

## Reading: Sorry!

### 1 Discuss these questions.

- 1 Think of some different situations where people might say 'sorry'.
- 2 Would you say 'sorry' to someone if you accidentally bumped into them in the street? How about if they bumped into you?

### 2 Read the article and find out about English customs. Do English people say 'sorry' in the same way as you?

## Sorry, I'm English.



'Sorry' is a very common word in British English. In fact people probably apologize more in England than anywhere else on Earth. The anthropologist\* Kate Fox did some experiments to find out just how automatically English people say 'sorry'. She bumped into passersby in busy, crowded places like train stations and shopping centres and counted how many people apologized. Even though the 'accident' was clearly her fault, about 80 per cent of English people said 'sorry'. Then she tried the same experiment on people from the USA, France, Belgium, Poland, the Lebanon, Scandinavia, Italy, Russia, Spain, Japan and Australia. Most people said 'Careful' or 'Watch out' and many were very nice about it and held out a hand to help her. Only people from Japan came close to saying 'sorry' so often. But she found it difficult to experiment on Japanese people because they were very good at jumping out of the way.

*anthropologist:* someone who studies people and their origins, customs and beliefs

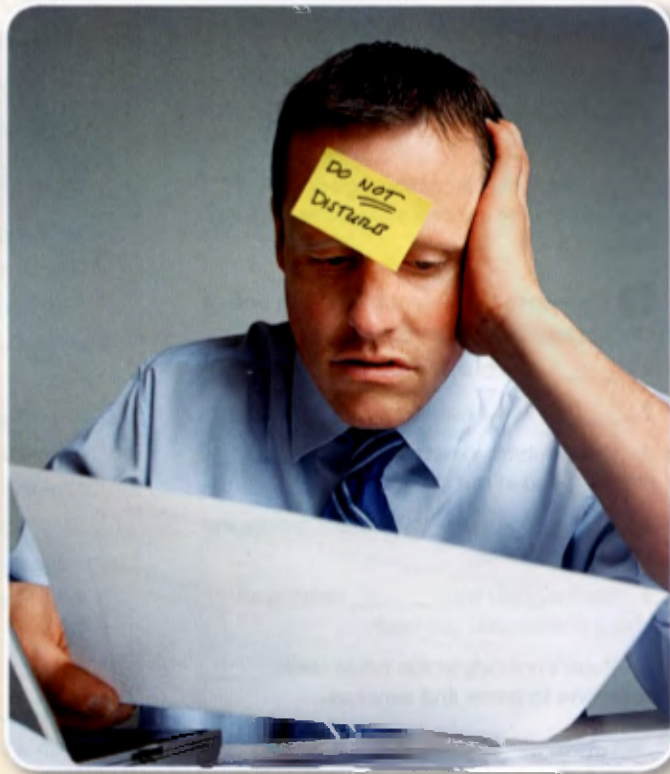
### 3 Answer these questions.

- 1 Who did this experiment and what's her job?
- 2 Who caused the accidents: the passersby or Kate?
- 3 Do Americans say 'sorry' as often as English people?
- 4 Why was it difficult for Kate to experiment in Japan?
- 5 Why do you think English people say 'sorry' so much?

## Listening: Sorry to interrupt

### 4 Answer these questions.

- 1 Do people ever interrupt you when you're working? Who interrupts you and what for?
- 2 What do you do when you don't want to be disturbed? Do you ever take your phone off the hook?



### 5 1.5 Here's one half of a telephone conversation. What do you think the other person is saying? Complete the conversation. Then listen and find out if you are right.

A: Jean Pierre Moreau.

B: 1 \_\_\_\_\_

A: Hi, Rosemary, Look, can I call you back?

B: 2 \_\_\_\_\_

A: Yes, I'm in the middle of something.

B: 3 \_\_\_\_\_

A: Thanks. Bye.

### 6 Look at these phrases. Then answer the questions.

- a Is this a good time to call?
- b Look, I'm really busy right now.
- c Have you got a minute?
- d I'm sorry, but I'm in a meeting.
- e Can I call you back?
- f Are you busy?
- g Is it important?
- h Sorry, but it's not a good time.

Which phrases can you use to ...

- 1 stop people interrupting you?
- 2 check it's OK to interrupt people?