

## Polite Requests by Matt Done



### 1 Warmer

a. Talk to a partner about the following two questions:

- When was the last time someone asked you for a favour? What was it?
- Do you often ask people for favours?
- What favours do people usually ask of you?

### 2 Listening

a. You are going to listen to three short dialogues in which someone asks another person to do something. What is the person asking for in each dialogue?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Listening for specific information

a. Listen to the dialogues again. Write down the exact question the speaker asks to make the request.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ you could give me a hand with these boxes?
2. Listen sir, I don't mean to be a pain, but \_\_\_\_\_ you to put the cigarette out?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ checking my cover letter, just to make sure there are no big mistakes?

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### 4 Focus on form

**a. Match a–c with 1–6:**

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| a. Can I ask you...          | 1. ...turning down the music?                   |
| b. Would you mind...         | 2. ...to send me an email with the information? |
| c. Do you think you could... | 3. ...to post this letter for me?               |
|                              | 4. ...ask him for me?                           |
|                              | 5. ...getting one for me too?                   |
|                              | 6. ...give me a hand?                           |

**b. Underline the forms of verbs in these indirect question structures.**

- Can I ask you + *bring / bringing / to bring* me a drink?
- Do you mind + *bring / bringing / to bring* me a drink?
- I'm sorry to ask this, but do you think you could + *bring / bringing / to bring* me a drink?

**c. Fill the gaps in the sentences below using the verbs in brackets in the correct form:**

- I'm about to go into a meeting. Can I ask you \_\_\_\_\_ (call) me later?
- I'm not actually using that email address anymore. Do you think you could \_\_\_\_\_ (send) it to my work email?
- I'm incredibly busy today. Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ (reschedule)?
- There's a lot of background noise. Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ (turn off) your microphones?
- Can I ask you \_\_\_\_\_ (send) me your CV and a copy of your certificates, please?
- I'm sorry to ask this, but do you think you could \_\_\_\_\_ (come) in tomorrow to finish the work?

### 5 Pronunciation

**a. Listen to the questions one more time and pay attention to the words in bold. How are they pronounced?**

- **Do you think you could** give me a hand **with** these boxes?
- **Can I ask you to put the** cigarette out?
- **Would you** mind checking my cover letter?

**b. Listen to the questions again and repeat them.**

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### 6 Reflection

**a. Discuss these questions.**

- Why do you think we sometimes use indirect language to make requests?
- How does direct speech in requests influence how we are perceived?

### 7 Speaking

**a. Look at the following situations. For each, write out one or two polite requests you could make.**

Example: *Would you mind moving your car? / Can I ask you to move your car?*

- A neighbour has parked his car in front of your garage. Ask your neighbour to move his car.
- Your friend's brother is a plumber. Ask your friend if his brother can come to your flat to look at a problem you have with your shower.
- You need to leave work early because of a doctor's appointment. Ask your colleague if she can answer your calls for the rest of the day.
- You have just watched a business presentation. Ask the speaker to send you the presentation via email.
- You are sitting in the park but the people next to you are playing very loud music. Ask them to turn the music down.

### 8 Pair work

**a. With a partner, write out a short dialogue for 2 of the situations above. Then, act out your dialogue for the class.**