

Ordering at Starbucks

Ordering at Starbucks is an English language challenge that didn't even exist fifteen years ago for most of the world. So it's no surprise that many ESL learners have a need to practice how to order at all, but particularly at Starbucks, which is a common meeting point for students, friends, business meetings and social gatherings.

The great thing about Starbucks is that the customer can truly customize his or her order to be the exact coffee drink he or she wants. Want a particular type of milk, temperature or amount of foam? No problem. Your local Starbucks barista will make your coffee for you exactly as you wish.

The problem is that many ESL students feel too nervous to order in Starbucks, which then causes them to:

rush their speech

not be understood

feel bad about not being understood

But if you can practice reading the 'How to Order at Starbucks' scripts below while listening to the audio and paying careful attention to pronunciation, ordering your next latte will be a breeze.

Don't forget — the American way is that YOU are the customer, and the cashier is paid to be patient and to figure out exactly what you want.

Here are a few key terms you will likely hear at your local Starbucks:

Glossary

Tall: Small

Grande: Medium

Venti: Large

Double: Two shots of espresso, versus the typical one shot of espresso

Triple: Three shots of espresso, versus the typical two or one shot of espresso

Latte: Hot milk with one or more shots of espresso

Cappuccino: Hot milk with one or more shots of espresso and lots of foam on top

Extra hot: hotter than usual drink

With room for milk: Don't fill the coffee to the rim of the cup, leave room for milk

Extra foam or no foam: Exactly that

Iced coffee: A coffee that has been cooled off then poured over ice. It's a great summertime treat but can be enjoyed all year long.

Soy Milk: A non-dairy alternative to milk; Starbucks serves a vanilla-flavored soy milk.

Frappuccino: A thick, blended iced coffee drink with syrup and sometimes whipped cream.

The general sequence of the words you order with are:

SIZE – ICED (optional) – NO FOAM (optional) – MILK (optional) – DECAF (optional) – NUMBER OF SHOTS (optional) – DRINK TYPE

Example

“Tall, skim, decaf double latte”

“Grande triple cappuccino”

“Venti iced coffee”

Follow along with the “How to Order at Starbucks” transcript and listen to the pronunciation and the order of words. Practice listening and reading the transcript repeatedly to get more confident in your own speaking and ordering abilities.

‘HOW TO ORDER AT STARBUCKS’ SCRIPTS

BARISTA: Hi! What can I get you?

CUSTOMER: I’d like a grande soy latte, please.

BARISTA: What’s your name?

CUSTOMER: It’s Darren.

BARISTA: That’ll be three fifty-nine.

CUSTOMER: Here you go. Thanks.

BARISTA: Hi, how are you doing?

CUSTOMER: Fine, thanks. I’d like to get a venti cafe mocha with whip please.

BARISTA: Did you say with or without whip?

CUSTOMER: With whip.

BARISTA: Got it. That’ll be five seventeen.

Notice how we connect words together in everyday, informal English. Also notice that as we stress some syllables, we relax others.

Example

“What can I get you?” became “Wha can I getchya?”

“What is your name?” became “Whatsyur name?”

“How are you doing?” became “howya doin?”

Remember, your order at Starbucks doesn’t have to be perfect. Even native English speakers don’t always know how to order or what the terms mean! But for the time being, Starbucks-lingo is here to stay.

Source: “How to Order at Starbucks | Pronunciation | Elemental English.” Elemental English | English Pronunciation Lessons. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 June 2013. <<http://www.elementalenglish.com/2011/10/how-to-order-at-starbucks-esl/>>.