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IPA(key): /ɛksˈkjuːz mi/, /ɪksˈkjuːz mi/ Audio (Southern England): excuse me (Canada, US) Said as a request to repeat information. (Canada, US) Said, as though as a request to repeat information, in order to indicate disbelief or indignation. It was so hot I took off my clothes and sat by the window to cool off.Excuse me? Said as a request for an individual's attention. Said as a request to pass somebody. Excuse me: can I get through please? Sorry, as an apology. (formal) Said as an expression of unexpected or early farewell. Oh, excuse me, I hadn't realized how late it was. I need to get home and make dinner. excuse me (plural excuse mes) An old-fashioned type of dance where partners are constantly changed. pardon me your attention please "Excuse me" is a polite expression used to request attention, apologize for an interruption, or ask for permission in a variety of situations. Some examples of situations where "excuse me" may be used include: Interrupting a conversation to ask for directions or information. Asking someone to move out of the way in a crowded place. Apologizing for bumping into someone. Asking someone to repeat what they said. Interrupting a meeting or presentation to ask a question. Apologizing for being late to an appointment or event. Asking for permission to speak or share an idea. Requesting someone's attention, like in a noisy environment or on the phone Asking for help or assistance in a formal or informal setting Gaining permission to leave a meeting or an event. It's important to note that "excuse me" is a polite expression and its usage depends on the context, the setting, the tone of voice, the relationship with the person and the nonverbal cues. It can be used in a more formal or in a more casual way, depending on the situation. Related 50+ Plain-Language Substitutions for Wordy Phrases "Pardon me" "I beg your pardon" "May I trouble you for a moment?" "I hope you'll excuse my interruption" "Please excuse the intrusion" "I'm sorry for any inconvenience" "I hope you don't mind my asking" "I hope you'll forgive me for interrupting" "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I had a question" "If you'll excuse me for a moment" "I apologize for the interruption" "With your permission" "I humbly request your attention" These expressions are considered as more polite and formal way to say "excuse me", it's appropriate to use them in situations like business meetings, formal gatherings or when talking with someone of higher authority or social status. It's important to use proper grammar and a respectful tone of voice when using these phrases, and be ready to apologize if your interruptions cause any inconvenience. "Pardon me, but I couldn't help but notice that you are having trouble with your computer, May I offer my assistance?" "I beg your pardon, but I couldn't help but overhear your conversation and I think I can help with that issue." "I hope you'll excuse the interruption, but I was wondering if I could trouble you for a moment to ask for your advice on this matter." "Pardon me for interrupting, but I was wondering if you could spare a moment to help me clarify something." "I apologize for the interruption, but I beg your pardon to inquire about something" "May I trouble you for a moment, I have a question about the last meeting that I believe you could help me with" "I beg your pardon, would you mind if I ask you something?" "I hope you'll excuse me for a moment, but I have to inquire about something" Related 50+ Different Ways to Say I'm Going to Sleep in English These examples shows how to use "pardon me," "I beg your pardon," "may I trouble you for a moment?" in different situations with different kind of requests, in all of them, you can see the polite tone, the apology and the explanation of the interruption. Remember that these expressions are considered as more polite and formal way to say "excuse me", it's appropriate to use them in situations like business meetings, formal gatherings or when talking with someone of higher authority or social status. "Sorry to interrupt!" "Sorry to bother you" "Sorry to be a pain" "Sorry to interrupt, but" "Can I talk to you for a sec?" "Can I ask you something?" "Can I ask you a quick question?" "Do you have a sec?" "Do you mind if I ask you something?" "Mind if I ask you something?" "Can I speak to you for a moment?" "You got a minute?" "Hey, do