

MODAL VERBS FOR REQUESTS

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Modal verbs are used in English to make polite requests. The lesson below shows you how to use modal verbs for requests can help you communicate in English.

Can & could

Can and could are modal verbs used to make requests. Here is the structure:

can/could + subject + verb

examples:

- **Can** you pass the salt please?
- **Could** you bring your book tomorrow?

Instructions and requests :

We use could you and would you as polite ways of telling or asking someone to do something:

• Could you take a message please?

• Would you carry this for me please?

• Could I have my bill please?

• Can and will are less polite:

• Can you take a message please?

• Will you carry this for me please?

Can and could are used differently. Can is less polite than could.

Can is used to make basic requests from a friend or co-worker. It is often used for small things.

- Can you pass the juice?
 - Can you turn off the air conditioner?
- Could** is more polite than can, but has the same function:
- Could you pass the juice please?
 - Could you help me with my homework Mr. Johnston?

Would

Would is used to make polite requests in English. The structure is as follows:

Would you mind + Verb + ING

Examples:

- Would you mind closing the door?
- Would you mind turning down the radio?

You can also say “do you mind”, but “would you mind” is more polite:

- Do you mind turning off the music?
- Would you mind turning off the music?

WOULD CAN ALSO BE USED TO MAKE POLITE REQUESTS WITH THE VERB “LIKE”.

- I **would like** another drink please.
- I **would like** some help with my math homework please.

This is the same as using the verb “**want**”. However, would is more polite.

- I **want** a drink.
- I **would like** a drink.

These types of requests are more common when ordering something. Take a look at these examples:

- I **would like** rice with my chicken.
- I **would like** another coke please.

REQUESTS WITH “TO HAVE”

WHEN YOU NEED OR WANT SOMETHING, YOU CAN USE THE MODAL VERBS “CAN”, “COULD” OR “MAY” FOLLOWED BY THE VERB “TO HAVE”. REMEMBER THAT WE USE “CAN” IN INFORMAL SITUATIONS, SUCH AS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY. “COULD” AND “MAY” ARE USED IN MORE FORMAL SITUATIONS, WITH YOUR BOSS OR DURING A MEETING.

EXAMPLES:

