

61 can/can't



Usain Bolt will win. He can run really fast!

And we can watch the race on my mobile phone.



1 Form

SUBJECT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
I/He/She/It/We/You/They	can run.	cannot (can't) run.

QUESTIONS	SHORT ANSWERS
Can I/he/she/it/we/you/they run?	Yes, I/he/she/it/we/you/they can. No, I/he/she/it/we/you/they can't.

Modal verbs are different from main verbs.



We use the infinitive without *to* after them:

~~X We can to come to your party.~~ ✓ We can come to your party.



We don't add *-s* after *he/she/it*:

~~X Marek cans swim.~~ ✓ Marek can swim.



We do not use *do/don't* to form questions and negatives:

~~X Do you can drive?~~ ✓ Can you drive?

~~X I don't can speak Spanish.~~ ✓ I can't speak Spanish.

2 Use

We use *can/can't*

- to talk about ability in the present:

Usain Bolt **can run** really fast.

I **can speak** Spanish perfectly.

Young children **can't understand** difficult ideas.

- to say if something is possible or allowed in the present:

We **can watch** the race on my mobile phone. (= It is possible for us to watch the race.)

Can I use this mobile phone in the USA? (= Is it possible for me to use it?)

Students **can use** dictionaries in the exam. (= It is allowed.)

You **can't drive** in the UK until you are seventeen. (= You are not allowed to drive.)

- for making an arrangement:

The doctor **can see** you tomorrow at 10.30.

Can you meet me here at nine o'clock on Sunday?

Practice

1 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the text with *can* or *can't*.

YOUNG PEOPLE WANTED FOR COMPETITION!

(0) *Can* you sing? (1) you play a musical instrument? (2) you tell jokes?

Do you watch competitions and think 'They (3) sing very well.

I (4) do better than that!'

Whatever you do, you (5) find a way to become famous on the stage.

You (6) enter the competition by phone or by email.

Just contact us and tell us what you (7) do.

We will then invite the lucky people to perform for us.

Please note: we (8) answer every email or phone call, so if you don't hear from us in three weeks, it means we haven't chosen you this time.

2 Find five more mistakes in the sentences and correct them. Tick (✓) the correct sentence.

- 0 I ~~don't can~~^{can't} open my suitcase without the key.
- 1 Jack cans come with us to the cinema.
- 2 Ms Wilkes can to see you tomorrow afternoon at two.
- 3 We can get tickets for the concert online.
- 4 Does Sue can speak Spanish well?
- 5 Can you to stay after the class for a few minutes?
- 6 My grandfather doesn't can see very well.

3 Write questions or positive (+)/negative (-) sentences with *can* or *can't*. Use the words below to help you.

- 0 I / leave my suitcase here / for an hour (?) *Can I leave my suitcase here for an hour?*
- 00 I / come with you tomorrow (-) *I can't come with you tomorrow.*
- 000 your friend / stay at my house (+) *Your friend can stay at my house.*
- 1 Sarah / call me later (?)
- 2 you / use dollars / in this store (-)
- 3 you / call the doctor from my office (+)
- 4 you / use mobile phones here (-)
- 5 I / speak to the manager (?)
- 6 Fran / make a really good curry (+)
- 7 Sandy / afford a new car (-)
- 8 Owen / speak Welsh (?)

4 Write four sentences about what you can and can't do.

- 0 *I can't drive a car.*
- 1 3
- 2 4