

Modals:

Can , Could and (be) able to (is , are , was , were)

- We use **can** to say that something is possible or allowed, or that somebody has the ability to do something. / We use **can + infinitive (can do / can see etc.)**

Exg

- + We **can see** the lake from our bedroom window. (*can for present*) only.
- + I haven't got a pen; 'You **can use** mine.
- + **Can you speak** any foreign languages?

@ The negative is **can't (= cannot)**:

- + I'm afraid I **can't come** to the party on Friday.
- You can say that somebody **is able to** do something, *but can* is more usual:
- + We **are able to see** the lake from our bedroom window.

(Could):

- Sometimes **could** is the past of **can**. We use **could** especially with:
See , hear , smell , taste , feel , remember , understand
- + We had a lovely room in the hotel. We **could see** the lake.
- + As soon as I walked into the room, I **could smell** gas.
- + I was sitting at the back of the theatre and **couldn't hear** very well.
- We also use **could** to say that somebody had the general ability or permission to do something:
- + My grandfather **could speak** five languages.
- + We were totally free. We **could do** what we wanted. (=we were allowed to do)

Could and was able to

- We use **could** for general ability. But if you want to say that somebody did something in a specific situation, use **was/were able to or managed to (not could)**:
- + The fire spread through the building very quickly, but fortunately everybody **was able to escape / managed to escape**. (*not could escape*)
- + We didn't know where David was, but we **managed to find / were able to find** him in the end. (*not could find*)

EXERCISES:

Q1/ Complete the sentences using can or (be) able to. Use can if possible; otherwise. Use (be) able to.

- 1- Gary has travelled a lot. He can speak five languages.
- 2- I haven't been able to sleep very well recently.
- 3- Nicole _____ drive, but she hasn't got a car.
- 4- I used to _____ stand on my head, but I can't do it now.
- 5- I can't understand Martin. I've never _____ understand him.
- 6- I can't see you on Friday, but I _____ meet you on Saturday morning.

Q2/ Complete the sentences with can/can't could/couldn't + the following:

Come eat hear run sleep wait

- 1- I'm afraid I can't come to your party next week.
- 2- When Tim was 16, he _____ 100 meters in 11 seconds.
- 3- 'Are you in a hurry?' 'No, I've got plenty of time. I _____.'
- 4- I was feeling sick yesterday. I _____ anything.
- 5- Can you speak a little louder? I _____ you very well.
- 6- 'You look tired; Yes, I _____ last night;

Q3/ Complete the answer to the questions with was/were able to

- 1- (A) Did everybody escape from the fire?
(B) Yes, although the fire spread quickly, everybody was able to escape.
- 2- (A) Did you finish your work this afternoon?
(B) Yes, there was nobody to disturb me, so I _____.
- 3- (A) Did you have difficulty finding our house?
(B) Not really. Your directions were good and we _____.
- 4- (A) Did the thief get away?
(B) Yes, No-one realised what happening and the thief _____.

May and might :

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Study this example situation:

You are looking for Bob. Nobody is sure where he is, but you get some suggestion.

He **may be** in his office.

(= perhaps he is in his office)

Where's Bob?

He **might be having** lunch

(= perhaps he is having lunch)

Ask Ann. She **might know**.

(= perhaps she knows)

- We use **may** or **might** to say that something is a possibility. Usually you can use **may** or **might**, so you can say:

✚ It **may** be true. Or It **might** be true. (perhaps is true)

✚ She **might** know. Or She **may** know.

- The negative forms are **may not** or **might not** (or **mightn't**):

✚ It **may not** be true. (= perhaps it isn't true)

✚ She **might not** work here anymore (=perhaps she doesn't work etc.)

I /you / he etc.

may
might

(not)

be (true / in this his office etc
be (doing / working / having
know / work / want etc.

- For the past we use **may have (done)** or **might have (done)**:

✚ (A): I wonder why Kate didn't answer the phone.

(B): She **may have been** asleep. (= perhaps she was asleep)

✚ (A): I can't find my bag anywhere.

(B): You **might have left** it in the shop. (= perhaps you left it in the shop)

✚ (A): I was surprised that Kate wasn't at the meeting yesterday.

(B): She **might not have known** about it. (= perhaps she didn't know)

I / you / he etc.

may
might

(not) have

been (asleep / at home etc.)
been (doing / working / feeling etc
Known / had / wanted / left etc.