you have a moment?" "Can I have your attention for a sec?" These expressions are considered as more casual and informal ways to say "excuse me", it's appropriate to use them in situations with friends, family, or with people you are comfortable with. They are usually used in casual conversations, informal gatherings, and in everyday life scenarios. They tend to sound less formal and a bit more relaxed, but they still convey politeness and ask permission. How to use them correctly Here are some examples of how you can use informal ways to say "excuse me" in English: Text message or instant message: "Excuse me, can I ask you something?" In-person, casual setting: "Sorry to interrupt, but can I ask you something?" Phone call or video call: "Hey, you got a sec? I need your help with something." Social media: "Excuse me, mind if I ask you something?" In-person at a casual party: "Sorry to be a pain, Can I talk to you for a sec?" Related 35 Popular Ways to Say I'm Hungry and I'm Tired When using informal expressions it's important to pay attention to the context and your relationship with the person you are addressing, also pay attention to their body language and nonverbal cues. Make sure to use a relaxed and friendly tone, but also be respectful, and always be prepared to apologize if your interruption causes any inconvenience. Remember to use these expressions appropriately, and not in formal situations where more formal expressions would be more appropriate. Idiomatic ways to say "excuse me" Here are some idiomatic ways to say "excuse me" in English: "Do you have a moment?" "If you don't mind" "Can I have a word with you?" "Can I have a quick chat?" "Can I ask you something personal?" "Can I pick your brain for a minute?" "Mind if I ask you something off topic?" "Can I pick your brain on something?" "Can I ask you something sensitive?" "Can I have a private word with you?" These idiomatic ways to say "excuse me" often convey a polite and respectful request for attention or for permission to speak. They can be used in various situations, formal or informal, depending on the context and the tone. They tend to sound friendly, approachable and are often used in everyday conversations. They are considered less formal than the previous examples, but they still convey the politeness and respect. There's no doubt that we all use the phrase "excuse me" in our day-to-day communication. It's one of the most widely used English phrases, so it's important to learn how to use it properly both formally and casually. It's also essential to know other synonyms to this popular phrase or rather learn other ways to say "excuse me". So without further ado, let's jump straight in. What Does "Excuse Me" Mean? The phrase "excuse me" has various meanings and can be used in various situations. It can be used as a polite way of interjecting someone when in a conversation, starting a conversation, capturing someone's attention, asking to leave, or expressing regret. PinExcuse Me - Created by 7ESL For example, this popular English phrase can be used to politely attract someone's attention, especially when starting a conversation. You can also use this phrase as a polite way of asking someone to move out of the way for you to pass. Another popular way to use "excuse me" is when you're apologizing for something you've done unintentionally or accidentally and could be annoying to other people such as sneezing or coughing. However, the most common way to use "excuse me" is when you're politely and respectfully asking someone to repeat something they've said because you didn't hear it. Other Ways to Say "Excuse Me" Given the different meanings of this popular phrase, there are both formal and informal ways of using it. Formal Ways of Saying "Excuse Me" Here are other formal ways of saying "excuse me": This can be used when you're politely asking someone to repeat what he's just said. Example: I beg your pardon, kindly be louder. This can be used when politely and respectfully asking to disagree with a given point. Example: Forgive me, I think this is not the right way of doing it. This is a polite way to excuse an action that you've done intentionally or accidentally such as sneezing or coughing. Example: My apologies, I didn't mean to be late. Informal Ways to Say "Excuse Me" This is an informal way of taking responsibility for doing something bad or making a mistake. Example: My bad, I was wrong on this one. This can