

CAN, COULD, MAY, AND WOULD: requests, permission, offers, and invitations

A. To ask for something you can say "**Can I have . . .**" "**Could I have . . .**" or "**May I have . . .**". "**May I have . . .?**" is the most formal.

Can I have some more potatoes mom? (at home)

Could I have some more water? (at restaurant)

May I have a moment of your time? (to a superior at work)

B. We can use "**can**", "**could**", or "**may**" to ask for permission to do something. "**Can**" is the least formal, "**could**" is medium friendly, and "**may**" is the most formal.

Can I have a glass of water, dad? (with family and friends)

Could I borrow a pencil, teacher? (with teachers, doctors, etc.)

May I have a moment with my lawyer? (with judges, Priests, etc.)

C. We sometimes use "**can**" or "**may**" to offer to do things. "**May**" is more formal.

Can I get you a cup of coffee Steve? (with family and friends)

May I help you sir? (with strangers)

D. For offering and inviting, we use "**Would you like . . .**" (not do you like).

Would you like some more to drink?

Would you like to go to the party with me?



Read the situations and write what you would say.

Example You've got a \$200 peso bill and you need some change. You ask a friend to help you. **Can you change a \$200?**

1. You want to borrow your friend's camera.

2. You have a car and want to give a friend a ride.

3. You want to go to the post office but you don't know where it is. You ask a stranger in the street.

4. You are calling about a house to rent that you saw in the newspaper. You want to know how much the rent is.

5. You are meeting with your boss and want to smoke a cigarette.

6. You want to ask permission to your boss to go home early.

7. You want to invite a classmate you have liked for months to the movies.

8. Your neighbor is playing loud music at 1 am. You want him to turn it down

9. There is a concert tonight and you want to invite some friends.

10. You are on a crowded bus and an old lady gets on. You offer your seat.

11. You want to light a cigarette, but you don't have a match. The stranger next to you has one.

