

Could / Couldn't

What **could** you **do** when you were young, Grandma?

Oh, I **could do** lots of things, my dear. I **could walk** for hours, but not get tired. I **could run**, I **could swim** and I **could go** ice skating. And these days, I can do jigsaw puzzles. There – that's the final piece!

Language focus

Use **could** / **couldn't** to talk about abilities you had or didn't have in the past.

When she was a girl, she **couldn't** swim, but she **could** ride a bike.

Yes/No questions are formed in the following way:

Could you / he / she / we / they make pancakes?

Yes, I / he / she / we / they **could**.

No, I / he / she / we / they **couldn't**.



1 Answer the questions with Yes, I could or No, I couldn't.

- 1 Could you walk when you were six months old?
- 2 Could you speak when you were one year old?
- 3 Could you run when you were three years old?
- 4 Could you catch a ball when you were four years old?
- 5 Could you read when you were five years old?
- 6 Could you write when you were seven years old?

No, I couldn't.

2 Complete the questions with the verbs from the box.

speak play climb ~~run~~ ski ride

www.theoldpeopleswebsite.co.uk

The Old People's Website



When you were a young man ...

- 1 ... could you run fast?
- 2 ... could you _____ mountains?
- 3 ... could you _____ any other languages?
- 4 ... could you _____ the guitar?
- 5 ... could you _____ a motorbike?
- 6 ... could you _____ or snowboard?

3 Match the questions in Activity 2 with the answers.

- a No, I couldn't, but my brother could. He was a member of a club. He went up Everest once!
- b Yes, I could. I didn't like driving cars, but I loved my second-hand Harley-Davidson!
- c No, I couldn't. I didn't go on winter holidays. They were too expensive!
- d No, I couldn't. I could play the violin, but I didn't learn to play anything else.
- e Yes, I could. I lived in Buenos Aires for five years when I was in my twenties, so my Spanish was very good.
- f Yes, I could. I loved doing that. I used to run by the river near my house every morning.

2

