

A. In order to succeed in English-speaking environments, either at work or in your social life, it is important to use polite language for many reasons. Not being polite could make you seem unfriendly, rude, impatient, aggressive, disrespectful or demanding. As well as using words such as *please*, *thank you* and *sorry* when necessary, we can also use **grammar** to increase our levels of politeness. Remember it is generally better to be too polite than not polite enough!

B. Which sentence in each pair do you consider politer? Why?

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|---|--|
| 1. Could you help me? | Can you help me? |
| 2. I wonder if you could help me. | I was wondering if you could help me. |
| 3. Where is the bus stop, please? | Could you tell me where the bus stop is, please? |
| 4. Be quiet. | Do be quiet. |
| 5. I want to ask you something. | I wanted to ask you something. |
| 6. Are you going to finish soon? | Will you be finishing soon? |
| 7. You should leave him. | If I were you, I'd leave him. |
| 8. Would you mind if I didn't come tonight? | Do you mind if I don't come tonight? |

C. Here are some grammar techniques to make you sound politer – which of them were used in the exercise above?

- Indirect questions: I need to know... → Could you tell me ... ?
- Present → Past: How much do you want to spend? → How much did you want to spend?
- Simple → Continuous: I hope you can... → I'm hoping you can...
- Past + Continuous → I wonder if you can → I was wondering if you could...



5. Using the passive to de-personalize an issue: You promised us ... → We were promised...
6. First conditional → Second conditional: If there's a chance to..., I'll be very grateful → If there was a chance to..., I'd be very grateful.

D. Make these sentences politer:

1. Tell me the way to the station.
2. Give me a cup of tea.
3. Turn down your music.
4. Do you want to come to the cinema?
5. Can you repeat what you said?
6. I can't come tonight.
7. Move, please.

E. Work with your partner: Comment on the notices below. Where could you see them? What kind of information do they give or what request do they include? How do they make you feel? Would they be phrased in the same way in our language?



a/



b/



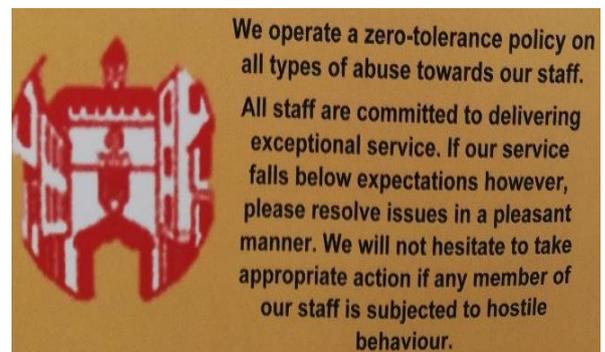
c/



d/



e/



F. In small groups, try to brainstorm answers to following questions:

- Why is it important to be polite and respectful towards other people?
- How could you and people around you modify their behaviour to be politer?

Choose your group speaker. He or she will express your group's opinion and justify it.



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