

Sample Phrases for Saying No

Saying no can be hard, even when you know you should. Use these scripts to decline opportunities and requests concisely and with grace and professionalism. Consider these phrases a starting point – customize them to your voice and tweak them to fit your situation. You may also consider printing out this list and keep it near your desk for easy reference.

- No, thank you.
- Thank you for the invitation, but I won't be able to participate.
- I appreciate you thinking of me. I have to decline to focus on my other commitments.
- I would love to be able to, but it's not possible right now.
- I'd rather not participate.
- I don't have the bandwidth right now.
- That doesn't line up with my goals at the moment.
- That doesn't work for me.
- I'm flattered you thought of me and at the same time, I have to say no.
- I don't want to_____.
- To ensure I'm [at my best, able to serve our clients], I have to say no.
- I'm not able to.
- Because _____ is important to me, I'm honoring that by saying no to this type of request.
- That sounds like a fantastic opportunity. I'm sorry to say I'll have to miss it.
- Right now I'm saying no to_____, so that I can say yes to _____.
- Thank you for thinking of me. I'm not interested in _____.

- That doesn't work for me.
- I have a problem with that.
- Yes, I do mind.
- I'd rather not.
- Not at this time.
- This isn't the kind of thing I can say yes to.
- I'm fully booked right now and can't accommodate this request.
- That's not a commitment I can make, so I have to decline.
- My time is limited, so I need to say no.
- Normally, I would say yes, but my other commitments preclude it.
- I don't want to make a commitment I'd have to cancel.
- None of those options work for me.
- I'm sorry I'm not able to help at this time.
- I'll have to pass.
- It's a no for me.
- I'm maxed out at the moment.
- It would be out of integrity for me to agree knowing I don't have the bandwidth to give this project the attention it deserves.
- What you need won't fit into my schedule right now. Can I help find the right resource?
- Can we take a look at my current priorities together? I'll either have to pause on other tasks, or we'll need to find someone else to take this on.
- I don't think we should do X, but I do have another idea that might work to achieve Y. Are you open to another perspective?
- If we add X to the scope of this assignment, we'll compromise our priority of Y. So if Y is still our priority, we'll need to say no to X.
- I'd love to contribute, but right now I'm laser-focused on everything that has a direct connection to priority X, so I have to pass.
- I'd be happy to be of help. But first, let's look at what's already on deck and if

this fits.

- I'm concerned that factors X and Y mean this is going to take longer than expected. Let me push on today and update you once we see where we are.
- It wouldn't be fair or right for me to agree knowing I don't have the bandwidth to give this project the attention it deserves.