Can

Can is an auxiliary verb, a modal auxiliary verb. We use **can** to:

- talk about possibility and ability
- make requests
- ask for or give permission

Structure of Can

subject + can + main verb

The main verb is always the bare infinitive (infinitive without "to").

	subject	auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	_____	play	tennis.
-	He	_____ **can't**	play	tennis.
?	**Can**	you	play	tennis?

Notice that:

- **Can** is invariable. There is only one form of **can**.
- The main verb is **always** the bare infinitive.

The main verb is always the bare infinitive (infinitive without "to"). We cannot say:

"I can to play tennis."

Use of Can

can: Possibility and Ability

We use **can** to talk about what is possible, what we are able or free to do:

- She _____ drive a car.
- John _____speak Spanish.
- I **cannot** hear you. (I **can't** hear you.)
- **Can** you hear me?

Normally, we use **can** for the present. But it is possible to use **can** when we make present decisions about future ability.

A. **Can** you help me with my homework? (present)
B. Sorry. I'm busy today. But I **can** help you tomorrow. (future)

CAN for Present Ability Games

can: Requests and Orders

We often use **can** in a question to ask somebody to do something.The use of **can** in this way is informal (mainly between friends and family):

- **Can** you make a cup of coffee, please?
- **Can** you put the TV on?
- **Can** you come here a minute?
- **Can** you be quiet!

. The use of **can** for permission is informal.)