

# PRACTICE!

## MODAL VERBS FOR POLITENESS:



Modal verbs are placed before the main verb in a sentence. While they do not change the meaning of a sentence, they do change the tone. They help us change or soften what we say so as not to be too direct or forceful. Modal verbs include: *may, might, can, could, shall, should, will, would*.

REMEMBER: we use the past form of the modals is more polite.

| <b>MODAL VERBS</b> | <b>PAST FORMS</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>can</i>         | <i>Could</i>      |
| <i>may</i>         | <i>Might</i>      |
| <i>shall</i>       | <i>Should</i>     |
| <i>will</i>        | <i>would</i>      |

Imagine we are At the Restaurant: The waiter or waitress gives you a dish that is not what you ordered. You see there is a mistake and you are unhappy with it. You say to the waitress or waiter: *"This is not what I ordered. Change it!"*, that sounds very harsh and direct. Here are softer ways to express the same idea:

- **Somewhat diplomatic:** *"This is not what I ordered. May you change it?"*
- **Diplomatic:** *"Would it be possible for you to change my dish? This is not what I ordered."*  
*"There may be a mistake with my order. Could you change this dish, please?"*
- **Even more diplomatic:** *"It looks like there may be a mistake with my order. Maybe you should check it and change this dish, please."*

By applying this modal verbs, we avoid to sound rude when it is not our intention. It helps us to feel in control of the conversation and to carry out an interaction with mutual respect. Have a look at the differences from the chart below:

| <b>DIRECT:</b>                     | <b>POLITE:</b>                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>I want a burger</i>             | <i>May I have a burger, please?</i>                                                               |
| <i>Let's get dinner.</i>           | <i>Shall we get dinner?</i>                                                                       |
| <i>I need help with this menu.</i> | <i>Will/Would you help me with this menu?</i><br><i>Would you mind helping me with this menu?</i> |

# ***YOUR TURN!*** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Transform the following sentences into more polite ones:**

1. *I'm hungry. I want some pizza.*

2. *Where is the bathroom?*

3. *I'm looking for some ice.*

4. *We want a table for two.*

5. *Give me your recommendation.*

6. *Turn down the TV. It is too loud.*

7. *I pay by credit card.*

8. *Don't add pepper. I'm allergic.*

