

Dialogue 1.5: What Time Is It?



- NATASHA:** What time is it? We're going to be late!
- TONY:** **It's a quarter after seven.** We're on time. Don't panic.
- NATASHA:** But I thought we had to be at the restaurant by **7:30** for the surprise party. We'll never make it there with all this evening traffic.
- TONY:** Sure we will. **Rush hour** is almost over. Anyway, the party starts at 8:00. But I do need help with directions. Can you call the restaurant and ask them where we park our car?

LANGUAGE NOTES

- **It's a quarter after seven.** This phrase is one of the most common ways of stating this time. It means: "It's 15 minutes past 7:00." Another possibility here is to simply say: "It's seven fifteen." In general you can say: "It's a quarter past the hour." How do we know the time of day? Look for context clues: "evening traffic."
- In the dialog, Natasha and Tony are going to a surprise party. They need to be on time. Therefore there is an element of stress and urgency. When someone is stressed for time you can use expressions like: *Don't worry. / Don't stress. / We're fine. / We will be on time.*
- Natasha thinks the surprise party begins at **7:30**. There are two different ways to express this time. You may say simply "seven thirty" or "half past seven."
- **Rush hour** is the time of day—usually in the morning and evening—when traffic is heavy because of people commuting to and from their workplace by bus, by car, by subway, on foot, etc.

Dialogue 1-6: A Telephone Call

- JOHN:** Hi, Alice, it's John. How are you?
- ALICE:** Oh, hi, John! I was just thinking about you.
- JOHN:** That's nice. **I was wondering if you'd like to** go to a movie tonight.
- ALICE:** Sure, I'd love to! What's playing?
- JOHN:** **I was thinking about** that new comedy *Lights Out*. **What do you think?**
- ALICE:** Sounds great!
- JOHN:** OK, **I'll pick you up** around 7:30. The movie starts at 8:00.
- ALICE:** See you then. Bye!



LANGUAGE NOTES

- **Hi, Alice, it's John:** Hi, _____, it's _____ is a casual and friendly way to say hello on the phone. Although "it's" means "it is," it is used to mean "I am" here.
- **Oh, hi, John!** Notice the rising intonation here. Alice is excited to hear from John and is very pleased that he called her.
- **I was wondering if you'd like to ...** This is a polite and indirect way of asking "Do you want to ...?" John is nervous and does not want to appear too direct or bold. Notice how the question goes up at the end, which shows that he is not overly confident.
- **Sure! I'd love to** means "Yes, I would love to." Notice that Alice is very enthusiastic and friendly. She wants John to feel comfortable about asking her out on a date.
- **I was thinking about ... / What do you think?** Again, John does not want to appear too bold. He wants to give Alice a chance to suggest a movie.
- **Sounds great!** Is an informal way of saying "That is a good plan."
- **I'll pick you up** is an informal way of saying "I'll come to your house so that we can go together."

Dialogue 1-7: **Can You Say That Again?**



- LUKE:** Hello? Hi, Stephanie, how are things at the office?
- STEPHANIE:** Hi, Luke! How are you? Can you please stop and pick up extra paper for the computer printer?
- LUKE:** What did you say? Can you repeat that, please? Did you say to pick up ink for the printer? Sorry, the phone is **cutting out**.
- STEPHANIE:** Can you hear me now? No, I need more computer paper. Listen, I'll text you exactly what I need. Thanks, Luke.
Talk to you later.
- LUKE:** Thanks, Stephanie. Sorry, my phone has really bad **reception** here.

LANGUAGE NOTES

- There are a few ways to express a lack of understanding and to request additional information. The most common ones are stated, but you can also say "Excuse me" or simply "I can't hear you." In a more formal situation, try saying "I'm sorry?" or "I beg your pardon?" (with a rising intonation).
- When asking someone to clarify information try saying *Can you please repeat that?* / *Can you spell that for me?* / *Can you please write down the address for me?*
- **Cutting out** describes a difficulty in understanding a caller due to poor cellphone reception. If you are having trouble understanding the caller, you can also say *The line is breaking up* / *I am losing you*. If the phone call is disconnected because of poor reception, you can say *The call dropped*.
- **Talk to you later** is the equivalent in a phone conversation of "See you later" in a regular, face-to-face conversation.
- **Reception** here means the availability of cellular service, the possibility to receive and give calls on a cellphone. Cellphone reception can be limited in remote areas, inside large buildings or underground (in the subway, for instance).

Dialogue 1-8: Coincidences

MEG: Well, hello there, Julia! Long time no see!

JULIA: Meg! Hi! **What a** coincidence! I haven't seen you in ages! What are you doing here?

MEG: I just got a new job in the city, so I'm shopping for some clothes. Hey, what do you think of this shirt?

JULIA: Hmm ... well, you know how much I love blue. See? I've got the same shirt!

MEG: You **always did have good taste! What a small world.**



LANGUAGE NOTES

- **Well, hello there ...** Notice the emphasis on "hello," which shows that Meg did not expect to see Julia.
- **Long time, no see!** This is a common expression used to say hello to someone you haven't seen in a long time.
- **What a ____!** This exclamation shows a great degree of surprise, joy, disappointment, etc. (What a surprise to see you here! What a joy to have you with us! What a shame that you have to leave so soon! What a wonderful idea that is!)
- **You *always did have good taste!*** Notice the stress on "did," which Meg uses to emphasize the fact that Julia **DOES** have good taste! Meg says it in a joking way because Julia likes the same thing that she does.
- **What a small world** is a common expression used to describe a chance meeting or other such coincidence.