

A Modern technology

Complete this text about modern technology with *can*, *can't*, *could* or *couldn't*.

You *can't*⁰ deny that modern technology has changed our lives. With it, we *can*¹ do things now that we *couldn't*² do at all only a few years ago. For example, 10 years ago you *could*³ only phone from a building or a telephone box but now we *can*⁴ make a call wherever we are, and previously you *could*⁵ only use telephones to make phone calls but now you *can*⁶ also take photos with them. Of course, in the old days you *couldn't*⁷ take photos with a camera, but you *could*⁸ take them without a film. Digital cameras *can*⁹ take hundreds of photos without a film, though you still *can't*¹⁰ make copies of your photos without a printer. Another thing is music. A few years ago you *could*¹¹ only listen to your music collection at home but now, thanks to MP3 players, you *can*¹² listen to it in the street or on the bus.

As for computers, 20 years ago people *could*¹³ do simple sums with a calculator but today, modern computers *can*¹⁴ solve enormous mathematical problems in a few seconds. And then there's the Internet. With the Internet you *can*¹⁵ send messages in an instant, and if you've got a question, you *can*¹⁶ use Wikipedia to find the answer. My grandfather says that he *couldn't*¹⁷ believe how quickly everything has changed, he's always saying that you *couldn't*¹⁸ do any of those things when he was young. However, as I tell him, you *can*¹⁹ enjoy the benefits of mobile phones, digital cameras, and computers unless you have enough money to pay for them.

Find words in exercise A that have these meanings:

A in the past

B very big

C advantages

B Generation differences

Complete this text by putting in each of the expressions in the blanks.

be able can can't can't could could
couldn't managed will be able were able

When my father was young, he didn't have much money so he *couldn't*⁰ hardly afford any luxuries. I *can*¹ remember exactly when he met my mother, but it was love at first sight. They worked in the same factory but they *couldn't*² see each other during the week because they worked different shifts. One day my mother said, "We *can't*³ be young lovers for ever. If we don't save some money, I don't know when we'll *be able*⁴ to get married." My father *couldn't*⁵ see that she was right: they had to do something. So he started working an extra shift at the weekend and my mother started to take evening classes to learn accountancy. She didn't have much time to study but at the end of the year she *managed*⁶ to pass the exam and get a job in the accounts department, which was better paid. After another six months they had enough savings and they *could*⁷ get a flat of their own. Things are easier for my generation. My sister and I *can*⁸ buy almost anything we want. I hope my children *will be able*⁹ to say the same.

