

# Apologies, excuses and thanks

## A

### Apologies with common replies

We can **apologise** [say sorry] in different ways in different situations.



A: I'm(terribly/really) **sorry** – I've forgotten your book.

*Terribly/really* makes you sound 'more sorry'.



B: **Never mind.** That's OK.



A: I **beg your pardon** – I didn't see you there.

*I beg your pardon* is a more formal apology, often used if you walk into someone.



B: **That's all right.** (also **That's OK.**)



A: (I'm) **sorry to disturb you.**

We use this phrase when we **interrupt** / speak to someone who is busy working.



B: **Don't worry.** Come on in. I can finish this later.



A: (I'm) **sorry to keep you waiting** – I **won't be long.**

We use this phrase when someone is waiting for us. *I won't be long* = I will be with you very soon.



B: OK. Fine.



A: **Excuse me,** I won't be a minute.

We use this phrase when we have to leave a room or go somewhere.



B: OK. Fine.



A: I **must apologise** for the noise last night.

This is a more formal apology, and it is often used in business letters.



B: That's all right. I understand.



A: I'm(really) **sorry I'm late.**



B: Don't worry.

### Common mistakes

I'm sorry I'm late. (NOT I'm sorry ~~for be~~ late. OR I'm sorry ~~to be~~ late.)

## B

### Excuses

We often give an explanation or **excuse** after an apology. An **excuse** is a *reason* for the apology, which may or may not be true. These are excuses students might give for being late for class.

I'm sorry I'm late for class ...

- There was a **delay** / **hold-up** on the underground. [when a train, plane, etc. leaves or arrives later than you expect]
- I was **held up** in traffic. [**hold up** – cause a delay and make someone late – is often used in the passive]
- My train **was cancelled** [the train company decided not to run the train], and I had to wait half an hour for the next one.
- I **overslept** [slept longer than I planned or wanted to].

## C

### Thanks and replies

These are some common ways of **thanking** people, with typical replies.

A: **Thanks (very much).**

A: I've brought your books.

B: **Not at all.** (also **That's OK.**)

B: Oh, **cheers.** (*informal*)

A: **No problem.** (*informal*)

A: I'll post those letters for you.

B: Oh, thank you. **That's very kind of you.** (This is polite and slightly more formal.)

## Exercises

thanks very much I'm terribly sorry don't worry never mind  
I was held up cheers I beg your pardon there was a delay

thanks very much /cheers

B: That's OK.

8 Your company promised to send some information to a customer last week. You still haven't sent the information and you must now write to explain. Write the first sentence of your letter.