

I'm sorry, but I'd rather not

LEARNING OUTCOME

learn how to ask for help and refuse politely

Everyday life

- 1** Look at the photo and answer the questions.

Where are the people and what are they doing?

What do you think they are talking about?



Everyday vocabulary

- 2** Look at these phrases that we can use when asking someone for help. Complete the phrases (1–8) with the words in the box.

wondering • favour • help • need • possible • hand • possibly • trouble

- 1 Can you me, please?
- 2 Could you do me a ?
- 3 I was if you could do something for me?
- 4 I some help.
- 5 Could you give me a ?
- 6 Could you help me with something?
- 7 Would it be for you to do something for me?
- 8 Would it be too much for you to help me?

- 3** Work in pairs. Look again at the phrases in 2. Which are more direct and which are extremely polite? In what kind of situation would you use each one? Think of other phrases for asking for help and add them to the list.

Dialogue

- 4** **09** Luke and Mark are both students. Luke needs to ask Mark to do something for him. Listen to the dialogue. How many things does Luke ask Mark to help him with?

- 5** Listen again and complete the sentences with the correct words. Then listen again and check.

- 1 Mark, You remember my parents are coming over for a visit?
- 2 I'm not sure about that. How long are they staying?
- 3 On second thoughts, you know what, Unfortunately, my flat is really very small and there's hardly room for two people, let alone three.
- 4 But ... I've just had an idea! stay over at yours instead?
- 5 Hmm. I don't think my landlady would agree.
- 6 Oh, one more thing. give me a lift to the station on the last Sunday of next month?
- 7 Next month? Could you ask me again nearer the time?

EVERYDAY ENGLISH TOOLKIT: ASKING FOR HELP AND REFUSING POLITELY

Look at the phrases (a–d) from the dialogue. Write the phrases in the correct place (1–4) below.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a Can I think about it and get back to you? | c I'm really not comfortable about that. |
| b I need to ask you a massive favour. | d I'm sorry, but I'd rather not. |

Asking for help

Can you help me, please?
I was wondering if you could do something for me?
Could you give me a hand?
Would it be too much trouble for you to help me?
(1)

Refusing to help

I can't really commit to that at the moment.
I'm afraid I'm going to have to say no this time.
(2)
(3)
(4)

- 6** Listen to the dialogue again. What does Mark say each time he refuses to help Luke? Why does he do this?

Over to you!

- 7** Work in pairs. Role-play asking each other for help and refusing politely. Give reasons for asking and excuses for refusing. Follow the steps below, then swap roles. Use the expressions in the Everyday English Toolkit.

Student A: Ask Student B to help you with the following things:

- You want to use Student B's notes from last week's lessons to help you write an essay.

- You would like to hold a party for your friend at Student B's home.

Student B: Ask Student A to help you with the following things:

- You would like Student A to meet you at the airport on Saturday.

- You want to borrow Student A's new jacket to wear to a party.