Can and could

We use can to
• show ability in the present.
  I can play tennis very well.
• ask or give permission for something.
  Can we join this gym?
  You can play football here.
• talk about what is possible.
  We can jog around the park every morning.
• ask somebody to do something for us.
  Can you do the shopping for me, please?

Can is followed by the bare infinitive.
We can see the sea from our balcony.
We often use can with verbs of senses such as see, hear, smell, etc.
I can hear you, so you don’t need to yell.

We usually use can’t instead of cannot in everyday English, but we sometimes use cannot to give emphasis.
No, Billy, you cannot stay up late tonight!

We use could to
• talk about ability in the past.
  Jennifer could skate when she was five years old.
• ask permission for something in the present or the future.
  Could I go to Janet’s house?
• ask for something politely.
  Could I have a glass of water, please?

We don’t use could for abilities in the past when we talk about a specific occasion when we managed to do something. In this case we use was able to or were able to.
He was able to solve the problem.
Could is followed by the bare infinitive.
Mr Jones could run very fast when he was young.

Remember!

Can and could are the same for all persons.
I can swim.
She can swim.
I could swim.
She could swim.
2 Complete the sentences with can, can’t, could or couldn’t. Use the verbs in brackets.

1 I keep trying, but I __ can’t understand __ the question. (understand)
2 Neil ____________ very fast. He won all the races. (run)
3 Dalia ____________, last week because she had three exams. (relax)
4 Dad ____________ you improve your French. He speaks it very well. (help)
5 I ____________ the gym last year because I had a broken leg. (join)
6 Dr Moore ____________ me tonight. He’s too busy. (see)
7 Julia ____________ German when she was at school, but now she’s forgotten everything. (speak)
8 We ____________ you to hospital. Don’t worry. (take)

3 Complete the questions using can or could and the words in brackets. Then complete the short answers.

1 ____________ you speak __ Italian before you moved to Rome? (you / speak)
   Yes, ____________ I could__.
2 ____________ your laptop this afternoon? (I / borrow)
   No, ____________.
3 ____________ a computer? (you / use)
   Yes, ____________.
4 ____________ sailing with us tomorrow morning? (Jimmy / come)
   Yes, ____________.
5 ____________ football when he was young? (Dad / play)
   No, ____________.
6 ____________ the guitar? (your sister / play)
   No, ____________.
7 ____________ when you were four years old? (you / swim)
   No, ____________.
8 ____________ me some bread from the supermarket, please? (you / buy)
   Yes, ____________.

Be able to

We use be able to to talk about
• ability.
  Sandra is able to speak three languages.
• a specific occasion when we managed or didn’t manage to do something.
  I was able to speak to the manager this morning.
  (We can’t use could here.)
  I wasn’t able to call the office this morning.
  (We can also use couldn’t here.)

We can use be able to with many tenses; we just use the correct form of the verb be.
But we don’t use be able to with continuous tenses.

Be able to is followed by the bare infinitive.

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Remember!
With verbs of the senses, we use can or could but not be able to.
I can smell the beautiful perfume. He could see the farmhouse.
4 Complete the sentences with the correct form of be able to. Use the verbs in brackets.

1 Mum got home very late last night so she ______ wasn’t able to cook ______ dinner. (not cook)

2 We ___________________________ swimming tomorrow morning because it’s going to be a lovely day. (go)

3 The photographer ____________________________ a good picture of the Tower of London yet. (not take)

4 I ____________________________ to the office today because I’ve got a cold. (not come)

5 Luckily, we ____________________________ in the tennis tournament next Friday. (take part)

6 Mum and Dad ____________________________ a relaxing weekend at the health farm two weeks ago. (enjoy)

5 Complete the questions with the correct form of be able to and the words in brackets.

Then complete the short answers.

1 ______ Will you be able to fix ______ my mobile phone tomorrow? (you / fix)
   No, ______ I won’t ______.

2 ______ yesterday evening? (Dan / study)
   Yes, ______ ______.

3 ______ the customers yet? (the manager / contact)
   No, ______ ______.

4 ______ me some medicine for my sore throat later on? (you / get)
   Yes, ______ ______.

5 ______ until six every day? (Lizzy / work)
   No, ______ ______.

6 ______ German fluently? (your parents / speak)
   Yes, ______ ______.

6 Choose the correct answers.

1 Helena had a terrible headache and she ______ see anything.
   a couldn’t
   b wasn’t able
   c can’t

2 It wasn’t very hot yesterday, so the tourists ______ walk in the desert.
   a couldn’t
   b were able to
   c are able to

3 ______ you breathe easily when you had that awful cough?
   a Could
   b Can
   c Were able to

4 ______ to give me a lift to the shops later on, Mum?
   a Can you
   b Will you be able
   c Could you

5 If we wake up early, ______ see the sunrise tomorrow morning?
   a we could
   b will we be able to
   c we can

6 Sandy had a lot of homework yesterday, so she ______ to the park.
   a can’t go
   b isn’t able to go
   c couldn’t go

7 I ______ pick up some fruit for you if you’re too busy.
   a able to
   b can
   c was able to

8 I ______ to the yoga class tomorrow morning.
   a can’t come
   b wasn’t able to come
   c couldn’t come
7 Complete the dialogue with the correct form of can or be able to and the words in brackets.

