



Lesson Plan 8

Writing Requests Using Email

CLB Level(s): 3-4

CLB Skill(s): Reading, Writing

Essential Skill(s): Reading Text, Document Use, Writing

Objective(s)	Audience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be able to complete request forms ■ To be able to write e-mails to request ■ To be able to write requests politely and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learners who are not comfortable putting requests in writing.
Grammar/Language Focus	Time Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Modal verbs used to make requests (may, could, can, would, will) 	1.5 hours
Vocabulary	Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ email, request, polite, modal verbs, supervisor, manager, staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Package of treats, e.g., candy (optional) ■ Copies of Appendices 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1 for each learner ■ Multiple copies of 4.2 for each learner
Workplace Culture	
<p>In the Canadian workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ requests should be formulated using a polite form ■ we sometimes formulate a question even when a request could be constructed as a command (supervisor requesting from a worker). 	



Learning Activities

Warm-up

1. Tell the class that you have a package of candy (or some other item readily available in the classroom) and that you will give some to whoever requests it. Brainstorm ways to request candy on the board. Answers may include:
 - I want candy.
 - I would like some candy.
 - Can I have some candy, please?
 - Give me some candy.
 - Could I have some candy?
 - May I have some candy, please?
2. Explore similarities and differences between the ways requests were made (statements versus questions, strong versus polite requests, the use of 'please')

Activity I: Requests at Work

1. Provide instruction and controlled practice on making polite requests using questions:
 - May I/could I/can I + (please) + verb + (please)
 - Would you/could you/will you/can you + (please) + verb + (please)
2. Distribute Appendix I.1
3. Have learners work in pairs or complete the table as a class. Answers may include:

From supervisor	From workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Supplies from suppliers (Could I order...?)■ Resources from managers (Would you be able to increase my budget for...?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Assistance from co-workers (Could you help me, please?)■ Resources from supervisors (Could I get some more ..?)

4. Point out that some requests, such as a supervisor requesting that a worker carry out a task, can be provided using the imperative. In Canada, this style is used less frequently than question formation.



Learning Activities

Activity 2: Complete Request Form

1. Brainstorm as a group ways that workers make requests. Point out that the form taught is applicable in both speaking and writing. Answers may include:
 - by completing forms
 - in person
 - on the phone
 - by e-mail
 - in a note
2. Distribute Appendix 2.1
3. Have learners work in groups of 3-4 to review the form and answer the questions.
4. Ask learners to share their strategies for understanding this simple form as you debrief the activity.
5. Lead a discussion about question 4 to have learners share their thoughts. Point out that although it is not required to be as polite on forms as in other written requests, if the form allows space, a polite request is likely to be received positively.
6. Distribute Appendix 2.2.
7. Orient learners to the document by asking the class the questions listed on Appendix 2.1.
8. Have learners complete the task on Appendix 2.2.
9. Collect Appendix 2.2 once learners are finished and provide follow-up feedback in a future lesson.

Activity 3: Read an E-mail Request

1. Distribute Appendix 3.1.
2. Have learners work independently to read and answer the questions.
3. Debrief reading comprehension questions and review new vocabulary. Discuss answers to question 4.



Learning Activities

Activity 4: Write E-mail Requests

1. Draw learners' attention back to the e-mail on Appendix 3.1 to point out the structure and features of the polite request.
2. Distribute Appendix 4.1.
3. Have learners read the scenarios to themselves. Discuss each in turn, clarifying vocabulary and context as needed. Point out that last minute requests often require that the person making the request be especially polite.
4. Have learners select two or more scenarios to write e-mails about. Distribute copies of Appendix 4.2 to the class as needed.
5. Have learners work independently to write e-mails to request.
6. Collect completed Appendices 4.2 and provide follow-up feedback in a future lesson.

Additional and/or Extended Learning Activities

- Teach learners responses to requests. Have learners practice responding to the requests in this lesson.
- Provide examples of e-mails where some requests have been made politely and some made impolitely. Have learners work in pairs to identify and revise the impolite ones.
- Have learners listen to voice mail messages from co-workers requesting office supplies, etc. Have them identify their method for making the request from a series of possible answers.
- Have learners work in groups to create posters for a school event. Provide paper to one group, scissors to another, coloured paper to another, markers to another, etc. Have learners politely request materials from other groups in order to complete the task. Pre-teach responses to requests. For example, "I'm sorry, I need this right now. Can I lend it to you later?"

