



Answers

1. a) Can
2. b) Could
3. c) May
4. d) Can
5. a) May
6. b) Could
7. c) can
8. d) may
9. a) May
10. b) Could
11. c) Could
12. d) Can
13. a) Could
14. b) may
15. c) May
16. d) Can
17. a) May
18. b) Could
19. c) may
20. d) Can



Explanations

1. “Can” (a)

With friends, 'Can I...?' is natural and appropriate. 'May I...?' would sound too formal in this casual setting.

2. “Could” (b)

'Could I...?' shows politeness and professionalism. 'Can I' would be too informal for a job interview.

3. “May” (c)

'May I...?' is the most appropriate choice for a formal social occasion such as a dinner party.

4. “Can” (d)

'Can I...?' is suitable between colleagues in an informal setting like a break room.

5. “May” (a)

'May I...?' is used in formal meetings and official occasions to make polite, authoritative requests.

6. “Could” (b)

'Could I...?' is appropriately polite for a semi-formal interaction like speaking to a receptionist.

7. “can” (c)

Children naturally use 'can' with their parents. It's informal and perfectly appropriate in a family context.

8. “may” (d)

Officials use 'may not' for formal prohibition. A police officer would use 'may' in an official capacity.

9. “May” (a)

In a courtroom, 'May I...?' is the expected level of formality. This is one of the most formal settings in English.

10. “Could” (b)

'Could I...?' is appropriately polite for a neighbour — not as casual as 'Can I' but not as formal as 'May I'.

11. “Could” (c)

'Could I...?' is polite enough for speaking to a stranger. 'Can I' might seem too direct with someone you don't know.

12. “Can” (d)

'Can I...?' is the natural choice between close friends in a casual setting. Using 'May I' would sound strangely formal.

13. “Could” (a)

'Could I...?' is appropriately polite for hotel receptions and customer service situations.

14. “may” (b)

In diplomatic and official contexts, 'may' is the appropriate formal modal for granting permission.

15. “May” (c)

A headteacher at a school assembly would use the formal 'May I' to address the whole school.

16. “Can” (d)

'Can I...?' is natural between teenagers and close friends. 'May I' or 'Could I' would sound oddly formal.

17. “May” (a)

'May I suggest...?' is a formal and professional way to offer a suggestion in a business context.

18. “Could” (b)

'Could I...?' shows appropriate politeness and respect when speaking to your boss. It's polite without being overly formal.

19. “may” (c)

A librarian stating rules uses 'may' to indicate what is formally permitted.

20. “Can” (d)

'Can I...?' is informal and natural between people who share a home. There's no need for formal language.