

Asking For Directions Using Modal Verbs

Asking for directions is very important when you are in another country. You must listen very carefully to every word. Also, it is important *how* you ask questions.

In English some ways of asking questions are rude (grosero) and people may get angry or offended.



When you want to ask a person you don't know directions DO NOT:

- Say only the place you want to go. For example, "CAXA bus station?"
- Only say "Where is the bus station?"





Polite Ways to Ask For Directions



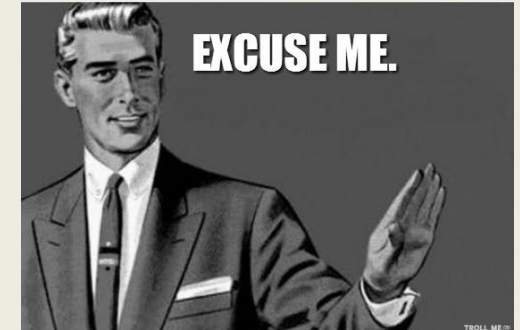
First you need to need to **get the person's attention**. You can say:

- Excuse me, ...
- Pardon me, ...
- Sorry to bother you, but....
- Sorry to interrupt, ... (if the person is busy or talking to another person)

When you have the person's attention you should use MODAL verbs. This is a polite and respectful form to ask questions. For example:

- Excuse me, **can/could** you please tell me how to get to CAXA bus station?
- Excuse me, **can/could** you please tell me the way to the Cathedral?
- Sorry to bother you, **can/could** you help me please?

In this context, **can** and **could** are similar to using the "usted" form in Spanish. **Could** is more formal than **can**.



Sample Conversations

Read the sample conversations. Note the language that is used to ask for directions.

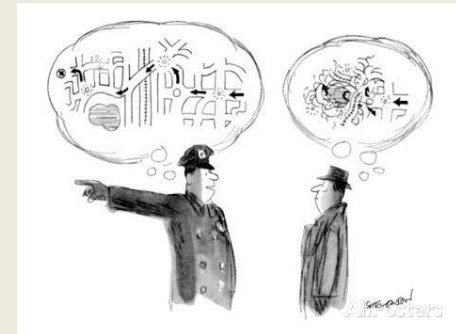
Conversation 1:

Tourist: Hello, excuse me, could you please tell me how to get to a bank near here?

Local: Sure. You go along this street for two blocks, then turn right on Main Street. Go along Main Street for three blocks and it is on the corner.

Tourist: Thank you so much.

Local: No worries, mate!



Conversation 2:

Tourist: Pardon me, Sir. I am lost. Could you help me, please?

Local: Yes, where do you need to go?

Tourist: Can you please tell me the way to a Japanese restaurant near here?

Local: No problem. There is a great Japanese restaurant close to the movie theater in Chuck St. Turn left at the next street, go straight for two blocks, then turn right at the traffic lights. It is located next to a drugstore, about half a block from the movie theater.

Tourist: Thanks for your help. I feel so hungry.

Local: That's okay. The food is delicious there. You will love it!

Tourist: Thanks!

Practice Exercises

Fill in the bank spaces with the correct words and phrases.

Use slide 2 to help you if necessary.

Conversation 1:

Tourist: Hello, (1) _____, (2) _____ you please tell me how to (3) _____ to a bookstore near here?

Local: Sure. You go along this street for two blocks, then turn right on Draper Street. It is on the corner, next to the church.

Tourist: (4) _____ so much.

Local: No worries, mate!

Conversation 2:

Tourist: Excuse me, (5) _____, please?

Local: Sure. How can I help?

Tourist: (6) _____ you please tell me the (7) _____ to a library near here?

Local: That's easy. There is a library in the next block in front of the supermarket.

Tourist: thanks!

Conversation 3:

Tourist: Hello ma'am, sorry (8) _____, but(9) _____
_____ where City Hall is?

Local: Sure. It's four blocks south of here. Go along this street, and you will see it after the Cathedral.

Tourist: Thanks for your help.

Conversation 4:

Tourist: (10) _____ to interrupt, but can you please (11) _____
_____ way to the famous castle near here?

Local: Sure. It's four blocks south of here. Go along this street, and you will see it after the Cathedral.

Tourist: Thanks a lot!

Answer Key

1. excuse me
2. could/can
3. get
4. Thanks/Thankyou
5. Can/Could you help me
6. Could/Can
7. way
8. to bother you
9. could/can you please tell me
10. Sorry
11. tell me the