Modal Verbs for Permission — Asking, Giving and Refusing — A1

CEFR Level A1 | 3 Worksheets: Can I…? • Saying No Nicely • Reading and Speaking | Answer Key Included

Worksheet 1: Can I…? — Asking

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A1 (CEFR)

Reference: How to Ask

When we want something, we ask. We use **Can I…?**

Question	Answer YES	Answer NO
Can I sit here?	Yes, you **can**. / Yes, of course.	Sorry, you **can't**. It's my friend's chair.
Can I use your pen?	Yes, sure. Here you are.	Sorry, I need it.

Important: we say Can I…? — not "I can…?"

✓ **Can I** open the window? ✗ **I can** open the window?

✓ Can I **go** now? ✗ Can I **to go** now?

Be polite! Add please: "Can I have some water, please?"

Exercise A: Make the Question

Write a question with Can I…?

#	You want to…	Your question
1	open the window	_____ ?
2	sit here	_____ ?
3	use your phone	_____ ?
4	have a biscuit	_____ ?
5	go to the toilet	_____ ?
6	see your book	_____ ?

Exercise B: Yes or No?

Read the situation. Write "Yes, you can." or "Sorry, you can't."

#	Situation	Your answer
1	"Can I sit here?" The chair is free.	_____
2	"Can I open the window?" It is very cold.	_____
3	"Can I have some water?" There is a lot of water.	_____
4	"Can I use your car?" You are 12 years old!	_____
5	"Can I take a photo?" The sign says NO PHOTOS.	_____
6	"Can I play football here?" It is a big park.	_____

Exercise C: Find the Mistake

Write the question correctly.

1. "I can open the window?"

   → _____

2. "Can I to sit here?"

→ _____

3. "Can I sits here?"

→ _____

4. "Can you I use your pen?"

→ _____

Score: _____ / 15

Worksheet 2: Saying No Nicely

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A1 (CEFR)

Reference: "No" Is Not Enough

In English, we do not usually say only "No". It is not polite. We say **sorry** and we give a **reason**.

Not polite ✗	Polite ✓
"No."	"Sorry, you can't. It's my sister's."
"You can't."	"Sorry, I'm using it."
"No, go away."	"Sorry, not now. Maybe later?"

The formula: Sorry + you can't / I can't + because…

"Can I use your bike?" → "**Sorry**, you **can't**. My brother has it today."

Exercise A: Add a Reason

Say no politely. Write a reason.

#	Question	Your answer: Sorry, … because …
1	"Can I open the window?"	Sorry, _____
2	"Can I use your phone?"	Sorry, _____
3	"Can I have your sandwich?"	Sorry, _____
4	"Can I sit here?"	Sorry, _____
5	"Can I play with your dog?"	Sorry, _____

Exercise B: Match the Answer

Match the question (1–5) with the best answer (a–e).

#	Question	Letter	Answer
1	"Can I have some cake?"	____	a. Sorry, you can't. It's a library!
2	"Can I talk to my friend?"	____	b. Yes, of course. Here you are.
3	"Can I take a photo of you?"	____	c. Sorry, I can't. I don't have any money.
4	"Can I have five euros?"	____	d. Yes, sure! Smile!
5	"Can I borrow your pen?"	____	e. Yes, you can. There is a big piece for you.

Exercise C: Complete the Conversations

Speaker	What they say
MIA	(1) _____ I sit here, please?
TOM	Yes, of (2) _____ . The chair is free.
MIA	Thank you! And (3) _____ I use your pen?
TOM	(4) _____ , you can't. I'm writing my homework.
MIA	No problem!

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 3: Reading, Speaking and Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A1 (CEFR)

Part A – Read the Text

Read about Nina's day. Then answer the questions.

Nina is at her friend Ella's house. She asks: "Can I have a drink, please?" Ella says: "Yes, of course! You can have juice or water." Then Nina asks: "Can I play with the cat?" Ella says: "Sorry, you can't. The cat is sleeping." Nina asks: "Can I watch TV?" Ella says: "Yes, you can. But first we can do our homework!" Nina is happy. She can watch TV after her homework.

1. What does Nina ask first?

_____

2. Can Nina play with the cat? Why / why not?

_____

3. When can Nina watch TV?

_____

4. Write one question from the text with **Can I…?**

_____

Part B – Where Are You?