be used to catch someone's attention or interrupt them. Example: Sorry to bother you; is this the right way to Manhattan? This is an informal but polite way of interrupting someone. Example: Sorry to jump in, but I've been trying to book an appointment with you for the last three weeks. Slang Ways to Say "Excuse Me" This is a very casual way of interrupting someone. Example: I don't mean to barge in, but let me join in on your conversation. This is a very informal way of giving an opinion or joining a conversation on something that doesn't concern you. Example: I'm sorry I have to butt in, but I do not think this is the right direction to take. Alternatives to Say "Excuse Me" Mea culpa I'm sorry Scuzzie Mama My mistake Sorry Oops Pardon me Whoops I beg your forgiveness Do you mind? Accept my apologies Pardon? Sorry about that Oh Be sorry for Be forgiven Sorry to inform I sincerely apologize As you can see, there are various ways to say "excuse me" without actually using the phrase. Your English won't sound too boring if you try these phrases instead of using the widely used "excuse me". Related Links: From Longman Dictionary of Contemporary Englishexcuse mespoken a) REPEATUsed when you want to get someone's attention politely, especially when you want to ask a question. Excuse me, can you tell me the way to the museum please? b) SORRY/APOLOGIZEUsed to say that you are sorry for doing something rude or embarrassing. Oh, excuse me. I didn't know anyone was here. c) LET/ALLOWUsed to ask someone politely to move so that you can walk past. Excuse me, could I just squeeze past? d) LEAVE A PLACUsed to politely tell someone that you are leaving a place. Excuse me a moment. I'll be right back. e) DISAGREUsed when you disagree with someone but want to be polite about it. SYN I'm sorry. Excuse me, but I don't think that's what he meant at all. f) American EnglishSORRY/APOLOGIZE used to show that you disagree with someone or are very surprised or upset by what they have just said. "You're going to pay, right?" "Excuse me?" g) especially American EnglishREPEAT used to ask someone to repeat something that they have just said. SYN pardon me. "What time is it?" "Excuse me?" "I asked you what time it is." → excuseExamples from the Corpusexcuse me. Answer, all I know is Sam and Diane were there, was there, excuse me. • Oh, excuse me. Did I mispronounce your name? • Excuse me for a minute. I'll be right back. • Oh excuse me, I am. • Oh, excuse me. I didn't know you were standing in line. • Excuse me - I didn't realize there was anyone in here. • If you will excuse me I must get back to lurking. • Excuse me. I need to get through. • Oh, excuse me, is that your bag I just stood on? • Excuse me. Is this the right bus to the airport? • Well, excuse me, M'Lud, there are other explanations. WordReference Random House Learner's Dictionary of American English © 2025excuse /v. ik'skjuːz/; n. -'skjuːz/USA pronunciation v., -cused, -cus'ing, n. v. [+ ~ object] to pardon or forgive; overlook:Please excuse my child's rude behavior. to offer an apology for:She excused her son's absence by saying that he was ill. to release from an obligation, responsibility, or duty: to be excused from jury duty. n. [countable] an instance or act of excusing: I don't want to hear any more of your excuses. a ground or reason for excusing or being excused: Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Idioms excuse me: (used as a polite way to interrupt or disturb someone):Excuse me, but may I talk to you for a moment? excuse, forgive, pardon imply being lenient or giving up the wish to punish. excuse means to overlook some (usually) slight offense: I can excuse her rudeness because I don't think she meant it. forgive is applied to more serious offenses; the person who is wronged not only overlooks the offense but keeps no ill feelings against the offender: to forgive and forget. pardon often applies to an act of leniency or mercy by an official or superior: The governor pardoned the young offender. WordReference Random House Unabridged Dictionary of American English © 2025excuse (v ik skjuːz, ɪk skjuːs) USA pronunciation v., -cused, -cus'ing, n. vt. to regard or judge with forgiveness or indulgence; pardon or forgive; overlook (a fault, error, etc.)Excuse his bad manners. to offer an apology for; seek to remove the blame of:He excused his absence by saying that he was ill. to serve as an apology or justification for; justify:Ignorance