

Making excuses

- ▶ Give reasons and explanations
- ▶ Discuss statements other people made

1 SNAPSHOT

Good Excuses, Poor Excuses

Not doing homework

- I was sure the assignment was due tomorrow.
- I emailed it to you, but it bounced back.

Arriving late to class

- My father didn't wake me up.
- My bike tire was flat because a dog bit it.

Missing work

- My cat was sick, and I had to take care of her.
- It was my birthday, and I always donate blood on that day.

Arriving late to work

- I worked on the new project until four in the morning, and then I overslept.
- My wife thinks it's funny to hide my car keys in the morning.

Arriving late for a date

- I was taking a telephone survey and lost track of the time.
- A horse running on the highway was holding up traffic.



Which are good excuses? Which are poor ones?

What excuse do you usually use for these situations?

What excuses can you make for missing a date or party?

2 PERSPECTIVES At your request

▶ A Who do you think made these requests? Listen and match.

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. She said to arrive on time for the meeting. ____ | a. my teacher |
| 2. She asked me to pick up some food on the way home. ____ | b. my boss |
| 3. He said not to miss practice again. ____ | c. my brother |
| 4. She told me to hand in my homework before Friday. ____ | d. my doctor |
| 5. She said to drink at least six glasses of water a day. ____ | e. my neighbor |
| 6. He asked me not to tell Mom about his new girlfriend. ____ | f. my roommate |
| 7. He told me not to leave my bike in the apartment hallway. ____ | g. my coach |

B PAIR WORK Can you think of another request each person might make?

A: Our teacher sometimes says, "Open your books."

B: A teacher could also say, "Repeat after me."

3 GRAMMAR FOCUS

▶ Reported speech: requests

Original request

Arrive on time for the meeting.

Don't leave your bike in the apartment hallway.

Can you pick up some food on the way home?

Reported request

She **said to arrive** on time for the meeting.

She **told me to arrive** on time for the meeting.

He **said not to leave** my bike in the hallway.

He **told me not to leave** my bike in the hallway.

She **asked me to pick up** some food.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 147

A Victor is organizing a surprise birthday party for his teacher. Look at what he told his classmates. Write each request using *say*, *tell*, or *ask*. Then compare with a partner.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Meet at my apartment at 7:30. | He told them to meet at his apartment at 7:30. |
| 2. Don't arrive late. | _____ |
| 3. Can you bring some ice cream? | _____ |
| 4. Can you help me make the sandwiches? | _____ |
| 5. Can you bring a small gift for her? | _____ |
| 6. Don't spend more than \$10 on the gift. | _____ |
| 7. Keep the party a secret. | _____ |
| 8. Don't say anything to the other teachers. | _____ |

B GROUP WORK Imagine you're planning a class party. Write four requests. Then take turns reading your requests and changing them into reported requests.

Edu: Bring something to eat to the party!

Eva: Edu told us to bring something to eat.

Aki: Can you help me clean up after the party?

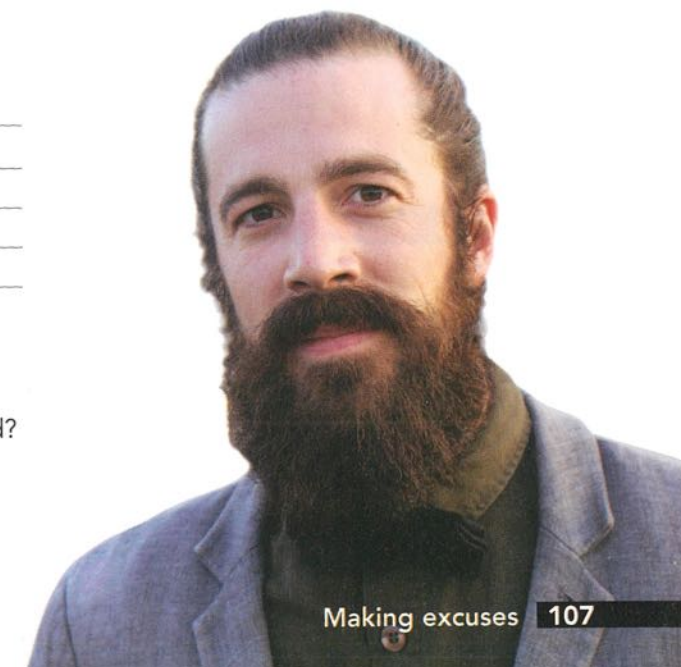
Jim: Aki asked us to help her clean up.

4 SPEAKING That's asking too much!

A Think of requests that people have made recently. Write two things people asked you to do and two things people asked you *not* to do.

Person	Request
My boss	shave off my beard

B GROUP WORK Talk about the requests that each of you listed in part A. Did you do what people requested? Did you give an excuse? What was it?