Marie: Hi, Alexia. How are you? (1) **Are you able to speak** (you / speak) today?
Alexia: I’m a bit better, thanks.
Marie: What was the matter yesterday? I called you lots of times and finally I
(2) __________________ (talk) to your mum. She said you
(3) __________________ (not come) to the phone.
Alexia: Mmm. I had a terrible sore throat and a toothache. I (4) __________________
(not eat) anything since Tuesday!
Marie: (5) __________________ (you / compete) in the talent show next week?
Alexia: I don’t know. We’ll see. I took some medicine last night and Mum will get me some
vitamins today. She (6) __________________ (not bring) them to me now because
she’s at work.
Marie: (7) __________________ (I / visit) you later on today?
Alexia: I’m still not very well. I don’t want you to catch my cold. Then you
(8) __________________ (not take part) in the talent show, either.

8 Say it! Look at these pictures with your partner. Talk about what this boy could or couldn’t do when he was
younger and what he can or can’t do now. Use can, could, be able to and these suggestions to help you.

- read
- play all day
- watch TV
- relax at the weekend
- speak English fluently
- use a computer
- take up a new hobby / sport
- walk to school
Read.

This man must be cold. He might be feeling ill. His car may have broken down or he might be lost.

May and might (for possibility)

We use *may* and *might* to say that it is possible that something will happen.

*I may go to Italy next month.*

*Paul might go to the sports centre with us.*

We don’t usually use *may* and *might* in questions, and we usually say *might not* instead of *mightn’t.*

*He’s tired. He might not come out with us this evening.*

*May* and *might* are followed by the bare infinitive.

*We may stay at home tonight. It’s really cloudy; it might rain later.*

**Remember!**

*May and might are the same for all persons.*

*I may go out.*

*She may go out.*

*I might stay in.*

*He might stay in.*

**Match.**

1. Vicky loves clothes. 
2. I’ve got a terrible cold. 
3. It’s going to rain tomorrow. 
4. The traffic is terrible. 
5. That girl is good at writing. 
6. That dress is really expensive. 

a. She may work as a journalist. 
b. I may not buy it. 
c. We may be late for the meeting. 
d. This medicine might make me feel better. 
e. She might become a fashion designer. 
f. We might not go to the park.
Must and can’t (for certainty)

We use **must** to say that we are sure that something is true.

*He drives a Ferrari. He *must* be rich!*

We use **can’t** to say that we are sure that something is not true.

*That *can’t* be Helen’s brother. He doesn’t have brown hair.*

3 Look at the pictures and complete the sentences with **must** or **can’t**.

1. You **must** be exhausted.

2. Oh! It **can’t** be an original.

3. She **must** be a good musician.

4. He **must** be a famous basketball player.

5. That ring **can’t** cost a lot of money!

6. That car **can’t** belong to him.

4 The words in bold are wrong. Write the correct words.

1. You **must** feel tired. You’ve just woken up! **can’t**

2. I’m not sure yet, but he **must** be the new head teacher. **can’t**

3. Darren got 99% in his last history test. He **can’t** be very intelligent. **must**

4. It’s snowing and you aren’t wearing a coat. You **might** be freezing! **must**

5. Those **must** be my pills. Mine are much bigger! **can’t**

6. The school canteen **must** sell drinks. If it does, I’ll get you one. **can’t**
5 Choose the correct answers.

1. This is a beautiful painting. You _____ be an artist.
   a) may not
   b) must
   c) can’t

2. You look just like each other. You _____ be twins.
   a) might
   b) can’t
   c) must

3. Eating a lot of fried food _____ be good for your health.
   a) can’t
   b) might
   c) must

4. There are clouds in the sky. It _____ rain.
   a) can’t
   b) might
   c) must

5. Lily has got an exam tomorrow. She _____ feel stressed.
   a) might not
   b) must
   c) can’t

6. We _____ have time for a snack during the journey, so let’s eat something now.
   a) can’t
   b) may not
   c) must

6 Say it! Talk with your partner about these pictures. Use may, might, must, can’t and these suggestions to help you.

- happy
- poor
- relaxed
- rich
- stressed
- talented
- tired
- an athlete
- a businesswoman / businessman
- a football player
- a gardener
- a student
- a parent
- a secretary

The man in picture one must be a football player. The woman in picture three might be relaxed.
Lesson 3

1 Read.

You must plan your study time well. You should make sure your desk is clean and tidy. You mustn’t eat or drink at your desk. You don’t have to study for hours at a time. You ought to set a timer and get up and move around.

2 Complete the sentences with must or mustn’t and a suitable verb.

1. We missed the bus today and we were late for school. We ______ must ______ home earlier tomorrow morning.

2. Fast food isn’t good for you. You _____________, it every day.

3. There’s no food in the fridge. We _____________ to the supermarket.

4. Dad has put on some weight. He _____________ more often.

5. Be quiet! We _____________ in the library.

6. I’m new at school. I _____________ some new friends.

Must

We use must to

• talk about obligation.
  We must study for the biology test.