➤ We use **may** and **might** to talk about possible action or happenings in the future:

✚ I haven't decided yet where to go for my holidays. I **may go** to Ireland.
(=perhaps I will go there)

✚ Take an umbrella with you. It **might rain** later. (= perhaps it will rain)

➤ Compare **will** and **may/might** (something in future)

✚ I'll **be** late this evening. (for sure)

✚ I **may might** be late this evening. (possible)

Note:

➤ We use only **might** (*not may*) when the situation is not real:

✚ If I were in Tom's position, I **might** look for another job.

(The situation here is not real because I am not in Tom's position (so I'm not going to look for another job) (**May** is not possible in this example).

EXERCISES:

Q1/: Complete each sentence with a verb in the correct form.

1. Where's Sam? I'm not sure. He might **be having** lunch.

2. Who is that man with Emily? I'm not sure. It might _____ her brother.

3. (A): Who was the man we saw with Anna yesterday?

(B): I'm not sure. It may _____ her brother.

4- (A): What are those people doing by the of the road?

(B): I don't know. They might _____ for a bus.

5- Do you have a stamp? No, but ask Simon. He may _____ one.

Q2/: Complete the sentences using might + the following:

bite break need ~~rain~~ slip wake

1. Take an umbrella with you when you go out. It **might rain** later.

2. Don't make too much noise. You _____ the baby.

3. Be careful of that dog. It _____ it.

4. I don't think we should throw that letter away. We _____ it later.

5. Be careful. The footpath is very icy. You _____.

6. Don't let the children play in this room. They _____ something.

Can / Could / Would you? etc (Requests, Offers, Permission and invitations)

A- Asking people to do things (requests)

- We use **can** or **could** to ask people to do things:
 - + **Can you** wait a moment, please? Or **Could you** wait a moment, please?
 - + Liz, **can you** do me a favour?
 - + Excuse me, **could you** tell me how to get to the airport?

Note:

- 1- **Do you think you could? (not can):**
 - + **Do you think you could** lend me some money until next week?
- 2- We also use **will** and **would** to ask people to do things (but **can/could** more usual)
 - + **Would you** please be quite? I'm trying to concentrate.

B- Asking for things

- To ask for something, we use **Can I have? or Could I have.....?**
 - + *(in a shop)* **Can I have** these postcards, please?
 - + *(during a meal)* **Could I have** the salt, please? (**May I have?** is also possible.)

C- Asking to do things

- To ask to do something, we use **can, could** or **may**:
 - + *(on the phone)* Hello, **can I** speak to Steve, please?
 - + **Do you think I could** borrow your bike?
 - + **May I** come in? 'Yes, please do'. (**May** is more formal than **can** or **could**)

D- Offering to do things

- To offer to do something, you can use **Can I?:**
 - + **Can I** get you a cup of coffee? 'That would be nice.'
 - + **Can I** help you?: No, it's all right. I can manage.'

E- Offering and inviting

- To offer to invite, we use **Would you like.....? (not Do you like):**
 - + **Would you like** a cup of coffee?' 'Yes, please.'
 - + **Would you like** to come to dinner tomorrow evening?' 'I'd love to.'

Note:

- **I'd like.....** is a polite way of saying what you want:
 - + *(at a tourist information office)* **I'd like** some information about hotels, please.
 - + *(in a shop)* **I'd like** to try on this jacket, please.

EXERCIES:

Q1/ Read the situations and write question beginning Can....or Could...

1- You're carrying a lot of things. You can't open the door yourself. There's man standing near the door. You say to him **Could you open the door, please?**

2- You phone Sue, but somebody else answers. She isn't there. You want to leave a message for her. You say:_____.

3- You're a tourist. You want to go to the station, but you don't know how get there. You ask at your hotel:_____.

4- You are a clothes shop. You see some trousers you like and you want to try them on. You say to the shop assistant:_____.

Q2/ Read the situation and write a question using the word in brackets.

1- You want to borrow your friend's camera. What do you say to him?
(think) **Do you think I could borrow your camera ?**

2- You've written a letter in English. Before you send it, you want a friend to check it for you. What do you ask? (think)_____.

3- You want to leave work early. What do you ask your boss?
(mind)_____.

4- The woman in the next room is playing music. It's very loud. You want her to turn it down. What do you say to her?
(think)_____.

5- You're on a train. The window is open and you're feeling cold. You'd like to close it, but first you ask the woman next to you.
(Ok) _____.

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