5 WORD POWER Verb-noun collocations

A Find three more nouns that are usually paired with each verb. The same noun can be paired with more than one verb. Then compare with a partner.

an apology	an invitation	a request
a complaint	a joke	a solution
an excuse	a lie	a story
an explanation	an offer	a suggestion
an idea	a reason	the truth

make	<u>a request</u>			
give	<u>an excuse</u>			
tell	<u>a joke</u>			
accept	<u>an apology</u>			
refuse	<u>an invitation</u>			

B PAIR WORK How do you deal with the things in part A? Tell a partner.

A: What do you do when a close friend makes a difficult request?

B: I give a good explanation, and I offer to help in another way. What about you?

6 CONVERSATION Are you doing anything on Sunday?

A Listen and practice.

Gabriel Hi, Craig.

Craig Oh, hi, Gabriel. How are things?

Gabriel Just fine, thanks. Uh, are you doing anything on Sunday night?

Craig Hmm. Sunday night? Let me think. Oh, yes. My brother just called, and he told me he had tickets to the basketball finals. I said I would go with him.

Gabriel Oh, that's too bad! It's my birthday. I'm having dinner with Tina, and I thought I'd invite more people and make it a party.

Craig Oh, I'm really sorry, but I won't be able to make it.

Gabriel I'm sorry, too. But that's OK.



B PAIR WORK Act out the conversation in part A. Make up your own excuse for not accepting Gabriel's invitation.

7 LISTENING Making excuses

A Listen to Gabriel invite his friends to his birthday party on Saturday. What excuses do they give for not going? Write them below.

1. Grant: _____
2. Sayo: _____
3. Diego: _____
4. Carrie: _____



B Listen. What happens on the night of Gabriel's birthday?

C PAIR WORK What was the last party you went to? Describe it to your partner.



8 GRAMMAR FOCUS

Reported speech: statements

Direct statements

I **am not feeling** well.

I **have** houseguests for the weekend.

I **made** a tennis date with Kim.

I **have planned** an exciting trip.

We **can't come** tomorrow.

We **will be** out of town.

We **may go** out with friends.

Reported statements

She **said** (that) she **wasn't feeling** well.

she **had** houseguests for the weekend.

she **had made** a tennis date with Kim.

she **had planned** an exciting trip.

They **told me** (that) they **couldn't come** tomorrow.

they **would be** out of town.

they **might go** out with friends.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 147

A Isabella is having a party at her house on Saturday. Look at these excuses. Change them into reported speech. Then compare with a partner.

1. Mason: "I already have plans for Saturday."
2. Olivia: "My in-laws are coming over for dinner that night."
3. Ben and Ava: "We've been invited to a graduation party on Saturday."
4. Felipe: "I promised to help my sister with her homework."
5. Tae-yun: "I can't come because I broke my leg."
6. Osvaldo: "I'll be moving this weekend."
7. Lisa and Henry: "We have to pick someone up at the airport that evening."
8. Omar: "I may have to work the night shift on Saturday."

Mason **said** he already had plans for Saturday. OR

Mason **told** her he already had plans for Saturday.

B GROUP WORK Imagine you don't want to go to Isabella's party. Take turns making excuses and changing them into reported speech.

A: I'm sorry, I can't go. I'm going camping this weekend.

B: Lucky guy! He said he was going camping this weekend.

9 PRONUNCIATION Reduction of *had* and *would*

- ▶ **A** Listen and practice. Notice how *had* and *would* are reduced in the following sentences.

She said she'd **made** the bed. (She said she **had made** the bed.)

She said she'd **make** the bed. (She said she **would make** the bed.)

- ▶ **B** Listen to four sentences. Check (✓) the reduced form that you hear.

1. ☐ had ☐ would 2. ☐ had ☐ would 3. ☐ had ☐ would 4. ☐ had ☐ would

10 WRITING About my classmates

- A** Interview your classmates and take notes. Use your notes to write a report describing what people told you. Use reported speech.

	Name	Response
What did you do last night?		
What movie have you seen recently?		
Where are you going after class?		
What are your plans for the weekend?		
What will you do on your next birthday?		

- B GROUP WORK** Read your report, but don't give names. Others guess the person.
"Someone said that he'd go to Paris on his next vacation."

11 SPEAKING You can make it.

- A GROUP WORK** What are some things you would like to do in the future? Think of three intentions.

