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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### Excuse me



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*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me, Feifei...

#### Rob

...and me, Rob. Now **excuse me** Feifei, I just need to reach over and get a tissue before I....  
SNEEZE! Oh excuse me!

#### Feifei

Are you getting a cold?

#### Rob

Oh **excuse me**, I've just got to get this. *Hi mum, I've told you not to call me at work. I'll call you tonight. OK? Bye. Sorry about that.*

#### Feifei

...Rob, are you going to do any work?

#### Rob

**Excuse me!** I am working very hard to explain today's piece of authentic English.

#### Feifei

**Excuse me?** Say that again.

#### Rob

Yes – that's it – our phrase today is two words with many different meanings – 'excuse me'.

#### Feifei

I see – so when you sneeze or make a rude noise you can **apologise** by saying 'excuse me!'

#### Rob

Exactly. And when I wanted you to move so that I could reach for the tissues, I said 'excuse me' to **politely ask** you to move so that I could reach them. A bit like this...

#### Example

Excuse me, could you move down the bus please so that I can get on. Thanks!

**Feifei**

And what about that phone call?

**Rob**

Ah yes, I said 'excuse me' as a **polite way of apologising for the interruption.**

**Feifei**

So you were being polite and then you were being rude when you said 'excuse me!'

**Rob**

I was expressing shock and disbelief that you thought I wasn't working. A bit like this...

**Example**

Excuse me! How can you say I don't do any housework – I cleaned the bathroom yesterday.

**Rob**

And then you said 'excuse me?' because you didn't understand what I said earlier – as usual – and **you wanted me to repeat** it.

**Feifei**

Excuse me! That's not fair. Any other uses?

**Rob**

Yes. Here's another one...

**Example**

**Excuse me**, do you know the way to the railway station?

**Feifei**

OK, that's 'excuse me' **to get someone's attention.** Well Rob, now I've got *your* attention, you'll have to **'excuse me'** because I've got to go.

**Rob**

A very good use of 'excuse me' Feifei – **politely saying you have to go.** So, can you think of any more...? Feifei? Feifei? Oh she really has gone.

**Rob**

Bye.

SORRY: expresses regret, remorse or sorrow; you may use it as an apology; used to prompt a repetition

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/the-english-we-speak/ep-171030>