

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei: Hello I'm Feifei and welcome to another episode of 6 Minute English.

Neil: Hi, I'm Neil.

Feifei: Oh, here you are Neil, I was just about to start without you.

Neil: No need, no need, I'm never late for anything, you know that! Punctuality is my middle name.

Feifei: Punctuality meaning: being on time for things.

Neil: Yes, punctuality means not being late. It's very important in Western working culture. Are you a punctual person Feifei?

Feifei: I'm always punctual in my working life, but in my personal life...

Neil: OK, I don't want to know. That's interesting Feifei because the psychiatrist Dr Keith Ablow, says the three most common causes for lateness are: firstly, worrying about the appointment, secondly, a need to show power or superiority, and the third reason for people being late is that they have a need to know they are loved. So Feifei, which one is you? Sounds like you are a mixture of all of them...

Feifei: No comment - let's move on.

Neil: Let's hear what some of our friends and colleagues have to say about punctuality.

I think living in London, you find the most common reason for being late is transport because it's not very reliable - whenever you are rushing somewhere, you think you are OK with time, but suddenly your train is delayed: if you have to change to another train, you might miss that train and it's going to make you be even later than you intended to be.

Feifei: Well that's very interesting. Generally speaking, if you're going to be late for something, it's polite to call and let people know.

Neil: It is. And here's a clip of someone doing just that.

Joe: *Joe Smith speaking.*

Sarah: *Hi Joe, it's Sarah. I'm on my way to the meeting but I'm afraid the traffic's terrible. I'm sorry but I think I'm going to be late.*

Joe: *OK, don't worry. What time do you think you'll get there?*

Sarah: *To be honest, it's hard to say. I've been here for 30 minutes and the traffic is at a standstill. I think I'll be about 15 minutes late.*

Joe: *OK, thanks for letting me know. If you're going to be any later, call me again.*

Sarah: *OK, will do. Sorry again. See you soon.*

Neil: So, that was Sarah calling to say she's going to be late and if I'm not mistaken -

Neil / FF: It's Business Betty!!

BB: Hello! I'm not late am I?

Neil: Not at all, and I wouldn't care if you were.

BB: Thank you Neil.

Feifei: You're just in time to tell us how to say you're going to be late for something.

BB: Oh that's good, I hate being late for things. Right - so to business. Now, in the English speaking world, if you are going to be late for an appointment, you should let people know. There are three things you need to do here. First, apologise. Second, explain why you're late. And third, say when you think you'll arrive. So, first: apologise. Here's what Sarah said:

Sarah: *I'm sorry but I think I'm going to be late.*

BB: "I'm sorry but I think I'm going to be late" - nice and simple. She apologised again at the end of the conversation.

Sarah: *Sorry again.*

BB: Second, explain why you're late. Sarah said:

Sarah: *I'm on my way to the meeting but I'm afraid the traffic's terrible. I've been here for 30 minutes and the traffic is at a standstill.*

BB: Let's hear that again.

Sarah: *I'm on my way to the meeting but I'm afraid the traffic's terrible. I've been here for 30 minutes and the traffic is at a standstill.*

BB: And third, say when you think you'll arrive.

Sarah: *I think I'll be about 15 minutes late.*

BB: And again:

Sarah: *I think I'll be about 15 minutes late.*

BB: And then, stop worrying! When you finally get to your meeting, don't go rushing straight in. Take a couple of minutes first, to calm down and freshen up, so that you appear professional, not panicky. A quick apology when you arrive - "Sorry I'm late everyone" and then it's down to business. So, I hope that's helpful...

Neil: Very very helpful!

Feifei: Yes, thanks Betty!

BB: Good, because I have to go now, I've got a meeting and I don't want to be late. Bye!

Neil / FF: Bye

Neil: She's very good...

Feifei: Shall we listen to the clip again?

Neil: I think we should...

Joe: *Joe Smith speaking.*

Sarah: *Hi Joe, it's Sarah. I'm on my way to the meeting but I'm afraid the traffic's terrible. I'm sorry but I think I'm going to be late.*

Joe: *OK, don't worry. What time do you think you'll get there?*

Sarah: *To be honest, it's hard to say. I've been here for 30 minutes and the traffic is at a standstill. I think I'll be about 15 minutes late.*

Joe: *OK, thanks for letting me know. If you're going to be any later call me again.*

Sarah: *OK, will do. Sorry again. See you soon.*

Feifei: So that's what to do if you're running late.

Neil: Yes, so next time Feifei, can you set off a bit earlier? I don't want to hang around.

Feifei: Yes set off earlier, you Neil.

Neil: Well, you don't want to talk about your personal life, do you? So I won't mention that thing.

Feifei: You were the one that was late for the programme.

Neil: Yes, but generally speaking, it's you, isn't it? Anyway, make sure you join us for the next episode of 6 Minute English.

Feifei: And DON'T be late! Bye!

Punctuality: Useful phrases

Apologising:	I'm sorry but I think I'm going to be late.
	Sorry again.
	Sorry I'm late everyone.
Explain why you're late:	I'm on my way to the meeting but I'm afraid the traffic's terrible.
	I've been here for 30 minutes and the traffic's at a standstill.
Saying when you think you'll arrive:	I think I'll be about 15 minutes late.