

## 62 *could, will be able to*



Could my great-grandmother run really fast?



She could, but women couldn't enter competitions like the Olympics in those days.

### 1 Past form and use

SUBJECT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
I/He/She/It/We/You/They	<i>could run.</i>	<i>could not (couldn't) run.</i>

QUESTIONS	SHORT ANSWERS
<i>Could I/he/she/it/we/you/they run?</i>	<i>Yes, I/he/she/it/we/you/they could. No, I/he/she/it/we/you/they couldn't.</i>

We usually use *could/couldn't*

- to talk about ability in the past:  
*Mozart **could write** beautiful music when he was a child.*  
*Could my great-grandmother **run** really fast?*
- to say if something was possible in the past:  
*Children **could play** in the streets years ago.*  
*Women **couldn't enter** competitions like the Olympics then.*

### 2 Future form and use

SUBJECT	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
I/He/She/It/We/You/They	<i>will be able to run.</i>	<i>will not (won't) be able to run.</i>

QUESTIONS	SHORT ANSWERS
<i>Will I/he/she/it/we/you/they be able to run?</i>	<i>Yes, I/he/she/it/we/you/they will. No, I/he/she/it/we/you/they won't.</i>

We use *will/won't be able to*

- to talk about ability in the future:  
*Karen **will be able to speak** French after two years in Paris.*  
*I've broken my leg – I **won't be able to drive** for weeks.*
- to say if something will be possible in the future:  
*We'll **be able to swim** every day at the hotel.*  
*Will you **be able to get** a good job after your technology course?*

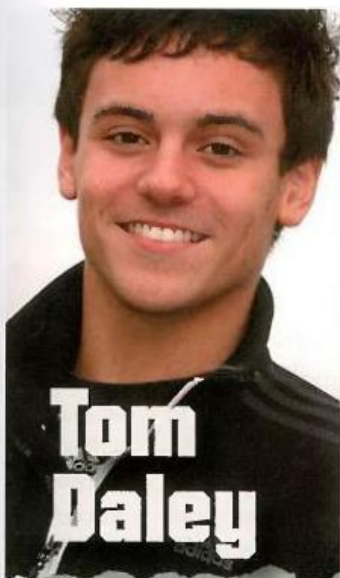
## Practice

### 1 GRAMMAR IN USE Choose the correct words in *italics* in the interview.

- A So you're interested in the translation job. Can you speak Spanish perfectly?  
 B Well, I (0) *able to / could* when I was at university, but that was a long time ago.  
 I'm taking a course so I (1) *will be able to / can* speak it very well again soon.  
 A OK. I'll give you our test, but I (2) *couldn't / won't be able to* recommend you for the job if you don't pass it.  
 B I understand that. Will I (3) *can / be able to* take the test soon?  
 A Let's see ... (4) *will you be able / can you* to come back next Tuesday at four o'clock?  
 B No, I'm afraid I (5) *will / won't*. I collect the children from school at that time.  
 A That's OK, we can arrange another time. Now, how are your computer skills?  
 B Well, I (6) *can't / couldn't* use a computer six months ago, but I've learnt now.  
 I (7) *could / can* type really fast when I was a student, and I'm sure I  
 (8) *can / will be able to* learn the other things really quickly.

### 2 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the text with phrases from the box.

could dive   could enter   could practise   ~~could walk~~   couldn't dive   couldn't surprise



NOT LONG AGO Tom Daley (0) *could walk* through the streets in his town and no one stopped him – but it's different now because he is a member of the Great Britain Olympic team.

Tom's the best diver in Europe now, but he (1) ..... at all a few years ago. He saw a diving board at his local swimming pool when he was seven and in a few months he (2) ..... really well. People in the sport started to notice him, and told him that he (3) ..... in the best diving centre in the UK.

Before he (4) ..... the Beijing Olympics, Tom needed to finish in the first eight at the competitions in Beijing. He finished seventh, so at the age of fourteen, he returned to Beijing as part of the Olympic team. Although Tom (5) ..... everyone by winning in Beijing, he finished seventh out of twelve divers in one event. Tom will be an amazing diver when he's older!

### 3 Put the words in brackets () in the correct order. Then complete the sentences.

- 0 (paint pictures Picasso amazing could) when he was very young.  
*Picasso could paint amazing pictures* ..... when he was very young.  
 1 (be use to gas or coal we able won't) in the future.  
 ..... in the future.  
 2 (you name write could your) before you went to school?  
 ..... before you went to school?  
 3 (will store you able to be) about 70 films on this DVD recorder.  
 ..... about 70 films on this DVD recorder.  
 4 (could we not a hotel find) near the beach.  
 ..... near the beach.  
 5 (to able we the match won't watch be) because it's on TV too late.  
 ..... because it's on TV too late.