

Can and be able to present and past ability discussion questions

Take turns choosing a line of questions below and making a question from it. You can sometimes ask two questions from that line, but make sure you don't ask the same question twice with different wording (as some questions have the same meaning).

Ask about questions below you don't understand, don't know how to answer, etc.

Can and be able to for present and past abilities grammar presentation

What are the two past forms of "can" above?

What is the difference between them?

Which sentences above don't have "could"? Why not?

Freer practice

Make similar questions for each other from the question stems at the bottom of the next page.

- Were you able to relax yesterday/ the day before yesterday/ on Monday/ last Wednesday?
- Were you able to... yesterday/ the day before yesterday/ on... day/ last... day?
- How old were you when you were first able to play a musical instrument? Is that similar to other people you know?
- How old were you when you were first able to...? Is that similar to other people you know?
- Do you remember the first time that you were able to speak English outside class? What happened?
- Do you remember the first time that you were able to...? What happened?
- Do you remember the first time that you tried to learn how to swim? How was it?
- Do you remember the first time that you tried to learn how to...? How was it?
- Is there anything you can't do? How hard have you tried to do that thing?
- Could you ride a bike when you were five years old?/ Were you able to ride a bike when you were five years old? How does that compare to other people you know?
- Could you... when you were... years old?/ Were you able to... when you were... years old? How does that compare to other people you know?
- Can you drive? Could you do that when you left school?/ Can you drive a car? Were you able to do that when you left school?
- Can you...? Could you do that when...?/ Can you...? Were you able to do that when...?
- Is there anything you could do but now can't? How did you lose that skill?/ Is there anything you were able to do but now can't? How did you lose that skill?
- Is there anything you could do well but now aren't so good at? Why has your ability changed?/ Is there anything you were able to do well but now aren't so good at? Why has your ability changed?
- When you were 16 years old, could you study better than now? Does it matter?/ When you were 16 years old, were you able to study better than now? Does it matter?
- When you were... years old, could you... better than now? Does it matter?/ When you were... years old, were you able to... better than now? Does it matter?
- Can you speak any other languages? Have you ever found that to be a useful skill?
- Can you...? Have you ever found that to be a useful skill?
- What kind of sport can you do most skilfully? How did you first learn how to do that thing?
- What kind of... can you... most skilfully? How did you first learn how to do that thing?

Question stems

- Are you able to...?
- Can you...?
- Could you...?
- Do you remember the first time that you...?
- Have you ever...?
- How old were you...?
- Is there anything that you...?
- Was there anything that you...?
- Were you able to...?
- What kind of...?
- When you were... years old,...