Unit 3 · Making Requests

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **make requests** and **answer** them: yes kindly, no with *sorry* and a reason; **invite**, accept, refuse
- a story (*Kisa Gotami and the Mustard Seed*), a **letter to the editor**; **can, could, will, would**; tongue twisters; a letter about a public problem

Getting started

- four pictures, each with a **request**: a man and a heavy sack; a girl helping an old man across the road; a boy reading; a girl waking someone up
- **poem** (*I Love Poems*), itself a request (*Please*):
  - **don't close your heart**: kindness is hidden inside, "under the veins, inside the cage" (the **rib cage**)
  - **don't close your eyes**: look everywhere, ocean, sky, right and left
  - message: stay kind and open, curious about the world

Reading I: Kisa Gotami and the Mustard Seed

- the steps:
  1. **Kisa Gotami** lives with her only son; her husband has died; she lives only for him
  2. the son falls ill and **dies**; she won't accept it; villagers **console** her, say prepare the **funeral**; she refuses
  3. she carries his body **door to door**, begging people to bring him back to life; for days lets no one touch him or take him to the **graveyard**
  4. an **old man**: go to **Gautama Buddha**, who has a **remedy** for all suffering; he is **meditating** under a **peepal tree**
  5. her **request**: use your power to bring my son back to life; the Buddha: I can help, if you do as I say
  6. the task: **a handful of mustard seeds** from a house **where no one has ever died**
  7. **every house** has lost someone: the first neighbor's **father** (a year ago), the next one's **grandmother** (a few weeks ago); a mother, a daughter…
  8. she understands: death is **inevitable**; she is not alone; everyone born is **destined** to die
- **lesson:** death comes to every family; you are not alone in grief; the Buddha teaches by letting her **find out for herself**
- **why mustard:** every home has it; the hard part is the **condition**
- **today:** after the **2015 earthquake** and **COVID-19**, communities comforted each other; be kind to people who grieve
- **who said it to whom:**
  - *Will you please help me? · Would you please use them to restore my son…?*: Kisa → the Buddha
  - *Well! Kisa, I think I can help you.*: the Buddha → Kisa
  - *Could you please lend me a handful of mustard seeds…?*: Kisa → a neighbor
  - *Yes, I can surely do that.*: the neighbor → Kisa

Reading II: a letter to the editor

- a **formal** letter written for a newspaper to print: short, clear, polite; the **editor** decides what is printed

Part	In Nitin's letter
sender's address, date	Kathmandu, 19 September 2021
receiver	The Editor, *The Rising Nepal*, Kathmandu
subject	Air pollution, a concern
salutation	Dear Sir/Madam
closing, name	Yours faithfully, Nitin Rai

- **body:**
  1. **why:** through your **esteemed** (much respected) paper, the air pollution in his city
  2. **cause:** an **environmental** problem, rising; **factories** the major source (of air and water pollution)
  3. **harm: suffocation**, breathing problems, lung diseases; chimney smoke full of **poisonous gases**, mixing with pure air
  4. **solution:** factory **owners** must take **responsibility**; a **strict law** to punish those who don't keep the air clean

Key words

console: give comfort and sympathy (*consoled*).
funeral: the ceremony for burying or burning a dead person.
graveyard: land where dead people are buried.
remedy: a way of making a bad situation better.
meditate: sit in silence to calm the mind.
inevitable: sure to happen; can't be avoided.
grief: very great sadness, especially at a death.
destined: sure to happen to someone, as if planned.
restore: bring back to how it was.
suffocation: difficulty getting enough air.
emit: send out (smoke, gas).

Pronunciation: tongue twisters

- **tongue twister** = similar sounds, hard to say fast; say slowly, then faster
- **Peter Piper** picked a **peck** (an old measure, about 9 liters) of **pickled** peppers: /p/
- **Betty Botter**: *butter, bitter, batter, better, bit*: /b/, /t/, short vowels that change the word
- **woodchuck** (**chuck** = throw): *wood, would, woodchuck, could*: /w/, /ʊ/, /tʃ/

Listening: invitations

- six friends invite each other: an art gallery, karaoke, a technology show, a concert, a sale, a horror movie

