

Common Greetings and introducing yourself

What do all conversations have in common? They start with a greeting. It is a polite phrase or sign of welcome that you use at the very first moment of meeting someone. And this is your chance to make a positive first impression.

Everyone likes a friendly greeting. Most likely, you already use the common greetings like “Hello” or “How are you?” However, there are more interesting salutations for different situations. To choose the right one, it is important to understand the level of formality for each conversation.

Greetings are nice things to say when people meet each other. Greetings may be different from culture to culture

Saying hello

Here’s a typical conversation structure.

A: Say “Hi!”, “Hello!” and follow with a phrase like “How are you?” or “How are things?”

B: Answer with a phrase like “Fine” and ask a similar question.

A: Reply

Here’s an example:

A: Hi Suzie. How are you?

B: Fine thanks. And you?

A: Yeah, fine thanks.

“Fine”, “Fine thanks”, “OK”, “OK thanks” all mean the same.

“I’m very well, thanks” is more formal.

“Not bad thanks”, “Can’t complain” are less positive.

In formal situations, you can also say “Good morning”, “Good afternoon” and “Good evening”.

“Good morning” = for the morning up to lunch.

“Good afternoon” = for the afternoon until early evening (i.e. around 6pm)

“Good evening” = for the rest of the evening

“Good night” = when you leave a person at the end of the evening, or when you go to bed.

Introducing yourself

Here are some simple phrases you can use.

“**I’m ...**” (your first name / first name + surname)

“**My name is ...**” (your first name / first name + surname)

In formal situations, give your first name and surname. In informal situations give your first name.

The other person says:

“Pleased to meet you.” or “Nice to meet you.” or “Good to meet you.”

Example conversations

A: Hi, I’m Clare.

B: Pleased to meet you! I’m Dave.

A: Good morning. I’m David Green.

B: Pleased to meet you. I’m John Harris.

A: Good to meet you.

Introducing other people

“**This is...** (name of your friend).”

Now give more information about the person.

“He’s a friend of mine.”

“He’s a friend of my brother.”

“He’s a colleague.”

“She’s my cousin.”

Example conversations

A: “John, this is Paul. He’s a friend of mine.”

B: “Hi Paul. Nice to meet you.”

Paul: “Good to meet you John.”

Deborah: “This is Sally. She’s my cousin.”

B: “Hi Sally. Pleased to meet you.”

Sally: “Pleased to meet you too.”

The best greetings for formal conversations

Sometimes you need to use more formal or business language to keep a professional tone. Here are the most common situations when such greetings are needed:

- job interview
- business meeting
- communicating with top management or CEO
- chatting with a new colleague
- having a conversation with clients
- showing respect to an older person
- speaking with someone you barely know

Use the following salutation examples to start a formal conversation in any of these situations.

Good morning / Good afternoon / Good Evening

These formal ways of greeting people are used at different times of the day. Whether you speak with a regular customer, colleagues or new neighbors, these phrases are effective to start the ball rolling.

The greetings change depending on the time of the day. For example, “Good morning” is generally used from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. whereas “Good afternoon” is appropriate for a period from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. “Good evening” is often used after 6 p.m. or when the sun goes down.

Keep in mind that “Goodnight” is not a salutation. In formal communication, it is used to say goodbye. For example:

It was nice to meet you. Good night!

Good night! See you tomorrow.

To show your respect, you can also add the person’s last name to your greeting words. Usually, native English speakers tend to be more informal even in business communication and use the person’s first name after the salutation:

Good morning, Mr Houston

Good afternoon, Ms. Partridge

Good morning, Tom

Good evening, Kelly.

To transform “Good morning” into a casual greeting, you can simply say “Morning”. Once you have to talk to a group of people, you can say something like:

Good evening, everyone! I hope you are doing well.

How do you do?

If you are looking for a VERY formal phrase for someone you meet for the first time, this one will be the most suitable. While this salutation is quite uncommon today, you can still hear it from older people.

“Hello. How do you do?” is a perfect solution for a business dinner or a formal event, e.g. conference. The right response is “I’m well/fine/great/better than ever, etc.”.

Nice to meet you / Pleased to meet you

This is one of the respectful greeting examples you can use replying to someone you meet for the very first time. For example:

A: Good morning. I’m Alex White from [Company].

B: Nice to meet you, Mr. White.

When people meet, it is a common practice to shake hands. A handshake generally lasts for a few seconds, which gives enough time to say “Pleased to meet you”.

How have you been?

This is a polite way to ask “How are you?” when you have not seen a person for a long time. Ask this question only if you have met someone before.

A: How have you been?

B: I’ve been busy working a lot. How about you?

Informal ways to say “Hello”

When it comes to a conversation with a neighbor or a chit-chat with colleagues during a coffee break, you can opt for these informal greetings:

- a casual meeting with colleagues
- having a conversation with your team
- networking
- job fair
- greeting neighbors

- talking to a friend

Hello / Hi / Hey

Searching for the most popular greetings to use in an informal atmosphere? “Hello” and “Hi” are the sure-fire ways to greet someone in such circumstances. Generally, it is followed by the person’s name:

Hello, Michel. How are you?

Hi, Monica. Nice to see you!

Say “Hey” to people you know well. However, it will also work fine when talking with strangers. In this case, “Hey” isn’t considered as a rude greeting but it may confuse a person.

How are you doing? / How’s it going?

This is a casual way of asking “How are you?” People prefer to ask one of these questions after the main greeting. Usually, it is followed by a brief, positive answer. For instance:

A: Hello, Amanda! How are you doing?

B: Fine, thanks. And you?

A: Hi, Michel. How’s it going?

B: Great! How about you?

Note that these questions can also be used as a part of the main greeting. This can happen when you meet someone but have no time to talk. In this case, there is no need to answer.

Nice to see you / It’s great to see you / Good to see you

When you have not seen a person for a while or meet somebody unexpectedly, use one of these friendly greetings. You can use them at the beginning of a conversation, after the salutation or as a concluding part of a short dialogue:

Hello, Veronica. Nice to see you there.

Well, it was great to see you. Have a good day.

Long-time no see / It's been a while

These common phrases are used to greet an old friend or begin a conversation with a person you haven't seen for a very long time. These expressions are often followed with questions like "How are you?" or "What's new?" And it is a great way to start small talk about what has happened since your last meeting.

A: Hey, John! Long-time no see. How are you?

B: I'm fine, thanks! What's new?

A: Hi, Taya. How's it going?

B: Good thanks.

A: I haven't seen you for ages.

B: Yes, it's been a while.

