Making Requests

Warm-Up

First, work with your class to brainstorm lots of different reasons *why* people **make requests**. Now, think of some places *where* people make requests.

Dialogues

Read the dialogues, and practice with a partner.

A. Making a Request (informal)

A: **Hey, DJ! Can you play some slow songs?**
B: Sure. I'll play some at the end of the night.

A: **Jason, can you move your car onto the road?**
B: Sure, dad. One sec.

A: **Can I borrow your shovel?**
B: Of course. It's in the garage.

B. Making a Request (polite)

A: **Would you mind turning the music down?**
B: Of course. Sorry for bothering you.
A: Thanks. The baby is sleeping.

A: **Pardon me. Could I bother you for a boost?**
B: Oh, no! Your battery died?
A: I'm afraid so. Do you have jumper cables?

A: **Do you mind if I sit here?**
B: Be my guest. Let me move my coat.
A: I appreciate it. It's the last seat in the house.

C. Making an Offer (before a request)

A: **It looks like you could use a hand.**
B: Yes, my battery died.
A: I'll get my jumper cables.
B: You're a lifesaver!

A: **Can I get you something?**
B: Actually, we could use some bandages.
A: I'll go grab the first-aid kit.
B: Thanks, I appreciate it.

Grammar Review

There are a few different ways to make a request.

Can/Will/Would you + subject + base verb

- Can you *give* me a boost?
- Will you *mail* this letter?
- Would you *proofread* my essay?

Would you mind + -ing verb

- Would you mind *giving* me a boost?
- Would you mind *mailing* this letter?
- Would you mind *proofreading* my essay?

> **Note:**
> "Would" and "would you mind" are more polite and formal than "can/will."

Sentence Building

Complete the dialogues by filling in the blanks with appropriate questions or responses. Try not to use the same question or response more than once. Practice your dialogues with a partner.

1. A: Can you put some more milk in my coffee?

   B: _____

2. A: _____

   B: Absolutely. Sorry for bothering you.

3. A: Would you mind sliding over one chair?

   B: _____

4. A: _____

   B: Be my guest.

5. A: Will you curl my hair for me?

   B: _____

Responding to Requests

In English, people use many different ways to respond affirmatively (to say "yes") and negatively (to say "no"). In fact, "yes" and "no" are considered very "direct," and aren't commonly used after someone makes a request. Listen to your teacher say these responses out loud. Note the intonation and the facial expressions. Then try saying each one out loud.

Responses

- Of course!
- No problem!
- Sure!
- Anytime!
- I'm sorry, I'm busy.
- Oh, I can't today.
- I wish I could!
- Would you mind asking someone else?

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Tag Questions

Tag questions are often used when making requests. With this type of request, the person assumes the answer will be "no." Begin with a negative auxiliary (helping) verb, and add the opposite (positive) verb tag after the comma/pause.

Examples

- You **don't** have any cash, **do** you?
- You **aren't** available to babysit, **are** you?
- You **can't** take the day off work, **can** you?

Complete the questions by adding the tags.
Use the examples above to help you.

1. A: You **don't** have any extra milk, _____ ?
   B: No, I'm sorry, I don't.

2. A: You **can't** make change for a twenty, _____ ?
   B: I wish I could. Sorry.

3. A: You **aren't** allowed to take a break now, _____ ?
   B: I'm afraid not.

4. A: You **don't** happen to have a spare tire, _____ ?
   B: Actually, you're in luck. I do have a spare!

Role-Play

HEY, DJ!

What songs/artists would you request if you were at a dance club or wedding? Take turns being a DJ. Which songs will you play? Which songs will you refuse to play?

Hey, DJ! Could you play _____ **by** _____ **?**
(song name)   (song artist)

- I'm sorry, I don't have that song.
- I can't play that.
- That's a terrible song.
- Oh, great song!
- Sure, I'll play that!