



**At the end of the lesson, the student will be able to:**

- \* identify the proper usage of modals.
- \* to construct sentences using modals.



## Let's study!

### 1. *Can* and *could* are modals:

\*They are followed by the base form of a verb.

\* They have the same form for all subjects. (*They do not use – s for the third person singular.*)

\* They form the negative with not. (*They do not use do.*)

\* They go before the subject in questions. (*They do not use do.*)

Note: The expression be able to has the same meaning of ability as can and could.

Mary *can* dance.

I *can* dance and she *can* dance too.

She *can't* sing.

*Can* Antonio dance too?

Are they *able to* dance?  
(*Can they dance?*)

She *wasn't able to* dance then.  
(*She couldn't dance then.*)



## Study!

2. Use *can*, *can't*, *could*, *couldn't* or a form of *be able to*, to express *ability*.

•She *can dance*, but she *can't sing*.

•We *could ride* bikes then, but we *couldn't drive* cars.

•Next year *you'll be able to write* to me in English.

3. Use *can* or *can't* for *present ability*.

She *can speak* English, but she *can't speak* French.

4. Use *can* for *future ability* when you are talking about plans or arrangements.

I *can buy* tickets on the way home tomorrow.

► Be careful! Don't use *can* for future ability when you are talking about things you learn.

When I finish this course, *I'll be able to speak* French well.

NOT "When I finish this course, I ~~can~~ speak French well."

Use *will be able to*.



## Study!

5. Use *could* or *couldn't* for *past ability*.

► Be careful! Don't use could in affirmative statements for a single event in the past. Use *was/were able to*.

A: *Could* he *dance* as a child?

B: No, he *couldn't dance* then.

► In 2017 they *were able to win* first prize in the dance competition.

NOT "in 2017 they ~~could~~ win"

6. You can use a form of *be able to* for *present, future or past ability*.

Present: *Are you able to drive* this car?

Future: *We'll be able to do* that dance soon.

Past: Li *wasn't able to win* first prize last year.

*Be able to* can also be a *gerund* or *infinitive*.

Note: *Can* is much more common than *be able to* in everyday speech about the present.

Gerund: *Being able to dance* is important to him.

Infinitive: I want *to be able to drive* by June.

More Common: *Can* you dance?

Less Common: *Are you able to dance*?



## Activity

Complete the paragraphs with can, can't, could or couldn't.

1. For a long time, Jim and Marie \_\_\_\_\_ agree on a family sport. Jim loves tennis, and Marie takes lessons, but she still \_\_\_\_\_ play. Marie \_\_\_\_\_ swim, but Jim hates the water. They recently took up dancing. Now, they \_\_\_\_\_ do the swing and spend time together.