

Can, could, be able to: Ability and possibility

Exercise 1

Choose the correct form of *can*, *could*, *be able to* (affirmative or negative). Use a form of *be able to* only if a form of *can* or *could* is not possible.

- 1 Can you read this for me? I _____ see without my glasses.
- 2 I've never _____ speak Spanish as well as my brother.
- 3 After 2 years in China, I _____ speak quite fluently now.
- 4 I hate _____ understand my French neighbours.
- 5 When he was 40, he _____ speak six languages.
- 6 After 6 hours climbing, we _____ reach the top of the mountain.
- 7 When I was a child I used to _____ stand on my head.
- 8 Yesterday I lost my keys and I looked for them everywhere, but I _____ find them.

9 Sally wasn't at home, but I _____
office.

contact her at her

10 If you tell him your problem he might _____
you.

help

Exercise 2

Choose the correct option/s for each gap below.
Use *can* or *could* if possible.

1 _____ lend me a pen, please? Choose TWO correct options

- A. Can you
- B. Could you
- C. Are you able to

2 Not all countries _____ to manufacture high-quality products.

- A. are able
- B. can
- C. could

3 She fell into the river, but fortunately the firefighters _____ rescue her. Choose TWO correct options

- A. were able to
- B. could
- C. managed to

4 They _____ unlock the door and escape.

- A. can
- B. could
- C. managed to

5 When you called yesterday I _____ pick it up because I was in the shower.

- A. couldn't
- B. wasn't able to
- C. can't

6 You _____ stay until late tonight if you want.

- A. can
- B. could
- C. are able to

7 _____ work from home is a big advantage for parents with young children.

- A. Caning
- B. Being able to
- C. To can

8 If you follow the instructions you should _____ set up the computer without a problem.

- A. be able to
- B. can
- C. could

9 I was alone all morning, so I _____ finish the book.

- A. was able to
- B. could
- C. can

10 Police officers searched the area but he _____ get away.

- A. managed to
- B. can
- C. could

Exercise 3

Fill in the gaps with the correct form of *can*, *could*, *be able to* (affirmative or negative). Use a form of *can* or *could* if possible.

- 1 you help me with the bags, please?
- 2 I'm free tonight, so I'll come and help you.
- 3 I used to touch my toes when I was younger.
- 4 I remember my brother draw much better than me.
- 5 We get a picture of the painting because cameras were not allowed.
- 6 I come with you to the party?
- 7 I haven't sleep very well lately.
- 8 She says that she speak five languages fluently.
- 9 We tried, but we stop the fire.
- 10 He didn't want to come, but finally we persuade him.