



Asking for Help

Let's Learn

Being able to ask for help is an important language skill. In this lesson, you will learn a few different ways to ask for help. You will also learn how to offer assistance to others and how to tell others you can't help.

Warm-Up

A HELPING HAND

In English, "a hand" sometimes means "help." You can say "I need a hand" when you need help. You can ask "Do you need a hand?" when others seem to need assistance. Have you offered a helping hand recently?

Note:

The phrase *to give a hand* can also mean to give a round of applause (to clap).

Useful Expressions

Listen to your teacher ask for and offer help.
Then recite these phrases together as a class.

A. Questions

Asking for Help

- Could you give me a hand?
- I could use some help.
- Help me, please.
- Do you have a minute?
- Would you mind lending me a hand?
- Can I ask a favor?
- Can you do me a favor?
- I have a favor to ask you.
- I need a *big* favor.
- Can you help me... (*base verb*)?
- Could you... (*base verb*) for me?

Offering Help

- Can I help you?
- Do you need a hand?
- What can I do for you?
- Is there anything I can do to help you?
- Is there anything else?
- Can I be of assistance?

B. Responses

Agreeing to Help

- Of course.
- No problem.
- Sure.

Accepting Help

- Thank you!
- I appreciate it.
- Thanks for your help.
- You're the best.

Declining Help

- I'm okay, thanks.
- That's okay.
- Thanks for offering.
- I'm all right.
- I'm fine. Thanks, though.

Dialogues

Dialogue 1

ASKING FOR HELP

Read the dialogue and practice with a partner.

A: Would you mind lending me a hand?

B: Sure. What can I do for you?

A: Could you hold the door open for me?

B: No problem. Is there anything else?

A: Actually, there's a door downstairs too.
Could you get that one as well?

B: Of course.

Dialogue 2

OFFERING TO HELP

Read the dialogue and practice with a partner.

A: Is there anything I can do to help?

B: Not at the moment, thank you.

A: Really? You look so busy.

B: There is one thing you could do.

A: Just say the word.

B: Would you mind closing the windows?

A: No problem.

B: I appreciate it.

Dialogue 3

DECLINING HELP

Read the dialogue and practice with a partner.

A: Those boxes look heavy. Can I give you a hand?

B: I'm okay. You could hold the door for me, though.

A: No problem. Can I take something for you?

B: That's okay. They aren't as heavy as they look.

A: Is there anything else I can do?

B: I'm fine. Thanks for offering.

Writing Practice

A. Complete the Dialogue

Complete the dialogue, and practice with a partner.

- A: Those _____ heavy . Can I give you a hand?
1.
- B: I'm okay. Would you mind holding _____ for me, though?
2.
- A: No problem. Can I _____ for you?
3.
- B: _____ .
4.

B. Sentence Building

Choose the correct word below each line to complete the requests for help.

- _____ I ask you a favor?
(Do / Can)
- Could you _____ me a hand?
(to lend / lend)
- I wonder if you could _____ me.
(help / to help)
- _____ you have a spare moment?
(Can / Do)
- I could _____ your help for a second.
(use / to use)

Speaking Practice

Take turns asking for help with these tasks.

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Moving boxes | 3. Doing homework | 5. Picking up mail |
| 2. Making dinner | 4. Looking after a pet | 6. Watching luggage |

Further Learning

A. Declining

There are different expressions to use when you can't help a person. You can choose whether or not to add a reason.

Useful Phrases

- I'm sorry. I can't.
(Add a reason if you want to.)
- I wish I could, but I can't.
(Add a reason if you want to.)
- I'm sorry. I'm busy right now.
(Use this for an immediate request.)
- I'm sorry. I'm not available.
(Use this for a request in the future.)

Example

- A: Can I ask you a big favor?
B: Sure, what is it?
A: I need to borrow 20 dollars.
B: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm broke.

B. Practice

Change the dialogue to a request that you made recently. Try your dialogue with a partner.

- Me: I have a favor to ask you.
_____ : What can I do for you?
Me: I need you to _____ .
_____ : I wish I could help, but _____ .
Me: Oh, that's okay. Don't worry about it.

Review

Task 1

WORDS & EXPRESSIONS

List as many words and expressions as you can to ask for help and offer to help.

Asking for Help

Offering to Help

Task 2

COMPLETE THE DIALOGUE

Now complete the dialogue between two friends.

- A: _____ me a hand?
B: Sure. What can I _____ you?
A: Could you _____ for me?
B: No _____. Is there anything else?
A: Actually, could you _____ ?
B: Of course.
A: Thank you! You're the _____ !

Task 3

ROLE-PLAY

Work with a partner. One of you is a teacher who needs a hand. The other is a student. Role-play an exchange between the teacher and the student. The teacher will accept help but then decline an additional offer of help. Your teacher/classmates will answer the following questions:

1. What does the teacher need help with?
2. What happens first? Does the teacher ask for help or does the student offer to help?
3. What type of help does the teacher decline?

Role-Play Assessment Tool

Student / Group: _____

Date	Level	Assessed By	Role-Play Scenario	Skill
			Asking for Help / Offering to Help	Speaking

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved With Help 	Needs Improvement 
asks for help or offers to help			
responds appropriately			
uses polite language			
speaks loudly and clearly			
takes turns speaking			

Notes




Learner Reflection

ASKING FOR HELP

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

Name: _____

Date: _____

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
use a variety of ways to ask for help?			
use a variety of ways to offer help?			
respond by accepting help or agreeing or declining to help?			
give a reason why I can't help?			

My Notes