

Chapter 4

Making Requests and Commands

Objectives

1. To use different kinds of request in daily conversation.
2. To know how to make a command in different contexts.

A. Making requests

Making a request is the polite way of asking someone to do something or asking permission. As cultured people, students should learn how to make proper requests.

A1. Presentation : Polite request or direct request

At the office, Dr. Thompson is very busy today, so he keeps on asking his secretary, Mrs. Smith to help him. Now study the following requests.

Dialogue 1

Dr. Thompson



Excuse me, Mrs. Smith. Do you have a minute to spare? I was wondering if you could go over this letter for me?

Mrs. Smith



Certainly. Could you please leave it on my desk?

Of course. Could I possibly borrow this file for a moment?

Go ahead. I'm not using it right now.

Would you mind typing this letter for me? I'd like to have it finished before the meeting at noon.

Of course not. Would you be so kind as to shut the window? It's so windy. I have plenty of work and I need to concentrate.

Certainly. I'd be glad to.

A1.1 Check your understanding

1. Why is Dr. Thompson busy?

2. Is Mrs. Smith busy as well? Why?

3. What are they preparing for?

4. Why did Mrs. Smith ask him to leave the letter on the desk?

5. Why did Mrs. Smith request him to shut the window?

A1.2 Key to your pronunciation

Making requests often use the question form. The intonation must be rising at the beginning and at the end of the request sentences.

3
2 4
Could you please leave it on my desk?

3
2 4
Could I possibly borrow this file for a moment?

3
2 4
Would you mind typing this letter for me?

3
2 4
Would you be so kind as to shut the window?

3
2 4
I was wondering if you could go over this letter for me?

A1.3 Explanation

A1.3.1 Modals

The modals "could" and "would" are often found in request sentences. Both of them are past forms of "can" and "will", but they do not indicate the past time of the events. They function as formal requests at the moment of speaking. Thus, the students should learn the different function of modals in English and try to distinguish them. The structure of the request can be regarded as in following patterns.

Could you please + Verb _____ ?

Could I possibly + Verb _____ ?

Would you mind + Verb + ing _____ ?

Would you be so kind as to + Verb _____ ?

I was wondering if you could + Verb _____ ?

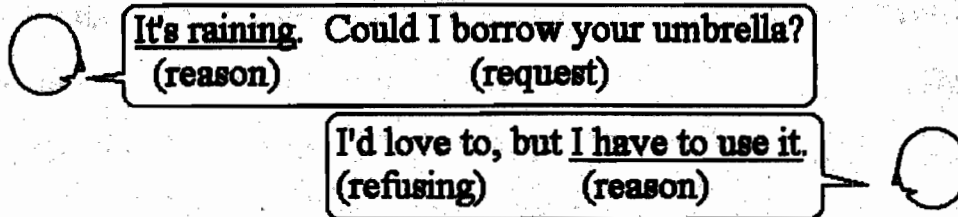
A1.3.2 Responses of requests

Notice how the requests are made with proper responses below.

Requests	Responses (consenting)
Could you please type this letter for me? Could I possibly borrow this file? Would you mind typing this letter for me? Would you be so kind as to type this letter for me? I was wondering if you could type this letter for me?	Of course. Go ahead. Of course not. Certainly. I'd be glad to. Certainly.
Requests	Responses (refusing)
Could you please go over this letter for me? Could I possibly borrow your calculator? Would you mind going over this letter for me? Would you be so kind as to go over this letter for me? I was wondering if you could go over this letter for me?	I'm afraid not. No, you can't. I have to use it. I'm afraid I do. I'd love to, but I'm terribly busy. I'm afraid I can't.

Responses of request can be either consenting (yes) or refusing (no). There are many forms in each category which students should learn how to use. Usually, for polite requests, there is some specific reason of the speakers for the requests or, of the hearers to consent or refuse. Study mini-talks 1-3 below.

Mini-talk 1 :



Mini-talk 2 :

These books are very heavy. Could you give me a hand?

Surely. I'd be glad to.

Mini-talk 3 :

The reading assignment is very difficult. I was wondering if you could get it finished for me this evening?

Oh. I'm afraid I can't. I'm tied up this evening.
(refusing) (reason)

Students should learn the proper usage of the responses especially when it is in negative form (refusing). The expression "I'm afraid ___" functions to qualify the response in order to make it more polite.

I'm afraid I can't.

I'm afraid I do.

I'm afraid not.

The response "I'd love to, but ." is regarded as "refusing" even though its structure is ambiguous. The first part "I'd love to" means "yes", whereas the second part "but" means "no". Students should understand its meaning and its function and not be confused when using it. Study more examples below.

