

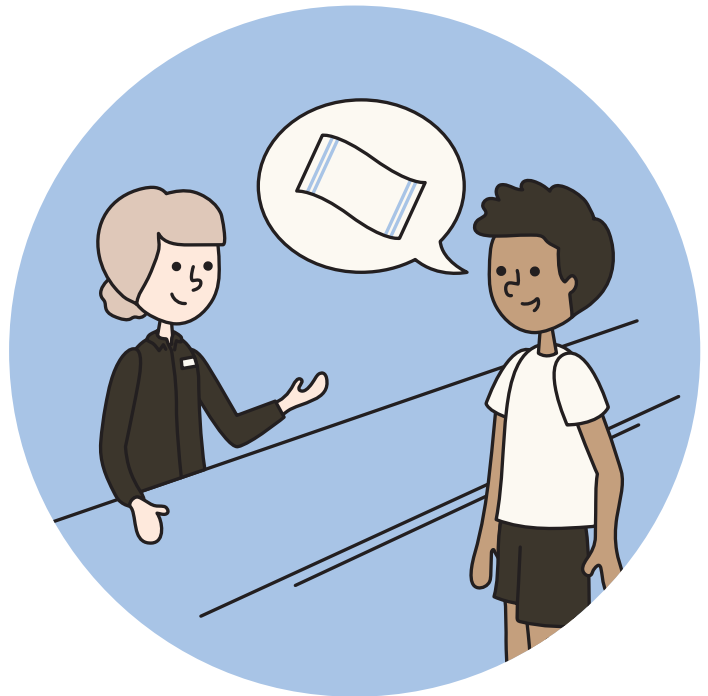
Making Requests

Let's Learn

In this lesson, you will learn how to make polite requests. To make a request means to ask someone for something politely.

You will review how to use the following modals and expressions:

- Can I / you...?
- May I / we...?
- Could I / you...?



Warm-Up

BRAINSTORM

You are more likely to get what you want or need if you ask politely.
What are some requests hotel guests make?

May we...?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| • <u>get another room key</u> | • _____ |
| • <u>get a fridge for our room</u> | • _____ |
| • <u>get towels for the pool</u> | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |

Dialogues

Read the dialogues out loud with a partner.

Dialogue 1

May I

A: Excuse me. May we get some towels for the pool?

B: Of course. How many do you need?

A: Can we get four, please?

B: Of course. Enjoy your swim.

Dialogue 2

HOTEL?

A: Front desk. How can I help you?

B: Hi. Could we get a fridge for our room?

A: Certainly. We'll bring one up for you. Do you need anything else?

B: No, everything else is great. Thank you.

Dialogue 3

A: Good evening. How can I help you?

B: Hi. Could I get some change for the vending machine?

A: Hmm. I'm all out of quarters. Could you come back in ten minutes?

B: Sure.

A: Thanks. I will ask my manager to get some change.

B: Thanks a lot.

Useful Expressions

Review these common questions and responses.
Recite them together as a class.

A. Making a Request

Pattern

To make a request, use one of these patterns:

Can / Could / May + subject + base verb

Note

When making a request using *may*, only *I* or *we* can be the subject (NOT *you*):

- ✓ May **I** have a window seat?
- ✓ May **we** sit at the back?
- ✗ May **you** sit by the window?
- ✓ Could / Can **you** sit by the window?

CAN

I

HAVE

A CUP OF
COFFEE?

Informal

- Can you help me?
- Can I borrow your phone?
- Can we switch places?
- Can you call back later?

Formal

- May we have a window seat?
- May I take Thursday off?
- Could you heat this up?
- Could you turn the music down?

MAY: used
to ask for
permission

May I use the
bathroom?

B. Approving a Request

To approve a request, use one word or phrase:

Strong Approval (polite)

- Of course.
- Absolutely.
- Certainly.
- Sure.
- No problem.
- Anytime.
- Your wish is my command.

Weak Approval (informal)

- I guess.
- I suppose.
- Give me a minute.

C. Refusing a Request

To refuse a request, use these expressions:

Apologetic Refusal

- I'm sorry, but... (reason / excuse)
- Sorry, but... (reason / excuse)
- I'm afraid I can't.
- I apologize, but... (reason / excuse)

Listening Practice

A. Formal & Informal

Listen to these requests or responses. Are they formal or informal?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. a) formal
b) informal | 4. a) formal
b) informal | 7. a) formal
b) informal |
| 2. a) formal
b) informal | 5. a) formal
b) informal | 8. a) formal
b) informal |
| 3. a) formal
b) informal | 6. a) formal
b) informal | 9. a) formal
b) informal |

B. Choose the Correct Response

Listen to the recording.

Circle the best response to each question or statement.

Can I switch seats with you?

1. a) I'm sorry, we don't have any.
b) **Certainly.**
c) Yes, we do.

Can we change the radio station?

2. a) I **suppose.**
b) I'm supposed to.
c) Supposedly.

I think I should
Probably/maybe

3. a) No, thank you.
b) **Of course!**
c) I'm afraid so.

May I take next Monday
off?

