

Polite Requests, Responses, and Excuses



Requests

Informal: when you are speaking to friends, your family members, waiters, salespeople.

Would you lend me your pen?

Could I borrow your pen?

Formal: when you are speaking to teachers, police, strangers, your boss, elderly people, important people

Would you mind lending me your pen?
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I wonder if I could borrow your pen.

Would you mind if I borrowed your pen?

Responses

Acceptance	Refusal with an excuse
Sure.	I'm sorry, but I can't.
I'd be glad to.	I'm sorry, but ____.
All right.	I'd like to, but ____.

Introductory Exercises

Fill in the blanks with the words or phrases in **bold type**.

Would you mind Could you Sure I'd like to, but

At home

1. Brother: _____ drive me to the train station at 5 o'clock?
2. Sister: _____ I'm leaving at 4 o'clock so I can't.
3. Brother: Thanks anyway. I'll ask somebody else.

On the street

4. Young woman: Excuse me. _____ telling me which way the tourist office is?
5. Elderly man: _____. It's over there.
6. Young woman: Thank you.

Could you Would you mind if Sure I'm sorry, but

At a store

7. Customer: _____ tell me how much this jacket costs?
8. Salesperson: _____. It's \$75.
9. Customer: Thanks

At school

10. Student: _____ I visited your office tomorrow to show you my paper?
11. Teacher: _____ I'll be out of town tomorrow.
12. Student: I see. Thanks anyways.

All right Could you wait be glad to
I wonder if Would you put

At work

13. Worker: _____ I could go out for lunch now.

14. Boss: _____ a half hour more?

15. Worker: _____.

At the store

16. Customer: _____ this in a box for me, please?

17. Salesperson: Sure. I'd _____.

Student A

Step 1: Say your sentences to Student B. Then listen to Student B.

1. Tell your partner, "I'm a police officer." Listen to your partner's request. Then **refuse** to help. **Give an excuse.**
2. Tell your partner, "I'm your mother." Listen to the request and **agree** to help.
3. Say, "I'm the head of the school." Listen and **refuse.** **Give an excuse.**
4. Say, "I'm a child." Listen and **agree.**

Step 2: First listen to Student B. Then make your request.

5. Ask your partner to weigh your package.
6. Ask your partner to lend you their umbrella.
7. Ask your partner to tell you where the drug store is.
8. Ask your partner to push your car. (Your car has broken down in the middle of the street.)

Step 3: Now you start again.

9. Say, "I'm the school secretary." Listen and **refuse.** **Give an excuse.**
10. Say, "I'm your boss." Listen and **refuse.** **Give an excuse.**
11. Say, "I'm a salesperson in a store." Listen and **agree.**
12. Say, "I'm your brother." Listen and **refuse.** **Give an excuse.**

Step 4: Now student B will start again.

13. Ask your partner to tell you how much their car cost.
14. Ask your partner to lend you \$75 so that you can go to a rock concert.
15. Ask your partner to lend you their car so you can travel for a week.
16. Ask your partner to pick you up at the train station tonight at midnight.

Student B

Step 1: First listen to Student A. Then make your request.

1. Ask your partner to tell you where the nearest bus stop is.
2. Ask your partner to open the window.
3. Ask your partner to lend you a pencil
4. Ask your partner to if you could sit next to them.

Step 2: Say your sentences to Student A. Then listen to Student A.

5. Tell your partner, "I'm a post office worker." Listen and **agree** to help.
6. Say, "I'm your friend." Listen and **refuse. Give an excuse.**
7. Say, "I'm a middle-aged stranger." Listen and **refuse. Give an excuse.**
8. Say, "I'm a policeman." Listen and **refuse. Give an excuse.**

Step 3: Now student B will start again.

9. Ask your partner if you could use the telephone on their desk.
10. Ask your partner to give you 3 days off from work. (You are tired and you need a rest.)
11. Ask your partner to tell you where the restroom is.
12. Ask your partner to help you with your homework at 9 o'clock tonight.

Step 4: Now you start again.

13. Say, "I'm your future father-in-law." Listen and **agree.**
14. Say, "I'm your boss." Listen and **refuse. Give an excuse.**
15. Say, "I'm your sister." Listen and **refuse. Give an excuse.**
16. Say, "I'm your father." Listen and **agree.**