

Chapter Seven

Politely getting things done

Grammar focus. Modals and imperatives.

Introduction.

An important part of social interaction is to get people to cooperate with each other. One way to get others to do things is to use the **imperative**. The grammar is simple enough. In fact it is perhaps one of the easiest points of grammar to teach in English. Simply say the verb that expresses the action you want to have accomplished. (*Jump. Eat.*) However, if we want to be polite so we can maintain friendships, have good relationships at work, and even have a happy marriage, we need to know more than this rule of thumb. To be polite, we need to keep two **politeness principles** in mind. First, we don't impose our will on others, and second, we give them options by implying that there are other possibilities and that they can not cooperate without offending us. Let's take a look at how we can use grammar to do this in three awareness activities.

Awareness Activity 7.1 Modals and time

When we studied tense, we noted that the present and past tense are attached to the first auxiliary or to the verb if there are no auxiliaries. For the future we have a variety of possibilities, most commonly adding *will* or *gonna* to the beginning of the verb sequence. We noted too that when **modals** other than *will* are used in a sentence, tense or time may be implied, but it is not expressed in the form of the modal. In other words, *should* may historically be the past tense

form of *shall* but it is not past in meaning. The same is true with *might* and *may*, *would* and *will*, *could* and *can*. Read the following sentences and decide what time (past, present, future) is being implied for the action in spite of the form of the modal.

- Could you go to the show with me?
- That may have happened.
- You should go to the doctor.
- That could be Henry at the door right now.
- I certainly would think so.

Were these your results?

- Could you go to the show with me? (future)
- That may have happened. (past)
- You should go to the doctor. (future)
- That could be Henry at the door right now. (present)
- I certainly would think so. (present)

This is why we say that though modals may have past and present tense forms, their forms do not indicate the tense. When we looked at tense, we saw that modals are useful to indicate stance, in other words our feelings (or mood, hence the name modal or “mood word”) about the likelihood that an action being expressed happened or will happen. Let’s do another awareness activity to see another important use of modals.

Awareness Activity 7.2 Giving advice

In the same way that the present tense may be too strong and too definite when talking about reality, commands can be too strong when giving friendly advice (*Go to the doctor about that blister.*). Again, modals are useful for softening the impact. However, dictionaries don't help language learners understand that the modals are not interchangeable when softening advice. Some modals imply strong advice and others weak advice. How would you rank the following bits of advice? (1 = strongest advice, 3 = weakest advice.)

- You should see a doctor about that blister.
- You could see a doctor about that blister.
- You must see a doctor about that blister.

Did you have the following rankings?

- You should see a doctor about that blister. (2)
- You could see a doctor about that blister. (3)
- You must see a doctor about that blister. (1)

Awareness Activity 7.3 Getting things done

Sometimes we want to do more than simply give advice. We want things to get done, and the sooner the better. Simple **imperatives** or commands serve this purpose, but to maintain good social relations and to not be considered rude, we have alternative forms at our disposal. Test your intuitions with the following. If you were a waitress, how would you rank the following five orders in terms of politeness? (5 = most polite, 1 = least polite, Use all five numbers)

- I'd like a mushroom pizza.
- Could I have a mushroom pizza?
- Bring me a mushroom pizza.
- A mushroom pizza.
- I want a mushroom pizza.

Most English speakers give the following rankings based on these principles or rules of thumb: Commands (*Bring me a pizza*), and in particular, **elliptical imperatives** without a verb (*A mushroom pizza*) are the least polite. They might be appropriate in situations where there is no need to maintain a courteous relationship (warnings of oncoming danger—*Watch out for cars!* or *Cars!*-- or signals to coworkers as part of a work routine --- *Put the mops here* or *Mops here*—or even instructions in a textbook, such as this one). The next level of politeness is to give the order as a statement that simply implies that something should be done (*I'd like a mushroom pizza* or *I want a mushroom pizza*.) The most polite is to make the request in the form of a question since that gives the greatest option of refusing to cooperate (*Could I have a mushroom pizza?*). Another principle is that adding a **modal** to either a statement or a question makes things even more polite, especially if the modal is in the past tense form. (*I'd like a mushroom pizza* and *Could I have a mushroom pizza?*)

With these rules of thumb in mind, the following would be the politeness ranking for our sentences:

- I'd like a mushroom pizza. (4)
- Could I have a mushroom pizza? (5)

- Bring me a mushroom pizza. (2)
- A mushroom pizza. (1)
- I want a mushroom pizza. (3)

Grammar.

