

How to turn down an invitation

Learn how to say 'no' to a formal invitation.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the task. You can read the transcript at any time.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. offended
2. a prior engagement
3. an appointment
4. RSVP
5. formal
6. a vet

Definitions

- a. a plan made before you received the invitation
- b. a doctor for animals
- c. (used at the end of letters to mean 'please reply')
- d. upset and angry
- e. a formal arrangement to meet someone
- f. serious and correct

Task 1

Put the words and phrases in order to make sentences.

1. no! Oh
2. is What it?
3. Yeah, worse! gets it exactly. And
4. you've a dentist's them Tell appointment. got
5. It's tell them the truth. have to going to no use. I'm just
6. engagement. unable because a prior to attend I'm I have

Discussion

Can you think of any other polite excuses for not going to a party?

Transcript

Man: Oh no!

Woman: What is it?

Man: 'Josh and Henrietta would like to have the pleasure of your company at a drinks party next Saturday evening ...'

Woman: Oh no, Josh and Henrietta ... they're not that couple who ...?

Man: Yeah, exactly! And it gets worse!

Woman: How?

Man: 'Formal dress'.

Woman: Argh ... It means you've got to wear a suit.

Man: At the bottom it says 'RSVP'. What does it mean?

Woman: You've got to reply.

Man: But I don't want to go, so what can I say?

Woman: Tell them you've got a dentist's appointment.

Man: Josh is my dentist!

Woman: Tell them it's your grandmother's 100th birthday party.

Man: But they know my granny died ages ago.

Woman: Tell them your dog's sick and you've got to take him to see the vet.

Man: It's no use. I'm just going to have to tell them the truth.

Woman: The truth? 'I'm not coming to your birthday party because I think you're boring and stupid?'

Man: Maybe not, then.

Woman: Tell them this: 'I'm unable to attend because I have a prior engagement.'

Man: 'Prior engagement'?! And ... they won't be offended?

Woman: Absolutely not.

Man: Perfect!

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. e
4. c
5. f
6. b

Task 1

1. Oh no!
2. What is it?
3. Yeah, exactly. And it gets worse!
4. Tell them you've got a dentist's appointment.
5. It's no use. I'm just going to have to tell them the truth.
6. I'm unable to attend because I have a prior engagement.