of the law excuses no one. to release from an obligation or duty; to be excused from jury duty. to seek or obtain exemption or release for (oneself):to excuse oneself from a meeting. to refrain from exacting; remit; dispense with:to excuse a debt. to allow (someone) to leave:If you'll excuse me, I have to make a telephone call. Idioms Excuse me, (used as a polite expression, as when addressing a stranger, when interrupting or disagreeing with someone, or to request repetition of what has just been said). n. an explanation offered as a reason for being excused; a plea offered in extenuation of a fault or for release from an obligation, promise, etc.:His excuse for being late was unacceptable. a ground or reason for excusing or being excused:Ignorance is no excuse. the act of excusing someone or something, a pretext or subterfuge:He uses his poor health as an excuse for evading all responsibility. an inferior or inadequate specimen of something specified:That coward is barely an excuse for a man. Her latest effort is a poor excuse for a novel. Old French, derivative of excuser; modern spelling, spelled with ex- on the model of ex-1 Latin excūsāre to put outside, exonerate, equivalent. to ex- ex-1 + -cūsāre, derivative of causa cause; (noun, nominal) Middle English excuse Old French excuser (verb, verbal) Middle English excusen 1175-1225 ex+cus+a+ble, adj. ex+cus+a+ble+ness, n. ex+cus+a+bly, adv. ex+cus'al, n. ex+cuse'less, adj. ex+cuser, n. ex+cus'ingly, adv. ex+cus'ive, adj. ex+cus'ive'ly, adv. 1. Excuse, forgive, pardon imply being lenient or giving up the wish to punish. Excuse means to overlook some (usually) slight offense:to excuse bad manners.Forgive is applied to excusing more serious offenses:to forgive and forget.Pardon usually applies to a specific act of leniency or mercy by an official or superior:The governor was asked to pardon the condemned criminal. 3. extenuate, palliate. 4. free. 9. justification. Excuse, apology both imply an explanation of some failure or failing. Excuse implies a desire to avoid punishment or rebuke. Apology usually implies acknowledgment that one has been in the wrong. 12. pretense, evasion, makeshift. Collins Concise English Dictionary © HarperCollins Publishers: excuse vb /ɪkˈskjuːz/ (transitive) to pardon or forgive; he always excuses her tardiness to seek pardon or exemption for (a person, esp oneself): to excuse oneself for one's mistakes to make allowances for; judge leniently; to excuse someone's ignorance to serve as an apology or explanation for; vindicate or justify; her age excuses her behaviour to exempt from a task, obligation, etc. you are excused making breakfast to dismiss or allow to leave: he asked them to excuse him to seek permission for (someone, esp oneself) to leave: she excused herself and leftbe excused = euphemistic to be permitted to go to the lavatoryexcuse me! = an expression used to catch someone's attention or to apologize for an interruption, disagreement, or social indiscretion n /ɪkˈskjuːz/ an explanation offered in defence of some fault or offensive behaviour or as a reason for not fulfilling an obligation, etc: he gave no excuse for his rudeness informal an inferior example of something specified; makeshift; substitute: a poor excuse for a hotel the act of excusingEtymology: 13th Century; from Latin excūsāre, from ex-1 + -cūsāre, from causa cause, accusationex+cusable adj excusableness n excusably adv Explore various uses of 'Excuse me' and master its comfortable usage in conversational English. Tagged With: Real Life English YouTube blocked? Click here to see the video. Video Transcript: In this American English pronunciation video, we're going to go over how to pronounce and use the phrase 'excuse me'. The phrase 'excuse me' can be used in different situations to mean different things. But first, let's talk about the pronunciation of the word 'excuse'. I'm going to say it two different ways. Can you hear the difference? Excuse, excuse. Excuse, excuse. Excuse, excuse. It's a subtle difference, and it's in the ending sound. If the ending sound is voiced, in this case, a Z sound, excuse, then it's a verb. If it's unvoiced, excuse, then it's a noun. It's a verb in the phrase 'excuse me'. So, for the most part, we will be using a Z sound. The different ways to use this phrase. First, you can use it to get someone's attention. >> Excuse me, where's the bathroom?>> Around the corner. >> Excuse me, do you have the time?