



May/Can

Trying to figure out when it is correct to use **may** or **can** is sometimes very confusing. Sometimes they mean the same thing, but sometimes their meanings are different.

May refers to something being a possibility. "I may be able to go to Susan's birthday party on Saturday," meaning "I might be able to go to Susan's birthday party on Saturday." **May** is also the name of a month!

Can refers to ability. "I can go to Susan's birthday party on Saturday," meaning "I am able to go to Susan's birthday party on Saturday." Can is also the name of a container.

Both **may** and **can** are used when asking or giving permission.

"You may sit down" and "You can sit down" are both considered acceptable. However, you may want to notice the situation. Where you are and who you're talking to will help you decide whether to use **may** or **can**.

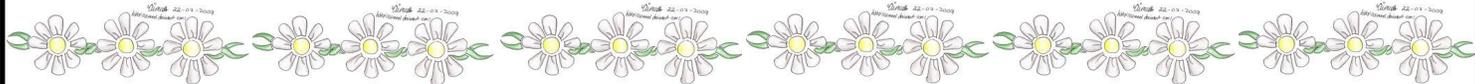
Use **may** when addressing a boss or in another formal setting. When writing, be more formal.

Use **can** when speaking with friends in an informal setting.

Read the sentences below. Circle the word that fits best. Answers are on the back of this sheet.

1. May/Can is the fifth month of the year.
2. Molly wants candy. She asks, "May/Can I have some candy?"
3. "I have a bad feeling that something here may not/can't be right."
4. Victor holds his breath for two minutes during swim practice. Afterwards he says, "See, I may/can hold my breath that long!"
5. Lucille and Marie are friends at school. Lucille asks Marie, "May/Can I borrow your History notes?"
6. Vera is at Starbucks. She asks the barista, "May/Can I get a small coffee?"
7. Bob and Sim are racing each other. Sim says, "I may/can run faster than you!"
8. Steve likes Cindy's friend Emily. Steve asks Cindy, "May/Can you give Emily my phone number?"
9. Greg may/can come over to my house tomorrow. He has to check his schedule first.
10. Little kids may/can find shapes in clouds.
11. It's Martha's birthday. She asks Sam, "May/Can you come to my party?"
12. Michael and Lea go out to dinner. The waiter asks, "May/Can I get you anything?"
13. Shiro wants to borrow his dad's car. He asks, "May/Can I borrow the car tonight?"
14. The church bells have a loud and clear sound which may/can be heard over a great distance.
15. If you go to the beach without applying sunscreen, you may/can get a sunburn.





Answers from May/Can

1. May
2. May/Can
3. may not
4. can
5. Can
6. May/can
7. can
8. Can
9. may
10. can
11. Can
12. May
13. May/Can
14. can
15. may

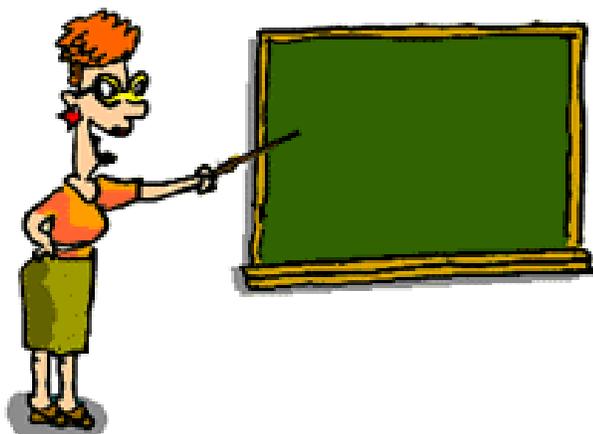
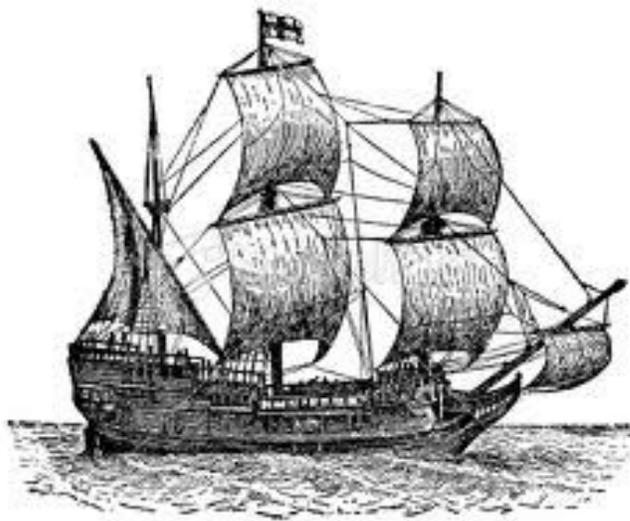
Memorial Day

Memorial Day is coming up on May 28th (it is always celebrated on the last Monday of May). This holiday is important symbolically, because it brings together all Americans, both supporters of war and supporters of peace, to remember all of the soldiers who have died during wars. Memorial Day is a national holiday. This means that it is recognized and celebrated throughout the entire country. It also means that students and government workers have the day off. Many offices are closed as well. If you are planning a trip to the post office try to go on the Friday before, instead.

Memorial Day weekend is traditionally the first weekend of the summer season. This is when public pools and beaches open for swimmers, and people start packing for summer vacations.

Conversation Practice

May 8th is Teachers' Appreciation Day. Honor and remember a teacher who inspired you. Did you ever have a teacher who made you enjoy learning? Or who helped you figure out what you wanted to be when you grew up? Or even changed the way you thought about the world? Tell your partner about this spectacular person!



Proverb/Joke

April showers bring May flowers. And what do Mayflowers bring? *Pilgrims!*

- It has to rain for flowers to grow.
- The Mayflower was the ship that brought early European settlers to this country.

Idiom

Be that as it may

- Although that is true, I have not changed my mind on the matter.

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