

Look at the picture and compare **CAN** and **COULD**



He **can** play the piano.



**can** + infinitive (**can do** / **can play** / **can come** etc.):

I/we/you/they he/she/it	} <b>can</b> <b>cannot (can't)</b>	<b>do</b>
		<b>play</b>
		<b>see</b>
		<b>come</b> etc.

<b>can</b>	I/we/you/they he/she/it	<b>do?</b>
		<b>play?</b>
		<b>see?</b>
		<b>come?</b> etc.

**Can you ... ? Could you ... ? Can I ... ? Could I ... ?**

We use **Can you ... ?** or **Could you ... ?** when we ask people to do things:

- **Can you** open the door, please? or **Could you** open the door, please?
- **Can you** wait a moment, please? or **Could you** wait ... ?

We use **Can I have ... ?** or **Could I have ... ?** to ask for something:

- (in a shop) **Can I have** these postcards, please? or **Could I have** ... ?

**Can I ... ?** or **Could I ... ?** = is it OK to do something?:

- Tom, **can I** borrow your umbrella? or Tom, **could I** borrow your umbrella?
- (on the phone) Hello, **can I** speak to Gerry, please? or ... **could I** speak ... ?

### Exercise 1

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ watch the movie last night. My TV was broken.

could

can't

**couldn't**

2. I \_\_\_\_\_ open the door last night, the key was stuck in it!

**couldn't**

could

can

3. \_\_\_\_\_ you hear that storm yesterday?

can  
can't  
**could**

4. I enjoyed my trip to Paris because I \_\_\_\_\_ speak a little French.

could  
couldn't  
**can**

5. \_\_\_\_\_ you speak Russian when you went to the university in Moscow or did you learn later?

can  
**could**  
couldn't

6. \_\_\_\_\_ I borrow your phone for two seconds? Thanks.

**could**  
couldn't  
can't

7. Both my sisters \_\_\_\_\_ dance ballet really well. I think they'll be famous!

could  
**can**  
couldn't

8. I see that he's shouting something, but I \_\_\_\_\_ hear what he's saying at all.

couldn't  
could  
**can't**

## Exercise 2

1. \_\_\_\_\_ he understand what you were talking about?

Could  
Cans  
Coulded

2. My sister \_\_\_\_\_ play tennis now.

can to  
can  
will can

3. I \_\_\_\_\_ walk when I was less than a year old.

can  
could  
have can

4. (Polite) \_\_\_\_\_ you tell me what time it is, please?

Could  
Can  
Will

5. My grandfather \_\_\_\_\_ walk without any help last night.

can

could

was able to

6. I would like to \_\_\_\_\_ play the piano.

can

could

be able to

7. How long have you \_\_\_\_\_ drive?

can

coulded

been able to

8. I'll \_\_\_\_\_ help you later.

can

could

be able to

9. Can you help me? I \_\_\_\_\_ never understand this.

can

cannot

am able to

10. Will people \_\_\_\_\_ live forever one day?

could be

be able to

could be able to

answers

1. Could

3. could

4. Could

5. was able to

6. be able to

7. been able to

8. be able to

9. can

10. be able to

2. can

Exercise 3

1. Which sentence is correct?

I can't to see you today. ✗ Incorrect  
My parents can come to the party. ✓ Correct  
We can visiting you at the weekend. ✗

2. Which question is correct?

Can you play the violin? Correct ✓  
You can play the violin? ✗ Incorrect  
Play you the violin? ✗ Incorrect

3. Which sentence is NOT correct?

David can't come to work today.  
I can't to fix your car, I'm afraid. Correct  
We can't see the television.

4. Which question is correct?

Can you help me please? ✓ Correct  
You can please help me? ✗ Incorrect  
Can you to help me please? ✗ Incorrect

5. Which question is NOT correct?

Where I can put this box? ✓ Correct  
Which sports can you play? ✗ Incorrect  
What time can you come to the office? Incorrect

6. Which is the correct answer?

Can your brother speak German?  
No, he can't. ✓ Correct  
No, he don't can. ✗ Incorrect  
Yes, he cans. ✗ Incorrect

7. What is the best reply?

Could I borrow your pen?  
Yes, sure. ✓ Correct  
Yes, you could. ✗ Incorrect  
Yes, I can. ✗ Incorrect

8. Which word completes the question?

\_\_\_\_\_ you understand Spanish people when you were in Spain?  
Could ✓ Correct  
Can ✗ Incorrect

Do ✗ Incorrect

9. Which word CANNOT go in the space?

\_\_\_\_\_ you drive me to the station please?

Can

Do +correct

Could

10. Which words complete the sentence?

I \_\_\_\_\_ dance really well when I was young, but I \_\_\_\_\_ now.

couldn't / can't +correct

could / can't

can't / can