>> Ah, it's about 9:15.>> Thank you sir.>> You're welcome. Because we're using it to get someone's attention, excuse me, it has to be very clear and a little bit louder. So, we begin with the H as in HIT vowel. Ih, ih, ih, a little jaw drop. Ex-, ex-, ex-. To make the K, the back part of the tongue reaches up and touches the soft palate. Ex-, kk, kk, ks, ks. Do you see how my jaw closes? That's because the teeth have to be together to make the S. The tongue tip is down, pressing here, to put a little tension in the tongue, behind the bottom front teeth. Ex-, ex-. The back part of the tongue reaches up and touches the soft palate, kk, kk, da-DA-da, excuse me. It has the EV as in FEW diphthong. So, the tongue tip is down, pressing behind the bottom front teeth. For the first half of the diphthong, the front part of the tongue is reaching towards the roof of the mouth, yy, yy, to make that Y sound. Excu-, yy, yy, yy. Then we have the OO vowel, excu-, so the lips will round. Excuse me, -e, -e, -se, -se. Then we have the Z sound, the M consonant, and the EE vowel. So, so make the Z sound, the tongue is here, touching the back of the bottom front teeth, and the teeth are closed, zz, zz. It's just like the S except I'm vibrating the vocal cords with my voice, zz, ZZ-mm. Then we just close the lips to go into the M sound. Excuse me, -e, And then the EE as in SHE vowel. Lips will part, jaw won't drop much because the tongue is lifting pretty high to the roof of the mouth. The tongue tip is down, but the front part lifts. Excuse me, excuse me. Let's watch one more time. >> Excuse me, where's the bathroom?>> Around the corner. >> Excuse me, do you have the time?>> Ah, it's about 9:15.>> Thank you sir.>> You're welcome. We also use this phrase to get around somebody, or if we accidentally bump into somebody in a crowd. Now here, we don't really need to get someone's attention, so we might really mutter it, excuse me, 'scuse me, 'scuse me, dropping the first syllable altogether. I've noticed sometimes I even almost just whisper it if I accidentally bump into somebody, or if I need to slide between two people. 'scuse me [ʃɪ]. So this is very different from the first case where we needed to get someone's attention, and we had to say it really clearly. Excuse me, 'scuse me, 'scuse me. >> 'Scuse me, 'scuse me. >> 'Scuse me, 'scuse me. >> 'Scuse me, 'scuse me, thank you. 'Scuse me. We can also use this phrase if we don't understand, we need somebody to repeat what they've said. Excuse me? Excuse me? Here again I'm dropping the first syllable. You don't have to. Excuse me? But it doesn't have to be so clearly pronounced because we're not getting someone's attention. We don't have to get the focus here, we already have the focus. Excuse me, excuse me? Notice also, the voice is going up in pitch. That means it's a question. That's the signal to the person that I didn't understand. Excuse me? >> So I don't know what I'm going to get.>> Excuse me?>> I don't know what I'm going to get.>> Ah, >> How about three?>> Excuse me?>> How about three?>> Yeah, three works.>> Okay, >> Excuse me? [ʃɪ] It's just like saying 'What did you say?', only it's a little faster. Excuse me, excuse me? This phrase can also be used sarcastically, as a response to somebody overreacting to something. For example, 'Rachel, you always make a mess in the kitchen.' 'Excuse me.' Now, when we use it sarcastically like that, we tend to really stretch out the stressed syllable, excuse, excuse. Well excuse me. Of course, it's a little bit rude, you would be using this, maybe, in an argument with somebody. >> Dad, I can't believe you ate the last cookie!>> Well excuse me! So there you go, four different ways to use and pronounce the phrase excuse me. So the pronunciation matters. Are we trying to get somebody's attention? Then we need to be really clear. Are we signaling that we don't understand? Then we need to phrase it as a question with the pitch going up. Excuse me? Instead of, excuse me. >> [burp] Excuse me!>> Hi.>> Hi. I hope this video has helped you figure out how and when to use this phrase. Don't forget to like and share this video! That's it, and thanks so much for using Rachel's English. >> Did you touch your mic? You can't touch it.>> Well excuse me!! Video: Tagged in: Real Life EnglishSee all videos Get the Top 3 Ways to Master the American Accent course absolutely free. Sign up today to unlock your American voice.