

Making the right noises

Sounds and their meanings

Read the dialogue.

A client is trying to deal with a bank. Her company wants a loan. What is the bank director's reaction?

CLIENT My company needs forty million dollars for the new project.

BANK DIRECTOR OK.

CLIENT We're going to build a new office in Singapore.

BANK DIRECTOR Right.

CLIENT We can pay back the money – there's no problem with that.

BANK DIRECTOR OK.

CLIENT I can have my accountants call you next week.

BANK DIRECTOR Yep.

CLIENT So, we have a deal!

BANK DIRECTOR Yes ... no! I mean I need some time. I'll get back to you.

Sounds and their meanings

Read the dialogue. This time the bank director's reactions are different.

CLIENT My company needs forty million dollars for the new project.

BANK DIRECTOR Uh-huh.

CLIENT We're going to build a new office in Singapore.

BANK DIRECTOR Uh-huh.

CLIENT We can pay back the money – there's no problem with that.

BANK DIRECTOR Uh-huh.

CLIENT I can have my accountants call you next week.

BANK DIRECTOR Uh-huh.

CLIENT So, we have a deal?

BANK DIRECTOR I need some time. I'll get back to you.

Making the right noises

- Match the sounds with the meanings below:
- a. Isn't it cute (USA)/sweet (UK)?
- b. Now I understand!
- c. Give me time to think.
- d. I'm listening.
- e. Excuse me? (USA)/Pardon? (UK)
-
- What sounds do you use to express these meanings in your language?

Making the right noises

1

TEACHER What's the difference between a hexagon and an octagon?

STUDENT Um ... a hexagon and an octagon ...
um ...

TEACHER Go on.

STUDENT Er ... a hexagon has six sides, and an octagon has ... er ... eight sides.

2

WOMAN What's the time?

MAN Eh?

WOMAN What's the time?

MAN The time! It's six o'clock.

3

SUE Hello, Phil. It's Sue.

PHIL Hi, Sue.

SUE I was just on the phone to Josh King.

PHIL Uh-huh.

SUE He's coming to London on Thursday ...

PHIL Mm.

SUE ... and I'm going to bring him to the meeting
on Friday...

PHIL Uh-huh.

SUE I hope we'll see you there.

PHIL Yeah. Look forward to it. Bye, Sue.

Making the right noises

4

MOTHER Katie said her first word today.

FATHER Really? What was it?

MOTHER She said 'Daddy'.

FATHER Aaah!

5

MAN This laser printer isn't working.

SUPERVISOR Let me see.

MAN I don't understand it.

SUPERVISOR It's simple. There isn't any paper.

MAN Ah! Sorry.

Interjections are words which express emotions

gosh phew wow ouch hey yuk oops ahem

- a. When you are surprised or impressed by something
- b. When you are really surprised or impressed by something
- c. When the weather is hot, or if you have a narrow escape from danger
- d. When you feel pain
- e. When you find something disgusting
- f. When you want to get someone's attention, politely
- g. When you want to get someone's attention, urgently
- h. When you make a mistake, or drop something

Complete the sentences with the correct interjection

- a. '_____, that is utterly amazing.'
- b. '_____, that was close. I nearly fell into the river then
- c. '_____, that tastes awful
- d. '_____, that hurt!'
- e. '_____, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to drop it
- f. '_____, are you listening?'
- g. '_____, watch out!
- h. '_____, did he really? I am surprised'