

Dealing with requests and enquiries politeness competition board game

Just this once.	Maybe.	Okay, do it.	Sure. Why not?	START Yes?/ Ask me your question.
Okay. Give me your email address.	<p>Instructions <i>Move clockwise around the board by coming up with as many different levels of formality above the thing written in the box as you can, without changing the fundamental meaning. Your partners will stop you when you accidentally go down in formality or change the meaning, then you can move one square clockwise for each successful attempt. For example, if the square said "Sorry" you could say "I'm sorry", "I'm very sorry", "I do apologise" and finally "Please accept my humble apologies", in which case you would get four points.</i></p>			I don't understand your question.
We already gave you that information.				Please wait.
Is that everything?				Okay, but give me time to arrange it.
I've already answered that question./ That is my last word on this matter.				I don't have that information.
Alright?				I don't know how.
Is that clear?				No idea.
You'd better...				I can't help you.
Ask John instead.				I don't have time.
You're asking the wrong person./ It's not my responsibility.				No, you can't.
You're wrong.				The answer (to this question) is always no.
That is totally unacceptable.				We can't do that.
No comment.				My hands are tied.

Mixed phrases to put in order

Grade the phrases below from 1 for the most casual/ informal to the highest number for the most polite/ formal.

Can I help you?
How can I be of assistance today?
How can I help you today?
Yes?/ What's your question?

Checking the meaning of the question

I don't really understand what you want to know.
I don't understand what you want to know.
I'm afraid I don't really understand what you want to know.

Asking people to wait

Could you give me just a moment, please?
Just a moment (please).
Just a sec./ Just a mo'.
Please wait.
Wait.

Okay, but give me time to arrange it.
That's fine, but I need some time to arrange it.
That's fine, but I'll need a little time to arrange it.

Saying you don't know

I don't have that information.
I'm afraid I don't have that information right now, but...
I'm afraid I don't have that information.

I don't know how (to do that).
Unfortunately I don't know exactly how (to do that). However, ...
Unfortunately I don't know how (to do that).

I don't know./ I have no idea.
I'm sorry but I'm not quite sure, but...
I'm sorry but I'm not sure.
Sorry but I don't know.

Negative answers/ Giving bad news

I can't help you.
Sorry, I can't help you.
Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do.

I don't have time (to do that)
I don't really have enough time (to do that).
I'm terribly sorry, but I don't really have enough time (to do that) right now.

I'm sorry to say that is not possible.
I'm sorry to say that is not really possible.
No, you can't.

Due to university policy, we are unable to grant such requests.
Due to university policy, we are unfortunately not able to grant such requests.
The answer (to this question) is always no.
We are unable to grant such requests.

I'm afraid we are not allowed to do that.
I'm afraid we have been told by the university that we are not allowed to do that.
We can't do that./ That's (absolutely) impossible.

I/ We don't have any left.
Unfortunately, they are temporarily out of stock, but...
Unfortunately, we don't have any left at this time.
Unfortunately, we don't have any left.

Due to the university's policy on privacy, I'm afraid I'm unable to share that information.
I'm afraid it's confidential.
It's a secret.

It's your own fault./ You were supposed to...
You may not have been aware of this, but applicants are supposed to...
You may not have been fully aware of this, but it is university policy for applicants to...
You may not have known this, but you were supposed to...

I'm afraid I'm not allowed to make such decisions.
I'm afraid my hands are tied.
I'm afraid such decisions are made by...
My hands are tied.

I'm afraid I can't comment on that.
I'm afraid I can't really comment on that, because...
No comment.

I'm afraid that is not allowed.
I'm afraid that is not really allowed in this kind of situation.
I'm afraid that is not really allowed.
That is not acceptable.
That is totally unacceptable.
That is unacceptable.

Correcting something that the enquirer is wrong about

I'm afraid that's not correct.

I'm afraid that's not quite correct.

That's not true./ That's wrong.

You're wrong.

Asking them to contact someone else

This actually the responsibility of...

This is not really part of my responsibilities.

You're asking the wrong person./ It's not my job./ It's not my responsibility./ It's not my problem.

Ask John instead.

Could you ask John instead?

You are probably better off asking John instead, because...

Suggesting solutions

It might be a better option to...

You may be better off...

You should probably...

You should...

You'd better...

Checking if they've understood

Got it?/ Do you understand?

I hope I have explained that well.

Is that clear?

Checking if you've answered their question

Alright?

Does that answer your question?

I hope that at least partly answers your question.

Ending the conversation

I don't have anything else to add (to my previous answer). / I've already answered that question./ That is (absolutely) my last word on this matter./ You've already asked me that.

I'm afraid I can't add anything to what I said before.

I'm afraid I can't really add anything to what I said before.

Is that everything?

Is there anything else?

Was there anything else that you'd like information on?

Was there anything else?

I think we already gave out that information.

Please tell me if I'm wrong, but I believe we already gave out that information.

You already have that information./ We already gave you that information.

Talking about future action

Okay. Give me your email address.

That's no problem. If you could give me your email address,...

That's okay. Can you give me your email address?

Others

Although this is not usually allowed, just this once...

Although this is not usually allowed, on just this one occasion...

Just this once.

I'm not entirely sure, but that might be acceptable.

Maybe.

That might be acceptable.

That might be okay.

Okay, do it.

That's no problem. Please go ahead.

That's okay. Please do so.

Okay. I can't see why not.

Sure. Why not?

That seems to be okay. I can't see any real reason why not.

Ask about any language above you aren't sure about or other polite forms you came up with.

Use the sentences on the board game again, but this time choosing any one and competing to become more and more formal.