



[Asking for a Favor](#)

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Asking for a favor refers to asking someone to do something for you. Use these phrases to politely ask for a favor. When someone asks you for a favor, you'll have to either grant it (say yes) or refuse it (say no). Pay special attention to the form of the verb used in each case.

Asking a Favor

Could / Would you do me a favor?

Could you do me a favor? is used to find out if someone will do a favor for you as a way to begin the conversation. The form Would you do me a favor? is more formal.

Would you do me a favor?

Could you do me a favor?

Could you please + verb

Use the simple form of the verb (do) to ask for help with specific actions such as asking for help in daily situations.

Could you please take me to work?

Could you please lend me a hand?

Could you possibly + verb

Use the simple form of the verb to ask for help with specific situations while being extremely polite.

Could I possibly take some time off to help?

Could you possibly work overtime today?

Could I ask / bother / trouble you + infinitive

Use the infinitive form of the verb (to do) to ask for a favor in formal situations.



Could I ask you to help my brother?

~~Could I bother you to give me a ride to work?~~

Could I trouble you to open the door for me?

Would you mind + verb + ing

Use the gerund form of the verb (doing) to ask for a favor in every day situations.

Would you mind closing the window?

Would you mind cooking dinner tonight?

Would it be too much trouble for you + infinitive

Use this form with the infinitive to ask for a favor in very formal situations.

Would it be too much trouble for you to let me come in late tomorrow?

Would it be too much trouble for you to take a look at this letter?

May I + verb?

Use the simple form of the verb with "may" when the favor you're asking requires permission.

May I leave class early?

May we use your telephone?

Granting a Favor

If you would like to say "yes" to someone who asks you for a favor, you can grant the favor using these phrases:

Sure

No problem.

I'd be happy to help you.

It would be my pleasure.

I'd be glad to help out.

It's common to ask for more specifics when granting a favor. For instance, if your friend asks you to help him out with a project, you might ask some follow up questions to get an idea of what is needed.

Would you mind giving me a hand?

I'd be happy to help you. What do you need help with?

Refusing a Favor

If you are unable to help out and need to say "no", you can refuse a favor with these responses:



I'm afraid I can't.

- Sorry, but I'm unable + infinitive
- Unfortunately, I'm not able + infinitive.
- Regrettably, I can't + verb

Saying "no," is never fun, but sometimes it's necessary. It's common to offer a different solution to try to help out even if you can't do the favor.

- Could I ask you to help me with my homework?
- Unfortunately, I'm not able to do that.
- Why not?
- Regrettably, I can't do math very well, so I won't be able to help.

Practice Dialogues

Use these dialogues to practice asking for a favor, granting favors and refusing favors.

Asking for a favor which is granted

- Peter: Hi Anna. I've got a favor to ask. Would you mind cooking dinner tonight? I'm kind of busy.
- Anna: Sure, Peter. What would you like for dinner?
- Peter: Could I trouble you to make some pasta?
- Anna: That sounds good. Let's have pasta. Which type of sauce should I make?
- Peter: Would it be too much trouble to make a four cheese sauce?
- Anna: No, that's easy. Yum. Good idea.
- Peter: Thanks Anna. That really helps me out.
- Anna: No problem.

Mark: Hey, could you please help me with the homework?

- Susan: I'd be glad to help out. What seems to be the problem.
- Mark: I don't get this equation. Would you mind explaining it to me?
- Susan: No problem. It's difficult!
- Mark: Yeah, I know. Thanks a lot.
- Susan: Don't worry about it.

Asking for a favor which is refused

- Employee: Hello, Mr. Smith. Could I ask you a question?
- Boss: Sure, what do you need?
- Employee: Would it be too much trouble for you to let me come in at 10 tomorrow morning?
- Boss: Oh, that's a little difficult.
- Employee: Yes, I know it's last moment, but I have to go to the dentist.
- Boss: I'm afraid I can't let you come in late tomorrow. We really need you at the



meeting.

~~Employee: OK, I just thought I'd ask. I'll get a different appointment.~~

Boss: Thanks, I appreciate it.

Brother: Hey. Would you mind letting me watch my show?

Sister: Sorry, but I can't do that.

Brother: Why not?!

Sister: I'm watching favorite show now.

Brother: But I'm going to miss my favorite game show!

Sister: Watch it online. Don't bother me.

Brother: Could you please watch your show online, it's a rerun!

Sister: Sorry, but I'm unable to do that. You'll just have to watch it later.