

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

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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?