

The Courtesy Words : “Please” and “Thank You”

The most popular courtesy words used in everyday life in the English Language are ‘**Please**’ and ‘**Thank You**’. Their proper use would show the writer’s or speaker’s sense of courtesy, gratitude, culture and refinement. They add to the pleasure and sweetness of life. They make social life easy and smooth.

The words of A.G. Gardiner are worth quoting in this connection : ‘Please’ and ‘Thank You’ are the small change with which we pay our way as social beings. They are the little courtesies by which we keep the machine of life oiled and running smooth.”

We give below the rules relating to their correct use in life.

Use of ‘Please’

Rule 1—‘**Please**’ is used at the **end** of a sentence of request or prayer. **As**—

1. Help me, please.
2. Would you lend me your pen for a minute, please.
3. Come here, please.
4. Have your seat, please.

In all these sentences ‘**Please**’ has been used at the end of the sentence. This is the correct way. It is wrong to begin a sentence with ‘**Please**’. It is wrong to say “Please help me”, or “Please have your seat.”

Rule 2—If the Request is in the form of an Imperative sentence (suggesting order), ‘**Please**’ is used at the beginning of the sentence. **As**—

1. Please close the door.

2. Please leave me alone.
3. Please bring me a glass of water.
4. Please call the peon.

Rule 3—If the Request is in Interrogative form, ‘**Please**’ is used in the middle of the sentence. **As**—

1. Will you please close the door ?
2. Will you please stop talking ?
3. Are you please willing to help me ?
4. Will you please give me your telephone number ?

Rule 4—If a reply is to be given to an **Enquiry**, a **Request** or a **Suggestion**, and if the reply is Affirmative, we use **Please** ; but if the reply is **Negative**, we should not use **Please**. For a Negative reply we say ‘**No, thanks**’, and for the Affirmative reply we say ‘**yes, please.**’

It should also be remembered that in Affirmative reply, we should say ‘**Yes, please**’, not ‘**Please, yes.**’ Similarly in Negative reply, we should say ‘**No, thanks**’, not ‘**Thanks, no.**’ **As**—

1. Are you going to dine with me tomorrow?
Yes, please.
2. Will you have another cup of tea ?
Yes, please. (or, No, thanks / thank you.)
3. Will your brother need my help ?
Yes, please. (No, thank you.)
4. Are you staying with me ?
Yes, please. (or, No, thanks / thank you.)

Use of 'Thanks'

Rule 1—"Thanks", "Thank you", or "Thank you very much" are used to express one's obligation for a favour done to oneself. These expressions are also used to express obligation when one's **request, proposal, or suggestion** is accepted by some person. **As**—

1. You helped me a lot. Thank you very much.
2. You gave me a very timely advice. Thank you.
3. Thanks for giving me your pen.
4. Will you have another cup of tea ?
Yes, thank you.
5. I thank you for accepting my request.
6. Thanks for your suggestion.

Rule 2—Whether your reply to a request, proposal, or suggestion is Affirmative or Negative, 'Thanks' or 'Thank you' are used in both cases. For the Affirmative reply we should say 'Yes, thank you', and for the Negative 'No, thank you.' We should never say or write 'Thank you, yes' or 'Thank you, no.'

Rule 3—If one does some favour to you, or does some little act for you even without your request, you must say 'Thanks' or 'Thank you'. For example—

1. If your pen is left on the table, and your peon brings it to you, you must say 'Thanks' or 'Thank you'.
2. If a paper slips down from your table, and someone talking to you puts it back, you must at once say 'Thanks' or 'Thank you'.

Exercise

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with either "Please" or "Thank you" :

1. Will you switch off the light ?
2. keep off the grass.
3. for helping me so timely.
4. Could you show me the way ?

5. How is your father now ? Much better,
6. pay my respects to your father.
7. Will you send me the particulars of your son ?
8. We can do without your help
9. for the honour you have given me.
10. Put the book on the table

Hints—(1) please; (2) Please; (3) Thanks / Thank you; (4) please; (5) thank you; (6) Please; (7) please; (8) Thank you; (9) Thanks; (10) please.

Exercise

Reply the following questions in the Affirmative or the Negative, as indicated, using "Yes" or "No", with either "please" or "thank you"—

1. Are you quite well now ?
(Affirmative reply)
2. Do you need any other book ?
(Negative reply)
3. Does your uncle need my advice ?
(Affirmative reply)
4. Is your father still ill ? (Negative reply)
5. Shall I bring tea for you ?
(Affirmative reply)
6. Are you quite comfortable here ?
(Affirmative reply)
7. Would you like me to bring your letters from the Post-Office ?
(Affirmative reply)
8. Shall I bring more milk for you ?
(Negative reply)
9. Would you need my help now ?
(Negative reply)
10. Do you still need a house ?
(Negative reply)

Hints—(1) Yes, thank you / thanks; (2) No, thank you; (3) Yes, please; (4) No, thanks; (5) Yes, thank you; (6) Yes, thank you; (7) Yes, thank you; (8) No, thank you ; (9) No, thank you; (10) No, thanks.