

Can vs Could

Can is for ability now and casual requests: *I can swim. Can you help me?* **Could** is for general ability in the past, polite requests and possibility: *I could swim at five. Could you help me? It could rain.*

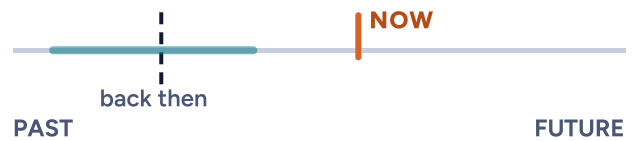
CAN · NOW, CASUAL

I **can** speak Spanish.



COULD · PAST, POLITE

I **could** speak Spanish as a child.



1. Choose the right answer Circle a or b.

- My grandfather _____ fix anything when he was young.
a) can b) could
- _____ you speak more slowly, please? (to a stranger)
a) Could b) Must
- I _____ hear you now. The line is better.
a) could b) can
- Take an umbrella. It _____ rain later.
a) could b) can
- Despite the traffic, we _____ arrive on time.
a) could b) were able to

2. Correct the mistake

Each sentence has one mistake. Write the correct sentence.

1. When I was young, I can run fast.

2. Could you to help me?

3. I could pass the exam yesterday.

3. Your turn

Write two sentences about your own life: one with **Can** and one with **Could**. Then explain the difference to a partner.

See the rule move

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

Can vs Could

1. Choose the right answer

1. **b) could** General ability in the past: could.
2. **a) Could** A polite request: could.
3. **b) can** Ability now: can.
4. **a) could** A possibility in one situation: could.
5. **b) were able to** One particular success: were able to.

2. Correct the mistake

1. **When I was young, I could run fast.** General ability in the past: could.
2. **Could you help me?** No to after could.
3. **I was able to pass the exam yesterday.** One particular success in the past: was able to.

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.