MODAL VERBS OF ABILITY

CEFR Level A2 — Elementary

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: can, could and be able to

'Be able to' works in every tense — 'can' does not.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

‘Can’ has only two forms: can and could. For other tenses we use ‘be able to’. Study the table.

Time	with can / could	with be able to
present	I can swim.	I am able to swim.
past	I could swim.	I was able to swim.
future	— (no form)	I will be able to swim.
present perfect	— (no form)	I have been able to swim.
after another verb	— (no form)	I want to be able to swim.

*So: **can** for present, **could** for past — but **be able to** when you need a different tense.*

PART B — **Choose the correct form**

Underline the correct option.

1. Next year I (can / will be able to) drive.
2. She (can / is able to) speak four languages. [both correct — which is simpler?]
3. I'd like to (can / be able to) play the piano.
4. When he was young he (could / can) run very fast.
5. They haven't (could / been able to) find a flat yet.
6. (Can / Will be able to) you help me tomorrow?

Score: _____ / 6

Worksheet 2: Fill in the Gaps

Choose can, could, or the right form of 'be able to'.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Complete the sentences**

be able to • can • can't • could • couldn't • will be able to

Write a form from the box in each gap. Use each one once.

1. After this course you _____ speak Spanish well.
2. I'm sorry, I _____ come to your party on Friday.
3. My father _____ play football when he was younger.
4. _____ you open the window, please?
5. We _____ find the hotel, so we phoned for help.
6. It's important to _____ swim.

PART B — **Put the verb in the right tense**

Use the correct form of ‘be able to’.

1. Since the operation, she _____ walk again. *(present perfect)*
2. In two years he _____ vote. *(future)*
3. I _____ finish the work yesterday. *(past, negative)*
4. Everyone should _____ read and write. *(after ‘should’)*

Score: _____ / 10

Worksheet 3: Reading

Read about a young climber and answer the questions.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A **Read and decide: true or false?**

> *Nadia could climb before she could walk properly. At three she was able to reach the top of the kitchen cupboards, which her parents did not enjoy. At school she couldn't sit still, but she could hang from a bar for two minutes. Last summer she wasn't able to finish the regional competition because she hurt her wrist. 'Next year,' she says, 'I will be able to climb the whole wall. I want to be able to compete in the nationals.'*

Write T (true) or F (false) next to each sentence.

1. Nadia learned to walk before she learned to climb. _____
2. At three she could reach the kitchen cupboards. _____
3. She found it easy to sit still at school. _____
4. She finished the regional competition last summer. _____
5. She hopes to compete in the nationals. _____

PART B **Find the forms**

Find ONE example of each in the text.

could (positive): _____

couldn't / wasn't able to: _____

was able to: _____

will be able to: _____

to be able to: _____

Score: _____ / 10

Worksheet 4: Writing Practice

Write about abilities in the past, present and future.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Then, now and later**

Write one sentence for each time. Use could, can and will be able to.

1. Something you learned as a small child. *(could)*
   _____
2. Something you are good at now. *(can)*
   _____
3. Something you hope to do in five years. *(will be able to)*
   _____
4. Something you have never managed to learn. *(can't / haven't been able to)*
   _____

PART B — **Write a paragraph**

Write a paragraph (40–50 words) about a skill you learned. Use at least FOUR different forms (can, can't, could, couldn't, be able to).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 10

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — A2 Level Worksheets

Modal Verbs of Ability | English Language Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – can, could, be able to

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Choices 1–6	**1 will be able to (‘can’ has no future form), 2 can (simpler and more natural), 3 be able to (after ‘to’), 4 could, 5 been able to (present perfect), 6 Can**

Worksheet 2 – Gap Fill & Tenses

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Gaps 1–6 in order	**will be able to, can't, could, Can, couldn't, be able to**
B1	present perfect	**has been able to walk**
B2	future	**will be able to vote**
B3	past, negative	**wasn't able to finish (also: couldn't finish)**
B4	after ‘should’	**be able to read and write**

Worksheet 3 – Reading

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	True / False 1–5	**1 F, 2 T, 3 F, 4 F, 5 T**
B	The forms	**could (positive): ‘could climb’ / ‘could hang from a bar’. couldn't / wasn't able to: ‘couldn't sit still’ / ‘wasn't able to finish’. was able to: ‘was able to reach the top’. will be able to: ‘will be able to climb the whole wall’. to be able to: ‘want to be able to compete’**

Worksheet 4 – Writing (guidance)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Then, now and later 1–4	**1 mark each. The verb after can/could/be able to must be the base form with no ‘to’ (e.g. ‘I could read when I was four.’).**
B	Paragraph (40–50 words)	**Up to 6 marks: 4 for four different forms used correctly, 2 for coherence, length and accuracy.**