Mini-talk 4 :

Could you drive me to the airport?

I'd love to, but I'm terribly busy today.

Mini-talk 5 :



Would you be so kind as to bring me the catalogue tomorrow?

I'd love to, but I'm not sure I can come tomorrow.



Mini-talk 6 :



Could you please pick me up around noon?

I'd love to, but I'm tied up today.



In daily conversation, various expressions have been found and all of them are considered as various forms of requests. All of them have the same meaning.

Please get this finished for me?

Would you please get this finished for me?

Will you get this finished for me?

Get this finished for me, will you?

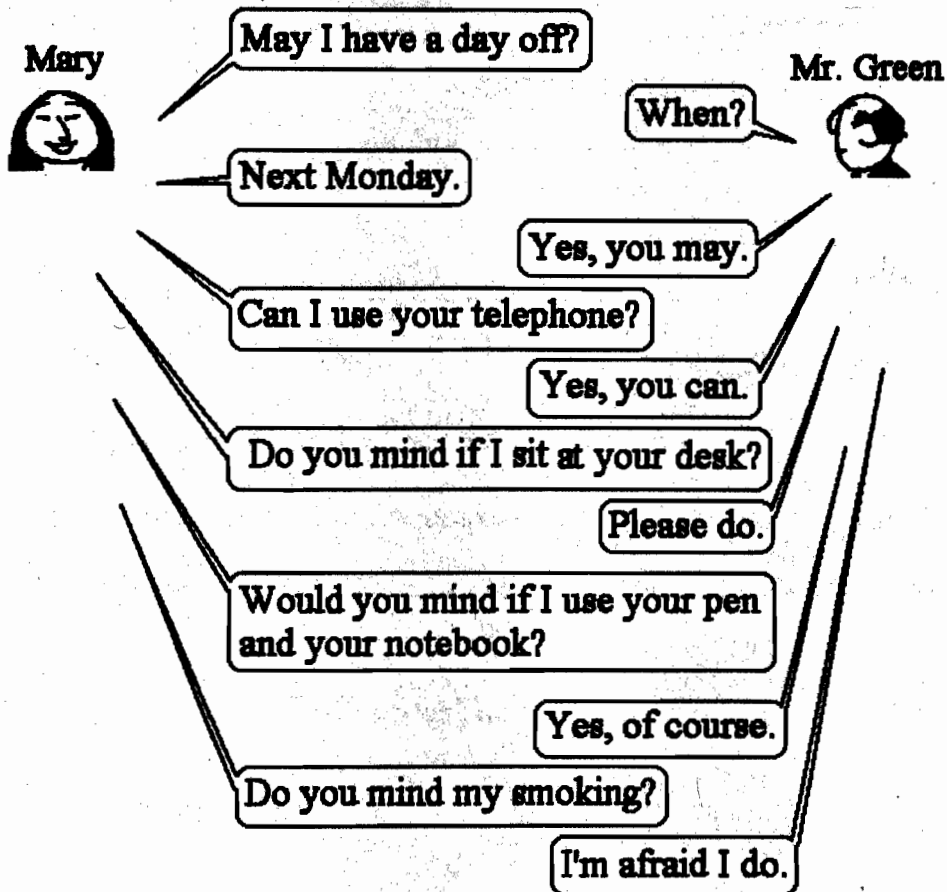
Will you get this finished for me, please?

Won't you get this finished for me?

A2. Presentation : Indirect request or permission

In the contexts where the speakers and hearers are intimate, structural forms of asking permission are used and function as indirect requests.

Dialog 2 : At the office



A2.1 Check your understanding

1. Who doesn't come to work on Monday?

2. Who is the boss?

3. How many requests has she made?

4. Why does Mary need a pen and a notebook?

5. What is Mr. Green's negative reply?


A2.2 Key to your pronunciation


The intonation pattern of the indirect requests are as the followings.

1. Say the above request sentences by putting primary stress with a rising pitch on the final words.

2 May I have a day off? 

2 Do you mind if I sit at your desk? 

2 Would you mind if I use your pen and your notebook? 

2 Do you mind my smoking? 

2 Can I use your telephone? 

2. Say the following replies by putting the rising-falling pitch in the appropriate places.

Positive replies

³ Yes, you may.

² Please do.

² Yes, of course.

³ Yes, you can.

Negative replies

² I'm afraid I do.

² I'm afraid you can't.

³ No, you may not.

A2.3 Explanation

1. All indirect requests are in form of questions. The modals "can" and "may" with tertiary stress are used to signify the request. Compare the intonation patterns of both types of requests below.

Direct requests 3 - 2 - 3 - 4

³ Could you leave it on my desk?

