

GRAMMAR

# Advanced uses of *may* and *might*

**LEVEL**

Upper-Intermediate  
(B2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B2\_2032G

**LANGUAGE**

English

## Learning outcomes

- I can use 'may' and 'might' to ask for and give permission and to make polite requests.
- I can use 'may' and 'might' to highlight information.



## Warm-up

**Excuse me, may I sit  
here?**

**How would you reply?**



# Review: *May* and *might*

Review the information below.

**May** can be used to *ask for*, and *give*, permission.

*May I borrow your laptop this afternoon?*

*Yes, you may borrow my laptop this afternoon.*

*May I come in?*

*Yes, you may come in.*

**May** is quite formal. We often use **can** in less formal situations. **Ex:** **Can** I borrow your laptop? Yes, you **can** borrow my laptop.

**Might** can be used to *ask for* permission. But it **cannot be used** to give permission.

*Might I ask you a question?*

*Might I see a form of identification, please?*

**Might** is used to make **very polite** requests. We often use **might** before verbs like **ask**, **suggest**, **recommend** and **propose**. **Ex:** **Might** I recommend the salmon?





# Form sentences

Form sentences using *may* and *might*.

1 recommend / might / I / the grilled salmon / ?



*Might I recommend the grilled salmon?*

2 your attention please / I / may / have / ?



3 a word / in private / have / might / I / with you / ?



4 borrow / may / please / I / a pen / ?



5 car / your / borrow / may / I / ?





# More uses of *may*

**Review** the information in the blue boxes.

## ***As you may know...***

- Used to draw attention to something that is being said.
- Forms a dependent clause that can come **before** or **after** the **main clause**.
- Acknowledges that the listener might have some prior knowledge of what the speaker is talking about.



## ***As you may have heard...***

- Used in the same way as ***as you may know...***
- *As you may have heard, we are looking to hire a new manager.*
- *Cynthia is travelling to Shanghai, as you may have heard.*

## ***As I may have mentioned...***

- Used in a similar way as the two previous phrases.
- Assumes the topic is known to whoever the speaker is addressing.
- *As I may have mentioned, Maurice is on holiday until next week.*
- *I am joining the HR team, as Emily may have already mentioned.*





# Multiple choice

**Choose** the correct verb to correctly complete each sentence.

1 As I may have \_\_\_\_\_, I went to Italy on holiday last year.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

2 Juliette is applying for redundancy, as you may \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

3 As you may have \_\_\_\_\_, we will open two new stores next year.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

4 I will be away next week, as you may already \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

5 I am retiring at the end of the month, as I may have \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know



# Practise using *may*

1. **Read** the scenarios below.
2. **Use** the phrases with *may* to talk about them.

You are talking to your colleagues about something you did over the weekend.

You are talking to your manager about some time off work.

You are talking to an interviewer about your work experience.

You are explaining the role of a job to a candidate during an interview.

*As you may know...*

*As you may have heard...*

*As I may have mentioned...*





This discussion is pointless. We **may as well** go home.

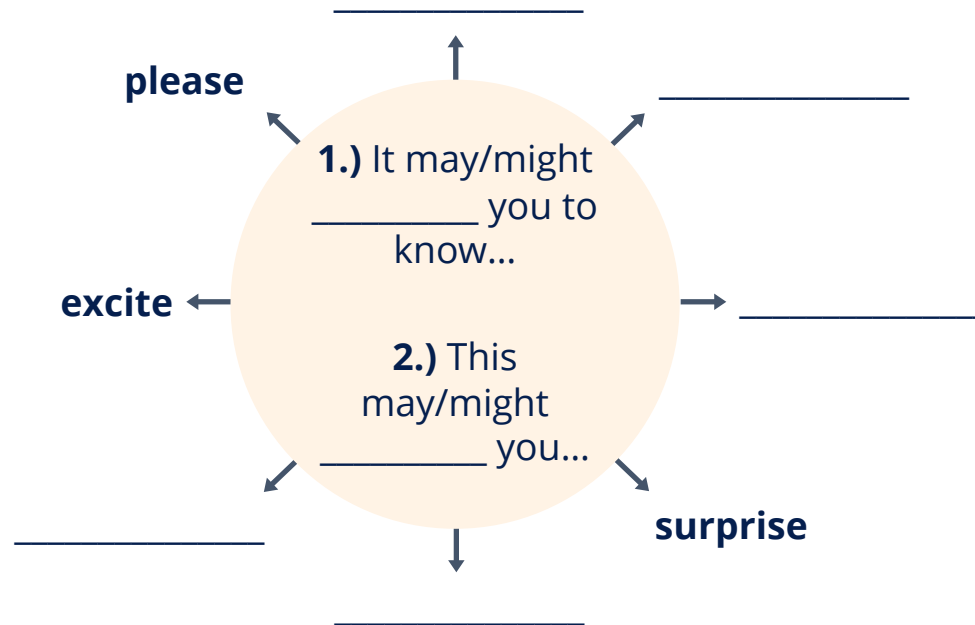
We **might as well** try calling Sarah to see if she is free.

We use **may as well** and **might as well** to mean there is nothing better to do, or there is no harm in doing something.



# Brainstorm

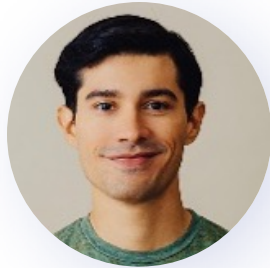
1. **Read** the two sentences in the yellow circle.
2. **Think** of some other verbs that could complete them.



# Lawrence's interview

Lawrence is interviewing for a position at Tom's small tech startup.

