

# BBC Learning English

## How to ...

### *Accept an apology*



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#### STING

**Amber:** Hello, I'm Amber with another edition of 'How to ...' the series that gives you useful language to do things in English.

In an earlier programme we looked at simple ways to apologise – to say sorry when you've done something wrong. In this programme, we look at how to *reply* when someone says sorry to *you* for something they've done wrong.

Now the good news is there are *lots* of short and friendly expressions that you can use to accept an apology. For example, if you're with someone who's *really* sorry for what they've done, you can just say:

**That's OK.**

**Amber:** For example:

**I'm *really* sorry, Pete, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.**

**That's OK.**

**Amber:** A good tip is to remember that when we accept an apology in English, we usually try to make the person who has said sorry feel better! Here's another way to do this – you can simply say:

**No problem!**

**Amber:** For example:

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**I'm so sorry I forgot your birthday, Oliver!**

**No problem!**

**Amber:** Do you get the hang of it? You tell the person who has said sorry that what has happened doesn't matter, that it isn't important, now they've said sorry. Listen again.

**I'm really sorry, Pete, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.**

**That's OK.**

**Amber:** And, if you know someone well or care about them a lot, you can just tell them *not to worry* about the situation. Listen.

**I'm sorry about the trouble I've caused.**

**Don't worry about it.**

**Amber:** And, you can shorten this to:

**No worries.**

**Amber:** For example:

**I'm sorry about the trouble I've caused.**

**No worries.**

**STING**

**Amber:** So far, we've looked at four handy expressions for accepting an apology:  
That's OK. No problem. Don't worry about it. No worries.  
Now you try to use them. You'll hear three apologies and you can use any of  
the expressions we've looked at to respond:

**Sorry for eating the last piece of cake!**

(pause)

**I'm really sorry for taking your DVD!**

(pause)

**Sorry for *drinking* all the milk!**

(pause)

**Amber:** Well done!

Now there may be situations when a good response is to *thank* the person who has said sorry to you – this works well if they have (or tried to) put right the wrong that they have done.

For example, imagine your flatmate is playing music so loudly that you can't revise for an exam you've got the next morning – you tell them to turn their music down; they do so, so you thank them.

**Turn it down! I've got an exam in the morning!**

**Sorry!**

**Thanks!**

**Amber:** To end the programme, let's listen to a scene from *The Flatmates* - the BBC Learning English dot com weekly drama! It shows how - when we accept an apology in English - we tend to use a few kind words. We say 'thank you' or try to put the other person at ease in some other way.

First, you'll hear Helen say sorry to her friend and flatmate, Tim. Helen is sorry for shouting angrily at Tim a few days before, when he had asked her a polite question about the possibility of paying less rent. After Helen says sorry, Tim accepts her apology by saying 'thanks' and then... Notice how Tim speaks kindly to Helen – try to catch what he says.

- Helen:** Tim, I want to apologise for the way I spoke to you the other day.  
**Tim:** Thanks, Helen. Well I should say sorry too. I put you in a difficult position, asking for a discount.  
**Helen:** That's OK. Would a slap-up meal make us friends again?  
**Tim:** Oh go on then!

**Amber:** Did you catch it? When Helen apologises, Tim says 'Thanks, Helen' and then he apologises too! He says that he didn't behave well either! This is often the way that saying sorry between friends will work – and it's a nice move – a friend says sorry to you, and then you say sorry for something else in reply!

Listen again and notice how Helen accepts Tim's apology (she says 'That's OK') and then she makes the kind suggestion that they share a slap-up meal 'to make up' – to become friends again!

- Helen:** Tim, I want to apologise for the way I spoke to you the other day.  
**Tim:** Thanks, Helen. Well I should say sorry too. I put you in a difficult position, asking for a discount.  
**Helen:** That's OK. Would a slap-up meal make us friends again?  
**Tim:** Oh go on then!

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