

# REFUSING POLITELY

B2-C1 | Functional language for declining requests and invitations

## 1 Useful phrase patterns

Use these phrases to say no clearly while staying polite and considerate.

### I appreciate the offer, but ...

I appreciate the offer, but I can't commit at present.

### I'm afraid I won't be able to ...

I'm afraid I won't be able to attend the meeting.

### Unfortunately, I have to decline.

Unfortunately, I have to decline on this occasion.

### I would prefer not to ...

I would prefer not to make a decision without the data.

### That sounds interesting, but ...

That sounds interesting, but the timing is difficult.

### I'm not in a position to ...

I'm not in a position to approve that expense.

### I don't think that would work for me.

I don't think that would work for me next week.

### Perhaps another time?

Perhaps another time, when the workload is lighter?

## 2 Respond to the situations

Write one polite refusal for each situation.

1. A manager asks you to join an extra project, but your current workload is already full.

---

2. A client invites you to a meeting next week, but you will be travelling for work.

---

3. A colleague asks you to approve an expense that is outside your responsibility.

---

4. A team wants you to decide on a new supplier before the price information is ready.

---

5. A professional contact invites you to an evening event, but you have an important family commitment.

---

6. A colleague suggests moving your regular meeting to a time when you teach a class.

---

7. A friend asks you to invest money in a business idea, but you do not understand the risks.

---

8. A group invites you on a weekend trip, but you need time to rest after a busy week.

---

# REFUSING POLITELY

B2-C1 | Suggested answers

## 3 Possible answers

These are examples only. Other accurate and suitable refusals are also correct.

*Encourage students to choose a phrase that suits the relationship and situation.*

1. I appreciate the offer, but I can't take on another project while my current workload is full.

---

2. I'm afraid I won't be able to attend the meeting because I will be travelling for work.

---

3. I'm not in a position to approve that expense because it is outside my responsibility.

---

4. I would prefer not to make a decision until we have the full price information.

---

5. Thank you for the invitation. Unfortunately, I have to decline because of a family commitment.

---

6. I don't think that would work for me because I teach a class at that time.

---

7. I appreciate the opportunity, but I would prefer not to invest before I understand the risks.

---

8. Perhaps another time? I need to rest after a particularly busy week.

---