Write one question with Can I…? for each place.

#	Place	Your question
1	In a café	_____ ?
2	In your English class	_____ ?
3	At your friend's house	_____ ?
4	In a shop	_____ ?

Part C – Speaking Game

Work with a friend. Ask five questions with Can I…?

Your friend says **yes** or **no**. If your friend says no, they **must give a reason**!

Example: "Can I use your ruler?" — "Sorry, you can't. I'm using it."

Now write your five questions and your friend's answers.

_____
____

_____
____

_____
____

_____
____

_____
____

Score: _____ / 15

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — A1 Level Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – Exercise A (Questions)

#	Model answer
1	Can I open the window, please?
2	Can I sit here, please?
3	Can I use your phone, please?
4	Can I have a biscuit, please?
5	Can I go to the toilet, please?
6	Can I see your book, please?

Accept answers without "please", but always praise learners who include it. At A1, "please" is not decoration — it is part of the structure.

Worksheet 1 – Exercise B (Yes or No?)

#	Answer	Why
1	Yes, you can.	The chair is free.
2	Sorry, you can't.	It is cold — a good reason for no.
3	Yes, you can.	There is plenty.
4	Sorry, you can't.	A child cannot drive.
5	Sorry, you can't.	The sign says no.
6	Yes, you can.	A big park — there is space.

Worksheet 1 – Exercise C (Mistakes)

#	Mistake	Correct question & rule
1	I can open…?	**Can I open the window?** — In a question, *can* comes first.
2	Can I to sit…?	**Can I sit here?** — No "to" after can.
3	Can I sits…?	**Can I sit here?** — No -s after can.
4	Can you I use…?	**Can I use your pen?** — Only one person: *I*. (Or: "Can you give me your pen?")

Worksheet 2 – Exercise A (Add a Reason)

Accept any polite refusal with a sensible reason. Models:

#	Model answer
1	Sorry, you can't. It's very cold today.
2	Sorry, you can't. The battery is dead.
3	Sorry, you can't. I'm very hungry!
4	Sorry, you can't. My friend is sitting here.
5	Sorry, you can't. He's sleeping.

Mark the reason, not the grammar of the reason. A learner who writes "Sorry, you can't. Is cold." has succeeded at this task.

Worksheet 2 – Exercise B (Matching)

1	2	3	4	5
e	a	d	c	b

Worksheet 2 – Exercise C (Conversation)

#	Answer
1	Can
2	course
3	can
4	Sorry

Worksheet 3 – Part A (Reading)

#	Answer
1	"Can I have a drink, please?"
2	No. Because the cat is sleeping.
3	After her homework.
4	Any of: "Can I have a drink, please?" / "Can I play with the cat?" / "Can I watch TV?"

Marking Guide — Speaking and Writing (Worksheet 3 Parts B and C)

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Question form	Can I + simple verb; no "to", no -s, correct word order	0–3
Politeness	Uses "please"; refusals include "sorry"	0–2
Reasons	Every "no" has a reason	0–3

Teacher Notes — A1

- **One structure only: *Can I…?*** Do not introduce *could* or *may* at A1. They are the same function in a different register, and register is an A2/B1 concern. Adding them here produces learners who say "May I sit here?" to their classmates.
- **Word order is the grammar lesson.** "I can sit here?" with rising intonation is how most L1s ask, and learners transfer it directly. Drill the inversion physically — two cards, *Can* and *I*, swapped in front of the class.
- **The refusal is the real lesson.** A bare "No" is grammatically perfect and socially wrong. English refuses with sorry + reason, and learners who never practise this sound rude in every future encounter. Worksheet 2 exists for this reason alone.
- **Accept broken reasons.** The reason clause will be full of errors at A1 ("Is cold", "I no have"). Correcting it defeats the purpose — the learner is doing the pragmatic work. Praise the attempt and move on.
- **Can is doing two jobs** — ability ("I can swim") and permission ("Can I swim?"). At A1 do not separate them. Learners handle the overlap intuitively; naming it confuses them.
- **Good classroom activity:** the "yes/no" circle. Every learner must ask their neighbour for something real — a pen, a seat, a look at their book. The neighbour must refuse the first time, with a reason, then accept the second. Everyone practises both faces.