

UNIT 12: ROBOTS

Lesson 3: Modal verbs – *Can, Could*

A. THEORY

Remember

CAN

- ABILITY**
(present) I can speak four languages.
- POSSIBILITY**
(present) Alcohol can cause cancer.
- PERMISSION**
(informal) Can I use your book, please?

COULD

- ABILITY**
(past) He could play football when he was a kid.
- POSSIBILITY**
(past) A lot of crime could be prevented.
- PERMISSION**
(polite) Could I take your book, please?

- Note: We use an infinitive after modal verbs

Can/ could + V – infinitive

B. EXERCISE

I. Choose the best answer.

- ‘____ you swim?’ ‘Yes, I ____’
A. Can/can’t B. Can/can
- I’m sorry I ____ help you today. I’m really busy.
A. can B. can’t
- Please ____ you buy some milk on your way home? I ____ leave the house because I’m looking after the baby.
A. can’t/can’t B. can/can’t
- I ____ ride a bike but I ____ drive a car.
A. can/can’t B. can/can
- I just ____ manage to wake up on time, I’m always late.
A. can’t B. can
- ‘Hello, ____ I help you?’ ‘Actually, no you ____ this restaurant is awful and we’ve been waiting here for half an hour. We’re leaving’.
A. can/can’t B. can’t/can
- I have a special talent, I ____ touch my nose with my tongue ____ you?
A. can/can’t B. can/can’t

A. can/can

B. can't/can't

8. ‘ ____ I go to the bathroom please?’ ‘Yes, of course you ____ ’.

A. Can/can't

B. Can/can

9. Look! It's right there! ____ you see it? It's so obvious!

A. Can

B. Can't

10. I've never been able to eat breakfast in the mornings. I ____ talk to anyone either!

A. can

B. can't

II. Circle the correct answer.

1. I (can/can't) speak French. I picked it up while I was in France.

2. I (can/can't) come to the party. I am really busy.

3. We (can/can't) hear you. The music is so loud.

4. Where are my keys? I (can/can't) find them.

5. I (can/can't) believe it . We won two million dollars.

6. We (can/can't) meet tomorrow if you want.

7. (Can/Can't) make me a cup of tea, please?

8. He (can/can't) jump. His leg hurt so much.

9. Literate people (can/can't) read and write.

10. Fish (can/can't) swim.

III. Arrange the following words to make a complete sentence.

1. you/ can/ play/ the/ violin/ ?/

2. draw/ they/ can't/ well/.

3. play/ I/ basketball/ I/ can/.

4. we/ can/ come/ house/ to/ your/?

5. she/ sleep/ can't

6. you/ cook/ can/?

7. watch/ can/ television/ I/ ?/

IV. Fill in the blank with *could* or *couldn't* and the verbs in the box.

recognize swim do play make lift read sleep



1.

Peter _____ last night because he heard strange noises.



2.

My brother _____ football very well and he was the best.



3.

I _____ even when I was a baby.



4.

She _____ the box - it was too heavy.



5.

This morning Mom _____ breakfast because of her illness.



6.

_____ you _____ an English book at the age of seven?



7.

I _____ my laundry yesterday. My washing machine broke down.



8.

K-Bot had cameras in its eyes and it _____ people's faces.

V. Enter “could” or “couldn’t” in these sentences.

- When I was young, I _____ play the guitar: it was too difficult for me!
- Her grandmother was bilingual: she _____ speak both English and Spanish.
- Yesterday, Peter _____ do that exercise alone. So, he called me for help.
- In 1950, people _____ use mobile phones.
- When his mother was young, she _____ skate but she can't do it any longer.
- We _____ open the door: it was locked from the inside!
- In 1990, people _____ watch TV.

8. Mary's grandfather _____ play chess and he was the best!

9. In 1945, people _____ play video games.

10. But the _____ play chess!

11. Peter _____ play tennis last Monday: he had broken his arm!

12. When Ann was teenager, she _____ watch a horror film: it was too frightening for her!

13. Last Sunday, we _____ take any photos in the museum: it was forbidden.

14. Mozart _____ play the piano when he was 5.

VI. Put the words in the correct order to make sentences.

1. was/ play/ I/ when/ chess/ six/ could/ I

2. couldn't/ football/ was/ we/ play/ it/ raining /because

3. understand/ not/ she/ anything/ said/ I/ could

4. when/ speak/ were/ you/ five/ could/ you/ English?

5. could/ my/ was/ two/ when/ brother/ he/ pictures/ draw

6. the/ could/ years/ house/ robots/ ten/ ago/ clean?

7. was/ very/ I/ couldn't/ this/ heavy/ it/ suitcase/ so/ lift

8. well/ Dave/ play/ could/ was/ when/ tennis/ he/ young

VII. Select and fill in the blanks, using the word Can / Can, Could / Could Can, Must / Must.

1. You _____ work harder if you want to pass the exam.

2. I don't want anyone to know. You _____ tell anyone.

3. _____ you please open the door?

4. _____ I go out tonight? No, you _____ study English.

5. We haven't got much time. We _____ hurry.

6. He _____ play tennis very well now but he _____ play really well when he was young.

7. Tom _____ drive but he hasn't got a car.

8. The boy fell into the river but fortunately we _____ rescue him.

9. We haven't got enough food at home so we _____ go shopping today.

10. She wasn't at home when I phoned but I _____ contact her at her office.

11. I can't stay in bed tomorrow morning because I _____ work.

12. You _____ touch that switch. It's very dangerous.

13. _____ you post this letter for me?

14. Brian has got three houses, six cars, a yacht. He _____ be very rich.

15. You've only just had dinner. You _____ be hungry.

VIII. Fill in each blank with *can*, *can't*, *could* or *couldn't*.

1. Robots now _____ help astronauts perform very difficult tasks.

2. _____ robots recognise our voices five years ago?

3. I read the book three times, but I _____ understand it.

4. I _____ remember his name. Do you know it?

5. Ten years ago, my grandpa _____ ride a horse, but now he can't.

6. Our daughter _____ read until she was seven years old.

7. Sorry, I _____ help you. I must do my homework!

8. Mozart _____ play the piano when he was only five years old.

9. We _____ buy any bread because the baker's was closed.

10. Jeanny _____ help you plant vegetables. She knows a lot about gardening

11. _____ you swim when you were 10?

12. We _____ get to the meeting on time yesterday, because the train was delayed by one hour.

13. He's amazing, he _____ speak five languages, including Chinese.

14. I looked everywhere for my glasses but I _____ find them anywhere.

15. She's seven years old, but she _____ read yet. Her parents are getting her extra lessons.

16. I read the book three times, but I _____ understand it.

17. James _____ speak Japanese when he lived in Japan, but he's forgotten most of it now.

18. I _____ understand the chapter we had to read for homework. It was so difficult.

19. I _____ lift this box – it's too heavy! Would you help me?

20. Lucy _____ make it to our meeting after all. She's stuck in traffic.