Because of their role in interaction, commands are quite common in conversation though not as common as questions. They are much less common in writing, though in journalism and academic writing they are more common than questions, probably because of their use in directions and in high frequency verbs, such as *note* and *notice*, which direct the reader's attention to certain bits of information. In our awareness activities we saw that modals, questions, and statements play an important role in directing the activities of others. Let's first take a closer look at the grammatical form of imperatives and modals before looking at how these various forms interact in pragmatics.

Imperatives. English imperatives or commands in daily interaction are quite simple. Look at the other person and then say the verb. There is no need for pronouns, verb agreement, tense, or anything else. You probably recognize some of these commands from your childhood.

- Eat your food.
- Wash your hands.
- Pick up your clothes.
- Make your bed.
- Say please and thank you.

The understood subject of the imperative is *you*, as you can see if you add a reflexive *–self* at the end. Notice how the reflexive agrees with the subject of the sentences in the following.

- He did it himself.
- I will get it myself.
- You found it yourself.
- We drove it ourselves.
- Read it yourself.

The irregular verb *to be* has a special form for the imperative based on the infinitive.

- Be on time.

In English, imperatives are only directed to the second person (*you*). When we look at pragmatics and discourse, we'll look at how to direct commands to others.

Rules of thumb. Imperatives.

Begin with the plain form of the verb with no tense or verb agreement expressed. The doer of the action (*you*) is also not expressed. *Come here.*

Modals. We've seen how modals are used in stance to indicate an attitude, judgment, or interpretation of what is happening. English sentences can be marked for tense or modality but not both. There are nine modal auxiliaries: *can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, and must*. There are several characteristics of modals that differentiate them from other verbs and auxiliaries.

1. Modals are always first but are not marked for tense to indicate time. What is historically the past tense mark (the *-d* or *-t*, *could*, *would*, *might*, *should*) in most cases no longer indicates past time but indicates the possibility that something will happen (*I may swim tomorrow*, *I might swim tomorrow*, *I would swim tomorrow*, *I could swim tomorrow*). but *I couldn't do it*, *I wouldn't do it*.) In order to indicate possibility at an earlier time, the auxiliary *have* is added, (*I may have done that yesterday*.) Some remainders of the historical past tense can be seen in what is referred to as back stepping in reported speech (*She says she will come* becomes *She said she would come*.) The past tense forms for *can* (*could*) and *will* (*would*) sometimes mean the past when they refer to the ability to do something (*She couldn't swim yesterday*.) or a refusal to do something (*She wouldn't swim yesterday*.) or a frequent past action (*She would practice everyday*.) As a general rule, the past tense form indicates tentativeness or politeness rather than past time.
2. Modals have no verb agreement: (*I can swim*, *He can swim* **He cans swim* versus *I swim*, *He swims*.)
3. Modals directly precede the plain form of verb without adding a *to* or adding an ending to the verb to make it into a participle. (*They can play* versus *They want to play*, *They are playing*, *They have played*.)
4. Modals also have phrasal or periphrastic counterparts which act more like regular verbs with verb agreement, tense and the addition of *to* before the verb. Sometimes these are called **semi-modals**. They are fairly recent

grammatical developments. They appear mostly in speech, where most grammatical changes first appear, rather than in writing, which tends to be more conservative.

- can, could >>> be able to
- will, shall >>> be going to (gonna), be about to
- must >>> have to (hafta), have got to
- should >>> be to, be supposed to
- may, might >>> be allowed to, be permitted to

5. Modals cannot co-occur with each other except in some regional dialects (Southern American English *I might could do that*). For Standard English the second modal must be changed to the periphrastic equivalent (*I might be able to do that*).

Rules of thumb. Characteristics of modals

1. Always first in the verb sequence. *Susie may have been coming.*
2. Have no verb agreement. **Ricardo cans come.*
3. Tense markings usually don't indicate time. *They could be here soon.*
4. Plain form of the verb follows. *I can swim. *I can to swim. *I can swimming.*

Pragmatics and Discourse.

Modals and social interaction. Modals play an important role in social interaction. In fact they are less common in news and academic prose probably because of their use in stance. The semi modals are also more common in

conversation than in written expository registers. Let's take a brief look at some particularities of the nine modals, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will*, *would*, *shall*, *should*, and *must*, before we look at how they interact with each other. Let's look first at *may*, *must*, and *shall*.

