Making requests in emails.

1) Choose words from list below to fit into each sentence. Only one solution makes proper sense.

in / out / place / Can / of / Please / grateful / following / tell / should

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a) ( 1.                   ) you send me info on the stuff you've got.

b) I'm interested ( 2.                   ) the Internet radio set advertised on your web site. Price 199 euros.

c) I'm writing to find ( 3.                   ) if you've got any tickets left for the Seville football match next Saturday.

d) Could you ( 4.                   ) me how much package and postage would be for this item?

e) I would be very ( 5.                   ) if you would send me your latest catalogue and price list.

f) With reference to our verbal agreement yesterday we should like to ( 6.                   ) an order for 2 dozen crates.

g) We should like to repeat last month's order for the ( 7.                   ) items.

h) I ( 8.                   ) be grateful for any information that you can send me about hotels in the area.

i) ( 9.                   ) reserve us 2 double rooms with en suite bathroom.

j) Please notify us ( 10.                   ) a date and time to suit you for another meeting.

2) Analysis. General questions for discussion.

a) Which sentence would not be suitable if you wanted your email to sound quite formal?

b) Look at sentence (d). This is called an indirect question. Here, the question mark is perhaps not necessary. Why? This type of question has a different grammar from true questions. What is the difference? Combine the following phrase and questions to make one indirect question:

(i) Please let me know whether... Are you manufacturers of...?

(ii) Can you tell me...? Where can I find...?

(c) Activity played in two groups. Please ask your teacher.
**Teacher’s notes.**  
*(Time for activity: 30 mins approx. Level: intermediate.)*

**Making requests in emails.**

Correct answers to question 1.
1. Can
2. in
3. out
4. tell
5. grateful
6. place
7. following
8. should
9. Please
10. of

Answers to question 2.
a) Sentence (a) definitely and possibly sentence (c). There are linguistic elements in (a) which make it sound very informal: abbreviated words (info); all Anglo Saxon words (can, send, stuff, got); unclear message (what stuff? what information does the sender want exactly?).

b) As a request the meaning is "please tell me how much...". There is no inversion in the second clause.

(i) Please let me know whether you are manufacturers of....

(i) Can you tell me where I can find...?

c) Write "Two dozen plastic Spanish bulls", "flight times from Madrid to Athens" on the board. Ask groups to write down a list of about 10 items they might request by email. A student from one group says one item out loud. Without referring to notes a student from the other group must request it. eg. "Please notify me about flight times from Madrid to Athens." Swap sides. The game continues and is lost if either side repeats the same request phrase eg. "Please notify me" is said again.