Reflective Evaluation

Collect and review Appendix 2.2 to determine if learners:

- are able to complete a simple request form

Collect and review Appendix 4.1 to determine if learners:

- are able to write requests politely and appropriately



Learning Activities

Debriefing/Wrap-up

- Ask learners if they can think of situations where asking impolitely is acceptable to generate a brief discussion.
- Review the structure of questions that politely request items or assistance. Answer any questions learners have.
- Point out that making requests politely is useful outside work. Brainstorm as a group settings where learners make requests to illustrate how this language can be used in those settings. Answers may include:
 - Requesting that one's husband/wife/child complete a chore
 - Requesting that a food item be prepared differently in a restaurant
 - Requesting service from a repair person



Skill Descriptors	
Canadian Language Benchmarks Skill(s)	Essential Skill(s)
<p>Reading</p> <p>Performance Indicator (Business/service texts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies layout and specific information on a form. (CLB 3) <p>What the person can do (Business/Service texts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get information from short business brochures, notices, form letters and flyers. (CLB 3) 	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads more complex texts to locate a single piece of information or reads simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information (ES 2)
<p>Writing</p> <p>What the person can do (Business/Service messages)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill out simple forms (CLB 3) Convey simple business messages as written notes (CLB 4) 	<p>Document use</p> <p>Complexity of the Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document is simple. Multiple pieces of information. One document. (ES 2) <p>Complexity of Entering Information: Information Entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entering several pieces of information. (ES 2) <p>Complexity of Information Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information available may be rearranged for entry into the document. (ES 2) <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing that is less than a paragraph (ES 1) Informal writing for small familiar audiences (ES 1) Concrete, day-to-day matters of fairly immediate concern (ES 1)

The copyright holder gives permission for users of the document to make copies of selected pages for not-for-sale educational purposes within their organizations. Copying for other purposes without permission is prohibited.

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks 803 – 200 Elgin Street Ottawa, ON K2P 1L5
Ph. (613) 230-7729 Fax: (613) 230-9305 info@language.ca

	What is requested?	Example of how they make the request
What do supervisors request?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make requests to workers to assign work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Can you fax this for me?"
What do workers request?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make requests to supervisors to get time off	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "May I have Friday off, please?"

A:

Retail Sales Personnel Vacation Request Form

- ☐ New request
☐ Change request (provide reason)

From: _____ To: _____

Employee Name (last, first): _____

Telephone Extension: _____

Reason for change:

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

1. Which workers complete this form?

2. For what purpose(s) is this form used?

3. In addition to the worker, who else signs this form?

4. Does a polite request need to be written on this form? If yes, where would it be written?

Complete the following form.

Imagine you work in the finance department and your extension is 521. You need the following items by Tuesday next week:

- package of paper clips
- 500 large envelopes
- two red pens
- a black binder
- package of notepads

Office Supply Request Form	
Date:	Department:
Employee:	
Telephone extension:	
Items requested:	
Signature:	

Activity 3: Read an E-mail Request

Appendix 3.1

Read the e-mail in order to answer the questions below.

<p>From: beverley.morris@petsforall.ca Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2009 2:38 PM To: kkerts@gtson.com Cc: bert.chomsky@petsforall.ca Subject: hamster cages</p> <hr/> <p>Hi Kristen</p> <p>I'm following up about the hamster cages you were interested in ordering from us. I wanted to let you know that I will be out of the office next week. Could you e-mail your order to my assistant Bert instead? He will be able to process it right away for you.</p> <p>Thanks, Beverley Morris</p>
--

1. Who wrote this e-mail?

2. Highlight or underline the request in the e-mail.

3. Have they made their request politely?

4. How else could they have written this request politely?

Activity 4: Write E-mail Requests

Appendix 4.1

	Who are you?	Who are you writing to?	What do you need?	By when?
A	Production Supervisor	Jean LaCroix (customer)	More information before you can process his order	As soon as possible
B	Teacher	Valerie Chang (Office Assistant)	A television and VCR for training	Tomorrow
C	Hotel Front Desk Clerk	Jeremy Fisher (Maintenance Supervisor)	A spill cleaned in the reception area	As soon as possible
D	Supervisor	Pardeep Goa (Manager)	An extra staff person during the busy summer months	--
E	Sales Manager	David Ericson (Sales Co-ordinator)	A sales report for the quarter.	Before the meeting next week
F	Yourself	Classmate	Help with an assignment	Before Monday

Date:
Subject:
<hr/>

Date:
Subject:
<hr/>