

Can, Could, Be Able To

Use **can** for ability now and **could** for general ability in the past: *I can swim. I could swim when I was five.* For one particular success in the past, use **was able to** or **managed to**: *I was able to fix it.* For permission and requests, **can** is casual, **could** is polite and **may** is formal: *Could I ask a question?*

Could I ask you a question?



1. Choose the right answer Circle a or b.

- Next year I _____ drive.
a) will can b) will be able to
- The door was locked, but we _____ get in through the window.
a) were able to b) could
- Hey, _____ I borrow your pen?
a) can b) must
- I've never _____ understand physics.
a) could b) been able to
- She _____ play the piano when she was six.
a) can b) could

2. Correct the mistake

Each sentence has one mistake. Write the correct sentence.

1. I could finish the report yesterday.

2. I will can help you tomorrow.

3. Can you to help me?

3. Your turn

Write three sentences of your own that use this rule. You can use these phrases.

Can I...?

Could you...?

May I...?

be able to

managed to

Would you mind...?

See the rule move

The full lesson, with more pictures, examples and a quiz that checks your answers, is free at
clarigram.app/modals/can-could

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1. Choose the right answer

1. **b) will be able to** Can has no future form: will be able to.
2. **a) were able to** One particular success in the past: were able to.
3. **a) can** Casual permission: can.
4. **b) been able to** Can has no perfect form: have been able to.
5. **b) could** General ability in the past: could.

2. Correct the mistake

1. **I was able to finish the report yesterday.** For one particular success in the past, use was able to or managed to.
2. **I will be able to help you tomorrow.** Can has no future form: will be able to.
3. **Can you help me?** No to after can.

3. Your turn

Answers will vary. Check that each sentence follows the rule on page 1, or paste them into Clarigram to have them checked.