

English at Work  
Episode 16: Slimy Limey!  
*Politely refusing*



- 
- Narrator:** Hello! You're joining us again after Anna's call from Mr Lime – he asked her to lunch, remember. Now Anna and Denise are flapping.
- Denise:** ...and before you know it, he'll be asking you to marry him! Trust me Anna, this has happened to me dozens of times!
- Anna:** But I thought he was only interested in the lemons! Please promise me you won't mention this to anyone.
- Denise:** OK, I promise.
- Anna:** Oh, shhhh!
- Tom:** Good morning. What's going on?
- Denise:** Mr Lime has asked Anna to lunch!
- Anna:** Please...
- Tom:** And?
- Denise:** And it's not to talk business! I saw him looking at her with big eyes, from the moment he first saw her!
- Anna:** Denise!
- Tom:** Old Slimy Limey eh? Lucky Anna!
- Anna:** He's not slimy, it's just...
- Tom:** Don't tell me you said yes?!
- Anna:** Well I didn't know what to say.
- Tom:** You didn't?
- Anna:** No, no, I said I was busy and would call back. I wanted to just say no, but with everyone complaining that I'm not polite on the phone... I just... I didn't know how to say it politely.
- Tom:** Ha ha, I'll tell you what to say.
-

**Anna:** Hang on, let me write it down... why do all the pens keep disappearing?

**Denise:** Here's one.

**Anna:** Thanks. Okay, I'm listening Tom.

**Tom:** Say: go...

**Anna:** *(writing)* go...

**Tom:** ...away... Slimy Limey.

**Anna:** Go away Slimy Limey. Are you sure?

**Tom:** Of course!

**Denise:** Don't listen to him Anna. This is what you say:  
Thank you for your offer. But I'm really sorry, I won't be able to.  
Then explain why, say I'm afraid... blah blah blah

**Anna:** Blah blah blah?

**Denise:** Say it's against company policy to have non-business lunches with clients.

**Anna:** Meaning?

**Denise:** You're not allowed to if it's not for business. Then say:  
It wouldn't be appropriate. So, with regret, I'm going to have to say no.

**Anna:** Okay, I think I've got that all down. Thanks. He'll be waiting for my call.  
*(dials phone)*

**Mr Lime:** Hello, Seb Lime speaking.

**Anna:** Hello Mr Lime.

**Mr Lime:** Anna! Please, call me Seb. So, when can I invite you to lunch?

**Denise:** *(whispering loudly)* Thank you for your offer...

**Anna:** Well, thank you for your offer. But I'm really sorry, I won't be able to.

**Mr Lime:** Oh?

**Denise:** *(whispering loudly)* I'm afraid...

**Anna:** I'm afraid it's against company policy to have non-business lunches with people.

**Mr Lime:** Really? Oh how tedious!

**Denise:** *(whispering loudly)* It wouldn't be-

**Anna:** Shhh!

**Mr Lime:** Pardon?

**Anna:** No, not shhh you Mr Slimy I meant shhhh Denise!

**Mr Lime:** Mr Slimy?

**Anna:** Oh no! I mean Mr Limey – Lime – er Seb! You see, it wouldn't be appropriate. So, with regret, I'm going to have to say no.

**Mr Lime:** I think I've understood. Goodbye Anna.

**Anna:** Goodbye.

**Narrator:** Oh dear, he didn't take that too well. But, apart from a little mistake, Anna did well there. Here are the phrases she used to politely refuse the offer of lunch:

*Thank you for your offer. But I'm really sorry, I won't be able to.*

*I'm afraid it is against company policy...*

*It wouldn't be appropriate.*

*With regret, I'm going to have to say no.*

Good job Anna, bad luck Mr Slimy!

- **Listening Challenge**

What excuse does Anna give Seb Lime for not going to lunch with him?  
(Answer: She says it is against company policy)