**1.**[**Formal**](https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/formal-informal-english)**English Greetings and Introductions**

Imagine that you’re on a business trip, and you’re [meeting](https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-meetings) some important clients for the first time.

Or maybe you work in service, for example in a hotel, and you need to talk to guests and customers. Learn more about this topic in our Oxford Online English lesson: [Talking About Your Job](https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talking-about-job%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

In these situations, you’ll want to use more formal language.

**Kasia:** Good morning! You must be Olivier.
**Olivier:** Yes, good morning! I’m sorry, and your name is…?
**K:** My name’s Kasia. Very nice to meet you. Welcome to Madrid!
**O:** Thank you.
**K:** How are you today?
**O:** Very well, thank you, and yourself?
**K:** I’m good, thanks for asking.

This dialogue uses more formal language. Can you see what makes it formal?

First, I started by saying *good morning.* The greetings *good morning, good afternoon* and *good evening* are quite formal and are generally only used in formal situations.

There’s one exception: you can sometimes use *good morning* informally with people you know well.

However, it’s common in this situation to shorten it to just *morning.*

Can you see any other examples of formal language in this dialogue?

There are many. Firstly, I asked Kasia’s name by saying, *and your name is…?* This is more formal than asking *what’s your name?*

After she introduced herself, Kasia said *very nice to meet you.* Saying *nice to meet you* is neutral—neither formal nor informal. However, adding *very* makes it sound much more formal. One word can make a big difference!

I introduced myself with a full sentence: *My name’s Kasia.* When speaking less formally, you’d use a shorter introduction, like *I’m Kasia* or just *Kasia.*

After I introduced myself, I said *Welcome to Madrid.* Does this sound formal or informal to you?

It’s quite formal. Do you know what makes it formal?

Again, it’s a small change which makes a big difference. Saying *welcome* by itself is neutral—it’s not so formal. However, adding *to* and a place makes it sound much more formal.

So, if you say, *Welcome to our office!* that sounds formal, while if you just say, *Welcome!* it doesn’t sound so formal.

It’s common when greeting someone in English to ask some kind of *how are you* question. Do you remember what Kasia asked me?

She asked *How are you today?*

Again, one word makes the difference—do you know which one?

It’s *today.* Asking *how are you* is neutral. Adding *today* makes it sound more formal.

My answer, *Very well, thank you,* also sounds quite formal. If I was speaking more neutrally, I’d say something like, *Well, thanks.* Adding *very* and saying *thank you* instead of *thanks* makes it sound more formal.

Finally, Olivier asked me *how are you* back. Do you remember how he did it?

He asked, *and yourself?* This is more formal than asking *and you?*

I replied and said *thanks for asking.* You wouldn’t say *thanks for asking* in a more informal situation.

So, you’ve seen here how small changes can make a big difference to how formal your language sounds.

Remember that formality doesn’t just depend on the words you use; other things like tone of voice and [body language](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-body-language.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) are also important.

Next, let’s look at how to handle greetings and introductions in a neutral way.

**2.**[**Neutral**](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/neutral)**Greetings and Introductions in English**

‘Neutral’ means neither formal nor informal.

For example, imagine you’re at work, and you meet a new colleague. You’re the same age and you’re in the same department.

This is an example of a neutral situation. You don’t need to be very formal, but you also wouldn’t want to sound too casual.

**O:** Hello!
**K:** Hello! Are you Olivier?
**O:** Yes, that’s right. What’s your name?
**K:** Kasia. Nice to meet you.
**O:** And you.
**K:** How are you?
**O:** Fine, thanks, and you?
**K:** I’m good, thanks.

First, compare this dialogue to the formal one from part one. They follow the same pattern, but this dialogue is much less formal. Can you see the differences?

First, we started with a neutral greeting, *hello.* You can use *hello* in any situation.

Then, I asked Olivier his name with a simple question, *What’s your name?*

*Hello, what’s your name…* pretty easy, right? That’s because neutral language is generally the simplest language.

If you compare the two dialogues, you can see that this neutral dialogue is shorter than the formal dialogue you saw in part one.

This is very common: formal language is often longer and more complex. Neutral language is short and simple.

You can see this throughout the dialogue: we use the basic words and phrases that you probably learned in lesson one of your English classes at school: *nice to meet you; how are you; fine, thanks;* and so on.

Okay, so now you’ve learned about the difference between formal and neutral greetings and introductions.

What about informal greetings and introductions?

**3. Informal Greetings and Introductions in English**

Informal greetings and introductions are useful if you know someone well, or you’re meeting someone in a casual situation.

For example, if you’re hanging out with some friends, and your friends introduce you to one of their friends, you would probably use more informal language.

Let’s see how this works:

**O:** Hi!
**K:** Hey! Olivier?
**O:** Yeah. Your name?
**K:** Kasia. Good to meet you.
**O:** You too.
**K:** How you doing?
**O:** Yeah, not bad. You?
**K:** Pretty good!

So, what do you notice here?

The first thing you can see is that the dialogue is even shorter than the neutral dialogue you saw in part two.

We both used a lot of short questions and sentences. For example:

* *Olivier?*
* *Your name?*
* *How you doing?*
* *You?*

These are fine in informal speech, and native speakers often shorten sentences and questions like this. However, you wouldn’t do this in a more formal situation.

There are also several phrases which you wouldn’t use in a more formal setting, such as:

* *Hi/Hey*
* *Yeah*
* *Not bad*
* *Pretty good*

These are all good words and phrases to use in an informal situation.

At this point, you could go back and review the three dialogues. Each dialogue has exactly the same structure—only the language is different.

See how you can use different words and phrases to greet people and introduce yourself with different levels of formality.

Okay? Let’s look at one more thing.

When you’re making introductions, you might also need to introduce another person.

**4. Introducing Someone Else in English**

Let’s see how you can do that in formal, neutral, or informal ways.

Here’s a very formal introduction.

**O:** Let me introduce my colleague, Kasia.

Here’s another very formal way to introduce someone:

**K:** May I introduce my colleague, Olivier?

What about neutral introductions?

**O:** This is Kasia.

Here’s another way to make in introduction using neutral language.

**K:** Have you met Olivier?

Finally, what about informal introductions?

In informal situations, you might not introduce people at all. You might just let them introduce themselves, or you might prompt them to introduce themselves by asking something like:

* *Have you guys met?*
* *Do you two know each other?*

If you want to make an informal introduction, the most common way is just to say the two people’s names, then say them again in reverse.

For example, imagine you’re introducing two people called John and Emma to each other. You could say:

* *John, Emma. Emma, John.*

So now, you should understand how to greet people and introduce yourself or someone else in different situations.