Mini Lesson 023 - Making Polite Requests with 'Could' and 'Would'

When making requests in English, using **'could'** and **'would'** helps to express politeness. These modal verbs make the request sound softer and more considerate.

Using 'Could':

- **'Could you…?'** is often used to ask someone to do something.
  - Example: *Could you open the window, please?*
- It suggests that the person has the ability or option to help.
  - Example: *Could you lend me your pen?*

Using 'Would':

- **'Would you…?'** is slightly more polite and formal than 'Could you…?'
  - Example: *Would you mind passing the salt?*
- It often implies that the request is more a matter of willingness than ability.
  - Example: *Would you help me with this project?*

Additional Polite Expressions:

- **'Would you mind…?'**
  - Example: *Would you mind closing the door?*
- **'Could I…?'** for requests related to yourself.
  - Example: *Could I borrow your book?*

Response to Requests:

- **Yes, of course.**
- **Sure, no problem.**
- **I'm sorry, but…** (if you can't fulfill the request)

Exercises:

1. **Fill in the blanks with 'Could' or 'Would':**

   1. _____ you help me with this math problem?

   2. _____ I use your phone to make a call?

   3. _____ you pass the butter, please?

   4. _____ you mind if I sit here?

   5. _____ you give me a ride to the station?

2. **Rewrite the following sentences to make them more polite using 'Could' or 'Would':**

   1. Open the door.

   2. Help me with my homework.

   3. Lend me your pen.

   4. Turn off the lights.

   5. Bring me a glass of water.

3. **Choose the correct form to complete the sentence:**

   1. _____ you like to join us for dinner? (Would / Could)

   2. _____ you mind if I borrowed your book? (Would / Could)

   3. _____ I have a bit more time to finish this? (Would / Could)

   4. _____ you close the window, please? (Would / Could)

   5. _____ I get you something to drink? (Would / Could)

4. **True or False:**

   1. 'Could you' is used to make polite requests. (True/False)

   2. 'Would you mind' is less polite than 'Could you'. (True/False)

   3. 'Could' is used when asking if someone is able to do something. (True/False)

   4. 'Would' is never used in making requests. (True/False)

   5. 'Could I' is a polite way to ask for permission. (True/False)

Answers:

1. **Fill in the blanks:**

   1. **Could** you help me with this math problem?
   2. **Could** I use your phone to make a call?
   3. **Could** you pass the butter, please?
   4. **Would** you mind if I sit here?
   5. **Could** you give me a ride to the station?

2. **Rewrite the sentences:**
   1. *Could you open the door, please?*
   2. *Could you help me with my homework?*
   3. *Could you lend me your pen?*
   4. *Would you mind turning off the lights?*
   5. *Could you bring me a glass of water?*

3. **Choose the correct form:**
   1. **Would** you like to join us for dinner?
   2. **Would** you mind if I borrowed your book?
   3. **Could** I have a bit more time to finish this?
   4. **Could** you close the window, please?
   5. **Would** I get you something to drink?

4. **True or False:**
   1. 'Could you' is used to make polite requests. (True)
   2. 'Would you mind' is less polite than 'Could you'. (False)
   3. 'Could' is used when asking if someone is able to do something. (True)
   4. 'Would' is never used in making requests. (False)
   5. 'Could I' is a polite way to ask for permission. (True)