



Can and Can't: Ability — A1 exercises

Printable worksheet · 23 questions · answer key with explanations on the last page
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Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 23

A. Multiple choice

10 questions

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- I ____ swim, but I'm not very fast.
A) can to B) cans C) am can D) can
- She ____ play the piano beautifully.
A) cans B) can C) can to D) is can
- ____ you help me with this box, please?
A) Do can B) Can C) Are can D) Cans
- He ____ come to the meeting — he's in Lisbon.
A) can't B) doesn't can C) cannot to D) not can
- "Can you drive?" — "Yes, I ____."
A) do B) am C) can D) can drive to
- Which sentence is correct?
A) I can speak Spanish. B) I can to speak Spanish.
C) I can speaking Spanish. D) I cans speak Spanish.
- ____ I open the window? It's very warm in here.
A) Do B) Am C) Can D) Is
- They ____ find the address on the map.
A) doesn't can B) not can C) cannot to D) can't
- It ____ get very cold here in February.
A) can B) cans C) can to D) is can
- "Can your sister cook?" — "No, she ____."
A) doesn't B) can't C) isn't D) not can

B. Fill in the blank

8 questions

Write the missing word or words in the gap.

- I _____ speak three languages fluently.
- She _____ ride a bicycle — she never learned as a child.
- _____ you pass me the salt, please?

4. _____ I use your phone for a moment?
5. My brother _____ cook very well, but he never does.
6. We _____ find our seats in the dark.
7. "Are you able to swim?" — "Yes, I _____ — I learned as a child."
8. You _____ smoke anywhere in the building.

C. Sentence building

5 questions

Put the words in the correct order and write the sentence on the line.

1. can / a / speak / Italian. / little / I

Describe a modest language ability of your own.

2. me, / you / Can / please? / help

Ask a stranger politely for assistance.

3. She / meeting. / can't / the / come / to

Explain that a woman is unavailable.

4. here? / I / sit / Can

Ask permission to take a chair.

5. play / instruments. / He / can / three

Describe a man's musical ability.

Answer key

Every answer carries the reason behind it. Read the reason for the questions you got right as well — that is where you find out whether you were right for the right reason.

A. Multiple choice

1. **D) can** — Can is followed by the bare infinitive — never by to and never with an -s.
2. **B) can** — Modal verbs have one form for every subject, so there is no cans.
3. **B) Can** — Can makes its own question by moving in front of the subject. No do is used.
4. **A) can't** — The negative is can't or cannot, with the bare infinitive after it.
5. **C) can** — The short answer repeats the modal verb, not the main verb.
6. **A) I can speak Spanish.** — Can is always followed by the base form of the verb, with no to and no -ing.
7. **C) Can** — Can I is the everyday way of asking permission in English.
8. **D) can't** — Can't works for every subject, and the verb after it stays bare.
9. **A) can** — Can also expresses general possibility, not only personal ability.
10. **B) can't** — The negative short answer repeats the modal in its contracted form.

B. Fill in the blank

1. **can** — Can expresses ability and is followed by the bare infinitive.
2. **can't** — The negative of can is can't or cannot, with no auxiliary added.
3. **Can** — Can you is the everyday polite request; could you is slightly more formal.
4. **Can** — Can I asks permission, and the modal moves to the front of the question.
5. **can** — Can has one form for every subject — there is no cans.
6. **can't** — Can't is used with verbs of perception where other languages use the present simple.
7. **can** — The short answer uses the modal that matches the ability being asked about, and it never changes for the subject.
8. **can't** — Can't expresses a prohibition as well as an inability.

C. Sentence building

1. **I can speak a little Italian.**
2. **Can you help me, please?**
3. **She can't come to the meeting.**
4. **Can I sit here?**
5. **He can play three instruments.**