Unit 2 · Asking for Permission

STUDY NOTES

WHAT THE BLE ASKS

- **CDC's grid tests skills, not units:** Reading 25 · Writing 20 · Grammar 5
- **Reading 1–2 (seen texts, 5 marks each):** *A Father's Letter to his Son*; *Changing World*
  - who said what
  - why
  - the order of events
  - word meanings
- **Writing**
  - ten punctuation errors (5 marks)
  - guided writing, 5 marks: a **story** from an outline
  - free writing, 10 marks: a personal or official letter (an email is set out much the same)
- **Grammar (5 marks):** *Change into a yes/no question*; blanks

Reading I: A Father's Letter to his Son

- **Kind:** short **story**, **past tense**, outside narrator, no names; much **dialogue**, where the boy keeps asking permission
- **Every summer:** parents take him to his grandparents in another city for **fifteen to twenty days**
- **Grown up:** says he can go **alone**; parents **refuse** (**worried about his safety**), he **insists**, they **agree**; they teach him all about traveling alone
- **Packing:** swimming **goggles** and swimsuit: yes, **on one condition** (always swim with his grandparents); presents of **sunglasses** and **mufflers**: a good idea
- **Station:** they **see him off**; he is **settled** in his **berth**; his father hands an **envelope** through the window: open it if afraid, it will calm him
- **Before leaving:** *I remember everything. Don't worry.*
- **Train: everyone is with someone** → lonely; a big man enters the **compartment** → scared, can't sleep → opens the letter
- **The letter:** don't be afraid, I am with you on this train, in the **adjacent** compartment
- his face **lights up**, fear **vanishes**
- **Meaning:** parents give freedom a little at a time; their care goes on even when we can't see it
- **Permission lines:**
  - *Is it okay if…?*
  - *May I…?*
  - *Would it be alright if…?*

Reading II: Changing World

- **Kind: poem**, four **stanzas**, no rhyme; "I" = an old man looking back
- credited to **Edward de Bono** (1933–2021), a thinker born in Malta (**lateral thinking**); name him in an exam
- **Stanza 1:** young, wanted to **change the whole world**; too hard → his **nation**
- **Stanza 2:** couldn't; **focused** on his **town**, couldn't; older, tried his **family**
- **Stanza 3:** old, sees he can change only **himself**; it hurts: he could have started there long ago
- **Stanza 4:** himself → family → town → nation → world: he could have **made an impact**, **indeed** changed the world
- **Shape:** goes **in** through three stanzas, comes **out** through the last; the order of words is the meaning
- **could have** + past participle = possible, but **didn't happen**: he did **not** change the world
- **Message:** change yourself first; that change would have spread

Key words

refuse / insist: say no / demand firmly, not accept no.
stuff: things (informal; no plural).
goggles: tight glasses keeping water, dust, wind out.
muffler: thick cloth round the neck; a scarf.
see someone off: go with someone to say goodbye.
settle: get into a comfortable position.
berth / compartment: a place to sleep on a train / a section of a railway coach.
depart / departure: leave / leaving.
announcement: something said in public to give news.
adjacent: next to something.
light up / vanish: (a face) become bright with happiness / disappear suddenly.
realize: begin to understand.
focus (on): give all your attention to one thing.
impact: a strong effect.
indeed: really.

Asking for permission

Asking	Verb after it
Can I...? May I...? Could I...?	base form
Is it okay / all right if I...?	present
Do you mind if I...?	present
Would you mind if I...?	**past form**
Would it be all right if I...?	**past form**
I was wondering if I could...	base form
Would it be possible to...?	base form

- **past form, but now or soon:** *Would it be all right if I **took** sunglasses?*
- *Can I...?* to a friend; *May I...? Could I...?* to a teacher, a stranger, an office
- **yes:**
  - *Yes, of course.*
  - *Go ahead.*
  - *By all means.*
  - *Sure.*
  - *Certainly.*
  - *Why not?*
- **no:** *I'm afraid not. / I'm sorry, that's not allowed. / You are not allowed to do that.*; *I'm sorry / I'm afraid* + a reason; a bare *No* sounds rude; *No way*: rude except as a joke with a friend
- **trap:** *Do you mind...?* = "Does it bother you?", so **"No" means yes**
- casual: *Any chance of...?, Sure*; formal: *May I have your permission to...?, That seems perfectly acceptable*; to a stranger: *Excuse me, would it be possible to...?*
- permission = **you** do it; request = **someone else** does it

Grammar: yes/no questions

- **Helping verb** → move it **in front of the subject**: *The train is leaving.* → *Is the train leaving?*
  - *am, is, are*
  - *can, could*
  - *may, might*
  - *was, were*
  - *will, would*
  - *must*
  - *have, has, had*
  - *shall, should*
- *be* alone moves too: *Are you tired?*; *there*: *Is there a berth?*
- **No helping verb** → add **do / does / did**; main verb to **base form**:
  - I, you, we, they: *Do you live near the station?*
  - he, she, it: *Does the ticket cost Rs. 50?*
  - past: *Did the train leave on time?*
- *have* as the only verb: *He has a bicycle.* → *Does he have a bicycle?*
- **Short answers:** pronoun + same helping verb:
  - *Yes, she is.*
  - *No, I can't.*
  - *Yes, they did.*

Writing: a story from an outline

1. **read the whole outline** first
2. each note → a full sentence in the **past tense**: *has tough days* → *He had tough days*
3. **join** notes:
   - *and*
   - *so*
   - *because*
   - *but*
   - *when*
4. **add a little:**
   - a time
   - a few spoken words
   - a feeling
5. **title**, then read through once

- **story to a given ending:** plan **backwards**:
  - who
  - who it hurt
  - what she did
  - what showed her

Writing: an email and a reply

- **Email:** To → **Subject** → *Dear Madam,* → opening (who you are, why you write) → request (which room, when, how long) → polite questions → *I look forward to your positive response.* → *With warm regards,* → name
- **Reply:**
  1. **Subject:** same one after *Re:*
  2. **Greeting:** *Dear Kabir,*
  3. **Thanks:** *Thank you for your email about...*
  4. **Answer early and clear**, exact days and times
  5. **Conditions** or the reason for a no; another way if you can
  6. a kind word, closing, name, position
- **yes:** *You are welcome to use... / You may use it, provided that...*
- **no:** *I'm afraid the hall won't be free... / Unfortunately, it won't be possible to...*

The sounds of -ed

Base verb ends in	-ed	Examples
/t/, /d/	**/ɪd/**, extra syllable	*wanted, handed*
voiceless: /p/, /k/, /s/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /f/	**/t/**	*asked, stopped*
voiced: every vowel, /b/, /g/, /v/, /z/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /r/	**/d/**	*loved, smiled, agreed*

- **voiced or voiceless?** fingers on the throat: "zzzz" hums, "ssss" is only air
- go by the **sound**, not the spelling

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ Would it be all right if I take...?
✓ ...if I **took**...?

✗ "Do you mind if I sit here?" "Yes, sit."
✓ "**No**, go ahead." (No means yes)

✗ Does he wants...? / Did she saw...?
✓ **Does he want**...? / **Did she see**...?

✗ Has he a bicycle?
✓ **Does he have** a bicycle?

✗ my stuffs
✓ my **stuff**; *things* in a formal letter

✗ The poet changed the world.
✓ He **could have**, but didn't.

✗ He have tough days. (in a story)
✓ He **had** tough days.