

3 Offers and requests

	OFFERS	REQUESTS
less formal/ more sure	<i>Can I help you? I'll help you.</i>	<i>Can/Will you close the window, please?</i>
	<i>We could do that for you. Shall I help you?</i>	<i>Could/Would you pass me the salt, please?</i>
more formal/ less sure	<i>May I help you? Might I be of assistance?</i>	<i>You might get me some milk while you're there.</i>

We can use *will* or *won't* when we offer something to another person:

Will you have some more cake? (neutral)

Won't you have some more cake? (more encouraging)

We use the question forms of *would* or *could* to make requests tentative or polite, and *You might ...* to request things of people we do not know so well:

Would you lend me the car tomorrow night, Dad? (tentative)

Could you fill in this form, please, sir? (polite) **You might ask Mr Salmon to call me later.**

We can make a request more insistent by using *will you* as a question tag (► Unit 79.2):
Come and look at this, will you? (We do not expect the answer to be 'no'.)



Pronunciation ► 1.11

4 Recommendation and advice

We use *must/mustn't* for strong recommendations and advice:

You really **must read** Michael Connelly's latest book. *It's stunning!*

You **mustn't blame** yourself. *It wasn't your fault.*



Pronunciation ► 1.12

Should or *ought to* are less emphatic:

Even people as young as twenty-five should consider a personal pension.

Children ought not to spend long periods in front of a computer screen.

The underlying shift in public opinion ought not to be exaggerated.

Had better (not) expresses the best thing to do in a particular situation. It often has a sense of urgency: *Your dog had better not dig up my rose bush again!* (threat)

If the burglars took your keys, you'd better change the locks. (warning)

5 Orders, instructions and promises

We use *will* and *shall* for orders, formal instructions and written rules:

The judges' decision will/shall be final. The secretary shall minute the proceedings.

We use *will* to make promises:

My government will reduce unemployment.

We also use *will* when we make a spontaneous decision (► Unit 27.1):

'That'll be Josie – I can't take her call now.' 'Don't worry, I'll tell her you'll call back.'

6 Expressing desires, preferences and disagreements

We often use *would* + infinitive with *to* with verbs of liking and preference (*like, love, prefer, etc.*) to express desires and preferences:

We'd love to come to your wedding on 6th September. Thank you for the invitation.

I'd prefer to lose weight by a tried and tested method than by a new trendy diet.

I would like you to listen to me when I'm talking! (use with an object)

We can use *would* with *rather/sooner* to express a preference (► Unit 40.4):

Our delegates would rather not stay at the conference centre.

We can use *would/wouldn't* to show disagreement in a polite way:

I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't go that far.