



All Ears English Episode 149: Practical Alternative Phrases for Saying “I’m Sorry”

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 149: “Practical Alternative Phrases for Saying “I’m Sorry.”

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel,’ from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

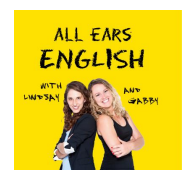
Gabby: So you guys listen to our podcast four times a week, but how can you actually learn how to learn with our podcast. (Um), Lindsay and I have made this e-book that is “Ten Ways to Learn English with a Podcast.” And where can they get this e-book?

Lindsay: So you can get this e-book if you go to AllEarsEnglish.com/Free.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: In today’s episode, you’ll see a comparison of three typical ways to apologize and three new and creative ways to apologize.

[Instrumental]



Lindsay: Hey, Gabby!

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. How are you?

Lindsay: What's shaking?

Gabby: Not much, how (are) you doing?

Lindsay: I'm all right.

Gabby: Good, good. All right. So yesterday in Episode 148, which you can find at AllEarsEnglish.com/148, we talked about the word "sorry" and, (uh), when to apologize, when not to apologize, and, (uh), we just talked about it a little bit. But in today's episode, we want to actually share practical phrases. We have three examples using the word "sorry" and three examples that would be alternative ways to, (you know), show, (uh), that you recognize something went wrong. (Um), and we're not saying one is right or one is wrong. They're both totally correct, both totally...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...acceptable, but we want to give you alternatives. So if you want to use the word "sorry" more sparingly, you could use the alternative. And this...

Lindsay: Right.

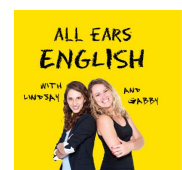
Gabby: ...is just a good way to grow your vocabulary.

Lindsay: Yeah. Yesterday, we talked a little bit about how "sorry" can become a habit.

Gabby: (Uh).

Lindsay: And if you're interested in breaking that habit, you don't have to, but if you're interested in breaking it, these are phrases you could start to use instead.

Gabby: Great. So we have three situations: being late, making mistakes, and making someone upset that you might want to apologize for. So, let's start with the first situation: if you're late. This is a big one. This is really useful, I



think, (um), if you're taking a class or you have a job where you have a set schedule. (Um), students come into my classes all the time and, and they want to apologize for being late, but they actually don't even know how to...

Lindsay: Oh, okay.

Gabby: ...(you know), say the correct phrase. So, (um), so one way you could say, (uh), this if you are late is, "I'm sorry I'm late."

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: "I'm sorry I'm late." How 'bout (about) an alternative if you don't want to say, "I'm sorry"?

Lindsay: Right. So one alternative would be – I guess if it's true, if this is what happened, you could say, "I got held up."

Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Yeah, it means something stopped you from being on time.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: I, I would think, okay, maybe, (uh), some person got, (you know), had to stop and talk to your or...

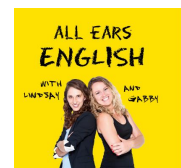
Lindsay: Yep. Or you were stuck in traffic. That could work for that too.

Gabby: Yeah, transportation delay...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...the train was late. You could also say, "Oh, I didn't realize it was already so late." (It) might sound like an excuse.

Lindsay: (Mm), yeah, I don't like this one.



Gabby: But, it's just some way that you can show that, (you know), you, you, you were late and you realize, you can see that you were late. Okay. So it's a personal choice what you want to use. (Um), okay. So another situation where you might want to apologize is when you make a mistake.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: So what's the traditional way to say, (um), "I made a mistake," with, with, with the word "sorry"?

Lindsay: Right. You could say, "Sorry, I messed up," or "Sorry, I made a mistake."

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Great. Okay. And an alternative way – (uh), I think this is interesting because it's not accepting the blame on yourself, but (um), you could say, "There was an error," or "There was a mistake." So "there was" is a neutral phrase. It's not saying "who did it," right. You're not accepting the responsibility or the blame or the fault. You're just saying, "There was a mistake." I think this is useful if maybe you're, (uh), caught up in some mistake that wasn't really entirely your fault, maybe it was someone else's fault. You are just the messenger, perhaps.

Lindsay: Yeah. It could be, (uh), useful too when you're accusing someone of making a mistake...

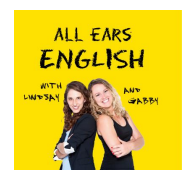
Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...but that's a different episode.

Gabby: Yeah. Yeah. (Uh), no, exactly. Right. There was a mistake. You're not saying it was your mistake. So it's – you can use it, (um), very strategically.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Okay. Our third situation is if you make someone upset, if you offend someone and make them mad, you may want to apologize.



Lindsay: Absolutely. If you wanna (want to) maintain their friendship.

Gabby: (Um), yeah. So traditionally, you might want to say, "Sorry you're upset. It's my fault." Okay. Or you could just say, "Sorry you're upset." All right. Your, your choice there.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: (Um), alternatively, you could avoid using "sorry." You could just say, "I see you're upset," or "I understand you're upset."

Lindsay: (Uh-huh), "How can I make it right?"

Gabby: Great. Yeah, I love, (uh), that you asked, "How can I make it right?"

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: "What can I do?"

Lindsay: Yeah, that's another one. "What can I do?"

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Great. So, (uh), let's just repeat the phrases so we can remember them even better. So for being late: "I'm sorry I'm late."

Lindsay: "I got held up."

Gabby: "I didn't realize it was already so late."

Lindsay: Yeah, I don't like that one. For making a mistake?

Gabby: (Um), "Sorry I made a mistake."

Lindsay: "There was an error."

Gabby: (Uh-hm). And if you make someone upset, (uh), "Sorry you're upset. It's my fault."

Lindsay: Or, "I see you're upset, how can I make it right?"



Gabby: (Uh-huh).

Lindsay: Nice.

Gabby: Or “What can I do?”

Lindsay: Yes.

Gabby: Great. All right. Thanks for listening and we hope you don’t have to apologize too much, but, (uh), when you do, use these phrases.

Lindsay: Thanks guys.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