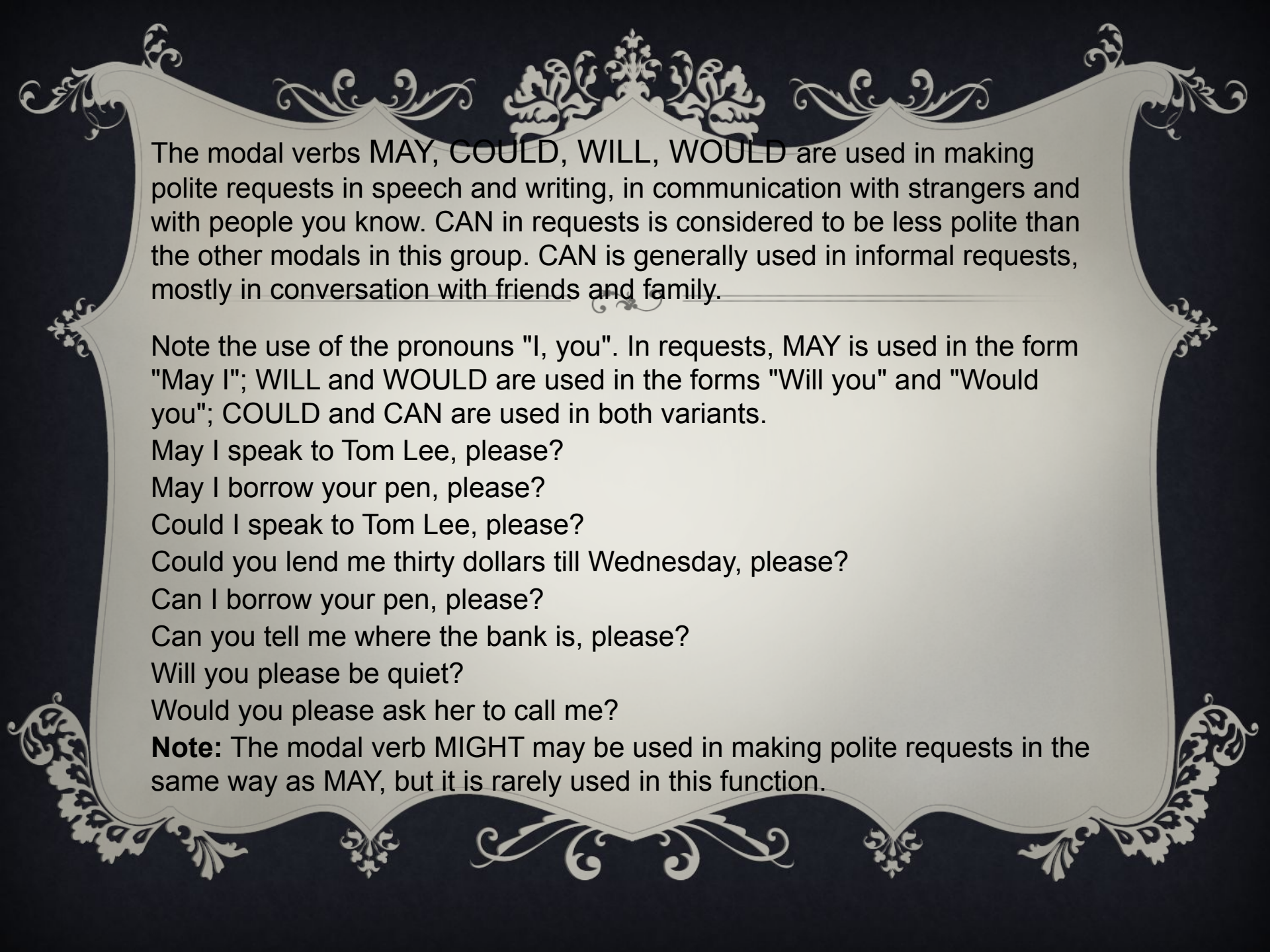
“CAN I HAVE SOME MORE CHICKEN, MOM?”

“CAN I HAVE TWO COKE’S AND A BURGER, PLEASE?”

“COULD I HAVE SOME MORE COFFEE?”

“COULD I HAVE THE WINE, PLEASE?”

“MAY I HAVE THE BILL, PLEASE?”

The page features a decorative border with intricate scrollwork and floral patterns in a light gray color, set against a dark background. The border frames the central text area.

The modal verbs MAY, COULD, WILL, WOULD are used in making polite requests in speech and writing, in communication with strangers and with people you know. CAN in requests is considered to be less polite than the other modals in this group. CAN is generally used in informal requests, mostly in conversation with friends and family.

Note the use of the pronouns "I, you". In requests, MAY is used in the form "May I"; WILL and WOULD are used in the forms "Will you" and "Would you"; COULD and CAN are used in both variants.

May I speak to Tom Lee, please?

May I borrow your pen, please?

Could I speak to Tom Lee, please?

Could you lend me thirty dollars till Wednesday, please?

Can I borrow your pen, please?

Can you tell me where the bank is, please?

Will you please be quiet?

Would you please ask her to call me?

Note: The modal verb MIGHT may be used in making polite requests in the same way as MAY, but it is rarely used in this function.

The phrase "be allowed to"

The substitute phrases "**be allowed to** do something, be not allowed to do something" can be used for describing permission in the present, future, and past.

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- I am not allowed to leave the house.
 - You will be allowed to see the patient soon.
 - We were allowed to take his car.
 - They weren't allowed to stay there.
 - She wasn't allowed to go there alone.



THE END!