

# could (do) and could have (done)

[mɪl bɪ]

**could (do)** – possible in present or future

- *Maybe I could stay with Sarah when I go to Paris.* (less sure than can)
- *We could go to the cinema.* (suggestion)
- *I'm so tired, I could sleep for a week.* (not realistic action)



**could have (done)** – was possible in the past

- *I was so tired, I could have slept for a week.*

**could't (do)** = would not be possible in present or future

- *I couldn't live in a big city. I would hate it.*

**could't have (done)** = would not have been possible in past

- *We had a really good holiday. It couldn't have been better.*

## 1 Which goes with which?

- 1 What shall we eat tonight?
- 2 I need to phone Vicky sometime.
- 3 What shall I get Ann for her birthday?
- 4 Where shall we put this picture?
- 5 What would you like to do at the weekend?
- 6 I don't know what to wear to the wedding.

- a We could go away somewhere.
- b You could give her a book.
- c ~~We could have fish.~~
- d You could wear your brown suit.
- e You could do it now.
- f We could hang it in the kitchen.

## 2 Put in can or could.

- 1 This is a wonderful place. I could stay here forever.
- 2 I'm so angry with him. I ..... kill him!
- 3 I ..... hear a strange noise. What is it?
- 4 It's so nice here. I ..... sit here all day but unfortunately I have to go.
- 5 I ..... understand your point of view, but I don't agree with you.
- 6 Peter is a keen musician. He plays the flute and he ..... also play the piano.
- 7 The company Amy works for isn't doing well. She ..... lose her job.
- 8 Some people are unlucky. Life ..... be very unfair.
- 9 I've been really stupid. I ..... kick myself.
- 10 Be careful climbing that tree. You ..... fall.

### 3 Complete the sentences. Choose from:

gone  
have moved

could be  
could have

could come  
could have come

could sleep  
could have been

- 1 A: Are you tired?  
B: Yes, very tired. I feel as if I could sleep for a week.
- 2 A: I spent a very boring evening at home yesterday.  
B: Why did you stay at home? You could have been out with us.
- 3 A: Shall I open this letter?  
B: Yes. It is important.
- 4 A: How was your exam? Was it difficult?  
B: It wasn't so bad. It wasn't worse.
- 5 A: I got very wet walking home in the rain.  
B: Why did you walk? You could have been taken a taxi.
- 6 A: Where shall we meet tomorrow?  
B: Well, I could have been to your office if you like.
- 7 A: Does Tom still live in the same place?  
B: I'm not sure. He could be.
- 8 A: Did you go to university?  
B: No. I could have been, but I didn't want to.

### 4 Complete the sentences. Use **couldn't** or **couldn't have + these verbs** (in the correct form):

afford    be    be    live    manage    stand    study    wear

- 1 I couldn't live in a big city. I'd hate it.
- 2 We had a really good holiday. It couldn't have been better.
- 3 I couldn't stand that hat. People would laugh at me.
- 4 You helped me a lot. I couldn't have been without you.
- 5 The staff at the hotel were really good. They couldn't have been more helpful.
- 6 There's no way we could buy a car now. We couldn't afford it.
- 7 Jack prepared for the exam as well as he could. He couldn't have been harder.
- 8 I wouldn't like to live near the motorway. I couldn't stand the noise of the traffic.