To invite	To accept	To refuse
Would you like to come?	*I'd love to.*	*Sorry, I can't.*
Do you want to join us?	*Thanks, I'd love to.*	*Thanks for asking, but I have to…*
I was wondering if you'd like to go.	*Sure!*	*I'd love to, but I'm busy.*
Can you come?	*Yes, it sounds like fun.*	

- a kind refusal: **thanks** + **a soft no** + **a reason** (Lisa and Jim must study, work)
- an invitation **rises** at the end; stress **love** in *I'd love to*

Speaking: requests and responses

Request	How it sounds
Will *you lend me your book?*	direct, a little firm
Can *you show me your album?*	friendly: family, friends
Could *you show me the way?*	polite, with anyone
Would *you help me with this?*	very polite
Would you mind ***carrying*** *this?*	very polite, + **-ing**

Saying yes	Saying no
Sure, here you are.	*No, I'm sorry, I need it.*
Of course. / No problem.	*I'm afraid I can't.*
Not at all. (to *Would you mind…?*)	*I'd love to, but I'm busy today.*

- **I'd like…** (polite) for *I want…*: a statement, ends with a **full stop**
- **board game:** each square a situation + clue → a request: *I'm starving.* (give me some bread) → *Could you give me some bread?*

Grammar I: can, could, will, would

- after them, the **plain verb**: no *to*, no *-s*, no *-ing*; question: modal + subject + verb
  - *Could you* ***help*** *me?* not *Could you to help*
  - *She would* ***like*** *a coffee.* not *would likes*
  - *Could you* ***please*** *bring…* (*please* after *you* or at the end)

Job	Now / future	Past
ability	She **can** swim.	She **could** swim at five.
request	**Can / Could / Will / Would** you help me?	
offer	**Can** I help you? **Would** you like tea?	
future, promise	I **will** help you.	He said he **would** help.
permission	You **can** borrow my bike. **Can** I go now?	

- **no ability:** *can't*: *She's seven but she* ***can't*** *read yet.*
- *Who* ***will*** *cook dinner?* (future); ***Would*** *you like to dance?* (invitation)

Grammar II: offers, requests, permission

- **request** (please do it): *Could you do me a* ***favor****? Will you give me a* ***hand****?* (= help me)
- **offer** (I'll do it for you): *Would you like some help? Can I help you? Would you like some cake?*
- **permission**: *I've finished my work. Can I go now?*

Writing: a letter about a public problem

- to the **editor** of a local paper or the **ward chairperson**; Nitin's parts in his order
  1. your address, date
  2. receiver's title and address
  3. **Subject:** the problem in a few words
  4. *Dear Sir/Madam, / Respected Sir/Madam,*
  5. the problem → its effects → what should be done (a polite request)
  6. *Yours faithfully,* + name
- **Yours faithfully** after *Dear Sir/Madam* (name unknown); **Yours sincerely** after a name (*Dear Ms. Thapa*)
- **project:** find the requests on the school's notices (library, staff room, canteen), translate Nepali ones: *Please return books on time.*

Extra bit: at the tailor's

- a **tailor** and a **customer** (a **man**: "sir") at a tailor's shop
- a **woolen suit**, from his own **suit-length** of cloth; **tight-fitting**; measurements (permission: *May I take…?*)
- ready in about **three weeks** (the **holiday rush**), before the end of the month
- three inside pockets, no hip pocket, a **ticket pocket**; a **fitting** Tuesday → he would rather come Wednesday
- **the surprise:** asks the price last: **777 rupees** to make it → goes **elsewhere**; the tailor, polite to the end, recommends **FITWELL** across the street
- offer: *Would you like to buy the cloth from us?*

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ Could you to open the door?
✓ Could you **open** the door?

✗ She can sings beautifully.
✓ She can **sing** beautifully.

✗ Would you mind to wait a minute?
✓ Would you mind **waiting** a minute?

✗ Would you mind closing it? — Yes. (meaning "go ahead")
✓ — **Not at all.** / **Of course not.**

✗ I would like a drink please?
✓ I would like a drink, please. (a **full stop**)

✗ She would likes a coffee.
✓ She would **like** a coffee.

✗ Could please you bring my keys?
✓ Could you **please** bring my keys?

✗ She can swim when she was five.
✓ She **could** swim when she was five.

✗ Dear Sir/Madam … Yours sincerely
✓ Dear Sir/Madam … **Yours faithfully**