**Read** the information in the pink boxes below. You will need the information for the next slide!



**Lawrence**

- working at Tom's startup is a dream of his
- has nine brothers and sisters
- can speak German, French, Italian, Russian and Mandarin
- Grew up in Seattle, Washington



**Tom**

- used to work with one of Lawrence's sisters
- lived in Seattle, Washington for 10 years
- is impressed with Lawrence's experience
- has decided to offer Lawrence the position.



# Complete the sentences

**Complete** the sentences with the information you read on the previous slide.



Lawrence

**It may interest you to know...**

**This might surprise you, but...**



Lawrence

**This might surprise you, but...**

**It may please you to know...**



Tom



Tom



# Using *may* and *might*

1. **Read** the scenarios below.
2. **Use** *may* and *might* to talk about them.

Tell a friend  
about some  
good news.

Tell a colleague  
about a rumour  
you heard at  
work.

Tell a friend  
that you've  
decided to go  
vegan.

Tell a family  
member that  
there is no harm  
in applying for a  
new job.

Inform a  
candidate that  
their  
application was  
not successful.

Tell your boss  
that you are  
moving to  
New York.



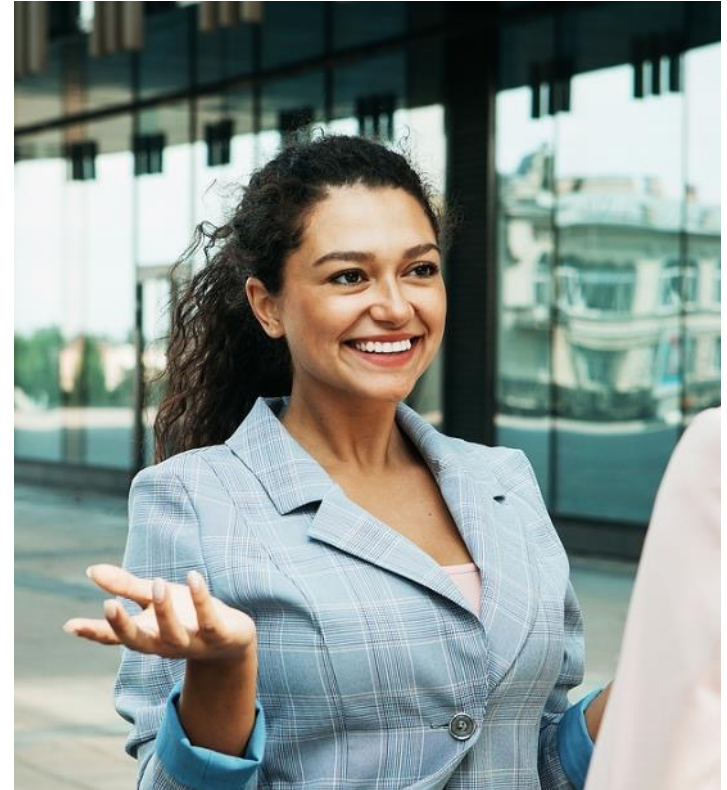
# It may/might \_\_\_\_\_ you to know...

1. **Complete** the three sentences with your own ideas.
2. Work in breakout rooms or together as a class.

1 It might surprise you to know...

2 It may interest you to know...

3 It may \_\_\_\_\_ you to know...







# End of the lesson

Idiom

***Mind your P's and Q's!***

**Meaning:** be on your best behaviour

**Example:** The parents reminded their children to mind their P's and Q's.



# Additional practice



# Multiple choice

**Choose** the correct verb to correctly complete each sentence.

1 As you may have \_\_\_\_\_, I will be leaving the company.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

2 Kraig is applying for a new job, as you may \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

3 As I might have already \_\_\_\_\_, we will have an online summer event.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

4 Susan will be away next week, as you may have \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know

5 We are hiring a new team member, as I may have \_\_\_\_\_.

a. heard

b. mentioned

c. know



# Discuss

**Read** the questions below. When might you use them? When was the last time you heard them?

**May I have your attention please?**



**May I speak with you in private?**



# Discuss

**Answer** the question below.

**When was the last time someone was rude to you? What happened?**

**Share your answer with the rest of the class.**







# Answer key

**P.5:**

2.) May I have your attention please?

3.) Might I have a word with you in private?

4.) May I borrow a pen please?/May I please borrow a pen?

5.) May I borrow your car?

**P.7:** 1.) b 2.) c 3.) a 4.) c 5.) b

**P.18:** 1.) a 2.) c 3.) b 4.) a 5.) b



# Summary

## Reviewing *may*

- **May** can be used to **ask for**, and **give**, permission.
- e.g. **May** I borrow your laptop this afternoon? - Yes, you **may** borrow my laptop this afternoon.
- **May** is quite formal. We often use **can** instead. e.g. **Can** I borrow your laptop? - Yes, you **can** borrow it

## Reviewing *might*

- **Might** can be used to **ask for** permission. But it **cannot** be used to give permission.
- e.g. **Might** I ask you a question?; **Might** I see a form of identification, please?
- **Might** is used to make **very polite** requests. We often use **might** before verbs like **ask**, **suggest**, **recommend** and **propose**. e.g. **Might** I recommend the salmon?

## Using *may* in set phrases

- **As you may have heard**, I will be leading the next project.
- **As you may know**, Tim will be leaving the company in August.
- **As I may have mentioned**, Maurice is on holiday until next week.

## *May or might as well*

- We use **may as well** and **might as well** to mean there is nothing better to do.
- They also can mean there is no harm in doing something.
- e.g. No one's coming, so we **might as well** go home.



# Vocabulary

form of identification

redundancy

may as well

might as well

rumour



## Notes

