

B1 BUSINESS GRAMMAR ≈ 27 MIN

Modal Verbs for Politeness — *ask politely*

You know the rule — now you practise the ladder of can, could and would you mind in new situations.

The past form of the modal
creates

distance

, not the past — the more distance, the
more

polite

the
request.

NAME

DATE

YOUR BUILD

1 · SORTING

2 · FILL-IN

3 · CORRECT

4 · WRITE

BRICK 1 · SORT: DIRECT OR POLITE · APPROX. 4 MIN

● ○ ○

Read each request. Fits a colleague you know well → left column. Needs more distance for a client or manager → right column.

Can you print the handout for me?

Could you review the draft proposal today?

Can you grab a coffee with me at eleven?

Would you mind rescheduling our call to Thursday?

Can you check this table before lunch?

Could you possibly extend the payment deadline?

Can you forward that email later?

Would it be OK if we moved the workshop to next week?

Can you swap shifts with me tomorrow?

Could you confirm the shipping address again?

DIRECT · FOR COLLEAGUES

POLITE · FOR CLIENTS AND MANAGERS

BRICK 2 · FILL IN THE MISSING WORD · APPROX. 6 MIN

● ● ○

Fill in the right word or phrase. Watch for mind + -ing, the permission questions and I'd like instead of I want.

- 01 Would you mind _____ these figures to the client before Friday?
- 02 _____ you possibly resend the shipping documents? I seem to have misplaced them.
- 03 In this very formal setting, _____ I ask a quick question before we start? (most formal rung)
- 04 Do you mind _____ I open the window? It's quite warm in here.
- 05 _____ it be OK if I joined tomorrow's call five minutes late?
- 06 _____ to reschedule this afternoon's call to Friday, if that suits you.
- 07 Our visitor has just arrived — _____ I get you something to drink? (relaxed offer)
- 08 _____ I reserve the demo room for Monday's client visit? (offer to take the task on)

YOUR BUILD

1 · SORTING

2 · FILL-IN

3 · CORRECT

4 · WRITE

BRICK 3 · FIND AND CORRECT THE MISTAKE · APPROX. 7 MIN



Each sentence hides exactly one mistake with the politeness modals. Underline it and write the whole sentence correctly.

01 Would you mind to check the figures before we send them?

02 I want to book a meeting room for our first call with the client.

03 "Would you mind covering my shift on Saturday?" "Yes, that's fine."

04 Can you send me the contract, Ms. Keller? We haven't spoken before.

05 May you send the updated figures by Friday?

06 Could you to check the invoice total before we send it?

BRICK 4 · WRITE YOUR OWN SENTENCES · APPROX. 8 MIN



Write your own polite request or offer for each business-context prompt. Choose the right rung on purpose.

01 Ask a colleague for a small favour using "Can you ...".

02 Ask a new client for a document using "Could you ...".

03 Ask your manager for permission using "Would it be OK if ...".

04 Make an offer to a visitor using "Would you like ..." or "Shall I ...".

MINI-CHECK – CAN I DO THIS YET?

- ☐ I choose the right rung: can for colleagues, could for clients and managers.
- ☐ After mind I use the -ing form, not the bare infinitive.
- ☐ For "Ich möchte" I use I'd like, not I want.
- ☐ To "Would you mind ...?" I answer "No, not at all" when I agree.

Not every box ticked? Redo the lesson and try this sheet again tomorrow.



Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why** — the rule matters more than the result.

BRICK 1 · SORTING

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| <p>01 Direct — Can you print the handout for me?
<i>Requests between colleagues stay with can.</i></p> <p>02 Polite — Could you review the draft proposal today?
<i>With a client, could creates the necessary distance.</i></p> <p>03 Direct — Can you grab a coffee with me at eleven?
<i>A casual request between colleagues needs no could.</i></p> <p>04 Polite — Would you mind rescheduling our call to Thursday?
<i>Would you mind + -ing is the top rung of the request.</i></p> <p>05 Direct — Can you check this table before lunch?
<i>A direct, friendly request inside the team.</i></p> | <p>06 Polite — Could you possibly extend the payment deadline?
<i>Possibly softens a bigger request even further.</i></p> <p>07 Direct — Can you forward that email later?
<i>A small favour between colleagues.</i></p> <p>08 Polite — Would it be OK if we moved the workshop to next week?
<i>Would it be OK if acknowledges the request affects the other person.</i></p> <p>09 Direct — Can you swap shifts with me tomorrow?
<i>A direct request, right for a familiar team.</i></p> <p>10 Polite — Could you confirm the shipping address again?
<i>With clients, could is the safe default.</i></p> |
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BRICK 2 · FILL-IN

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|---|--|
| <p>01 forwarding
<i>Mind is an ordinary verb — the -ing form follows it.</i></p> <p>02 Could
<i>Could you possibly is the fixed phrase for a bigger favour.</i></p> <p>03 May
<i>In a very formal setting, May I is the most formal rung.</i></p> <p>04 if
<i>Do you mind if I ... asks permission that affects the other person.</i></p> | <p>05 Would
<i>Would it be OK if opens the polite permission question.</i></p> <p>06 I'd like
<i>I'd like replaces the too-direct I want.</i></p> <p>07 Can
<i>Can I get you ...? is the fixed offer formula for guests.</i></p> <p>08 Shall
<i>Shall I ...? offers to take a task on.</i></p> |
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BRICK 3 · CORRECT

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|---|---|
| <p>01 Would you mind checking the figures before we send them?
<i>Mind is not a modal — it needs the -ing form, not to.</i></p> <p>02 I'd like to book a meeting room for our first call with the client.
<i>I want reads like a demand in a client email.</i></p> <p>03 "Would you mind covering my shift on Saturday?" "No, that's fine."
<i>No, not at all means yes; Yes would be a refusal.</i></p> | <p>04 Could you send me the contract, Ms. Keller? We haven't spoken before.
<i>With a new client, could is the minimum.</i></p> <p>05 Could you send the updated figures by Friday?
<i>May does not request an action from someone else — only could/can do.</i></p> <p>06 Could you check the invoice total before we send it?
<i>The base verb without to follows could.</i></p> |
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BRICK 4 · WRITE

Your sentences may differ — just check the rung and the form after the modal.

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|---|---|
| <p>01 "Can you cover my desk for ten minutes?"
<i>Can fits a colleague.</i></p> <p>02 "Could you send me the signed agreement, please?"
<i>Could is the safe default with a new client.</i></p> | <p>03 "Would it be OK if I started twenty minutes later tomorrow?"
<i>Would it be OK if asks permission politely.</i></p> <p>04 "Would you like a coffee while you wait?"
<i>Would you like ... is the standard offer for guests.</i></p> |
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NEXT BRICKS — KEEP BUILDING FREE ONLINE

PAIR WITH THIS

Must, Have To, Should

englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/must-have-to-should

NEXT STEP

Might, Could, May

englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/might-could-may

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