

## CONGRATULATING FRIENDS FOR DIFFERENT OCCASIONS

### Good news, bad news

These lessons cover language you can use when you want to give or react to news. Including:

- Congratulating someone on good news
- Responding to someone's bad news
- Giving good news
- Giving bad news

### Responding to someone's good news

What's the best way to respond to someone's good news? Most people know how to say 'congratulations' - but what other words, phrases and strategies are useful?

#### Informal congratulations

Congratulations!

That's  
What

fantastic  
brilliant  
great  
wonderful  
splendid

news!

That's fantastic! (etc)

How splendid! (etc) *old-fashioned*

Fantastic! (etc.)

#### More formal congratulations (useful for cards and letters)

Congratulations

on getting married  
on your good news

I'm really

pleased  
happy  
delighted

for you!

to hear about...

#### Exclamations of surprise

Wow!

Really?

Did you?! Are you?!

#### Follow-up questions

Are you excited?

So when did you... ?

And are you going to...?

**How to ... respond to someone's good news**

SIG

William: Hello and welcome to How to... your weekly instruction manual for saying and doing things in English.

TAG

My name's William Kremer. Let's start today's programme with a piece of good news: I'm getting married next month!

So what's the best way for you to respond to something like that? Well, English speakers are lucky to have a word that they can use whenever something really good happens to another person...

Example

Elena: Congratulations!

William: Congratulations! If you're writing a card or a letter you might want to say what you are congratulating your friend about. To do this you can say...

Example

Elena: Congratulations on your engagement!

William: Or you can say

**Example**

Elena: Congratulations on getting married!

William: But there are lots of things we can say to people who have some good news other than 'congratulations'. I'm going to invite a colleague from BBC Learning English into the studio, and I'm going to tell him my good news – about me getting married next month, and let's see what words he uses when he responds.

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STING

William: And Matt has just come into the studio – hello Matt.

Matt: Hello William.

William: Now the reason I have called you into the studio today is because I have some good news.

Matt: Ah excellent – I like good news.

William: I am going to be getting married next month...

Matt: Oh congratulations, that's fantastic news! Are you excited?

William: I am very excited, yes! Erm and er.. yeah... so...

Matt: Are you getting married in a church?

William: No, we're not getting married in a church – but er, no, we're doing the modern thing -

Matt: You're doing the modern thing rather than the traditional...

William: Yes, that's right.

Matt: Very good.

William: That's my news.

Matt: That's splendid news. I also have some very exciting news...

William: You don't! Do you also..?

Matt: I... I also have some exciting news.

William: What's your news?

Matt: In one month's time, my wife is having a baby boy – our first child.

William: Is she?!

Matt: Yes, she is.

William: Wow, I didn't know that! When did you... well, you must have found out a long time ago...

Matt: I found out a long time ago, but we've been keeping it quiet.

William: Oooh, well congratulations! Do you know if it's a boy or a girl?

Matt: I said it was a boy.

William: Oh yes! Good point... OK Matt, that's all I wanted to tell you.

Matt: Ah, fantastic – well, good luck.

William: Good luck to you too. Bye bye.

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OK, Matt's left the studio now. Don't worry if you didn't catch all of that conversation – but let's listen back now to a few interesting bits.

William: Did you notice that after I told Matt my good news, he asked me some questions?

Example

Matt: ... Are you excited? Are you getting married in a church?

William: Matt is interested in my wedding. In general, when people tell you something new, something exciting – a very good way to respond is to ask lots and lots of questions!

What other language did Matt use?

Example

Matt: Oh congratulations, that's fantastic news!

William: This is a very common and a very easy way to respond to some good news.

Simply describe the news as 'fantastic' or 'great' or brilliant – or use any other very positive word...

Example

Matt: Oh congratulations, that's fantastic news!... That's splendid news – I also have some very exciting news...

William: But you don't need to say, 'That's fantastic news'. When we're talking, we can often use these very positive words like 'fantastic' or 'splendid' by themselves...

Example

Matt: Ah, fantastic, well, good luck...

