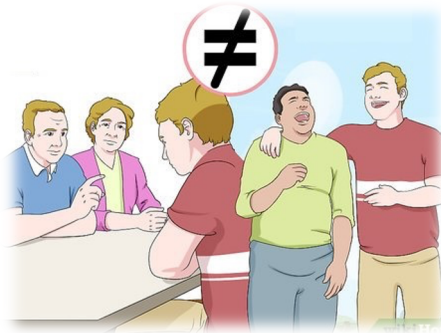


Mind Your Language: Cultural Capital Role-Play

Imagine you're planning a cinema trip. How would you talk about it with a close friend compared to a parent, or even a teacher or employer? You might use casual slang with a friend (*"Yo, wanna hit the movies on Sat?"*), give practical details to a parent (*"Would it be okay if I go to the cinema with friends this Saturday? I'll be back by 9pm"*), and adopt a more formal tone with a teacher or boss: *"I was wondering if I could have Saturday off? I'm planning a day trip with my family."* These shifts in language reflect what Pierre Bourdieu called 'cultural capital' – the social knowledge and communication skills that help us navigate different contexts and relationships. The way we speak can signal respect, familiarity, or professionalism, and it often decides how others perceive and respond to us.

Here's four more scenarios for you to work with. In each scenario, role-play how you would use language when talking with 1. A friend; 2. A parent; 3. A teacher or employer. How will you use language to signal your relationship and the expectations of each encounter?

1. Asking for help with a project (e.g. resources, support, or needing a deadline extension)
2. Talking about your day
3. Sharing good news (e.g. a project breakthrough or a positive test result)
4. Expressing disagreement about an issue at school or work



Reflection

After sharing your role-plays, reflect on how you used language as cultural capital in different contexts:

1. How did your language change between contexts?
2. Which version felt most natural to you and which most challenging? Why?
3. How might adapting your language in these ways affect how others perceive you? What happens when language is not matched to context?