

Before You Read

Direct and Indirect Ways of Getting People to Act

There is always more than one way to direct, or instruct, other people to take action. By our tone of voice, choice of verbs, and how few or how many words we say, we may sound demanding. People may think we are too direct. If we are too indirect, people may think we are only making a suggestion and that they don't really need to do anything.

Fill in the boxes with sentences or questions to give the same instructions in different styles. The first one is done as an example.

Demand	Request	Suggestion
Turn down the volume!	Could you play a little quieter?	It's been said, "Silence is golden." Don't you agree?
You must practise guitar an hour a day.		
	May I borrow your microphone?	
		I'd love to hear that song again.