

Who are you talking to?

A **register** is a variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Different situations require different registers. The examples below go from the least polite to the most polite.



- A *Give me a hand, will ya?*
- B *Please help me.*
- C *Will you help me?*
- D *Could you help me?*
- E *Would you mind helping me?*

You might not hesitate to use A to speak to a friend or a close family member at home, but it would be inappropriate to use A to speak to your teacher in the classroom. Just as you can be not polite enough, you can also be too polite. For example, a boss is probably not going to use E to assign a task to someone that works for him. It would be too polite and would imply that the employee had a choice whether or not to complete the task, which would be misleading.

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence and its setting/characters below. Indicate whether the sentence is **too polite (A)**, **just right (B)**, or **not polite enough (C)** for the setting and characters. Write your answer on the line.

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| _____ | 1. "Please take a seat." | Teacher speaking to a student in the classroom. |
| _____ | 2. "Would you please kick that ball back to me?" | One kid to another on the playground. |
| _____ | 3. "I expect this report to be on my desk in the morning." | Boss to employee in an office. |
| _____ | 4. "Will you set the table, please?" | Mother to daughter in the home. |
| _____ | 5. "Get that thing out of here." | Son to father in the home. |
| _____ | 6. "Would you like to buy some candy for my soccer team fundraiser?" | Teenager to an adult neighbor. |
| _____ | 7. "Would you mind having it finished by noon?" | Woman to her auto mechanic. |
| _____ | 8. "Go to your room." | Parent to a young child who is misbehaving. |
| _____ | 9. "Excuse me, is this seat taken?" | Man to a woman he doesn't know at a theater. |