May is rare in conversation but common in academic prose. When it is used in conversation and academic prose it usually denotes possibility (*That may be true*) rather than permission (*You may leave the room now.*) Today *can* more commonly performs the latter function in conversation. Although at one time *may* was the preferred modal for asking for or giving permission, that usage today is promoted mostly by classroom teachers or grandparents who are trying to reinforce the traditional pattern in the younger generation. Some of you may remember exchanges such as the following:

Child: Teacher, can I go outside now?

Teacher: I don't know if you are able to or not.

Child: O.K. *May* I go outside now?

Teacher: Yes, you *may*.

Even the traditional children's game *Mother, may I?* reinforces on this pattern.

Must and *shall* are more common in British English than American. In American English the semi-modals equivalents *have to* and *going to* are preferred. *Must* is not common in conversation, perhaps because it is too pushy with its inherent meaning of obligation (*It must be done by noon.*). When it occurs in conversation, it usually means likelihood (*It must be noon.*). It is much more common in academic prose, where it means obligation. *Shall* has almost

disappeared from usage. When it is encountered, it is usually used with the first person for suggestions or invitations (Shall we dance?) or to indicate resolve or intentions. (*I shall try harder this year.*) Even these uses are rare and have a stilted, even elitist flavor.

Degrees of likelihood. The remaining modals, *can*, *could*, *might*, *should*, *will*, and *would* are the workhorse modals and appear in all kinds of English, though most commonly in conversation. We've seen how *will* has developed into a sign of the future tense in English. We saw in Chapter Five on tense that the modals are used with stance to indicate the likelihood that something is happening. Read through the following sentences and note how the modals rank against each other for indicating the certainty that something is true:

- What do you think is making that noise in the other room?
 - high certainty
 - It must be the repairman.
 - It will/would be the repairman.
 - It should be the repairman
 - It may be the repairman
 - I could/might be the repairman.
 - low certainty

I'm sure you can see the difficulty this causes English language learners. The dictionary definitions give few clues as to which of the modals ranks highest in

certainty and which the lowest. For example, why are *could* and *should* rated on this scale but not *can* and *shall* whereas both *may* and *might* and *will* and *would* are? Why is *might* weaker than *may* but *will* and *would* are about the same?

Note that the modals rank in similar ways when they indicate the likelihood that something will be true in the future.

- high certainty
 - It will be hot tomorrow.
 - It should be hot tomorrow.
 - It may be hot tomorrow.
 - It could/might be hot tomorrow.

- low certainty

Note too that adjectives and adverbs can substitute for these modals or they can be used in conjunction with them (*It must be the janitor. It is very certainly the janitor. It must very certainly be the janitor.*)

- high certainty
 - must >>> necessarily, very certainly
 - will .>>> fairly certainly
 - should >>> probably, quite possibly
 - could, might >>> possibly
- low certainty

Polite Advice. Modals are also used in social interaction to give advice. Rather than simply say, *Get your knee checked by the doctor*, we can soften the command by changing it into advice with the use of modals and semi-modals. Notice how the ranking is similar to that for indicating likelihood.

- highly urgent
 - You must get your knee checked by a doctor.
 - You better get your knee checked by a doctor.
 - You should get your knee checked by a doctor.
 - You might/could get your knee checked by a doctor.
- less urgent

Did you notice *better* being used as a modal? Some use *best* instead.

Remember, this is descriptive conversational English. Many interesting changes in the language start out in conversation. We'll look more closely at *better* as a modal in our reflections at the end of the chapter.

Polite requests. Modals are also used to make requests of a general nature:

- Will/would/can/could you help me fix dinner?

or to request permission:

- May/might/can/could I take a bite of that?

Notice that in making requests, the historic past tense form (*would, could, might*) is more polite because it indicates tentativeness. However, in the answer, the

present tense form (*will, can, may*) needs to be used if the answer is a definite *yes*. When a past tense form is used in an answer, the implication is a polite rejection even though the speaker says *yes*. Compare the following. Which one is a definite *yes*?

A. Speaker A. Might I have a bite of that?

Speaker B. Yes, you might.

B. Speaker A. Might I have a bite of that?

Speaker B. Yes, you may.

In conversation A, Speaker B has given a polite refusal. We would expect the next word to be *but* followed by an explanation for the refusal. In conversation B we can almost see Speaker A's mouth open in anticipation.

