

**GRAMMAR • Can and can't for ability**

To talk about ability, use can or can't and the base form of a verb.



Carrie **can** play the guitar.



Josie **can't** cook.

**Questions**

Can you **play** the guitar?  
Can he **speak** English?

**Short answers**

Yes, I **can**. / No, I **can't**.  
Yes, he **can**. / No, he **can't**.

Use can or can't with well to indicate degree of ability.  
She can play the guitar, but she can't play **well**.

can't = can not = cannot

**GRAMMAR PRACTICE** Complete each conversation with can or can't and the base form of a verb.

1 A: ..... you ..... the guitar?

B: Yes, I ..... . But I don't play well.

2 A: ..... Gwen ..... well?

B: Yes, she ..... . She swims very well.

3 A: ..... your brother .....?

B: My brother? No. He ..... cook at all.

4 A: ..... Gloria ..... English well?

B: No, she ..... . She needs this class.

5 A: ..... your mother .....?

B: Yes. She knits very well.

6 A: ..... your sisters .....?

B: Yes. They go skiing every weekend.

## Could you .. ?

Form: Could you + base form of verb ..... ?

### Examples:

Could you carry my bags?

Could you give me some advice?

Could you carry these boxes?

We can add “possibly” to be even more polite. We put “possibly” in between “Could you” and the verb.

### Example:

Could you possibly hold my drink?