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L2 G4

MODALS: Understanding Modals of Requests and permission

I. Introduction to Modals of Requests/permission:

Modals are fundamental elements in English grammar that help convey different meanings and functions. Modals of requests, also known as modals of politeness or permission, are a subset of modal verbs used to make polite requests, seek permission, or offer and ask for assistance. In this lesson, we will explore modals of requests, their definitions, usages, examples, differences, and exercises to help you understand their usage effectively.

II. Definitions: Modals of Requests/permission

Modals of requests are verbs that are used to make polite requests or ask for permission.

Common modals of requests include:

1. Can: Used to request permission, offer assistance, or ask for something politely.
2. Could: More polite and formal than "can," it is used to make requests in a courteous manner.
3. May: Used to seek formal permission, make polite requests, or ask for assistance.
4. Would: Commonly used to make polite and indirect requests.
5. Will: Used to make polite requests, especially for immediate or future actions.

III. Usages and Examples:

1. Can:

- Usage: Making a polite request.
- Example: "Can you pass me the salt, please?"

2. Could:

- Usage: Making a more formal or polite request.

- Example: "Could you please help me with this heavy box?"

3. May:

- Usage: Seeking formal permission or making a polite request.

- Example: "May I use your phone for a moment?"

4. Would:

- Usage: Making polite and indirect requests.

- Example: "Would you mind closing the window?"

5. Will:

- Usage: Making a polite request, often for immediate or future actions.

- Example: "Will you kindly pass me the menu?"

IV. Differences Between Modals of Requests:

- Can and Could "Could" is more formal and polite than "can." "Can" is often used for informal requests, while "could" is preferred in formal situations.

- May: It is primarily used for formal requests and seeking permission.

- Would and Will: "Would" is used to make indirect and particularly polite requests, while "will" is employed for immediate or future requests that are polite in tone.

V. Exercises:

A. Choose the appropriate modal of request for each sentence from the list: can, could, may, would, will.

1. _____ you please hand me the stapler?

2. _____ I borrow your pen for a moment?

3. _____ you mind helping me with my luggage?

4. _____ you be so kind as to pass me the salt?

5. _____ I have a glass of water, please?

B. Rewrite the following sentences using a different modal of request:

1. "Can you give me a hand?"
2. "May I use your computer for a minute?"
3. "Could you please close the door?"
4. "Will you assist me with my homework?"
5. "Would you pass me the newspaper?"

C. Create your own sentences using modals of requests to make polite requests, seek permission, or offer assistance.

VI. Conclusion:

Modals of requests are essential for effective communication in English, especially in polite and formal contexts. Understanding their differences and practicing their usage will help you become proficient in making requests, seeking permission, and offering or asking for assistance politely in various situations. Continue practicing to enhance your language skills and be confident in using these modals in your daily interactions and writing.