Polite Imperatives. Imperatives are commonly used in everyday activities without any politeness elements added when cooperation is assumed. For example, we use them in reminders (*Don't forget to pick up some milk on the way home.*), wishes (*Have a nice day!*), suggestions (*Try it this way.*), invitations (*Come on in.*), directions (*Go six miles south and turn left at the yellow barn*), warnings (*Watch out for children.*), and prohibitions (*Do not enter.*).

In these everyday routine situations **elliptical imperatives** are very common. In an elliptical imperative we just name the object of the action without the rest of the expected sentence, as was done in the examples of the least polite English in AA 7.3. Here are some other examples.

- Heads up! (based on *Put your heads up*, i.e. *Pay attention, an object is coming your way.*)
- Spoons! (based on : *Put your spoons here.*)

However, even imperatives need to be softened to encourage good will. To make everyday imperatives more polite, we have been taught to add *please*, perhaps even a *pretty please with sugar on it*. Some people add a *do* to make imperatives more friendly (*Do hand me that butter plate*) or a *kindly* (*Kindly hand me that butter plate.*) Sometimes, especially when doing activities with children, to make sure that the children we are talking to know that the imperative is directed to them, we include *you* in the command, often accompanied by their name (e.g. *Johnny, you sit over there.*). Whether or not a command in this statement form is more polite or more threatening depends on the tone of voice. The first type is said with a gentle encouraging voice, the second slowly with stress on every word.

However, as we saw in AA 7.3, there are other ways to be more polite with imperatives. Politeness is based on not imposing on others and giving them the option of not cooperating. Thus we achieve our goals by building good rapport. With imperatives this is done indirectly by using statements and questions with modals, especially modals in the past tense form. Again, let's pretend we are a waiter in a restaurant ranking the politeness of our customers.

- Least polite (most direct)
 - imperative (elliptical) Sprite.
 - imperative: Give me a Sprite

- declarative (no modal) I want a Sprite
- declarative (present tense form of modal) I'll have a Sprite
- declarative (past tense form of a modal) I'd like a Sprite.
- interrogative (no modal) Do you have Sprite?
- interrogative (Present tense form of modal): Can I have a Sprite?
- interrogative (past tense form of modal): Could I have a Sprite?
- Most polite (least direct)

Of course we could increase the politeness another notch or two by adding a *please*.

Including Others. As we have seen so far, English commands can only be given to the second person, the person we are talking to. When we want to include other people in the command, we use other grammatical constructions. Let us look at a few.

Let imperatives. The most common way to include the speaker or a third person in an imperative is to preface the command with a *let* followed by the name of the person or object to be involved in the command or by the corresponding pronoun. The *let us* form is usually contracted to *let's*.

- Let me help you wash the dishes.
- Let's wash the dishes together.
- Let John do it
- Let this be a lesson.

- Let light appear.

Note that with this command form, there is no verb agreement in the third person singular, (*Let John do it* but *John does it. Let light appear* but *Light appears.*)

Causatives. We also have a causative pattern that we can use to delegate actions to others. The mildest causative uses the frame HAVE + DESIGNATED DOER + DESIGNATED ACTION.

- I'll have Henry wash the dishes.
- Have Mary be here at 7.

If we want to leave open who will perform the task, we use a closely related pattern, HAVE + DESIGNATED OBJECT + DESIGNATED ACTION AS PAST PARTICIPLE. Who will do the action may be the person mentioned in the S position in the sentence or someone else.

- I'll have the dishes washed.
- Have your room cleaned up by tonight.

Another version of these causative constructions replaces *have* with the conversational verb *get*, implying that it might take a little more encouragement to achieve the desired result. Notice that when we specify who will do the action, the resulting action is in the form of an infinitive (*to + verb*) rather than the base or plain form of the verb.

- I'll get Henry to wash the dishes.
- Get Mary to be here at 7.
- I'll get the dishes washed.

- Get your room cleaned up by tonight.

To indicate that we are having trouble or anticipate having trouble in getting the specified third party to cooperate, we use the *make* causative.

- I'll make Henry wash the dishes.
- Make Mary be here at 7.

Diffuse imperatives. Sometimes we don't have anyone in particular in mind to do the action. In this case we would use the diffuse imperative by including an indefinite pronoun (*someone, anyone, some body, nobody*) as the subject.

- Somebody answer the phone.
- Nobody move.

Reflections

Some Concepts

- In conversation a variety of grammatical forms are used to manage the activities of others.
- Modals interrelate with each other to show the probability and advisability of actions or requests.
- We indicate politeness by not imposing our will on others and giving them options by implying that there are other possibilities and that their lack of cooperate will not offend us.

