



Responding to requests games

1. Try your best to say no

In groups of two to four, one person must try to politely answer all requests negatively, giving a different reason why each time.

How can you say yes and no to requests, and which ways are more polite?

2. Requests Answer Me

Circle one of the phrases below without showing anyone and request something in a way which you think will get that response from your partner. They must choose their response from the list below. If they actually answer using the phrase you have circled, you get one point.

- “Maybe later”
- “Okay, but just this once”
- “I’m afraid I don’t have one/ any.”
- “I would be my pleasure.”
- “No problem. I’m going to do that later anyway.”
- “It would probably be better to ask...”
- “I’m sorry but I don’t know how to.”
- “I’m/ You’re not allowed to.”/ “It’s not permitted.”
- “That depends on...”
- “Certainly. Here you are.”
- “Of course. It’s over there. Help yourself.”
- “I guess/ I suppose so.”
- “Maybe, but I’ll need my boss’s permission.”
- “That’s fine. Please do.”
- “Unfortunately we’ve run out/ it’s out of stock“
- “I’ll do my best/ I’ll do what I can/ I’ll see what I can do”
- “Okay, I’ll do it straightaway/ immediately.”

What other reasons could you use for refusing requests?



3. Responses to requests brainstorming and guessing game

Choose one of the requests below and brainstorm possible responses until you both/ all run out of ideas, then switch to another. The last person to come up with an idea each time gets a point.

- “Do you mind if I sit down here?”
- “If it’s not too much trouble, could you show me the way?”
- “Could you possibly show me how to use the photocopier?”
- “Sign here please.”
- “Do you have a minute?”
- “Could you spell that for me, please?”
- “Can you hold the line, please?”
- “Can you help me to move all this stuff upstairs?”
- “Don’t move, I’ll be right back.”
- “Would you mind getting me one too?”
- “Do you have the time?”
- “Would it be possible for you to make a rough estimate?”
- “Can I leave a message?”
- “Is it possible to have his mobile number?”
- “Would it be okay for me to get back to you later on that?”
- “Do you have a calculator that you could lend me?”
- “Have you got an automatic pencil that I could borrow?”
- “Have you got time to give me some feedback on my report?”
- “I need some help with proofreading my PowerPoint slides.”
- “I’d be (very) grateful if you could take my place in the next meeting.”
- “I’d like to request time off for my brother’s wedding.”
- “Could you tell me your boss’s contact details?”
- “Would you mind putting me through to Mr Smith?”

Choose one of the requests above and tell your partner possible responses to that until they guess which one you are thinking of. Try not to use words from the phrase above in your responses.

Choose one of the sentences above and continue the conversation as long as you can.

Brainstorm a list of other things you often have to say no to and do the same as above.



4. Using excuses brainstorming and roleplays

What could you use these excuses to explain? Choose one, think of things it could be used as a reason for, and then roleplay a conversation with one of those situations.

- Lack of authority
- Length of time needed
- Deadline
- Staff shortages
- Not available
- Rules/ regulations/ policies/ laws
- Out of date
- Updates
- Technology
- Documents/ Paperwork
- Privacy
- The time of year
- The time of day
- Delays
- Equal opportunities
- (Recent) changes
- Building work/ Maintenance work
- Code of conduct
- Cultural norms/ Cultural differences