4. a) **Give me a minute.**
b) (That's okay.)
c) I couldn't.

Could you clean up that
mess?

5. a) **Sure, I can do that.**
b) I'm sorry it's so busy.
c) That's kind.

Can you play some slow songs?

Could I get the lunch-size meal?

6. a) Don't worry about it.
b) It's really delicious.
c) I'm sorry, but I can't serve it after 2:00 pm.

7. a) Milk or sugar?
b) I got it for you.
c) I apologize. We only have cream.

Can I get that with skim
milk? less fat

8. a) **Absolutely.**
b) Yes, it's dark.
c) You're welcome.

Could you dim the lights?

9. a) No, he didn't.
b) What can I do for you?
c) **Sure.**

Can we put the
hockey game on?

Speaking Practice

A. Complete the Formal Dialogue

Complete the dialogue and then practise it with a partner.
Try to use a variety of words and expressions from page 3.

A: Could I order room service for tomorrow morning?

B: _____ .
1. (strong approval)

A: I'll have the breakfast special. May I _____ fruit instead of potatoes?
2. (verb)

B: _____ we don't have fresh fruit at this time of year.
3. (apologetic refusal)

A: That's okay. I'll have the potatoes. _____ I get some hot sauce?
4. (modal)

B: _____ .
5. (strong approval)

A: _____ I also get a wake-up call at 7:00 am?
6. (modal)

B: _____ .
7. (strong approval)

A: Thank you!

B. Change the Informal Dialogue

Read the dialogue and then practise it with a partner.
Then change the information in bold to another situation.
Practise again.

A: Can you **pick me up after school**, Dad?

B: I guess.

A: Thanks. Can you **give Nina a ride**, too?

B: I'm sorry, but I don't have time **to drive Nina home today**.

A: Can **she come to our house**?

B: I suppose.

A: Thanks, Dad!

Review

Task 1

FORMAL OR INFORMAL?

Are the following exchanges formal or informal?
Does the respondent approve or refuse?
Put a check mark (✓) in the correct columns.

#	Dialogue	Formality		Response	
		Formal	Informal	Approval	Refusal
1	Q: Could you turn the music down, please? A: Yes. I apologize for the noise.				
2	Q: May I take the first week of July off? A: I'm afraid Kyle already asked for that week.				
3	Q: Can I have a friend over? A: I suppose.				
4	Q: Can you let the dog out? A: Yep.				
5	Q: May we have a booth instead? A: I'm sorry. We don't have any available at the moment.				
6	Q: Hey! Can you play the new Beyoncé song? A: Your wish is my command!				

Review cont.

Task 2

COMPLETE THE DIALOGUE

Complete the following dialogue. Recite it with your teacher or with a partner.

Student: _____ you proofread my resume?

Teacher: _____ I don't have time right now.

Student: No problem. _____ you do it tomorrow?

Teacher: _____ !

Student: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Task 3

MAKING REQUESTS

Work with a partner. Role-play a **formal** request at a hotel. Then role-play an **informal** request between friends. Switch roles so that you each have a turn using formal and informal language. Use approval (weak and strong) and refusal in your responses.

Your audience (classmates/teacher) will have to answer the following:

- What did Speaker A request?
- Did Speaker B approve or refuse?
- Was the situation formal or informal?

Speaking Assessment Tool

Student / Group: _____

Date	CLB Level	Assessed By	Role-Play Scenario	Skill Competency
			Making Requests (formal & informal)	III. Getting Things Done

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved With Help 	Needs Improvement 
uses a variety of polite/formal language for making requests			
uses informal language to make requests in an informal situation			
uses appropriate language to make a refusal in formal and informal situations			
uses weak and strong expressions to give approval			
speaks clearly and loudly			

Notes
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Learner Reflection

MAKING REQUESTS

Add check marks (✓) to show what you've learned in this lesson.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
make a polite request?			
make a request in formal and informal situations?			
give strong and weak approval after a request?			
give apologetic and strong refusal after a request?			
recognize the difference between formal and informal requests, approvals, and refusals?			

My Notes

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students review language and useful expressions for making requests. They practise using formal and informal language in questions and responses and learn to recognize and express approval and refusal. Includes listening practice and assessment tasks.

LEVEL: Low Int / CLB 2-3

TIME: 1 hour

TAGS: functional English, making requests, permission, refusal, approval, formality, modals, useful expressions, manners, polite, getting things done, CLB, LINC, PBLA

Let's Learn

Go over the learning objective with your students.
Introduce the related verbs *permit* and *allow*.

Warm-Up

Brainstorm different things that people make requests for at hotels. Write the responses on the board and have students copy the examples to complete their lists.

CLB Skill Competency

Speaking: I. Interacting with Others,
III. Getting Things Done

Writing: II. Reproducing Information

Dialogues

Have students practise the dialogues out loud in pairs.

CLB Skill Competency

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

Useful Expressions

Recite the words and expressions and have your students repeat after you for pronunciation and intonation practice.

