7A New skills — Modal verbs of ability

a Choose the correct verb. Sometimes both verbs are possible.

It's never too late

My 78-year-old father [1] **couldn't** / **wasn't able to** even turn on a computer until about two years ago. All that changed when he decided that he wanted to [2] **can** / **be able to** use the internet and he did a course at his local Adult Education Centre. Although he really enjoyed the course, he [3] **couldn't** / **wasn't able to** put what he learnt in his classes into practice because he didn't have a computer. So, for his birthday, I bought him his own laptop and that's when he really started learning! Now, he [4] **'s able to** / **can** use the internet really well and send emails. What he loves most is [5] **can** / **being able to** speak to and see his grandchildren on Skype at least once a week. We live in Australia, but he lives in the UK. If he didn't have a computer, he [6] **couldn't** / **wouldn't be able to** keep in touch with us so much.



b Complete the sentences with *can* / *can't* or *could* / *couldn't*. If a form of *can* / *could* isn't possible, complete the sentence with a form of *be able to*.

1 At the end of the six-week course, you *'ll be able to* design your own website.

2 Masha called me yesterday because she _____ remember how to get to my house.

3 Simon isn't going to _____ finish the report by the end of the day.

4 Pierre has passed his driving test, so now he _____ drive his father's car.

5 I haven't _____ speak to Harry for over three weeks. He never answers his phone.

6 The train was delayed, so I _____ get to the meeting on time.

7 Miriam hates not _____ play chess as well as Luke. He always beats her and she's a really bad loser!

8 Sometimes when you're on Skype you _____ hear the other person very well.

9 I'm afraid I won't _____ go away this weekend. I'm too busy.

10 You should _____ do this exercise without any help. It's quite easy.

11 We _____ park here; there are no spaces.

12 _____ do what you like is the best thing about a holiday.

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