

Question: Mustafa asks:

What is the difference between 'I will meet you' and 'I will meet with you'? Martin, can you give us your thoughts on those two expressions?

Answer: Martin replies:

Yes - well, firstly, well done Mustafa, well done for being really up-to-date, because of course 'I will meet with you' -- that 'with' there is a recent form, certainly in British English. It comes from American English, but I think in American English too, it's a fairly recent form.

'I will meet you' / 'I will meet with you'

There is a difference: I will meet you or I'll meet you, could mean all kinds of things. It could mean that we're going to have a meeting, and we're going to do some work together; but it could simply mean that's where we're going to see each other, and we're going to go and do something else afterwards.

'I will meet with you' does imply a number of things: it implies that it's quite formal; it implies that it's for professional reasons and it implies that somehow, we're going to collaborate on something ...and that it will go on for quite a long time.

Now, I'll meet you, I will meet you could have the same sense but, very often we say I'll meet you at 6 o'clock and 30 seconds later we're moving on somewhere else and it's for dinner or the cinema and it's social.

Which is the more common expression?

I'll meet you is much more common. Personally, I love these new expression, and I use 'I'll meet with you' at every opportunity. However conservative people very often dislike, and disapprove of, these new expressions which come into the language - and so I tend to be a little bit careful about who I'm talking to when I use expressions like this. I love it!

Are there any other expressions that mean more or less the same thing. Are there any more colloquial expressions that people use to meet up with somebody else, with their friends?

Well, it's not to meet up with their friends, but I think it's relevant. We often say 'I'll meet you halfway'.

'I'll meet you half way'

And if you meet somebody halfway, it's got nothing to do with actually meeting, it's got to do with negotiating. So, you want something, and I want something else - then we can either fall out and do nothing, or we can both compromise and find a solution which involves both of us getting some of what we want, and not getting some of what we want -- and in that case, what we talk about is meeting somebody halfway: 'I'll meet you halfway'.

'Meeting up' / to 'meet up'

Of course, we talk about meeting up, and that's a very common expression: in fact it's what we call a phrasal verb, but you can meet up, or you can meet up with somebody - that's always for social reasons and it involves getting together, usually then to do something else, and it may involve not two people, but a large group of people. So, at the end of an evening of doing something socially, somebody might say 'when are we going to meet up again'?

To 'hook up'

If you hook up with somebody you meet them. It's very colloquial. Usually young professional people use this, people in their twenties, professional people, who lead a very busy life. They don't have very much time to spend with anyone, and they say 'oh, I'll hook up with you sometime' - meaning getting into contact for a quick conversation which has some definite purpose. They will then move on and hook up with somebody else.

To 'get in touch'

We often use the expression 'to get in touch with someone'. Now, that very often doesn't involve touching or even seeing. It's very often a letter, or an e-mail, or a phone call, or a text message – but that has the sense of contacting somebody who you haven't had contact with for quite some time. Christmas in this part of the world of course is where we tend to get in touch with people that we don't see regularly and that just means sending them a card and it's really to let them know that we're still there - and thinking of them.