William: We can also use the words 'how' and 'what' by saying 'how splendid' or 'what splendid news' but you don't hear these phrases very often nowadays – they're quite old-fashioned.

One other thing to mention is that good news often involves surprise. Listen again to me being surprised by Matt's good news:

Example

William: In one month's time, my wife is having a baby boy – our first child.

William: Is she?!

Matt: Yes, she is.

William: Wow, I didn't know that! When did you... well, you must have found out a long time ago...

'Wow' - W-O-W - is a word that we use when we are really surprised by something – and pleased!

William: Well, some interesting language there. I just want to play you a couple of other phrases that you might find useful – here's the first one:

Example

Elena: I'm really pleased to hear that.

William: I'm really pleased to hear that. And here's another phrase –

Example

Elena: I'm really happy for you.

William: I'm really happy for you. These two phrases are a little bit more formal, so you're not so likely to hear them. But they are very useful for when you're writing to congratulate someone – maybe in a card.

END SIG

You can listen again to the dialogue from this programme, and practise today's language point, on the How To webpage on BBC Learning English dot com.

Goodbye!

### BBC Learning English How to....react to someone's good news Quiz

For each question choose the one correct answer.

**1:A:I'm pregnant! B:**

a:How, really?                      b:Wow, really ?                      c:Cow, really?

**2:A:we're engaged! C:**

a:That fantastic news!              b: That fantastic!              c: Fantastic!

**3: We are so excited\_\_\_\_\_ you! C:**

a:at                                      b:to                                      c:for

**4:Dear Mark, \_\_\_\_\_ ! C**

a:Congratulations for to get your new job              b:Congratulations for your new job

c:Congratulations on getting your new job

**5:Dear Claire, \_\_\_\_\_ ! B**

a:We're delighted hearing about your news              b: We're delighted to hear about your news

c: We're delighted for your news

**6:I've won the lottery! C**

a:No! Do you?                                      b:No! Won you?                                      c:No! Have you?

## 6. Congratulations and wishes

When someone has achieved something, or been fortunate in some way, we say:

### **Congratulations (on...)**

answer is Thank you or Thanks (informal).

may also be used about an achievement.

greetings include:

**Christmas!**

**Happy Easter!**

the person greeted may either repeat the greeting or say **Thank you, (and) (the) same to you.** Note that congratulate and congratulations are not appropriate here. Note also that there is no English greeting which can be used for any festival. The only way of greeting someone on the occasion of a festival not celebrated in Britain (or at least not wildly celebrated) is to use the word **wishes**, for example:

**(Very) best wishes for...**

**My/ our (very) best wishes for...**

The usual birthday greetings are:

**Many happy returns (of the day)!**

**Happy birthday!** - more common, especially in informal situations

**Congratulations** may be used when someone comes of age (now at 18 in Britain) in formal style. Otherwise it is practically never used as a birthday greeting nowadays.

The answer to all these is **Thank you.**

For engagements and weddings the following forms are used:

**Congratulations.** - weddings only

**I wish you every happiness.** –very formal, weddings only

**I hope you will be very happy.** – semi-formal, weddings only

If we meet someone who has recently has married but whose wedding we didn't go to, the word marriage is used instead.

**Congratulations on your marriage.** – very formal

**I hear you've got married. Congratulations.** – informal, semi-formal

Now here are some other wishes for various occasions:

**Have a good/ nice holiday.** – to someone going away on holiday

**Have a good/ nice weekend.**

**Have a good/ nice time.**

**Enjoy yourself.**

**Have a good journey** – to someone about to travel somewhere, but not usually when he is going on holiday (Here is Have a good holiday is more usual.)

**Good luck!**

**The best of luck!**

The person addressed replies Thank you or Thanks and may add **I shall need it.**

**All the best!**

**I hope you'll soon be/ feel better.**

## ACTIVITIES

Identify 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns from the script!

Grammar handout on pronouns! Pg 232 JE

The  
**Well done –**  
Seasonal  
**Happy/ Merry**  
**Happy New Year!**  
In reply