

## 4.5 That doesn't sound right!

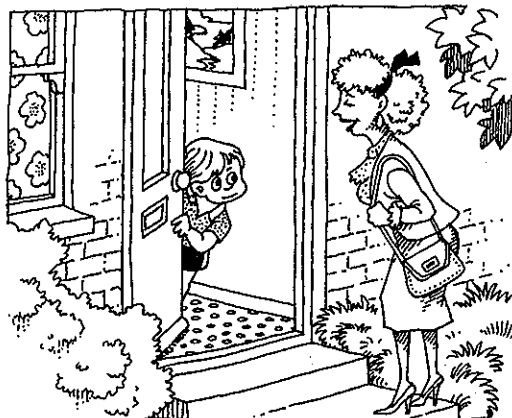
## Functions

**A** Work in pairs. Look at these short conversations and explain which remarks are inappropriate to the situation, as you imagine it. Decide what the people should have said instead. Look at this example first:

8 year-old: Hello.

Adult: Good afternoon, I wonder if I might have a word with your mother?

*Hello. Is your mummy at home?  
or Can I speak to your mummy?*



- 1 Assistant: Can I help you?  
Customer: No, that's not necessary.
- 2 Patient: Good morning, doctor.  
Doctor: Oh dear, you look ghastly, what's the matter?
- 3 Your boss: Yes, come in.  
You: I'm going to come to work half an hour late tomorrow.
- 4 Boss: Do you see what I mean?  
New employee: Yes, and I don't agree with you.
- 5 Friend: Would you excuse me, please? I'd very much like to make a phone call.  
You: Fine.
- 6 Student: Have you had time to mark my composition?  
Teacher: Yes, and I hope you don't mind my saying this, but you've made one or two tiny mistakes.
- 7 Waiter: Are you ready to order now?  
Customer: No, go away.
- 8 Wife: Would you mind assisting me with the washing-up, if you've got a moment?  
Husband: Certainly, I'd be delighted to.
- 9 Waiter: Was your meal any good?  
Customer: Yes, it was.
- 10 Guest: The meal wasn't as bad as I expected.  
Hostess: Oh, good. I'm so glad you enjoyed it.

**B** The kind of language you might use yourself in different situations depends on who you are talking to, and also how polite, tactful or direct you want to be. There are also different degrees of formality:

VERY FORMAL	I owe you a deep debt of gratitude; I should like to say how honoured I was to make your acquaintance.
FORMAL	It was a pleasure to meet you. Thank you very much indeed.
NEUTRAL	Goodbye. Thank you.
INFORMAL	Bye for now. Thanks a lot.
FAMILIAR	Bye bye. Cheers.



Work in pairs. Decide which of the following phrases are:

VERY FORMAL    FORMAL    NEUTRAL    INFORMAL    OR    FAMILIAR

- 1 A lot of people like fish and chips.    Loads of people like fried chicken.  
Lots of people like curry.    Many people enjoy hot dogs.  
A significant number of people prefer sandwiches.
- 2 Good to see you.    Hello.    Hi there.  
It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.    Pleased to meet you.
- 3 I'd like to introduce myself. My name's .....    I'm ..... – what's your name?  
May I introduce myself, I'm .....    My name's ..... – who are you?
- 4 Do you feel like a drink?    Like a drink?    Want a drink?  
May I offer you a drink?    Would you like me to get you a drink?
- 5 Can I have tea, please?    I want tea, please.    Tea, please.  
I'd like a cup of tea, please.    Would it be possible for me to have some tea?
- 6 One should always try to be polite.    You should always try to be polite.
- 7 Give my best wishes to your parents.    Give my love to Jan, won't you?  
Oh, love to Jim, by the way.    Remember me to your husband.  
Please give my best regards to your wife.

► Why might it sound strange if you greeted a close friend like this:

*Good morning, how very pleasant to see you again!*

or, if you greeted an elderly acquaintance like this:

*Hi there, how's it going?*

► What's the effect of using a very formal phrase in an informal situation?

*Friend: I've brought you some coffee.*

*You: That's extremely considerate of you – thank you so much.*

Or very familiar language in a formal situation?

*Stranger on train: Would you like to have a look at my newspaper?*

*You: OK.*