

## GRAMMAR Modal verbs for ability

### Present

*She can/can't paint.*

*They're able to/aren't able to read quickly.*

### Past

*I could/couldn't follow the plot.*

*Jack was/wasn't able to go to the library.*

*He managed/didn't manage to read the book in a day.*

### Future

*I'll be/won't be able to finish this today.*

### Questions

*Can/Could he paint? No, he can't/couldn't.*

*Is/Was she able to read quickly? Yes, she is/was.*

*Will you be able to read more books? No, I won't.*

*Did he manage to finish the book? Yes, he did.*

### Use

We use *could* to describe general ability in the past.

We use *managed to* to describe specific achievements in the past.

### 1 Match the sentence halves.

- 1  I couldn't
- 2  Sheila can
- 3  Unfortunately, Keith won't
- 4  Will you be able
- 5  We can't
- 6  I managed

- a read in five languages!
- b offer you a place at our college, I'm afraid.
- c understand the French film – they all spoke very fast.
- d to find the book you wanted.
- e to finish the book this week?
- f be able to come to the party.

### 2 Choose the correct option.

- 1  *Were* / *Did* you able to ride a bike when you were five?
- 2 Ben and Eve won't *be able* / *able* to come to the play.
- 3 Can you *write* / *to write* poetry?
- 4 I *managed* to *read* / *reading* fifteen books over the summer!
- 5 The theatre was so full of people that I *couldn't* / *could* see the stage.
- 6 I started writing a novel, but I didn't *manage* / *manage* to finish it.

### 3 Choose the word or phrase which does NOT fit each sentence.

- 1  to speak to your mum last night?  
a Did you manage      b Were you able  
 c Could you
- 2 I  post that package for you – sorry.  
a can't                      b managed to  
c won't be able to
- 3 I  read when I was three, but only slowly.  
a can                              b could  
c was able to
- 4 I  drive, but I'm taking lessons.  
a can't                              b 'm not able to  
c managed to
- 5 The book was difficult to follow, but I  finish it.  
a couldn't                              b was able to  
c managed to

Активация Windows  
Перейдите до разделу "Настройки" активации Windows.

### 4 Complete the text with one word in each gap.

Thank you, Ms Palmer!

When I was younger, I wasn't very good at anything. I couldn't swim, I wasn't <sup>1</sup>*able* to read very well and I <sup>2</sup>n't ride a bike on my own until I was twelve! People used to ask me things like, '<sup>3</sup> you say "thank you" in French?' and I just looked down and felt embarrassed. The problem was I just didn't have any confidence. I <sup>4</sup> able to do these things if I really tried, but I didn't believe I could.

Then a new French teacher came to our school. Her name was Ms Palmer and she gave me lots of attention. She really encouraged me and said things like, 'If you <sup>5</sup> to read this text, I'll let you play Активация Windows  
Перейдите до разделу "Настройки активации Windows." that French game on your tablet for ten minutes.' It worked, and not only did my French improve, but now I <sup>6</sup> able to do lots of other things and I feel more confident too. Next year, I'm hoping I will <sup>7</sup> able to learn Spanish and Italian too. Merci beaucoup, Ms Palmer!