

1 You use **can** to say someone is allowed to do something. You use **cannot** or **can't** to say that they are not allowed to do it:

You can leave your coat here if you like. You can go now.



If you are making a general statement you can say *You're allowed to ...* or *You're not allowed to ...*

In Britain you're not allowed to drive a car until you're seventeen, but in some countries you're allowed to drive when you're only sixteen.

2 You can use **may** or **may not** to say the same thing:

You may leave your coat here if you like. You may go now.

We may not go in there. It's private. You may not drive a car until you are seventeen.

NOTE: Nowadays the use of **may** is rather formal.

3 When you are **making a request** or **asking permission** you use **can**:

Can I ask a question, please? Can I use your telephone, please?

If you want to be formal or very polite you use **could**:

Could I ask a question, please? Could I use your telephone, please?

May is also used to ask for permission, but this is very formal:

May I come in now, please? May we leave these things here?

4 You use **needn't**, **don't need to**, or **don't have to** when you are giving someone permission or advice not to do something, or saying that something is not necessary:

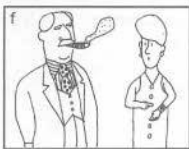
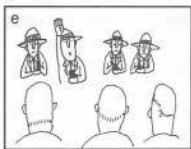
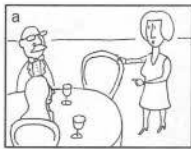
You don't need to cook your own supper. You don't need to shout.



NOTE: **don't need** and **don't have** are followed by **to**. **Needn't** is just followed by the verb:

You needn't come to work today. You needn't write it out in full.

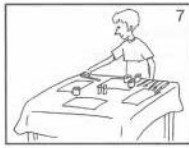
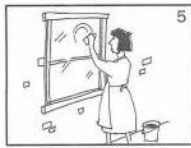
A Here are some people making requests or asking for permission. Write under the pictures what the people are saying. Use *can* or *could*:



Here are some words to help you: borrow your pen; have another biscuit; play with you; go home early tonight; ask a question; have a kilo of bananas; take this chair; have a lift home.

Close your books and see how many of the sentences you can remember.

B Here are some things you *don't need to do* or *don't have to do* if you are staying in a hotel. Write under the pictures:



Here are some words to help you: clean the windows; make your bed; clean the furniture; cook your own meals; lay the table; wash the dishes; tidy your room; clean the bath.

Close your books and see how many of these sentences you can remember.