

Lesson 3

Cancelling/rescheduling a doctor's appointment

Teacher's booklet

Phase 1: Guided noticing (approx. 30 min)

Exercise 1. Warm-up and predicting

Note: The terminology should be removed in the student's version of the booklet.

Instructions: Can you think of some real-life situations in which people may say something like this:

Note: Here teachers can provide more than 3 examples (any examples from the shortlist).

- Could we reschedule?

Possible situation (s): _____

- I can't make it

Possible situation (s): _____

- Do you have any availability_____ + [suggest date range]?

Possible situation (s): _____

Exercise 2. Exploration through written contextualized input

Background: 10 native speakers of English were asked to respond to the following scenario:

You have a dental appointment that you need to cancel or reschedule. You are calling your dentist's office. What would you say in this situation?

Read their responses below and try to notice and underline any expressions/word combinations that were similar to those we discussed at the beginning of today's lesson (e.g., *Do you have any availability_____ + [suggest date range]?*). The first response has been done for you.

1. Hello, ***I would like to cancel my appointment on*** Wednesday. My name is xxxxxx. I will call back to reschedule when I am available to come in.
2. Hi, it's [name] calling, I have an appointment with Dr. Smith on Tuesday, March 6th? Yeah, I need to reschedule. Thanks.
3. Hi, (name). Something's come up, and I need to reschedule the appointment that I had for (time/date). Do you have any appointments free for (dentist) in the near future?
4. Hi, this is Mr. Browne, unfortunately I will not be able to make my 11:00 appointment with Dr. Smith as something has come up. I will call back to reschedule as soon as I can.
5. Hello. This is [name]. I'm afraid I need to reschedule my appointment.

6. Hi, I am calling to reschedule an appointment for a cleaning with_____. Unfortunately, I can't make it this week. Does he/she have an opening next week?
7. Hi there, I'm just calling to reschedule my Thursday appointment with Dr. Z. I'm not going to make it. Do you have any availability next week? Early mornings are better.
8. Hi, I'm calling about my appointment today. I won't be able to make it. I'm sorry. Could we reschedule?
9. Hello, my name is (insert name) I have an appointment at (time). I am calling to inform you that I will not be able to make the appointment because..... My car is broken and I have to bring it in the shop to get it fixed. I was wondering if it would be possible to reschedule for another day?
10. Hello, I need to cancel my appointment that's scheduled for tomorrow. Something came up, and I can't make it.

Phase 2: Deep cognitive engagement and stimulating retention (approx. 60 min)

Exercise 1. Form-comparison and metapragmatic explanation

Instructions: Now compare the expressions you've underlined in Exercise 1 with the list provided in your handout. Were you able to notice most of them?

Teacher's script:

Such expressions are also called '*pragmatic formulas*'. These are fixed or semi-fixed multi-word combinations *frequently used* by the native/highly proficient speakers of the language for *specific communicative purposes*. Such expressions can be very beneficial for developing *fluency* and *accuracy* in a second language. The knowledge of these expressions can also help you improve your *pragmatic competence* (ability to use your second language in a contextually appropriate way in order to be properly understood by the native/highly proficient speakers of the language). Such expressions can help you *sound more natural* in your second language, and, as a result, you are more likely to be accepted into the '*inner social circle*' of the second language community.

Now let's move on to Exercises 2 and 3. These exercises were designed to help you better memorize these formulas and understand how they are used in context (in this lesson, *Inviting neighbors to a barbeque party*).

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Target pragmatic formulas:

1. I would like to cancel my appointment on ____ + [date]
2. I need to reschedule/cancel [my appointment]
3. Something's (has) come up
4. I will not (won't) be able to make it
5. I'm afraid I need to reschedule my appointment
6. I'm calling to reschedule my appointment
7. Do you have any availability ____ + [suggest date range]?
8. Could we reschedule?
9. I was wondering if it would be possible to ____ + [any meaningful completion of the phrase]?
10. I can't make it

OPTIONAL: At this point in the lesson, teachers may also want to discuss the following questions with the group to enhance cross-cultural linguistic awareness:

Awareness-raising discussion questions:

1. Are the responses provided by the native English speakers different from/similar to your your native language?
2. Are these responses different from/similar to your own responses in English?

3. What are the main similarities (if any) between your own responses and those provided by the native speakers?
4. What are the main differences (if any)?

