

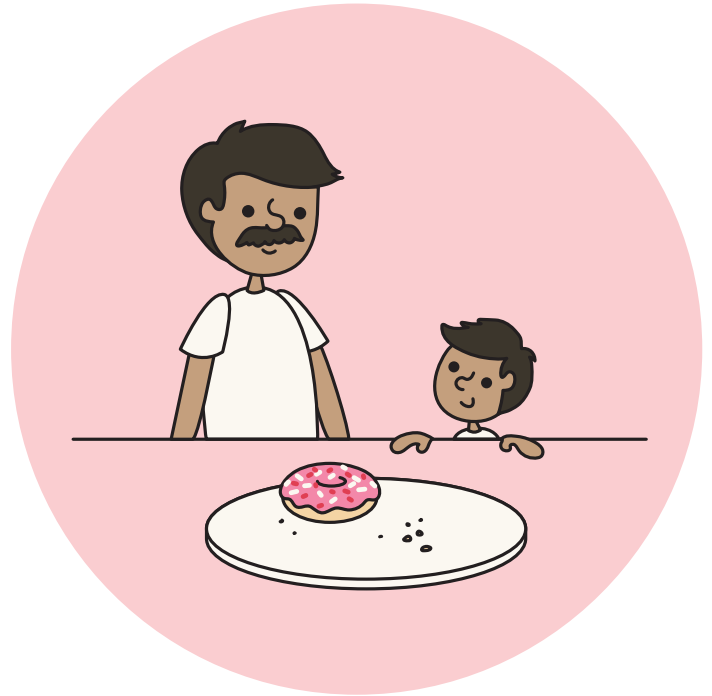
Asking for Permission

Let's Learn

In this lesson, you will learn how to ask for permission politely. To ask permission means to find out if you are *allowed* or *permitted*.

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

- Can
- Could
- May
- Do you mind if
- Is it okay if



Warm-Up

BRAINSTORM

In English, it is polite to ask for permission before you do or use something that affects others.

What are some examples of things people ask permission for?

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • <u>borrowing a pen</u> | • _____ |
| • <u>getting a ball from someone's yard</u> | • _____ |
| • <u>using a phone</u> | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |
| • _____ | • _____ |

Dialogues

Read the dialogues, and practice with a partner.

Dialogue 1

A: Can I borrow the car, Mom?

B: Sure, go ahead.

A: Is it okay if I take the leftover pizza too?

B: That's fine by me, but ask your dad.

Dialogue 2

A: Do you mind if I park out front?

B: I'm sorry. Those spots are reserved. There's a parking lot across the street.

A: Great. May I leave my bags here for a moment?

B: Be my guest!

Dialogue 3

A: Do you mind if we charge our phones here?

B: I'm afraid the charging stations are for paying customers only.

A: Okay, could we order some drinks and charge our phones?

B: Absolutely.

A: Great. Could I use your washroom too?

B: Sure, go ahead.

Useful Expressions

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

A. Asking for Permission

Patterns

To ask for permission,
use one of these patterns:

Can / Could / May
+ **subject + base verb**

Do you mind if / Is it okay if
+ **subject + present verb**

Informal

- Can I use your phone?
- Can we park here?
- Is it okay if I sit here?

Formal

- May I borrow your ruler?
- Could she use this computer?
- Do you mind if he leaves his bag here?

B. Giving Permission (Approval)

To give or grant permission, use one word or phrase:

Strong Approval

- Of course.
- Sure.
- Absolutely.
- Be my guest. (*formal*)
- You don't (even) have to ask. (*yes*)
- By all means.
- Anytime!

Weak Approval

- I guess.
- If you must.
- Fine. Go ahead.
- It's fine by me, but ask...

I Don't Mind

Understanding a response to the question
"Do you mind if..." can be tricky. You need to
listen for the tone and look at the body language.

Q: Do you mind if we park here?

A: Of course! [*smiling*] (Of course I don't mind.)

A: Sure! [*smiling*] (Sure, it's fine.)

A: Absolutely not. [*smiling*] (I don't mind at all.)

A: Actually, I do mind. [*shaking head*] (It's not okay.)

STILL UNSURE?

Follow up with a direct question:

Q: Are you sure it's okay?

A: Yes, it's fine!

Useful Expressions cont.

