

Teacher's notes

LEVEL: Elementary / A1

TIME: 50 minutes

SKILLS: listening, speaking

AIM: to practise polite language used when taking customer orders

MATERIALS: one copy of the worksheet per student

Grammar

modals: *could, may, can*

use of *I'll* as a spontaneous offer of action

Vocabulary and phrases

Is there anything else ...?

Would you like ...?

Let me just ...

May I confirm ...?

to rush an order

Procedure

1. Write *Taking an order* at the top of a whiteboard or flipchart. Ask students for examples of products or services customers can order. How or where can a customer place an order? Write their examples on the white board or flipchart:

Taking an order

Product or service

1. mobile phone

2.

3.

How / Where can the customer order?

1. by phone, on the internet, at a shop

2.

3.

2. Write the four examples of 'unfriendly' language as displayed in the box below on the flipchart or whiteboard and ask students if they think this is suitable language to use with customers. Ask students which polite forms they know and write down their suggestions. Then strike through the unfriendly phrases and rewrite the examples using *Would you like ...?*, *Could you ...?*, *May I ...?* and *Let me just ...*

- ~~You want~~ to order five cases of orange juice?
Would you like ...
- ~~Give me~~ your customer number.
Could you give me ...
- ~~I want to~~ check your contact details.
May I ...
- ~~I'm saying~~ your phone number again.
Let me just say ...

3. Finally, model the 'polite' versions of the sentences and get students to practise saying them.

A

1. Tell students to use the words in the box to complete the conversation. When they have finished, tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Then play Track 1 so students can check their answers.

Key:

1. *May I help?*; 2. *Could you give ...?*; 3. *May I confirm ...?*; 4. *Let me just ...*; 5. *Would you like ...?*; 6. *I'll go over ...*; 7. *We'll rush ...*; 8. *Is there anything else?*

2. Use a concept question to check their understanding of *by 5pm*. Does this mean:

- before 5pm;
- before or exactly at 5pm;
- after 5pm?

Key: b

The students might already be familiar with deadlines, so you can give the example of a report or project that should be finished *by the end of the month*.

3. Get the students to practise reading the dialogue aloud with a partner. Then, ask them to switch partners and change roles.

Teaching tip:

With weaker students, first model the practice role-play yourself with a confident student. Then have the rest of the class do the role-play in pairs.

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4. Ask students to help you complete a list of the polite language used in the phone order and write them on the board. Ask the students to find the polite phrases, then circle the polite forms in each example.

Professional language for customer orders

1. Could you give me your customer number?
2. Can I help you with anything else?
3. Let me just go over your order.
4. May I confirm your contact details?
5. Would you like us to send out the order this morning?

Have them practise reading the sentences aloud and check any pronunciation and intonation problems.

Teaching tip:

If you think you will have time to do the **Follow-up** section of this lesson (see below), you can delay practising question intonation until then, and instead focus mainly on basic pronunciation. If not, model the intonation at this stage.

5. Ask students how they would make offers in English. Explain that *Would you like ...?* is more professional and polite than *Do you want ...?* for any business communication. Also, *Can I ...?* is mostly used when we offer to do something for somebody, while *Could you ...?* is used to ask the customer to do something for you (i.e. NOT *Could I ...?* or *Can you ...?*).

6. Put students in pairs and get them to practise making offers to each other. Set up the offers on the whiteboard or flipchart in boxes with these topics.

have something to drink
have a meeting tomorrow at 10am
go to lunch together
give their mobile number

7. Ask students to write down sample polite questions and answers with the topics. Walk around to check their examples.

Key (possible answers):

Q: *Would you like something to drink?*

A: *Yes, I'd like tea with milk and sugar, please.*

Q: *Could we have a meeting tomorrow at 10am? / Would you like to meet tomorrow at 10am?*

A: *Yes, that's fine by me.*

Q: *Would you like to go to lunch together?*

A: *Yes, that sounds good.*

Q: *May I have / Could you give me your mobile number?*

A: *Yes. It's 06789 398025.*

8. Then, get the students to stand up and practise using their questions and answers with other members of the class.

9. Point out the use of the *I'll ...* form when offering to do something for the customer. Write these contrasting examples on the board:

I'll go over your order again.
On a sales call, I go over the order again with every customer.

10. Explain that *I go over* is the present simple, which means a regular activity. *I'll go over* is a future form which we use to make an offer or to promise to do something. Ask the students to give more examples of how we can offer help or action to the customer with *I'll ...*. Make a list on the whiteboard or flipchart, with corrections if necessary.

Offering or promising action

1. ~~I go over~~ the order again.
I'll go over the order again.
2. ~~I send~~ you the report.
I'll send you the report.
3. ~~I phone~~ you at 3pm.
I'll phone you at 3pm.
4. ~~I email~~ you the information.
I'll email you the information.

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11. Next, explain that *Let me just ...* is another way to offer help to the customer. Write up the examples like this:

Asking permission to help the customer

Let me just ...

... repeat your phone number.

... take your address.

... send you an email to confirm that.

... go over the information again.