³ Would you mind typing this letter for me?

³ Would you be so kind as to shut the window?

Indirect requests 2 - 3 - 4

² Can I use your telephone?

² May I have a day off?

² Do you mind if I sit at your desk?

2. The students should not confuse the structural patterns between the direct request and indirect ones below.

Direct request

Would you mind + Ving _____ ?

Would you mind stopping on the way and visiting the museum?

Indirect requests

Do you mind if _____ clause ?

Would you mind if _____ clause ?

Do you mind _____ noun phrase ?

- Do you mind if we stop on the way and visit the museum?

- Would you mind if we stop on the way and visit the museum?

- Do you mind my stop on the way and my visit the museum?

A3. Practice

A3.1 Writing exercises

A3.1.1 Write a sentence of request.

1. Use the information on you left to complete the request sentences on your right.

get some milk	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
---------------	--

have some more tea	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
have another piece of cake	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

A3.1.2 Complete the mini-talks with request sentences.

Use the above requests to complete the mini-talks below.

Mini-talk 7 :



My tea cup is empty.



Mrs. Smith

Mini-talk 8 :



Ooh! Your cake is so delicious.
I'm still starving.



Sure, help yourself.

Mrs. Smith

Mini-talk 9:



Sally

I'm full now, but I'm still thirsty.



Mrs. Smith

Go ahead.

A3.2 Listening and speaking exercises

A3.2.1 Sentence Practice. Right to left drills. Listen and repeat after the instructor.

1. I / was wondering / if / you could / go over / this letter / for me?

for me?

this letter for me?

go over this letter for me?

you could go over this letter for me?

if you could go over this letter for me?

was wondering if you could go over this letter for me?

I was wondering if you could go over this letter for me?

2. Could / I / possibly / borrow / this file / for a moment?

3. Would / you be / so kind / as to shut / the window?

4. Would / you / mind / typing / this letter / for me?

5. Would / you / please / get / this / finished / for me?

6. Would / you / please / pick me up / around / noon?

7. Do / you / mind / if / I / sit / at / your desk?

8. Would / you / mind / if / I use / your pen / and / your notebook?

A3.2.2 Substitution Drills. Substitute the given words or phrases to the underlined words.

1. May I have a day off?

have another piece of chocolate cake?

use your telephone?

borrow your umbrella?

2. I was wondering if you could buy me some sweets?

some medicine

some tissues

some cigarettes

3. Would you please get a roll of film for this camera?

a stamp for this envelope

a blank cassette for this record

a key for this machine

4. Would you mind if I borrow your calculator?

hair dryer

alarm clock

type writer

B. Making commands

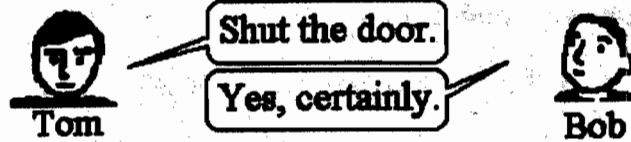
Making a command is a way of telling someone to do something or to behave the way you expect. The person who makes the command must have authority over the hearer. Moreover, the "commander" is likely to expect the hearer to behave as he orders. On the contrary to requests, the hearer has an alternative either to accept or refuse the requests.

There are two types of commands – positive and negative commands.

Study the command sentences in the mini-talks below.

B1. Presentation : Mini-talks 10-17

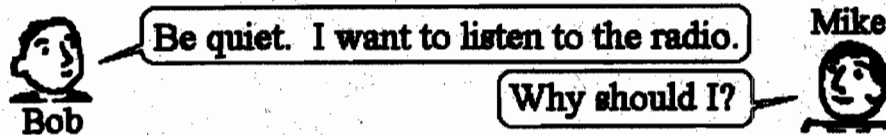
Mini-talk 10 : Tom commands Bob to shut the door.



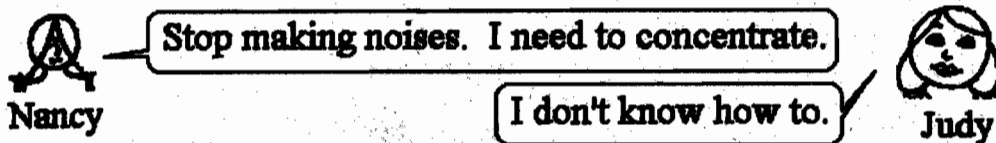
Mini-talk 11 : The mother commands the girl to follow her.



