

This is Everyday Grammar.

Imagine that your cousin wants to ask his longtime girlfriend to marry him. And he needs you to help him find the right wedding ring.

So, he takes you along to the ring shop.

At the shop, an employee asked your cousin this.

Were you looking for any style in particular, sir?

But wait - why did the speaker use a past tense to talk about something happening right now?

The answer is that past forms do not always have a past meaning.

We use the past tense to talk about the present or future for a few reasons.

One of them is to be polite.

In English, polite language is generally less direct than informal language.

So, in polite speech, we sometimes use past verb forms to sound less direct.

The employee at the ring shop used the past continuous verb form to express politeness.

Here's another example.

Suppose you had trouble with your computer and took it to a shop for repairs.

A few days later, you call the shop to see if it's ready.

which of these sounds more polite?

Hi, is my computer ready yet?

Hi, I was wondering if my computer was ready yet.

The second, which uses the past continuous, is more polite.

The first sentence is more direct and could be mistaken by the listener as rude.

Join us again soon for more reasons we use past tense to express present and future meaning!

And that's Everyday Grammar.

这里是《每日语法》节目。

想象一下，你的堂兄想向他交往多年的女友求婚。

他需要你帮他挑选合适的结婚戒指。

所以，他带你一起去了戒指店。

在店里，店员问了你的堂兄这样一句话。

先生，您想买什么特别的款式吗？

但是等等——为什么说话者要用过去时态来谈论现在正在发生的事情呢？

答案是，过去式并不总是表达过去的意思。

我们用过去时态来谈论现在或将来，有几个原因。

其中一个原因就是出于礼貌。

在英语中，礼貌用语通常比非正式用语更不直接。

所以，在礼貌用语中，我们有时会使用动词过去式来，让我们听起来不那么直接。

戒指店的店员用动词过去进行时来表达礼貌。

再举一个例子。

假设你的电脑出了问题，你把它拿到门店去修理。

几天后，你打电话这家店看它是否修好了。

哪一种问法听起来更礼貌呢？

嗨，我的电脑修好了吗？

嗨，我想请问一下我的电脑有没有修好。

第二句使用过去进行时的更礼貌一些。

第一句更直接，有可能会被听者误认为粗鲁。

记得来听后面的课程，我们会讲用过去时来表达现在和将来意思的更多原因！

以上就是今天的《每日语法》。