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How to make polite requests in English

The most common **polite** way is to use *Would you/would you like to/could you* to ask other people to **do** something. We use it to suggest or **request** something more **polite** than **Do** you want to ...? *Would you please give me the file on the table?* Yes, of course.

How do you politely ask for something?

- In more formal situations. Excuse me... ..
- Say hello. A “hello” and a smile go a long way! Say “hello” at the beginning of your **request**.
...
- Remember “please” and “thank you” “Please” normally goes at the end of the sentence: ...
Say “excuse me” If you **ask** someone who is doing **something** else, remember to say “excuse me”

What is an example of a request sentence?

Simple **Sentences** used for **Request**:

I wonder whether you could give me a car. I am sorry to trouble you but I need your help. I hope you don't mind if I asked the money. Would you mind if I ask your help ?

How do you formally ask for something?

Fortunately, the structure of a formal email of request is very simple:

1. You start the email or **letter** by explaining what you are writing about (the topic/subject) and what the email's purpose is (i.e. you want to **ask** them some questions or for **something**).
Then in the next section, you **ask** them the questions or requests.

How to write a polite email asking for something:

1. Step 1: Focus on the recipient. Remember: Your message to the important person should be focused on THEM. ...
2. Step 2: Sell your benefits. Let's face it, you're trying to sell yourself here. ...
3. Step 3: Make saying “no” impossible.

A request is when we ask someone for something. Since we are asking someone for help, it is important to be polite.

We must avoid being too direct.

4. Here are examples of being too direct:
 - “I want help.”
 - “Pass me the salt.”
 - “Can you carry my bag?”
5. These questions are all correct English but they are too direct. These are not polite requests. They are in fact quite rude. People will be offended because they will think that you are giving them orders.

In general English people love being polite and respect good manners. You might have noticed we are continually saying please, thank you, excuse me and sorry.

When making a request you are asking someone to do something that will help you but may not help them in anyway. In fact, you might be asking something that will be really difficult for the other person to do. Therefore it is important when making a request to ensure you are being polite.

To do this you might want to include a *modal verb* such as *can* or *could* (more formal) to soften your approach. This may make it look like you are asking a question rather than making a request. However, don't worry the listener will understand you are not looking for an answer other than the answer to the request.

For example, if you are in a restaurant and say: “I want the bill” to the waiter, your request will be considered very direct. You might want to use this kind of language if you are angry or have had very bad service. However if you wish to remain polite you might want to consider one of the following options:

“**Can** I have the bill, please?”

“**Could** I possibly have the bill please?”

Polite language can also be used to ask for the permission of the person you are speaking to. For example just sitting down next to someone in a bar might be considered a bit forward or if that person is waiting on a friend might create an awkward (uncomfortable) situation. You might want to seek their permission first. For example:

“**Would it be ok** if I sat here?”

“**Do you mind** if I sit here?”

“**Is it alright** if I sit here?”

This extends to seeking someone's attention. For example if you want to get past someone who is blocking your way “move please!” will be seen as being very direct. You might wish to soften this approach by adding and “excuse me” or “sorry to bother you.”

- “*Excuse me*, could I possibly get past?”

“*Sorry to interrupt*, but could I ask you to move just for a moment while I get past?”

Polite requests in spoken English:

Could you?

Form: Could you + base form of verb ?

examples:

Could you carry my bags?

Could you give me some advice?

Could you carry these boxes?

We can add “**possibly**” to be even more polite. We put “possibly” in between “Could you” and the verb.

Example:

Could you **possibly** hold my drink?

Would you mind.. ?

Form: Would you mind + ing form of verb ... ?

Examples:

Would you mind carrying my bags?

Would you mind giving me some advice?

Would you mind helping me?

Would you mind taking my photograph?

I wonder if you could .. ?

Form: I wonder if you could + base form of verb ... ?

Examples: I

Wonder if you could mind my bag?

I wonder if you could give me some advice.

I wonder if you could help me?

We can add “**possibly**” to be even more polite:

I wonder if you could **possibly** take me to the airport?

Negative statements with question tags

A statement is a normal sentence. It is not a question. We can add question tags to a negative statement to transform the negative into a question. This is very formal English and it’s an excellent way to ask someone something politely.

There are several ways of doing this:

Form: You couldn’t + base form of verb ... + could you?

Example:

You couldn't help me, could you?

Form: You wouldn't + base form of verb ... + would you?

Example:

You wouldn't take me to the airport, would you?

Form: I don't suppose you could + base form of verb ... + could you?

Example:

I don't suppose you could clean the bathroom, could you?

Polite requests in written English

Here is a good expression for formal emails and letters:

Form:

I would be grateful if you could + base form of verb ...

Example:

I would be grateful if you could send me your price list.

We can add "most" to be even more polite:

Example:

I would be most grateful if you could send me the reports.

Notice that these are not questions. They are affirmative statements. Therefore, do NOT write a question mark at the end. (?)