

MAKING APPOINTMENTS AND PLANS

Have you had to make an appointment recently? What about arranging plans with your friends or family?

You probably make appointments and plans on a regular basis, but you're probably wondering if you're using the right language and expressions to schedule these meetings.

If so, don't worry - we're going to talk all about it!

Making Appointments and Plans

There are many reasons that we need to make appointments.

Some of the most common appointments are visiting **the doctor or the dentist**, scheduling time for a **haircut or manicure**, and arranging a time for a **service in your home**, such as installing cable TV and internet.

We may also need to **schedule a meeting** with a coworker, a manager, or a professor from university, or make plans to **spend time with friends**.

Making appointments is much easier when you are talking to the person directly and can look at a calendar to decide on a good time to meet.

However, we usually **schedule appointments on the phone** and this type of conversation can be stressful when you're a non-native English speaker - even if you're fluent!

We often use special expressions to make plans and schedule appointments, so you need to be able to **understand and react to what people are saying to you**.

This vocabulary lesson will help you understand and use the questions we often use to make appointments. You will also be able to **agree to requests to make plans or suggest alternative meeting times**.

State Your Request

When making appointments, we often begin the conversation by indicating **what kind of plans we would like to make**. This prepares the other person to go deeper into the conversation.

Making Plans with a Friend

- Let's go to the movies this weekend.
- Let's hang out this weekend.
- I need some help with my homework.
- I'd like to try that new Italian restaurant.

Making a Professional Appointment

- I'd like to make an appointment to see Dr. Smith.
- I'd like to meet about the report I've been working on.
- I would like to meet with you about my essay.

Asking about Availability

After introducing your reason for meeting, you need to **ask about the other person's availability**.

There are many ways to do this. You want to choose the right language based on the person you are talking to and how formal your request needs to be.

After all, you'll be more relaxed with a friend than with the receptionist at the doctor's office!

More Informal

- **Are you free** tonight / next Saturday / on July 15?
- **Are you around** this weekend?
- **Do you have any plans** this weekend / next Wednesday / after class?
- **Do you have any time** this afternoon?
- **Do you have free time** next week?

These questions are casual ways to ask a friend or acquaintance if they are available on a specific day or during a period of time.

When you find out that your friend is free, you can make your request. For example, you can say, "Let's go out to eat!", "Do you want to go the museum on Sunday?", or "Can you help me with my homework?"

More Formal

- **Are you available** on Saturday, June 7 / Monday afternoon?
- **Do you have any availability** next week?
- **Does the doctor have any availability** in the next few days?

When we are talking to coworkers, managers, professors, or doctors, we often use more formal language to show respect for their time.

Asking about availability shows that you understand that they are busy and that you want to find a good time that is convenient for both of you.

Agreeing to Meet

When we agree to meet at a specific time, we often show enthusiasm using one of the following phrases and usually confirm the date and/or time.

- **That works for me.**
- **I can do** Thursday at 5PM.
- **Sounds good!**
- **Sounds great! I'll see you Friday night.**
- **That's perfect for me.**

Finding a Better Time to Meet

If everyone can't meet at the suggested time, we need to **negotiate to find a better time to meet.**

First, we indicate that we are busy at the suggested time. Sometimes we give a simple reason, such as another appointment. Then we suggest a different time to meet or ask another question about the other person's availability.

- **I'm not free** on Sunday, **but how about** Monday?
- **I'm not around** this weekend. **I already have plans.** **Can we try** next week?
- **I'm sorry, I'm not available** at 4PM. **I have another appointment.**
- **Thursday night doesn't work for me.** **I have a previous commitment.**
- **I can't make it** at 3PM. **Let's try to meet** at 4 instead.

If this time works for the other person, we agree to meet and confirm the time again. You may repeat this negotiation a few times to find the best time for the appointment.

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