

Sorry, Frank, One Quick Thing

Four ways to cut in when the room is not yours.

| Learn one phrase per page.

| Play **phrases.mp3** and say each phrase out loud. You'll hear it twice.

| Try the quick check at the end.

Excuse me

A polite way to get someone's attention before you speak. People say it before a question, a request, or a reason for stopping them.

Examples

- Excuse me, is this seat taken?
- Excuse me, I think you dropped your wallet.

You can also say

- Pardon me, could I ask you something?
- Sorry, do you have a second?

Say it in a friendly voice. A sharp or loud "Excuse me!" can sound annoyed or rude.

Sorry to interrupt

You say this when you cut into someone's talk or work. You admit it's a bit rude, but you still say what you need.

Examples

- Sorry to interrupt, but your taxi is here.
- Sorry to interrupt, but the meeting starts now.

You can also say

- Sorry to cut in, but dinner is ready.
- I hate to interrupt, but we need to leave.

It's usually followed by “but” and the reason. It doesn't ask permission, so the speaker will keep going.

One quick thing

You say this before a short question or message. It promises that it won't take much of the person's time.

Examples

- One quick thing before you go: please lock the door.
- I know you're busy, but I have one quick thing to ask.

You can also say

- Real quick, can I ask something?
- I just need a second of your time.

Keep your promise. If "one quick thing" becomes a long talk, people may get annoyed.

Can I just say

You say this to politely share a thought when the other person may not want to hear it. It makes your point sound softer.

Examples

- Can I just say how proud I am of you?
- Can I just say that dinner was amazing?

You can also say

- If I may say something, you did great.
- I just want to say one thing.

"Just" makes it softer. Use it when the person is resisting, then keep your point short and kind.

Quick check

1. _____, does this bus go downtown?

Excuse me / Thank you / Well done

2. _____, but your mom is on the phone.

Happy to interrupt / Ready to interrupt / Sorry to interrupt

3. I know you're busy, but I have one _____ to ask.

long thing / quick thing / slow thing

4. I know you're busy, but can I _____ that you did great today?

just say / just speak / just talk

Answers: 1 Excuse me, 2 Sorry to interrupt, 3 quick thing, 4 just say

Real moments. Right words.

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