**Can, Could, May and Would: requests, permission, offers and invitations**

*a) Asking people to do things (requests).*

*We often use* ***can*** *or* ***could*** *when we ask someone to do something:*

Can you wait a moment, please?

Ann, can you do me a favour? = Can you help me?

Excuse me. Could you tell me how to get to the station?

Do you think you could lend me some money?

I wonder if you could help me.

*To ask something you can say* ***Can I have..?/Could I have..?/May I have..?***

* (*in a shop*) Can I have these postcards, please?
* *(at table*) Could I have the salt, please?

*-Asking for and giving permission*

We often use **can, could**, and **may** to ask permission to do something:

* (*on the telephone*) Hello, can I speak to Tom, please?
* ‘**Could** I use your telephone?’ ‘Yes of course.’
* ‘Do you think I **could** borrow your bicycle?’ ‘Yes, help yourself.’
* ‘**May** I come in?’ ‘Yes please do.’

*To give permission, we use* ***can*** *or* ***may*** *(but not* ***could****):*

* You can (or may) smoke if you like.

*Use* ***can / can’t*** *to talk about what is already allowed or not allowed:*

* You **can** drive for a year in Britain with an international licence.
* If you’re under 17, you **can’t** drive a car in Britain.
  + *We sometimes use can when we offer to do things:*
* ‘Can I get you a cup of coffee?’ ‘That’s very nice of you.’
* (in a shop) ‘Can I help you madam?’ ‘No, thank you. I’m being served.’
  + *For offering and inviting we use Would you like..? (not ‘do you like’)*
* Would you like a cup of coffee?
* Would you like to come to the cinema with us tomorrow evening?

***I’d like (=I would like)*** *is a polite way of saying what you want, or what you want to do:*

* I’d like some inforation about hotels, please.
* I’d like to try on this jackets, please.

**Exercises**

**Read this situation and write what you would say. Use the words given in brackets.**

**Example: You’ve got a pound (uang gede/utuh) note but you need some change. You ask somebody to help you. (can you…?) Can you change a pound?**

1. You want to borrow your friend’s camera. What do you say to him/her? (Could I …?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. You have a car and you want to give somebody a lift. What do you say? (Can I …?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. You have to go to the airport but you don’t know how to get there. You ask a passer-by. (Could you …?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. You are telephoning the owner of a flat which was advertised in a newspaper. You are interested in the flat and you want to come and see it today. (Do you think I …?)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. You are at an interview. You want to smoke a cigarette. What do you ask first? (May I ….?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. You want to leave work early because you have some important things to do. What do you ask your boss? (Do you think I …?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. You want to invite someone to come and stay with you for the weekend. (Would you like … ? ) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. The person in the next room has some music on very loud. How do you ask him politely to turn it down? (Do you think you …?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*This time you have to decide how to say what you want to say.*

Example: You have to carry some heavy boxes upstairs. Ask someone to help you. Do you think you could give me a hand with these boxes?

1. A friend has just come to see you in your flat. Offer him something to drink. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. You want your friend to show you how to change the film in your camera. What do you say to him/her? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. You’re on a train. The woman next to you has finished reading her newspaper. Now you want to have look at it. What do you say? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. You need a match to light your cigarette. You haven’t got any but the man sitting next to you has some. What do you ask him? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. There is a concert on tonight and you are going with some friends. You think Tom would enjoy it too. Invite him. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. You’re in the post office. You want three stamps of Japan. What do you say? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. You are sitting in a crowded bus. There is an old lady standing. Offer her your seat. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
8. You’re in a car with a friend, who is driving. He is going to park the car but there is a No Parking sign. You see **the sign** and say: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reading**

**Is that an invitation?**

In Canada and the United States, people enjoy entertaining at home. They often invite friends over for a meal, a party, or just for coffee and conversation. Here are the kinds of things people say when they invite someone to their home:

“Would you like to come over for dinner Saturday night?”

“Hey, we’re having a party on Friday. Can you come?”

To reply to an invitation, either say thank you and accept, or say you’re sorry and give an excuse: “Thanks, I’d love to. What time would you like me to come?” or “Oh, sorry. I have tickets for a movie.”

Sometimes, however, people use expressions that sound like invitations but which are not real invitations. For example:

“Please come over for a drink sometime.”

“Let’s get together for lunch soon.”

“Why don’t you come over and see us sometime soon?”

These are really just polite ways of ending a conversation. They are not *real* invitations because they don’t mention a specific time or date. They just show that person is trying to be friendly. To reply to expressions like these, people just say: “Sure, that would be great!” or “OK, yes, thanks.” So next time you hear what sounds like an invitation, listen carefully. Is it a real invitation or is the person just being friendly?

**Writing**

*1. Make up three invitations to interesting or unusual activities. write the on cards.*

Would you like to go see Godzilla Meet Superman tonight?

There’s a dog and a cat show on Saturday. Do you want to come with me?

*2. Write three response cards. One is an acceptance card:*

That’s sound great! What time do you want to meet?

I’d love to, thanks. Where do you want to meet?

*The other two cards are refusals. Think of silly or unusual excuses:*

I’d like to, but I’m taking my bird to a singing contest

I’m sorry I can’t. I’m taking cooking lessons. We’ve learning how to boil water that day.

*3. Now use your cards for the exercise below.*

*What an invitation! What an excuse!*

*Class activity*. Put all the invitation cards in one pile and the response cards in another pile face down. Then shuffle each pile. Each student takes three invitation cards and three response cards.

*Now go around the class. Use your cards to invite people to do something. Accept or decline any invitations you get.*