C. Refusing Permission (Refusal)

To refuse permission, use these expressions:

Apologetic Refusal

- I'm sorry, but...
- I'm afraid I can't allow...
- I'm afraid that is not allowed.
- I wish you could, but...
- Sorry. Not today.

Strong Refusal (informal)

- No way.
- Absolutely not.
- Not a chance.
- Good try.
- Not happening.

The Magic Word

Some people won't take "no" for an answer.
They use the magic word (*Please?*) to beg for permission.

Child: Can I eat the last doughnut?

Dad: No way. You had one already.

Child: Please? *[whining]*

Dad: Not a chance.

Child: Come on. I'm hungry. Pretty please? *[stronger whining]*

Dad: Fine. Go ahead.

Listening Practice

A. Formal & Informal

Listen to these questions and 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.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. a) Yes, they are ready.
b) Absolutely not.
c) I like cookies too. | 4. a) It's fine by me.
b) I'm sorry, but I forgot.
c) That's not today. | 7. a) Absolutely. Have two!
b) It did.
c) Sure, go ahead. |
| 2. a) I guess.
b) It's Tuesday.
c) If she must. | 5. a) I'm sorry, but I need that spot.
b) Be my problem.
c) Great, thanks. | 8. a) Not a chance!
b) I see that.
c) You're welcome. |
| 3. a) No, thank you.
b) Anytime!
c) I'm afraid so. | 6. a) Not today.
b) I sure did.
c) It did happen. | 9. a) No, he didn't. Go ahead.
b) Sorry, I didn't.
c) Absolutely. You can have it. |

Speaking Practice

A. Complete the Formal Dialogue

Complete the dialogue, and practice with a partner.

A: Do you mind if I leave halfway through the meeting? I have an appointment.

B: _____ .
1. (weak approval)

A: Sorry. Also, _____ I get the Wi-Fi password?
2.

B: _____ . It's GuestFree. One word, capital G and F.
3. (strong approval)

A: Thanks a lot.

B: No problem. _____ I trade seats with you?
4.

A: _____ .
5. (strong approval)

B. Change the Informal Dialogue

Read the dialogue, and practice with a partner.

Then change the information in bold to another situation.

Practice again.

A: **Can I borrow your pen?**

B: Of course.

A: Thanks. **Is it okay if I use your notes from last week too?**

B: Good try.

A: Please?

B: No way.

A: Come on! **I was sick last week.**

B: **Fine. Go ahead.**

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: Can I have a piece of this pizza? A: You don't have to ask.				
2	Q: Do you mind if I pet your dog? A: I'm sorry, but he is a guide dog.				
3	Q: Is it okay if I run out for a sec? A: Not happening!				
4	Q: May I have the Wi-Fi password? A: I'm afraid that's only for guests.				
5	Q: Could we please use this chair? A: I'm sorry. We're waiting for someone.				
6	Q: Can I sleep at your house tonight? A: Anytime!				

Review cont.

Task 2

COMPLETE THE DIALOGUE

Complete this dialogue on a piece of paper. Recite it with your teacher or with a partner.

Student: _____ I rewrite this math test?
1. (formal request)

Prof: _____ I don't allow retests.
2. (apologetic refusal)

Student: Okay. I understand. _____ I get some extra help
3. (formal request)
before the final exam? I really don't understand this material.

Prof: _____ ! _____ I give
4. (strong approval) 5. (informal request)
your email address to a tutor?

Student: By all means! Thank you.

Task 3

ASKING FOR PERMISSION

Work with a partner. Role-play a **formal** request for permission in a workplace. Then role-play an **informal** request for permission in a neighborhood. 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 ask for permission for?
- Did Speaker B approve or refuse?
- Was the situation formal or informal?

Speaking Assessment Tool

Student / Group: _____

Date	Level	Assessed By	Role-Play Scenario	Skill
			Asking for Permission (formal & informal)	Speaking

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved With Help 	Needs Improvement 
uses a variety of polite/formal language (including modals) to ask for permission			
uses informal language to ask for permission in an informal situation			
uses appropriate language to refuse permission in formal and informal situations			
uses weak and strong expressions to give approval			
speaks clearly and loudly			

Notes
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Learner Reflection

ASKING FOR PERMISSION

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

Name: _____

Date: _____

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

My Notes