

## I'm sorry, but I'd rather not

### LEARNING OUTCOME

learn how to ask for help and refuse politely

#### WARMER

Ask students when they last had to ask someone for help, and what the situation was. It could be something big, like asking to borrow a sum of money, or something small, like helping them with homework, or explaining something. Students share their answers with the class. Ask students to look at the learning outcome. Explain that in this lesson they are going to learn how to ask for help and refuse politely.

#### Everyday life

- 1 Ask students to work in pairs, look at the photograph and answer the questions.

#### Possible answers

The people are at home. The boy is holding a box of things and the man might be asking if the boy wants some help.

#### Everyday vocabulary

- 2 Ask students to read the phrases 1–8, which we can use when we need to ask someone for help. Ask them to work in pairs and select a suitable word to complete each phrase. Encourage students to look up any unknown words in a dictionary, or ask other students. Check answers as a class.

#### Answers

- 1 help 2 favour 3 wondering 4 need 5 hand 6 possibly 7 possible 8 trouble
- 3 Ask students to work in pairs and look again at the phrases in 2. Ask them which are direct and which are extremely polite. Ask them to think about what kind of situation they might use each phrase in, e.g. with family and friends, with a teacher, or with a stranger. Ask students to brainstorm any other phrases for asking for help and to add them to the list in 2. Ask pairs to share their ideas with the class. Check answers and write the phrases on the board.

#### Answers

Phrases 1 and 4 are direct.  
Phrases 6, 7 and 8 are extremely polite.  
Students' own answers.

#### Dialogue

- 4 Read the context for the situation aloud. Tell students that they are going to listen to a dialogue between two students, Luke and Mark. Explain that Luke needs to ask Mark to help him. Tell them not to worry about understanding every word. They should listen and find out how many things Luke asks Mark to help him with. Ask students to check their answer in pairs, before checking as a class.

#### Answers

Three: if his parents can stay at his place; if he can stay at Mark's place; if Mark can give him a lift to the station

- 5 Ask students to look at the sentences from the dialogue. They listen again and complete the gaps with the missing phrases. They check answers in pairs, then listen to the dialogue again and check.

#### Answers

- 1 I need to ask you a massive favour.
- 2 Can I think about it and get back to you?
- 3 I'm sorry, but I'd rather not.
- 4 Would it be possible for me to
- 5 I'm really not comfortable about that.
- 6 Is there any chance you could possibly
- 7 I'm sorry, but I can't really commit to that at the moment.

#### EVERYDAY ENGLISH TOOLKIT

Ask students to look at sentences a–d from the dialogue. Ask them to write the sentences in the correct category in the Everyday English Toolkit. Students could try and do this from memory first, before listening again to the dialogue to check. Ask them to read through all the sentences and check they understand what they mean. Ask students to practise saying the phrases, using the correct intonation.

#### Answers

- 1 b 2 a 3 c 4 d
- 6 Ask students to work in pairs and listen to the dialogue again. Ask them what Mark says each time he refuses to help Luke. Ask them why he does this.

#### Answers

Mark always gives a reason or makes an excuse why he can't help Luke. He does this to explain why he can't help, because it's rude to just say 'no' or refuse to help someone without explaining why.

#### Over to you!

- 7 Students work in pairs. Ask them to read the instructions and follow the steps. Remind students to use expressions from the Toolkit. Monitor and make a note of errors or good language during role-plays. Write these on the board (anonymously) for the class to correct or note in their notebooks. Some pairs could act out their dialogues in front of the class.

Extension: Students write a short email or text to a friend, asking them for a favour. They then swap requests and write a reply, refusing and giving an excuse or reason.