

# Respond to a Situation

10 High-Scoring Sample Answers — PTE Academic & PTE Core (2026)

Curated by **Smriti Simkhada** (90/90 perfect scorer) — ptenepal.com. In PTE Academic you get 10 seconds to think and 40 seconds to speak. The task is scored on Content, Pronunciation, and Oral Fluency — and Content matters most. Each model answer below runs about 35–45 seconds at a natural pace.

## The 4-Step Template

Step	What you do	Example phrases
<b>1. Acknowledge</b>	Greet the person and name the situation directly.	"Hi Sarah, I wanted to talk to you about...", "I'm really sorry about..."
<b>2. Explain</b>	Give one short, specific reason or piece of context.	"What happened was...", "The reason I'm asking is..."
<b>3. Resolve</b>	Offer a concrete solution, request, or next step.	"Would it be possible to...", "I'd be happy to..."
<b>4. Close</b>	End politely and keep the relationship warm.	"Thanks so much for understanding.", "I really appreciate it."

**How to practise:** read each answer aloud with a 40-second timer, then re-record your own version of the same prompt without looking. Do not memorise the scripts word-for-word — Pearson's AI penalises recited or off-topic responses. Learn the frame, not the lines.

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## Scenario 1: Explaining a Situation (Running Late)

### Prompt

You are late for a dinner party. Explain why to your host.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi there, I'm so sorry — I know I'm running really late tonight and I feel terrible about it. What happened was there's an unexpected road closure on my usual route, and I've been stuck in traffic for the last thirty minutes with no way around it. I've just found an alternative road, so I should be with you in about fifteen minutes. Please don't hold dinner for me — go ahead and start, and I'll catch up as soon as I arrive. Thanks so much for understanding, and I'll see you very soon.

*Examiner note: The answer apologises once, gives one clear reason, and offers a practical resolution ("don't hold dinner"). Rambling through multiple excuses hurts Content; one specific reason scores better.*

## Scenario 2: Making a Request (Borrowing Something)

### Prompt

You want to borrow a book from your friend.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi John, I was wondering if I could possibly borrow your economics textbook for the weekend? The thing is, I left mine at the library before it closed, and I've got an assignment due first thing on Monday that I really can't start without it. I'd take good care of it, and I promise to return it to you on Monday morning before our lecture. If you need it yourself this weekend, no problem at all — just let me know and I'll figure something else out. Thanks a lot, I'd really appreciate it.

*Examiner note: Indirect request forms ("I was wondering if I could possibly...") plus a fallback ("if you need it yourself...") show the pragmatic awareness this task is designed to measure.*

## Scenario 3: Apologising to a Colleague

### Prompt

You borrowed a colleague's laptop charger and accidentally left it on the bus. Apologise and tell them how you will fix it.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi Priya, I owe you an apology — I'm afraid I've lost the laptop charger you lent me. I had it in my bag on the bus home last night, and when I got off I realised it must have slipped out somewhere. I've already reported it to the bus company's lost property office, but honestly, I don't want you to be stuck waiting. So I've ordered you a brand-new one online — it should arrive by Thursday. In the meantime, you're welcome to use mine whenever you need it. I'm really sorry again, and thanks for being so patient about it.

*Examiner note: A high-scoring apology owns the mistake immediately and resolves it concretely (a replacement with a date). Vague promises like "I'll sort it out" leave the Resolve step incomplete.*

## Scenario 4: Asking for a Deadline Extension

### Prompt

You cannot finish your assignment on time because you were unwell. Ask your professor for an extension.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Good morning, Professor Wilson. I wanted to speak to you about the research essay that's due this Friday. Unfortunately, I came down with a bad flu last week and lost almost four days when I simply couldn't work. I've completed the research and the outline, but the writing itself still needs time, and I don't want to hand in something rushed. Would it be possible to have an extension until next Tuesday? I can show you my draft and a medical certificate if that helps. I'd really appreciate your consideration, and thank you for your time.