CLB Skill Competencies

Listening: III. Getting Things Done

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Listening Practice

A. FORMAL & INFORMAL

Play the recording or read the questions and statements out loud. Your students will decide if the examples represent formal or informal language.

#	Question/Statement	Answer
1	Can I use your phone?	b
2	I guess.	b
3	May I ask a question?	a
4	Could you speak a little slower, please?	a
5	Can I park here?	b
6	Could you put the chairs away, please?	a
7	Could I make a reservation for two, please?	a
8	Give me a second.	b
9	I'm afraid that's against our policy.	a

B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT RESPONSE

Play the recording or say each sentence or question for your students. Your students will listen and circle the best response.

#	Sentence/Question	Answer
1	Can I switch seats with you?	b
2	Can we change the radio station?	a
3	May I take next Monday off?	b
4	Could you clean up that mess?	a
5	Can you play some slow songs?	a

6	Could I get the lunch-size meal?	c
7	Can I get that with skim milk?	c
8	Could you dim the lights?	a
9	Can we put the hockey game on?	c

CLB Skill Competencies

Listening: III. Getting Things Done

Speaking Practice

A. COMPLETE THE FORMAL DIALOGUE

Answers will vary.

1. Sure / Certainly / Of course / No problem
2. get / have / order
3. I'm afraid, I'm sorry, but
4. Could / May
5. Sure / Absolutely / Certainly / Of course / No problem
6. Could / May
7. Sure / Absolutely / Certainly / Of course / No problem

B. CHANGE THE INFORMAL DIALOGUE

Students can read the dialogue and practise with a partner. Then have them change the information in bold to another situation and perform it for the class.

CLB Skill Competencies

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

Writing: II. Reproducing Information

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Review (Assessment Tasks)

The last three tasks are optional and can be used for assessment purposes and/or review practice. Task 3 includes an assessment tool that you can share with learners so that they understand your expectations.

TASK 1

Have students read the dialogue and decide whether each exchange is formal or informal and accepted or refused.

1. formal / approval
2. formal / refusal
3. informal / approval
4. informal / approval
5. formal / refusal
6. informal / approval

CLB Skill Competencies

Reading: III. Getting Things Done

TASK 2

Have students complete the text and practise it with you or with a partner. Answers will vary.

1. Could / Can
2. I'm afraid / Sorry, but / I'm sorry, but
3. Could / Can
4. Sure / Certainly / Absolutely / Of course

CLB Skill Competencies

Writing: II. Reproducing Information

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

TASK 3

If you want to use this task for summative assessment, hand out the ready-made Role-Play Assessment tool (page 8), or personalize your own from a template in Shared Criteria for Success:

<https://esllibrary.com/resources/2352>

Place students in pairs and have them do a role-play for the class (or just for you) using the scenarios provided. You can decide how much time you want to give pairs to practise.

CLB Skill Competencies

Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

Learner Reflection

When you are finished with this lesson, have your students reflect on their learning by filling in the chart (page 9).

ABOUT THE EMOJI:

The emoji (and their derivatives) used in this lesson are from Twemoji, an open-source project by Twitter. They are licensed under CC-BY 4.0. <https://github.com/twitter/twemoji>

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Answer Key cont.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Summary

OVERVIEW

Stage: 1

CLB: 2 – 3*

Primary Skill Competency: Speaking – III. Getting Things Done

PAGE	TASK	SKILL COMPETENCIES
1	Warm-Up	Speaking: I. Interacting with Others, III. Getting Things Done Writing: II. Reproducing Information
2	Dialogues 1–3	Speaking: III. Getting Things Done
3	Useful Expressions	Listening: III. Getting Things Done Speaking: III. Getting Things Done
4	Listening Practice	Listening: III. Getting Things Done
5	Speaking Practice	Speaking: III. Getting Things Done Writing: II. Reproducing Information
6	Review Task 1	Reading: III. Getting Things Done
7	Review Task 2	Writing: II. Reproducing Information Speaking: III. Getting Things Done
7–8	Review Task 3 (PBLA)** <i>Includes Assessment Tool</i>	Speaking: III. Getting Things Done

*Note:

This CLB range is suggested by ESL Library based on the descriptors in the Canadian Language Benchmarks guide: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>

**Note:

PBLA refers to portfolio-based learning assessment in the LINC program (though any teacher can use these tasks for review or assessment). Visit our Resources section for Assessment Tools that you can print and personalize for PBLA: <https://esllibrary.com/resources>

Answer Key cont.

Canadian Language Benchmarks Summary cont.

PROFILES OF ABILITY

The following descriptors from the Canadian Language Benchmarks apply to this lesson and are used with permission. For more detailed information see: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf> and visit: <http://www.language.ca/>

BENCHMARK	THE LEARNER CAN:
Speaking (2-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make and respond to an expanding range of simple requests related to everyday activities.
Listening (2-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand greetings, introductions, requests, goodwill expressions, and an expanding range of basic courtesy formulas. (2) Understand expressions used to make and respond to requests and warnings in situations of immediate personal need. (2-3)
Reading (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get information from simple formatted texts.
Writing (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy or record a range of information from short texts for personal use.