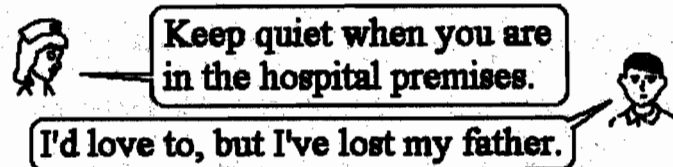
Mini-talk 12 : Bob commands Mike to be quiet.



Mini-talk 13 : Nancy commands Judy to stop making noises.



Mini-talk 14 : The nurse commands the boy to keep quiet.



Mini-talk 15 : The mother commands her daughter to shut up.



Shut up. You've talked too much.



I'd love to, but I've lost my purse.

Mini-talk 16 : The husband commands his wife not to worry about him.



Don't worry about me.



I'm afraid I can't.

Mini-talk 17 : The wife commands her husband not to forget his wallet.



Don't forget your wallet.



Yes, of course.

B1.1 Check your understanding

1. Is there any subject in command sentence?

2. If yes, where is it? What is it?

If no, why?

3. In making a command, is it necessary to give a reason? Why?

4. What indicates negative command? And where is it?

5. What tense do we use in making a command?

B1.2 Key to your pronunciation

1. Normally, the 31 pattern of intonation is found in saying a command sentence.

' Listen.

' Follow me.

' Shut the door.

' Stop.

' Help me.

' Stop making noises.

' Wait.

' Shut up.

' Don't forget your wallet.

2. Like direct requests, the command sentences must begin with rising pitch and end with falling pitch similar to a sentence. For some command sentences which accompany with reason, the intonation pattern will be like the following.

' Keep quiet when you are in the hospital premises.

3. Sometimes, the intonation patterns can be changed if the speakers intend to make a polite command. Notice the difference below.

' Be quiet.

(command)

(Falling 3-1)

' Be quiet.

(polite command)

(Rising 3 - 4)

' Be careful.

(command)

(Falling 3-1)

' Be careful.

(polite command)

(Rising 3 - 4)

B1.3 Explanation

Command sentences begins with an infinitive without "to". The subject of the command sentence is being understood of the pronoun "you". For negative commands, the command sentence will begin with "don't" and "don't" must be preceded the infinitive without "to". Study the mini-talks 10 -17. Complete the following tables with command sentences.

Positive commands		Replies	
1.	Shut the door.	Yes, certainly.	consenting
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Negative commands		Replies	
7.			
8.			

B2. Practice : Listening and speaking practice

B2.1 Sentence Practice. Right to left drills. Listen and repeat after the instructor.

1. Don't / forget / your wallet.

your wallet.

forget your wallet.

Don't forget your wallet.

2. Stop / making / noises.

3. Don't / worry / about me.

4. Keep / quiet / when / you / are in / the hospital / premises.

B2.2 Substitution Drills. Substitute the given words or phrases to the underlined words.

1. Stop making noises.

working too hard.

talking too much.

eating too much.

2. Don't forget your wallet.

your calculator

your umbrella

your jacket

3. Keep quiet when you are in the hospital.

in the lecture room

in the seminar room

in the office

B2.3 Dictation. Listen to what your instructor says and then fill in the blanks.

1. Would you please get this _____ for me?

2. Couldn't you _____ pick me up around noon?

3. Do you mind my _____ on the way?

4. Keep quiet when you're in the _____.

5. Don't forget your _____.

6. Shut up. You _____ too much.

7. Stop making noises. I need to _____.

8. I was _____ if you could go over this letter for me.








9. I'm _____ this evening.

10. Could you _____ airport?

C. Applications

C1. Mini-talks completion

Make requests to suit the replies below.

1. **You** _____ **Ann**

Yes, please do so.
2. **You** _____ **Bob**

Of course.
3. **You** _____ **Ed**

Certainly.
4. **You** _____ **Jane**

Why should I?
5. **You** _____ **Jim**

I'd love to.
6. **You** _____ **Joe**

I'm afraid I do.
7. **You** _____ **John**

No, you can't.

8.

You

I'm not in the mood.

Judy



C2. Sentence transformation

Say the following requests, then change them into commands.

1. Would you mind shutting the window?

2. Would you leave the door open?

3. May I borrow 5 dollars?

4. Do you mind if I put the notice on the board?

5. Please state your opinion.

C3. Dialogue completion

Complete the mini-talks 18-19 below.

Mini-talk 18 : You need some airletters and your friend, Tom is going to the post office.

You

Tom, I wonder if _____
while you are at _____ ?

_____. How many do you want?

_____. Thanks a lot.



Tom

Mini-talk 19 : Mary and John are in the library.

John



Mary, _____
a dictionary for a moment?

I'm afraid not. _____
Would you mind coming back in ten minutes?

Take your time. I can wait.



Mary