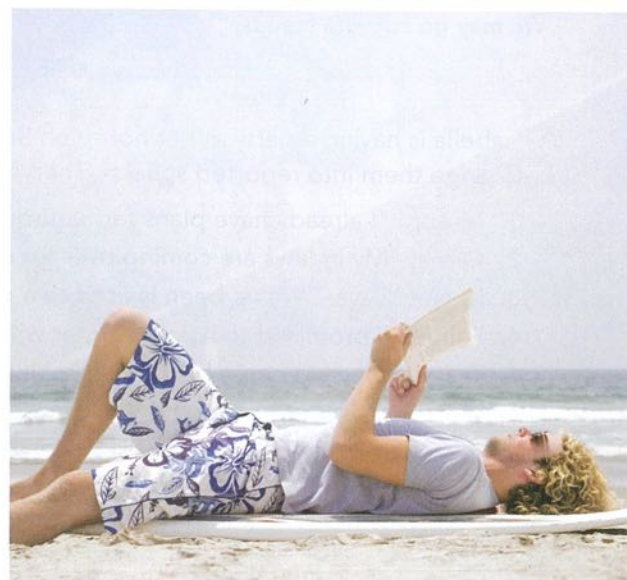
A: I'm going to take an English course abroad.

B: That sounds fun. Have you decided where?

- B CLASS ACTIVITY** Report the best intentions you heard. Then give suggestions.

B: Noriko said she was going to take an English course abroad, but she hadn't decided where.

C: She could go to Australia. My brother attended a very good school there. He told me he studied incredibly hard!



12 INTERCHANGE 16 Just a bunch of excuses

Make some plans. Student A, go to Interchange 16A on page 129; Student B, go to Interchange 16B on page 131.

13 READING

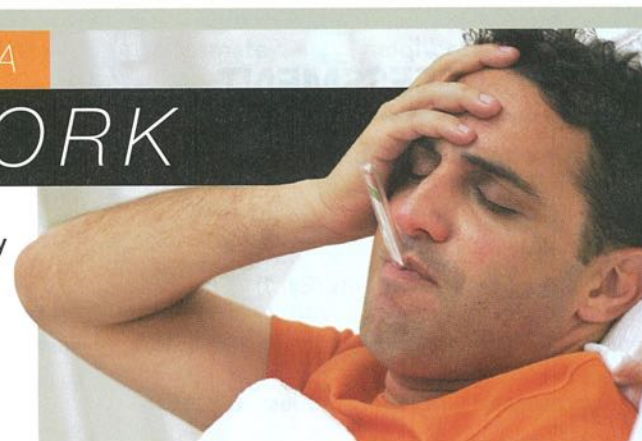
- A** Scan the article. What are three common reasons for missing work?

A GOOD EXCUSE FOR A DAY OFF WORK

1 On average, U.S. employees take 4.9 sick days per year. Usually this does not cause any particular problems. But when employees take sick leave without a good reason, it can quickly become an issue. In fact, in one survey, 18 percent of employers said that they had fired an employee for taking days off without a good reason. The key is to understand what reasons are acceptable and what reasons are not. Generally, most excuses for sick days fall into one of three categories.

2 The most common reasons for not going to work are health-related. It would probably be OK to tell your boss that you ate something bad last night and that you have a stomachache. Of course you might not want to share the details of a health issue with your boss – after all, you do have the right to privacy. If you don't want to be too specific, you can just tell your boss that you have a small medical issue and need to take the day off.

3 Household accidents are the second category of reasons for not going in to work. You might call your boss to say you slipped in the shower and hurt your knee. This is a common accident and one that your boss will sympathize with. However, if you are going to be out of work for several days due to an injury, it's important to make arrangements with your employer. See if you can work from home, or at least make sure there is someone to cover your work.



4 The third type of sick day use isn't really about illness, but it's about something else you can't control: transportation problems. The car might not start, there may be a terrible traffic jam, or there could be delays on the subway. Some employers may be sympathetic to absences due to transportation problems, but others may not. It's important to know your boss and to understand whether he or she will accept an excuse like this.

5 Regardless of the reason for the sick day, there are a few things you can do to make missing work more acceptable to your employer. Try to keep sick days to a minimum. When you do need to take a sick day, give your employer as much advance notice as possible. Finally, never take a sick day if there isn't anything wrong with you – the only good excuses are the ones that are true.



- B** Read the article. Then correct four mistakes in the summary of the article.

U.S. workers take just under a month in sick days a year. The least frequently used excuses are for health reasons. When employees take a sick day, it's important to explain the reason to their colleagues. It's OK to take a sick day, even if you feel fine, as long as you give an excuse.

- C** Find words in the text to match these definitions.

- told someone to leave his or her job (paragraph 1) _____
- an explanation given for something (paragraph 1) _____
- someone's right to keep information about his or her personal life secret (paragraph 2) _____
- understand or care about someone's problems (paragraph 3) _____
- a warning that something is about to happen (paragraph 5) _____

- D** What other excuses do people make for not going to work or class? What's the silliest excuse you have ever heard?