

4 Complete the exchanges with *can't*, *may*, *should* or *must*.

- 1 A: Are you going out this evening?
B: We're not sure. We ...*may*... stay at home.
- 2 A: Juliet's not answering her telephone.
B: Well, she be out then because she always picks up if she's in.
- 3 A: Are the boys playing in their room?
B: They be. They're far too quiet.
- 4 A: Where's Victoria?
B: I don't know. She have been here by now.
- 5 A: I have to work late tonight. If so, would you mind starting dinner?
B: Of course not.
- 6 A: Have you posted your letter to me yet?
B: Yes. You receive it in two days.



Listen and repeat. Then act out.



Permission

Asking for permission

can (informal) / **could** (more formal)
may / **might** (very formal)

Can / **Could** I interrupt you for a second?
May / **Might** I speak to the bank manager, please?

Giving or refusing permission

can (informal; giving permission)
Note: *could* is not used in the present to give permission

Can I use your phone? Of course you **can**. (informal)
Could I use your phone? Of course you **can**.
(NOT: ~~of course you could~~)

may (formal; giving permission – also used in written notices or formal announcements)

May I use your phone? Certainly you **may**. (formal)
Luggage **may** be left here. (written notice)

mustn't / **can't** (informal – refusing permission)

I'm afraid you **can't** / **mustn't** enter the room.

may not (formal – refusing permission)

Rubbish **may not** be left here. (written notice)

Talking about permission

can / **be allowed to** (to talk about the future or present)

Pupils **are allowed to** / **can** use the school swimming pool free of charge.

could (to talk about the past – used for repeated actions)

She **could** always play at the park after school.
(repeated action)

was / **were allowed to** (to talk about the past – used for repeated or single actions)

The reporter **was allowed to** (NOT: ~~could~~) take a photo of the pop singer. (single action)

couldn't / **wasn't allowed to** (in negations or questions for either repeated or single actions)

The foreigner **wasn't allowed to** / **couldn't** enter the country without a visa. (single action)

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Modal Verbs

5 Study the situations and write sentences using *may*, *can*, *could* or *can't*.

- 1 You want to see the headmaster. Ask the secretary for permission.
May I / Can I / Could I see the headmaster, please?
- 2 Your sister wants to use your computer but you have a lot of schoolwork. Refuse permission.
- 3 You want to go camping with your cousins. Ask your parents for permission.
- 4 Your friend wants to borrow one of your books. Give him your permission.
- 5 You'd like to leave school early because you aren't feeling well. Ask the teacher for permission.



Listen and repeat. Then act out.



Requests – Offers – Suggestions

Requests (asking someone to do something)

Can you? (informal request)**Will you?** (familiar)**Could you?** (polite request)**May I?** (formal request)**Would you / Would you mind?** (more polite and formal than 'could you')**Can you** help me, please?**Will you** get me my glasses, please?**Could you** make me some lemonade?**May I** have a glass of water? (request)
compare: **May I** open the window? (asking for permission)**Would you** post this letter for me?**Would you mind** typing these letters for me?

Offers (offering to do something)

I'll (I'm willing to do sth – informal)**Shall I/we / Can I/we** (Do you want me/us to ...? – informal)**Would you like / Would you like me to ...?****I'll** do the shopping if you like.**Shall I** help you with your luggage?**Would you like** some more tea?

Suggestions (making suggestions)

Shall I/we?**I/We can / could****We also express suggestions with:****Let's / How about / Why don't we?****What about?****Shall we** go to the theatre?**We can / could** go to the cinema if you like.**Let's** go to the park. **How about** going to the park?
Why don't we go to the park? **What about** going to the park?

6 Fill in: *would you, I'll, shall, let's, why don't you or how about.*

Harry: Oh no! I can't find all that work I did on my laptop.
 Ben: 1) *I'll* help if you want.
 Harry: Really? Thanks. I'm hopeless with anything electronic.
 Ben: OK. 2) clicking on this icon here?
 Harry: Nothing's happening.
 Ben: Mmm. 3) switch it off and start again?
 Harry: No, that's not working. It's still the same problem.
 Ben: 4) see if you've deleted the work by accident.
 Harry: 5) show me how to do that?
 Ben: It's easy. Just click here. No. It doesn't look like your work is still here.
 Harry: That's terrible! All that work took me two hours to do last night.
 Ben: 6) I phone my brother? He's a computer expert.
 Harry: No thanks. I'll just have to do it again and be more careful this time!

7 What would you say in these situations? Use the words in brackets.

- You're on the train. You have a seat but a pregnant lady is standing. You offer her your seat. **(would)**
 You: *Would you like to sit down?*
 Lady: Yes, thank you. You're so kind.
- You're at a restaurant and you'd like some more water. You ask the waitress. **(could)**
 You:
 Waitress: Yes, Madam. Right away!
- You've invited a friend over for dinner. You've just finished the meal and offer her dessert. **(how)**
 You:
 Friend: Sounds great!
- You're driving a car. Your friend isn't wearing his seatbelt. You ask him to wear it. **(can)**
 You:
 Friend: Of course! I can't believe I forgot!
- You need help cleaning the house. You ask your roommate. **(will)**
 You:
 Roommate: Sure. What would you like me to do?

8 Choose the correct modal verb.

- We **may** / **could** try and fix it ourselves. What do you think?
- I'm sorry. I didn't hear you. **Could** / **May** you please repeat that?
- I **will** / **shall** do that for you if you like.
- Could you** / **Would you mind** waiting another quarter of an hour?
- We haven't had a proper chat for ages. **Why don't you** / **Would you like** come round to my place for dinner tonight?
- Shall I** / **What about** help you with your homework?
- Would you like** / **Will you like** another slice of pizza, Claire?
- Why don't we** / **How about** going to the Maldives this year?
- Would you** / **May you** give me your full name, please?
- OK, **shall** / **may** we say 8:00 pm then? How does that sound?