



Ability: Can, Could and Be Able To — A2 exercises

Printable worksheet · 23 questions · answer key with explanations on the last page
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Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 23

A. Multiple choice

10 questions

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. She ____ speak four languages fluently.
A) cans B) can C) can to D) is can
2. ____ you help me with this suitcase?
A) Do B) Are C) Can D) Does
3. I ____ swim when I was six years old.
A) can B) could C) am able D) could to
4. He can't ____ to the meeting tomorrow.
A) to come B) coming C) come D) comes
5. I'd love to ____ play the piano.
A) can B) could C) be able to D) am able
6. ____ I open the window? It's very warm.
A) Do B) Can C) Am D) Have
7. Which is the politest request?
A) Give me the salt. B) Can you give me the salt?
C) Could you give me the salt, please? D) You give me the salt.
8. The fire brigade ____ rescue everybody in the building.
A) could B) was able to C) can D) could to
9. She hasn't ____ to contact him all week.
A) could B) can C) been able D) be able
10. ____ they see the stage from those seats?
A) Do B) Could C) Does D) Are

B. Fill in the blank

8 questions

Write the missing word or words in the gap.

1. She _____ play the violin beautifully.
2. _____ you pass me the salt, please?
3. I _____ ride a bicycle when I was five.

4. He can't _____ tomorrow because he is working.
5. I would like to be _____ to speak Georgian.
6. _____ I use your phone for a moment?
7. After several tries, we _____ able to start the engine.
8. She hasn't been _____ to sleep properly for weeks.

C. Sentence building

5 questions

Put the words in the correct order and write the sentence on the line.

1. She / can / fluently. / languages / speak / three

Describe somebody's present linguistic ability.

2. me / moment? / you / a / Could / for / help

Make a polite request for assistance.

3. I / swim / before / started / I / could / school.

Describe an ability you had as a young child.

4. today. / the / can't / come / He / to / meeting

Report somebody's absence, in the negative.

5. to / to / want / be / cook. / able / I

State an ambition where can is impossible.

Answer key

Every answer carries the reason behind it. Read the reason for the questions you got right as well — that is where you find out whether you were right for the right reason.

A. Multiple choice

1. **B) can** — Modals never take -s in the third person.
2. **C) Can** — Modal questions are formed by inversion, with no auxiliary do.
3. **B) could** — Could describes general ability in the past.
4. **C) come** — The base form always follows a modal, with no to.
5. **C) be able to** — Can has no infinitive, so be able to is used after another verb.
6. **B) Can** — Can asks for permission as well as describing ability.
7. **C) Could you give me the salt, please?** — Could plus please is the softest of these forms.
8. **B) was able to** — A single successful past action takes was able to rather than could.
9. **C) been able** — Can has no participle, so been able is used after have.
10. **B) Could** — A past ability question uses could with inversion.

B. Fill in the blank

1. **can** — Can describes present ability and never takes -s.
2. **Could** — Could makes a request politer than can.
3. **could** — Could describes a general ability in the past.
4. **come** — The base form follows a modal, with no to.
5. **able** — Be able to fills the gap where can has no infinitive.
6. **Can** — Can asks for permission as well as describing ability.
7. **were** — One successful past action takes was or were able to.
8. **able** — After have been, able to is the only possible form.

C. Sentence building

1. **She can speak three languages fluently.**
2. **Could you help me for a moment?**
3. **I could swim before I started school.**
4. **He can't come to the meeting today.**
5. **I want to be able to cook.**