

Expressing Ability

Activity Sheet (page 1/2)

A. Complete the sentences below, writing either *can*, *could*, or *be able to*.

1. We usually use to express ability, possibility, or permission in the past.
2. We usually use to express ability, possibility, or permission in the present.
3. can be used to express ability, possibility, or permission with all other tenses.
4. can also be used in the past and present, but it is more formal than *could* and *can*.
5. We also use when referring to ability in a particular situation.

B. Match the beginnings of the sentences with the correct endings, then decide which Ability verb is suitable and circle it.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. I got a puncture yesterday. Fortunately | a. <i>can speak / could speak</i> five languages. |
| 2. When I am 80 years old, I probably | b. <i>will be able to finish / could finish</i> it by then. |
| 3. Mary's a talented linguist. She | c. <i>could run / can run</i> much faster than I do now. |
| 4. When I was younger, I | d. <i>can fly / can't fly</i> . |
| 5. Although they have wings, penguins | e. <i>I was able fix / was able to fix</i> it. |
| 6. Until you pass your driving test, you | f. <i>can't move / won't be able to move</i> as easily. |
| 7. My essay is due tomorrow. I hope I | g. <i>couldn't drive / won't be able to drive</i> my car. |

C. Complete the sentences, using the verb in brackets with the correct Ability verb.

1. I (not/do) my homework because I didn't understand it.
2. I locked myself out of my house. Luckily, I (climb) through the window.
3. I'm afraid I (come) to your party. I'm busy that day.
4. (you/help) me with my bags? They're really heavy.
5. Although Sam can read quite well, he still (not/write)
6. John (retire) when he turns 67.
7. If you don't show your passport, you (not/check in)
8. By the time she was 10 months old, Alice (walk) very well.
9. My cousin lives in Australia. I hope I (visit) her one day.
10. Sally is allergic to dairy products, so she (eat) cheese.

D. Using one of the verbs below, complete the sentences with a suitable Ability verb in the correct form.

enter run go stay not/light not/afford fix not/eat travel not/call

- 1. Smoking is prohibited. You your cigarette in here.
2. The tap was broken. Fortunately, the plumber it.
3. I to go out tonight because I spent all my money last week.
4. Peter had finished all his work, so he home early.
5. I the curry because it was too spicy.
6. In 50 years' time I think people to the moon very easily.
7. Anyone over 18 years old the nightclub.
8. I had run out of credit on my phone, so I you.
9. Cheetahs faster than any other mammal.
10. When I am retired I in bed all day if I want to.

E. Complete the sentences below using the verbs below with an Ability verb in the correct form. Afterwards, chat with a partner and decide if they are true or false, then write 'T' or 'F' next to each sentence.

find not/travel not/visit not/walk sleep

- 1. In 1950 people by plane because they hadn't been invented yet.
2. Cows downstairs because their heads are too heavy.
3. Snails for up to 3 years.
4. You polar bears in the Antarctic.
5. By the year 2100 we Venice as it be under water.

Working together, create three true or false facts of your own using Ability verbs. Afterwards, find another partner to read your facts to and see if they can guess whether they are true or false.

- 1.
2.
3.