- Different degrees of politeness are manifested through the interaction of modals, statements, questions, and imperatives in giving commands, making requests, and giving suggestions in conversation.

Some Key Terminology.

- **causatives**—a way to delegate actions to a third party. The most common structure is HAVE + DESIGNATED DOER + DESIGNATED ACTION, (*Have Mabel wash the car.*) Alternatives include GET + DESIGNATED DOER + to + DESIGNATED ACTION, (*Get Mabel to wash the car*) and MAKE + DESIGNATED DOER + DESIGNATED ACTION, (*Make Mabel wash the car.*) These last two imply that more coercion is needed. An alternative causative leaves open who will perform the action. HAVE/GET + DESIGNATED OBJECT + DESIGNATED ACTION AS PAST PARTICIPLE, (*I'll have/get my carpets cleaned before the party starts.*)
- **diffuse imperatives**—commands directed to no one in particular, (*Someone get the phone.*)
- **elliptical imperatives**—imperatives without the verb, (*Heads! Attention!*) Common in emergency situations or in social relationships where cooperation is expected, such as classroom instruction (*Hands to yourself!*) Otherwise, considered rude.
- **imperatives**—also called commands. They are formed by using the verb by itself without any inflections. They are directed to the listener or readers, i.e. the second person, (*Hit the ball. Drive slowly.*) For politeness purposes, statements and questions, especially those using modals often

function as imperatives in conversation, (*Could you please help me* versus *Help me. I'd like a sandwich* versus *Give me a sandwich.*)

- **let imperatives**—a way to direct an imperative to someone besides the second person. Place *let* before the person who will do the task and then state the task, (*Let us make a cake. Let me do that, Let the boys join us*)
- **modals**—auxiliary verbs that are characterized by not having verb agreement, (*The storm may come*), a past tense form that does not refer to past time, (*The storm might come tomorrow*), always appears first in the verb sequence, (*The storm might have come, The storm may be coming.*) Modals are used to soften the impact of tense by indicating a less definite stance, (*The storm is coming* versus *The storm may be coming.*)
- **semi-modals**—combinations of words that have the meaning of modals and can substitute for modals but have verb agreement and require a *to* before the main verb, (*He has to go* versus *He must go. She is going to help us* versus *She will help us.*)

Some reflective activities.

1. In a cartoon, a teenage boy is relaxing on the couch. His mother passes by and the following conversation takes place:

Teen: Mom, can I have a piece of that cake you made?

Mom: Sure,

Long pause lasting three panels with the teen starting to look perturbed.

Teen: You mean I have to get it myself?

- What was the source of the miscommunication?
2. What went wrong? What rule of thumb was overlooked?
 - *We must to go.
 - *Do you can swim?
 - *May swim!
 - *I had my house paint.
 - *Leaves the room.
 - *You should go home yesterday.
 3. Written versus spoken English. A study which compared the use of modals in university science lectures and science reading found that the five most common modals in the lectures were (in rank order): *can, will, would, going to, have to*. The five most common modals in the reading assignments for those lectures were (in rank order) *may, can, should, will, must*. *Must* did not occur in the lectures. *Going to* and *have to* did not occur in the readings. Based on your readings and your own experience with English, how would you explain these differing results? What are the implications for language teachers?
 4. Politeness with past tense forms. Suppose you overheard the following conversation from a polite young man asking a young woman to attend a concert.

Young man: Susie, could you go to the concert with me tonight?

Young woman: Yes, I could

Is Susie planning to go? How do we know? If this conversation were to continue, what would probably be the next word?

5. Modals and perfects. What went wrong in the following conversation?

Speaker A: You should have gone to the show with us.

Speaker B: O.K., I'll be ready to go at 6.

What has the speaker misunderstood about how tense and aspect work with modals?

6. Some suggest that *need*, *dare*, *best*, and *better* are modals in English as in the following examples. *He better do that. She best be here by 10. Dare he come again? He need not try that.* Based on the characteristics of modals, do you agree? Do they pass all the tests? Since a modal is an auxiliary, it can be an operator in questions. Can these be operators in all questions, including tag questions? Or does it sound best when another operator is added such as *do*, *be*, or *have*? Which of these seem to be the best candidates for becoming modals in conversational English today? Do some seem to be archaic and dropping out of favor? *Better* and *best* have been used in sentences such as those in the examples since 1800, *need* and *dare* even longer. How does that influence your decision?
7. How would you make the let and causative versions of the imperative be more polite?