• talk about necessity.
  Daniella must eat more fruit.

Must is followed by the bare infinitive.
I must finish my work tonight.

We use must for the present and the future.
You must take your medicine now.
We must fix our washing machine tomorrow.

We use mustn’t to talk about something that we are not allowed to do in the present and in the future.
I mustn’t forget to post the letter.
They mustn’t make so much noise.

We can’t use must for the past. We use had to.
I had to study last night.

Remember!

Must is the same for all persons.
I must be quiet.
She must be quiet.
Have to

We use have to to talk about an obligation in the present, future and in the past.

We have to talk to our new classmate.

Have to is followed by the bare infinitive.

Mum has to go on a business trip.

Present simple  I have to finish my homework.
Past simple  I had to finish my homework.
Present perfect simple  I have had to wear a uniform for six years.
Future simple  I will have to finish my homework.

Remember!

Have to isn’t the same for all persons. I have to finish. She has to finish.

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of have to and these verbs.

buy  come  not catch  not pay  run  take

1 Salma isn’t here at the moment. Her mum ___________________________ her to the doctor’s because she isn’t well.
2 ___________________________ I ___________________________ with you to the shops? I’ve got so much homework to do.
3 My brother and I woke up late on Monday, so we ___________________________ to school.
4 John can walk to the office. He ___________________________ a bus.
5 Oh no! My hairdryer is broken! I ___________________________ a new one.
6 Julia’s parents own the restaurant, so we ___________________________ for our lunch yesterday.

Mustn’t vs don’t have to

Mustn’t and don’t have to have a totally different meaning. We use mustn’t to say that we are not allowed to do something.

We mustn’t wake up the baby. She’s asleep.

We use don’t have to to say that it isn’t necessary to do something, but we can do it if we want to.

You don’t have to take the dog for a walk. I’ve already taken it.

4 Complete the second sentences so they have a similar meaning to the first sentences.

Use mustn’t, don’t have to or doesn’t have to.

1 It’s not a good idea to drink coffee at night.

You ___________________________ drink ___________________________ coffee at night.

2 Dad feels much better this morning, so he can get up.

Dad feels much better this morning, so he ___________________________ in bed.

3 If the children don’t like the fish, it’s not necessary for them to eat it.

If the children don’t like the fish, they ___________________________ it.

4 This is a library so we aren’t allowed to make any noise.

This is a library so we ___________________________ any noise.

5 It’s bad for Marcus to spend hours on the Internet every day.

Marcus ___________________________ hours on the Internet every day.

6 Jenny’s mum makes her packed lunch for her.

Jenny ___________________________ her packed lunch. Her mum does it for her.
Should

We use should
• to give advice.
  You should have a glass of orange juice every morning.
• to ask for advice.
  Should I speak to a doctor?

Should is followed by the bare infinitive.
You should exercise more often.

Remember!
Should is the same for all persons.
I should rest.
She should rest.

Ought to

We use ought to and ought not to to give advice.
You ought to eat more vegetables.
We ought not to spend hours in the local café.

Ought to isn’t used in the question form.
Ought to is followed by the bare infinitive.
Betty ought to pay more attention in class.

Remember!
Ought to is the same for all persons.
I ought to try.
She ought to try.

5 Match.

1 It’s late. ____________________________
2 Adel seems sad. ____________________________
3 It’s Will’s birthday tomorrow. ____________________________
4 Biscuits aren’t good for you. ____________________________
5 It’s very sunny today. ____________________________
6 Helen wants to become a doctor. ____________________________
7 This film is fantastic. ____________________________
8 The weather is going to be terrible this weekend. ____________________________

6 Choose the correct answers.

1 We ______ catch a very early flight next week.
   a ought  
   b had to  
   c will have to

2 I ______ go to the dentist this month.
   a should  
   b had  
   c will have

3 I haven’t got a headache anymore. I ______ go to the doctor’s.
   a don’t have to  
   b mustn’t  
   c should

4 I’m on a diet. I ______ to order a salad.
   a must  
   b should  
   c ought

5 You ______ throw away batteries. Recycle them!
   a ought not  
   b shouldn’t  
   c not have to

6 Mum and Dad ______ a table at the new café last night.
   a must book  
   b had to book  
   c should book
Dear Sue,
I need your help! I'm taking part in a 100-metre race at school next month and I don't know what to do!
Last year, I hurt my leg so I didn't have to/mustn't take part. But this year I have no choice!
I spoke to my gym teacher yesterday and he says I ought to/must run in the race.
The problem is that I'm not very fit. Mum said I have/ought to ask for your advice because you do lots of running. First of all, should/ought I go running every day? Secondly, is diet important? Mum says that I mustn't/don't have to eat fast food all the time and that I have/must to stop eating chocolates, too! There's only a month left, so I have/must think of something quick!
You have/ought to reply today! It's urgent!
Cathy

Circle the correct words.

Kevin has got exams next week and he's feeling very stressed.
I think Laura should go to bed earlier.