



MODALS OF ABILITY

MODAL

USAGE

PRESENT

EXAMPLE

CAN	General or specific ability	CAN/CAN'T	Richard can speak French fluently.
BE ABLE TO	General or specific ability	AM/ARE/IS (NOT) ABLE TO	Max was able to swim.



MODAL

USAGE

PAST

EXAMPLE

COULD	Could - general ability	COULD	My sister could swim when I was six.
	Couldn't - general or specific	COULDN'T	I couldn't play the piano when she was five.
BE ABLE TO	General or specific ability	WAS/WERE (NOT) ABLE TO	Jennifer was not able to dance when she was eight.
MANAGED TO	Specific ability	MANAGED TO	Police finally managed to catch the culprit.

MODAL

USAGE

FUTURE

EXAMPLE

CAN	General or specific ability	CAN/CAN'T	I can help you tomorrow.
BE ABLE TO	General ability.	WILL/WON'T BE ABLE TO	Journalists will be able to preview the exhibition tomorrow.