



Saying No and Disagreeing in Foreign Languages

KS2 MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Ages 9-12 ⌚ 3 min read

Why We Need to Say No

When you're learning a foreign language, one of the most useful things you can say is 'no' or 'I don't like that'. Whether you're speaking **French, Spanish, German**, or any other language, being able to disagree politely is a super important skill. It helps you communicate what you really think and makes conversations feel more natural and honest.

Simple Ways to Disagree

The easiest way to disagree in most languages is to say a word that means 'no'. In French, it's '**non**'. In Spanish, it's '**no**'. In German, it's '**nein**'. These single words can stop a conversation quickly, but sometimes you want to say more.

Think of it like a traffic light: 'non' or 'no' is like a red light—it stops things right away. But sometimes you need to explain why you're stopping!

Expressing Dislike

To say you don't like something, different languages use different patterns. In Spanish, you might say '**No me gusta**', which literally means '**It is not pleasing to me**'. In French, you say '**Je n'aime pas**', meaning '**I don't like**'. In German, it's '**Ich mag das nicht**', which means '**I don't like that**'. Notice how these are full sentences, not just one word.

Saying Something Isn't True

When you want to say something isn't true or correct, you use a **negative** structure. In most European languages, you need to add a **negative word** near the verb (the action word). For example, in French: '**Je ne suis pas d'accord**' means '**I don't agree**'. The '**ne**' and '**pas**' work together to make it negative.

Think of it like brackets around a sentence: the negative words wrap around the verb to flip its meaning from positive to negative, like switching a light switch from on to off.

Polite Disagreement

In all languages, it's important to disagree respectfully. You can soften your **'no'** by adding polite words. Saying **'Non, merci'** (No, thank you) in French is kinder than just **'Non'**. Adding **'s'il vous plaît'** (please) or **'señor'** (sir) in Spanish shows respect and helps people understand you're not being rude.

Practice Makes Perfect

The best way to learn these negative phrases is to **practise them regularly**. Try saying them out loud, write them down, and use them in sentences. Soon, disagreeing politely in a foreign language will feel just as natural as doing it in English!