Grammar detective 7. Quantifying politeness.

One way that linguists collect data about how people use grammar in their social interactions is to use situational questionnaires. Such questionnaires are usually developed by first using an open ended questionnaire as a pilot study to see what kinds of answers are typical. They then create another questionnaire with multiple choice answers based on the results of the pilot study. This questionnaire can then be given to large numbers of people of various backgrounds to discover or verify descriptive patterns. Let's try an open ended questionnaire ourselves to see what interesting patterns we can find about how polite our friends are in various social settings.

Instructions:

1. Make six copies of the situations below. Do not include the point system. That is for your use later on when you do the analysis.
2. Select six friends or acquaintances for your pilot study. Have all be similar in age, ethnic origin, and education. Have three be males and three females.
3. Give each person a copy of the situations and have them write out their answers.
4. Using the following politeness rating scale, analyze their responses to the different situations. Notice that the role relationships, the urgency, and the ages differ in the given situations. Do these have an effect? Did you have trouble assigning politeness ratings? Do you find that the politeness scale needs to be adjusted so it better measures politeness? If so, what are

your suggestions? Did the responses of the males differ from the females?

5. Summarize your results in a two-page report and include as an appendix the six questionnaires you collected so we can compare your analysis with your data. In class be prepared to combine your findings with those of your classmates.

Politeness Scale (Point System)

least polite

1 point -- words or phrases but no verb (A glass of water)

2 points -- command (Give me a glass of water)

4 points -- statement (I want a glass of water)

6 points -- question (Do you have water?)

most polite

bonus points

+1 -- uses a modal

+2 -- uses a past tense form of modal

+1 -- says please

+1 -- introduce the request with an apology ("excuse me," "pardon me")

penalty points

-2 -- profanity

The Situations

Situation 1.

You have stopped by to pick up a friend to join you and some others for a night on the town. Your friend's mother greets you at the door and asks you to sit down while your friend gets ready. You chat for a couple of minutes. You are very thirsty. How would you ask her for a glass of water?

Situation 2.

Before going to the movies, your group stops off at small Italian restaurant. You sit down and the waiter comes out to take your order. Your group wants a super sized Hawaiian pizza and a pitcher of root beer. How would you order?

Situation 3.

You are enjoying your pizza and lose track of the time. You have the only watch in the group and you notice that it seems to be stopped. A teenage boy at the next table has a watch. You don't want to miss the next show. How would you ask the boy for the time?

Situation 4.

The waiter is slow in getting the check to you so you can leave. You are anxious to get your bill. How would you ask for it?

Situation 5.

You get to the show on time. You need 5 tickets. What will you say to the person in the ticket office?

Situation 6.

To make everything go faster, you collected everyone's money before you got in line so you could buy the tickets at once. The price has gone up so you discover that you need two more dollars from everyone. How would you ask your friends for some more money?

Teaching Ideas.

1. **Assigning Duties.** Make a list of things that need to be done around the classroom. Then have the students take turns assigning the chores to each other using. Have them decide which ones would be the most undesirable. Put the students in pairs and have them take turns assigning the chores. Have one state the chore using the frame: *We need to have OBJECT past participle*, e.g. *We need to have the blackboard erased*. Then the other one will make the assignment using the frame *Let's have PERSON verb* or *Let's get PERSON to verb*, or *Let's make PERSON verb*, as appropriate according to how desirable the chore is, e.g. *Let's have Isabel sweep the floor*. *Let's make Juan sort the wooden blocks*.
2. **Let's remind each other to be more polite.** Tell the students commands (*open your books, stamp your feet*), then have the students remind you of a more polite version using a "would you please" question. (*Would you please open your books? Would you please stamp your feet*) After they have corrected you, put the students in pairs and have them do the same with each other with one giving a command and the other a more polite version.
3. **What could it be?** Fill a plastic or cloth bag with four or five objects of various shapes. Have the students take turns handling the bag and feeling the objects through the sides. Have them guess what the objects are. If they aren't sure, have them use *may be*, *might be*, *could be* with their

guesses. Have them use *must be*, *has to be* if they are fairly sure. Use the simple present tense *is* if they are definitely sure. When all have made their guesses, open the bag and show the contents. To make it more interesting, use unusually shaped or misleadingly shaped objects.