

Turning into formal politeness



Hi Andrea. Hope you're well.

You know I'm doing that secretarial course? Well, *(1) there's something on my mind, and maybe you can help.* I know you were in a similar situation last year. The thing is, the course is really boring and I hate it. But I've already paid for it, and it runs till the end of June. What do you think I should do? *(2) Any ideas?* Thanks for taking the time to help me on this - I always appreciate your advice. *(3) Please let me know what you think- email me or give me a call.* All the best,
Sandra

Hey Sandra! Great to hear from you!

I'm good. Same old stuff - work, music. I'm really into a band called The Virals - ever heard of them? *(4) I'm really sorry you're having such a hard time at the moment.* But being honest *(5) I think you should finish the course.* You only have a few months to go. There's always stuff in the chorus like that which comes in handy later, like increasing your typing speed. If you're desperate, then *(6) what about going to a careers advice centre?* It might help to talk to someone there. *(7) I think it's better than giving up the course and doing nothing.* Or maybe do something crazy, like travelling around India for a year. That way, you could think about what you want to do with your life. *(8) Hope that helps, but you have to decide in the end!* Cheers,
Andrea



Now match the phrases in italics above (1-8) with the phrases (a- h) below.

- a) I would appreciate it if you could contact me to discuss this matter further...
- b) I think it might be a good idea to ...
- c) I was wondering if you had any ideas.
- d) have you thought of ...
- e) I'd like your advice about a problem I have.
- f) I hope I have been of some help.
- g) I think this option would be preferable to ...(+ing)
- h) I was sorry to hear about your current difficulties.

a_____ b_____ c_____ d_____ e_____ f_____ g_____ h_____



Being polite and diplomatic



Rewrite each sentence using the words in brackets to make them more polite / diplomatic using the prompts.

- 1 Can we meet again next week? (wonder/could)
- 2 You've made a mistake on the invoice. (there / seems)
- 3 The quality is low. (not very)
- 4 Shall I speak to Mr. Baker? (would you like)
- 5 Your estimate for the cost is low. (might/ a little)
- 6 We should wait. (wouldn't/ better idea)
- 7 It's a bad idea. (honest / I'm not sure/ good)
- 8 Let's cancel the project. (perhaps/should think about)



Make the emails more polite / diplomatic by changing the phrases in **italics**. There may be several possible answers.

Leyla, thanks for your email with the costs from the printers about the new brochure. (1) *It is (2) very expensive.* (3) *Isn't it a better idea* to contact some other printing firms and get some alternative price? After all, (4) *we have been very unhappy* with the quality of their work on the last few jobs.

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| 1 It seems to be | 3..... |
| 2..... | 4..... |

Robert - sorry we didn't have a chance to talk yesterday. (5) *Shall we* reschedule for next week? Actually, there is something else I was going to mention. (6) *Can you* have a word with Sandra about the new Area Manager job? I'd like to know when it is going to be advertised. (7) *It's delicate* for me because there's a chance that I (8) *will* be one of the candidates.

- | | |
|--------|--------|
| 5..... | 7..... |
| 6..... | 8..... |

Gabriel, thanks for the suggestions on how to price out new range of accessories. To be honest, (9) *it's a bad idea*. The price you suggest (10) *are* too high for this market. (11) *Can't you see* a lower price (12) *will* be better? We don't want to be out of line with the competition.

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 9..... | 11..... |
| 10..... | 12..... |



Memos and internal messages



Compare these two emails. How are they different? Which do you think is better?

Version 1

Subject: To all the department heads - VIP visitor tomorrow

Tomorrow we will have the pleasure of welcoming Mr Bianchi from Ferrara Textiles as a visitor to our company. His company intends to place a large order with us, and we hope that this will become a long-term business relationship.

It is therefore very important to make a good impression, and all the staff in your department should know about his visit and be as helpful as possible. They should greet him by name, answer any questions he asks, explain procedures, etc.

Mr. Bianchi will be looking around the company from about 11:30, after his meeting with me. I would like to make sure that there is someone present in every section over the lunch period, in case the company tour runs late. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Version 2

Subject: To all the department heads - VIP visitor tomorrow

Mr. Bianchi of Ferrara Textiles will be looking around the company tomorrow, from about 11:30. It is important to make a good impression. Please:

- 1 Inform all staff in your department.
 - 2 Remind them to greet Mr Bianchi by name and take time to answer his questions.
 - 3 Arrange lunch breaks so that there is always someone available in your section.
- Thank you for your cooperation.

BE FLEXIBLE



For most people, version 1 would take too long to write in a busy working day. Version 2 is easy to understand, and it has a clear structure with numbered action points -ideal for busy working days- However, a memo (short internal notes) should also account for a structure.

- 1 Situation
- 2 Problem or objective
- 3 Solution or strategy
- 4 Closing comments.

Depending on the level of formality carried out by each company the length of memos or internal messages will vary and should be adapted.