*Examiner note: This answer shows progress already made ("research and outline are done") and proposes a specific new date — both make the request reasonable, which strengthens Content.*

## Scenario 5: Making a Complaint

### Prompt

Your hotel room is very noisy at night because of construction next door. Complain to the receptionist and ask for a solution.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi, good morning. I'm staying in room four-twelve, and I'm afraid I need to raise a problem with you. There's construction work going on right next to my window, and it started before seven this morning — I've barely slept for two nights now. I understand the building work isn't the hotel's fault, but I'd really appreciate it if you could move me to a quieter room on the other side of the building, ideally today. If nothing's available, could you let me know what else you can offer? Thanks very much for your help — I'd be glad to get this sorted.

*Examiner note: A strong complaint stays polite but specific: room number, exact problem, and a preferred remedy plus a backup question. Anger or vagueness both lower the Content score.*

## Scenario 6: Declining an Invitation

### Prompt

A friend has invited you to their birthday dinner on Saturday, but you cannot attend. Decline politely and suggest an alternative.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi Anita, thank you so much for inviting me to your birthday dinner on Saturday — it honestly sounds lovely, and I hate that I have to say this. Unfortunately, I've already committed to my cousin's wedding that same evening, and there's really no way I can get out of it. I'm so sorry to miss your celebration. But I'd love to make it up to you — how about I take you out for lunch on Sunday, just the two of us, so you can tell me all about the party? Happy early birthday, and have an amazing night!

*Examiner note: The three moves that matter: warm thanks, one honest unavoidable reason, and a concrete alternative plan. Declining without offering anything back sounds abrupt and loses content points.*

## Scenario 7: Asking a Professor for Help

### Prompt

You do not understand the requirements of your assignment. Ask your professor for help.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Excuse me, Professor Chen, do you have a couple of minutes? I've started working on the case-study assignment that's due in two weeks, but I'm a little confused about the requirements. I've read the brief twice, and I'm still not sure whether we should analyse one company in depth or compare two companies briefly. I've drafted an outline based on the first interpretation — would you mind taking a quick look and telling me if I'm on the right track? Or if it's easier, I could come to your office hours on Thursday. Thank you so much — I really want to get this right.

*Examiner note: Naming the exact point of confusion — and showing you've already tried — turns a vague plea for help into a precise, answerable request. That specificity is what the Content trait rewards.*

## Scenario 8: Requesting a Shift Swap

### Prompt

You need to attend a family event on Saturday. Ask your co-worker to swap shifts with you.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hey Daniel, can I ask you a favour? I'm scheduled to work this Saturday morning, but my brother's graduation ceremony is that day, and it would mean a lot to my family if I could be there. Would you be willing to take my Saturday shift? In exchange, I'd be happy to cover your Sunday evening shift this week, or any other shift you'd like to give away later this month. I've already checked with the manager, and she's fine with a swap as long as we both agree. I'd really owe you one — thanks for considering it.

*Examiner note: Offering a fair trade and confirming the manager's approval removes every reason to say no. Requests that transfer all the inconvenience to the other person score lower on appropriateness.*

## Scenario 9: Returning a Faulty Product

### Prompt

The headphones you bought last week have stopped working. Return them to the shop and ask for a replacement or refund.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi, I bought these wireless headphones from your store just last week, and unfortunately they've already stopped working. The right earphone went completely silent two days ago, and I've tried resetting them and re-pairing them with my phone, but nothing fixes it. I have the receipt and the original box here. Since they're well within the warranty period, I'd like a replacement, please — or if you don't have the same model in stock, I'd be happy with a refund instead. Could you let me know what the process is? Thanks very much for your help.

*Examiner note: Strong answers prove the fault is genuine ("I tried resetting and re-pairing") and state a clear primary remedy with an acceptable fallback. That covers every content point the prompt expects.*

## Scenario 10: Inviting a Colleague

### Prompt

A new colleague has joined your team. Invite them to the team's farewell lunch for a departing member.

### Model answer (35–45 seconds)

Hi Maya, I'm glad I caught you. As you might have heard, Robert from our team is leaving at the end of the month, and we're organising a farewell lunch for him this Friday at the Thai restaurant just across the road, around twelve-thirty. We'd really love for you to come along — it would be a great chance for you to meet everyone properly outside the office, and the food there is fantastic. There's no need to bring anything; we're just splitting the bill on the day. Shall I add you to the group chat with all the details? Hope you can make it!

*Examiner note: A complete invitation answers the listener's unspoken questions: what, when, where, why them, and what's expected. The friendly close ("Shall I add you...") naturally fills the 40 seconds.*