Exercise 2. Understanding the implied meaning of the target formulas and explicit metapragmatic explanation

Review 1. Match the pragmatic formulas with their best paraphrased versions. Pay careful attention to the hints provided for you.

1. Something has come up

Hint: the phrasal verb 'come up' doesn't refer to the action of coming in the literal/direct sense in this context

2. I was wondering if it would be possible to ___ + [any meaningful completion of the phrase]?

Hint: the phrase 'I was wondering' means 'I wanted to know' in this context

3. I can't make it

Hint: the verb 'make' doesn't mean 'make something with your hands' in this context

4. I'm afraid I need to reschedule my appointment

Hint: the phrase 'I'm afraid' doesn't mean 'I'm physically scared' in this context

- a. I can't come to my appointment
- b. Unfortunately, I need to reschedule my appointment
- c. Something unexpected has happened and I can't come to my appointment
- d. I just wanted to know if it would be possible to reschedule my appointment

Note: Note that these paraphrased versions are the interpretations of the author; teachers may want to create their own paraphrases.

Answer key: 1-c; 2-d; 3-a; 4-b.

Review 2. Review each pragmatic formula again and decide whether each pragmatic formula is a direct or an indirect speech act.

In other words, how direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation? Circle or underline the chosen answer.

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

Hint: Direct speech acts is when the speaker says exactly what he/she means. Indirect speech acts is when the speaker means more than he/she says in reality. Indirect speech acts are generally considered more polite in English.

1. I'm calling to cancel/reschedule my appointment

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

2. I need to reschedule my appointment

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

3. Something has come up and I ____ + [excuse]

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

4. I would like to cancel/reschedule my appointment on ____ + [date- Wednesday]

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

5. Can/could we reschedule?

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

6. I was wondering if it would be possible to reschedule for ____ + [date- the following week]?

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

7. I won't be able to make it/ I can't make it

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

8. Do you have any availability/ies _____ + [suggest date range]?

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

9. Would it be possible to move the appointment to ____ + [suggest date range]?

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

10. I'm afraid I need to reschedule my appointment

How direct was the speaker when he/she asked for appointment change/cancellation?

Very direct Somewhat direct Somewhat indirect Very indirect

OPTIONAL: At this point in the lesson, teachers may also want to provide some explicit explanation as to 3 key socio-pragmatic factors speakers have to keep in mind when engaging in a conversation to enhance L2 pragmatic competence development:

Teacher's script: *When you engage in a conversation with 2 or more people, there are 3 key factors you need to keep in mind:*

1. **Social distance** (how well do the speakers know each other; age & gender)

Note: As the level of social distance increases (goes up), the level of politeness increases (goes up), *which affects the language choices*

2. **Power** (does the speaker have any power/authority over the hearer or vice versa; what are their roles)

Note: As the level of power (goes up), the level of politeness increases (goes up), *which affects the language choices*

3. **Imposition** (the type of obligation the speaker is forcing the hearer to do- e.g., borrow money vs to borrow a pen- is this a high stakes context? What are potential risks?)

Note: As the level of imposition (obligation/responsibility) increases, so does the level of politeness, *which affects the language choices*

Exercise 3: Speech act analysis

Instructions: Read each response and divide it into meaningful components (parts). Next, find a phrase that matches speaker's communicative strategy, as shown in the example. Check your answers with the rest of the class.

Example: Hi there, I need to reschedule my appointment. Do you have any availabilities for [suggest date range]?

Part 1

Hi there, I need to reschedule my appointment

Speaker's strategy

Greeting + Request for appointment change →

Follow-up question →

Part 2

Do you have any availabilities for [suggest date range]?

Phrase

Hi there, I need to reschedule my appointment

Do you have any availabilities for [suggest date range]?

1. Hello, I would like to cancel my dental appointment on Wednesday. My name is xxxxxx. I will call back to reschedule when I am available to come in.

Greeting + request for appointment cancellation → _____

Providing personal information → _____

Promise of future action → _____

2. Hi, it's [name] calling, I have an appointment with Dr. Smith on Tuesday, March 6th. Yeah, I need to reschedule. Thanks.

Greeting + context → _____

Request for appointment cancellation → _____

Thanking → _____

3. Hi, (name). Something's come up, and I need to reschedule the appointment that I had for (time/date). Do you have any appointments free for (dentist) in the near future?

Greeting → _____

Explanation + Request for appointment change → _____

Follow-up question → _____

4. Hi, this is Mr. Browne, unfortunately I will not be able to make my 11:00 appointment with Dr. Smith as something has come up. I will call back to reschedule as soon as I can.