3. Now, have the students role-play the orders in pairs, using a customer-friendly tone of voice.

B

1. Put students in pairs and hand out one set of the Activity B cut-outs to each pair. Explain that this is a telephone order and the different parts of the conversation are mixed up. Ask them to first put the four parts of the conversation in the right order, writing numbers 1-4 on the line to the top left of the strip. Then, tell students that some of the words in italics are incorrect. Ask them to read the conversation again and circle the correct words.

Key:

1. *could*; 2. *confirm*; 3. *help*; 4. *go over*; 5. *rush*; 6. *may I*; 7. *would*

2. Check the answers with the whole class, then get the pairs to act out the conversation.

3. Ask students to think of another product or service to order. Replace *Computerworld* with another company name on the worksheet. Then change the product or service to match the new company. Have the students repeat the role-play in pairs with the new company and product or service.

Follow-up

Practise the phone orders in the worksheets again. This time, emphasize tone of voice and question intonation in taking orders.

1. Role-play the phone orders with a confident student. You should read the role of the agent in a disinterested monotone voice. Ask the students for their reaction to your tone of voice.

2. Model the phone orders again using a lively, customer-friendly voice. Ask students what impression this makes on a customer.

Worksheet

A

Work with a partner. Write the words or phrases from the box below in the correct gaps.

I'll go over Is there anything else May I help Would you like
Could you give We'll rush Let me just May I confirm

Agent: Good morning. Beverage Warehouse Helpline. _____ [1] you?

Customer: Yes, please. I need to order ten cases of water – six sparkling and four still – for my restaurant.

Agent: _____ [2] me your customer number, please?

Customer: Yes, here it is: 55008-22.

Agent: So, I've got your customer file here. That's Mr Sabatini of Little Italy Restaurant?
_____ [3] your contact details? Is that 57 Landon Street ?

Customer: No, that's our old address. Our new address is 89 Oakville Road. The postcode is M2 4JB.

Agent: OK. _____ [4] repeat that. 89 Oakville Road, Manchester, M2 4JB. Is that correct?

Customer: Yes, that's right.

Agent: _____ [5] us to send out your order this morning?

Customer: That'd be perfect. I really need it by 5pm today.

Agent: Sure, that's no problem. We can send it out by 11am, Mr Sabatini.
_____ [6] your order again. That's ten cases of water – six sparkling and four still. _____ [7] the order so it arrives by 5pm.

Customer: That sounds great. Many thanks for your help.

Agent: _____ [8] I can help you with?

Customer: No, thank you. That's all for today. Bye for now.

Agent: Goodbye.

B

—
Agent: Good morning, Computerworld. *Let me just / May I* help you?

Customer: Yes, please. I *want / would like* to order five laptops, model number 3567. I'm a regular customer.

—
Agent: *Could / May* you give me your customer number?

Customer: Yes, it's 709521.

Agent: So, that's Ms Smith of Barney Jones Ltd? May I *confirm / rush* your contact details? Is that 56 Royal Road, Bristol, BS2 5RF?

—
Customer: Yes, that's right. Could you possibly send out the laptops today? We really need them as soon as possible.

Agent: Of course, that's no problem. We can send them out by 5pm today, Ms Smith. I'll *go over / give* your order again. That's five laptops, model number 3567. And we'll *go over / rush* the order so it arrives by tomorrow.

—
Customer: That sounds great. Many thanks for your help.

Agent: Can I *help / serve* you with anything else?

Customer: No, thank you. That's all for today. Bye for now.

Agent: Goodbye.



A

Agent: Good morning. Beverage Warehouse Helpline. May I help you?

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Agent: Could you give me your customer number, please?

Customer: Yes, here it is: 55008-22.

Agent: So, I've got your customer file here. That's Mr Sabatini of Little Italy Restaurant? May I confirm your contact details? Is that 57 Landon Street?

Customer: No, that's our old address. Our new address is 89 Oakville Road. The postcode is M2 4JB.

Agent: OK. Let me just repeat that. 89 Oakville Road, Manchester, M2 4JB. Is that correct?

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Customer: That sounds great. Many thanks for your help.

Agent: Is there anything else I can help you with?

Customer: No thank you. That's all for today. Bye for now.

Agent: Goodbye.

B

Agent: Good morning, Computerworld. May I help you?

Customer: Yes, please. I would like to order five laptops, model number 3567. I'm a regular customer.

Agent: Could you give me your customer number?

Customer: Yes, it's 709521.

Agent: So, that's Ms Smith of Barney Jones Ltd? May I confirm your contact details? Is that 56 Royal Road, Bristol, BS2 5RF?

Customer: Yes, that's right. Could you possibly send out the laptops today? We really need them as soon as possible.

Agent: Of course, that's no problem. We can send them out by 5pm today, Ms Smith. I'll go over your order again. That's five laptops, model number 3567. And we'll rush the order so it arrives by tomorrow.

Customer: That sounds great. Many thanks for your help.

Agent: Can I help you with anything else?

Customer: No, thank you. That's all for today. Bye for now.

Agent: Goodbye.