

# Hi! It's nice to meet you.

## Introductions.

One reason to learn English is so that you can meet new people and talk with them. If you want to meet people outside your country, then it is a good idea to learn English. Today people from all over the world use English to talk with people who don't know their language. It does not matter if you are Japanese, Bolivian, or Nigerian. If people cannot speak your language, their next question is "do you speak English?"

As soon as you introduce yourself, people can see how good your English is. So we are going to make your introductions better. We will look at –

- **The three levels of *register*.**
- **Types of introduction.**
- **Follow-up questions.**

### **Register.**

In every country we use register. Children speak to adults in one way, adults speak to children in another way. Children speak in another way with other children, and adults speak in another way to other adults. The boss speaks to the worker in one way, the worker speaks to the boss in a different way.

*For example:* "Hi there Bill! How are you?"

"Very well, thank you, Mr Walker. And yourself?"

Guess who is the worker, and who is the boss?

English has three types of register –

**formal**, for people we do not know, or people we need to be polite to (like the boss!),

**neutral/general** for people we do not know well,

**informal**, for friends and family.

*For example*

"Excuse me, but would you mind passing the salt, please?" (very formal)

"Can you pass me the salt please?" (neutral)

"Salt!" (very informal!)

But when English people become very, very polite to you, this can mean that they are angry about something.

## **Types of introduction**

People make introductions for many reasons. For business ("May I present Mr Collins of Widget supplies"). If two of your friends are meeting for the first time ("Terry - this is Sarah - we play tennis together"). It may be impersonal ("Hello, I'm nurse Jones. I am here to take your temperature.")

Ok - let's look at some introductions. (The first speaker is blue, the reply is in red.)

### **Formal introductions**

**Mr Thompson, this is Professor Jones.**

**Professor Jones. I'm pleased to meet you.**

**Mr Thompson, may I present Professor Jones.**

**How do you do?**

("How do you do?" does not mean "what do you do?" It does not mean anything. It is just a polite way to say "hello" when you are introduced.)

**Allow me to present Professor Jones.**

**I'm delighted to meet you, Professor. My name is Bob Thompson.**

(You should say your name if the person who introduces you does not say it.)

We use formal introductions on formal occasions. For important business, meeting important people or (some!) weddings and funerals, formal language is safest.

### **General/Neutral introductions**

**Mr Thompson, do you know Professor Jones?**

**How are you, Professor?**

**Bob, this is Jane Jones.**

**I'm pleased to meet you.**

**Bob Thompson, Jane Jones.**

**It's nice to meet you.**

Sometimes it is hard to know if you should use the first name, (Ted); the title (Professor) or the formal name (Professor Jones). English people have the same problem! When you are not sure, use the more formal name, or just call the other person "you". Sometimes the other person will help you and say (for example) "Please call me Jane". We use General introductions for people we might never meet again, for meetings which are not very important, or for meeting people like ourselves - for instance the people we will work with.

### **Informal introductions**

**Bob, meet Jane**

**How are you, Jane?**

**Bob, this is Jane.**

**Hi, Jane.**

**You don't know Jane, do you?**

**No, hi Jane, I'm Bob.**

Informal introductions are for people we meet at parties, or when we are with friends. We use only the first name, and we don't say the family names.

*Some other suggestions.* With formal introductions, and some general introductions, you shake hands. You don't usually shake hands in impersonal introductions. With informal introductions you shake hands if you are near that person.

## **Introducing yourself**

English people do not usually introduce themselves, except in impersonal introductions.

*For example*

*"I am Police Officer Jones, and I am arresting you for ..."*

*"I'm Bill Richeigh, your pilot on this flight ..."*

*"Hi, I'm Susan, your tour guide ..."*

When people introduce themselves, they usually say *why* they are introducing themselves.

You can also introduce yourself, at parties for example.

**Excuse me, I don't think we have met, my name is Bob Thompson.** (Formal)

**May I introduce myself? I'm Bob Thompson.** (Formal)

**Hello, I'm Jane.** (General/neutral)

**You must be Bob Thompson. I'm Jane Jones.** (General/neutral)

**Hello Bob, I'm Jane.** (Informal)

**Are you Bob Thompson? I'm Jane Jones.** (Informal)

When people introduce themselves you say the same things that you say to people who are introduced to you.

## **Follow-up questions**

In every country there are things you can talk about with people you have just met. And there are other things you can't talk about. There is an old rule that says "Don't talk about money, sex or politics with people you don't know well." It is a good rule. We call things people talk about which are not important "small talk". Good small talk subjects are: The weather (*Yes*, English people do talk about the weather), what you are doing at the party, why you are in the country, if you like the country, food, and travel. You can also talk about your job. In the vocabulary section you will find exercises for words about nationality.

*This conversation is an example*

**Hi, I'm Tara. Are you Maria?**

**Yes, that's right. Hello Tara.**

**Are you from Spain, Maria?**

**No, I'm Italian.**

**Italy? Oh, that's lovely. I went to Italy on holiday last year.**

**Really? Did you like it?**

**Oh, yes. The food was fantastic. And the weather too.**

**Where in Italy did you go?**

**Well, first .....**

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So. That was your introduction to introductions!