Greeting → _____

Explanation → _____

Promise of future action → _____

5. Hello. This is [name]. I'm afraid I need to reschedule my appointment.

Greeting → _____

Request for appointment change → _____

6. Hi, I am calling to reschedule an appointment for a cleaning with _____. Unfortunately, I can't make it this week. Does he/she have an opening next week?

Greeting + Request for appointment change → _____

Explanation → _____

Follow-up question → _____

7. Hi there, I'm just calling to reschedule my Thursday appointment with Dr. Z. I'm not going to make it. Do you have any availability next week? Early mornings are better.

Greeting + Request for appointment change → _____

Explanation → _____

Follow-up question → _____

8. Hi, I'm calling about my appointment today. I won't be able to make it. I'm sorry. Could we reschedule?

Greeting + context → _____

Explanation → _____

Apology → _____

Request for appointment change → _____

9. Hello my name is (insert name). I have an appointment at (time). I am calling to inform you that I will not be able to make the appointment because.... My car is broken and I have to bring it in the shop to get it fixed. I was wondering if it would be possible to reschedule for another day?

Greeting → _____

Context → _____

Explanation → _____

Request for appointment change → _____

10. Hello, I need to cancel my appointment that's scheduled for tomorrow. Something came up, and I can't make it.

Greeting + Request for appointment cancellation → _____

Explanation → _____

Phase 3: Practice (approx. 30 min)

Instructions:

Students work in pairs and role-play the following scenario:

Part 1: The first student is a **patient** and he/she is calling a dental clinic to try and reschedule his/her appointment. The second student is a **receptionist** who receives the call. Both students have their 'calendars' in front of them at the time of the call.

The 'patient' has his/her calendar with all the commitments marked until the end of the month. The 'receptionist' has his/her own calendar with the doctor's appointment schedule. Their task is to negotiate the best suitable time for a new appointment. If there are no available appointments, the 'patient' will need to cancel. It is important that 'patients' use the target pragmatic formulas as they negotiate appointments' times.

Part 2: Student switch roles.

Note: To better address the learning needs of their learners, teachers may want to make their own versions of the calendars on this website: <https://print-a-calendar.com/>

Calendars can be directly printed off the website.

Patient's calendar example

	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	1	FREE DAY	2	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	3	English class- 6 pm- 9 pm	4	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	5	OFF	6	
OFF	7	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	8	FREE DAY	9	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	10	English class- 6 pm- 9 pm	11	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	12	OFF	13
OFF	14	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	15	FREE DAY	16	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	17	English class- 6 pm- 9 pm	18	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	19	OFF	20
OFF	21	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	22	FREE DAY	23	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	24	English class- 6 pm- 9 pm	25	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	26	OFF	27
OFF	28	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	29	FREE DAY	30	English class 9 am - 2 pm Pick up kids from school-2:30	31						

Receptionist's calendar example

		1 FULLY BOOKED	2 Kelly B.- cleaning 9 am - 10 am Jake S.- cleaning 10:30 am- 11:30 am	3 FULLY BOOKED	4 AVAILABLE	5 Hannah P.- filling 9 am - 11 am Peter M.- filling 12 pm- 2 pm	6 OFF
7 OFF	8 FULLY BOOKED	9 Kelly B.- cleaning 9 am - 10 am Jake S.- cleaning 10:30 am- 11:30 am	10 FULLY BOOKED	11 AVAILABLE	12 Hannah P.- filling 9 am - 11 am Peter M.- filling 12 pm- 2 pm	13 OFF	
14 OFF	15 FULLY BOOKED	16 Kelly B.- cleaning 9 am - 10 am Jake S.- cleaning 10:30 am- 11:30 am	17 FULLY BOOKED	18 AVAILABLE	19 Hannah P.- filling 9 am - 11 am Peter M.- filling 12 pm- 2 pm	20 OFF	
21 OFF	22 FULLY BOOKED	23 Kelly B.- cleaning 9 am - 10 am Jake S.- cleaning 10:30 am- 11:30 am	24 FULLY BOOKED	25 AVAILABLE	26 Hannah P.- filling 9 am - 11 am Peter M.- filling 12 pm- 2 pm	27 OFF	
28 OFF	29 FULLY BOOKED	30 Kelly B.- cleaning 9 am - 10 am Jake S.- cleaning 10:30 am- 11:30 am	31 FULLY BOOKED				