

BASIC English Grammar

FOURTH EDITION

Betty S. Azar
Stacy A. Hagen

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Laurette Poulos Simmons

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CHAPTER 12

Modals, Part 1: Expressing
Ability

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Tarifa is smart.
She can speak five languages.





(a) Tarifa is smart.

She **can speak** five languages.

(b) I have some money.

I **can buy** a present for my mom.

(c) You are smart. You **can fix** cars.

can



ability



possibility



(d) CORRECT: Thelma *can ride* a bike.

can

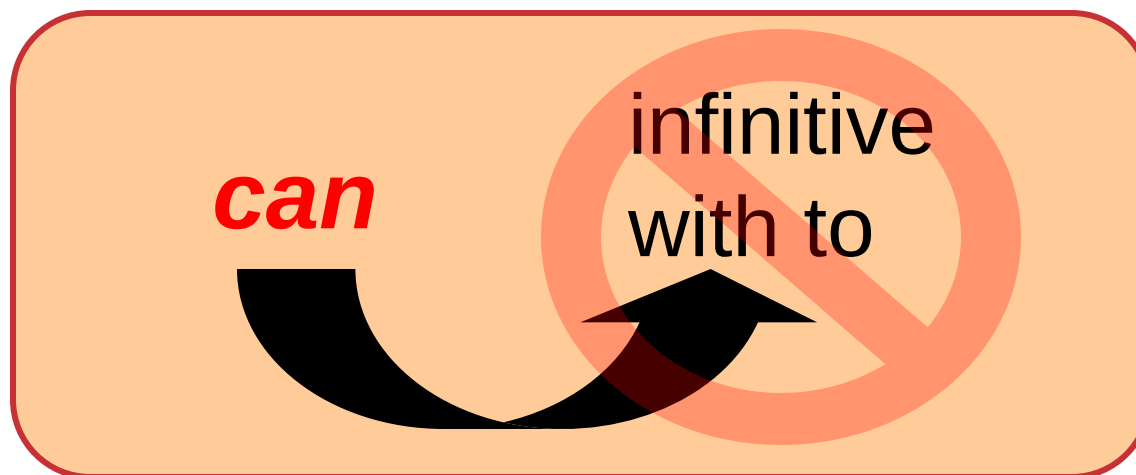
simple form
of main verb





(d) CORRECT: Thelma **can ride** a bike.

(e) INCORRECT: Thelma *can to ride* a bike.





(d) CORRECT: Thelma **can ride** a bike.

(e) INCORRECT: Thelma *can to ride* a bike.

(f) INCORRECT: Thelma *can rides* a bike.

can

main verb – final -s





(g) Rajiv **can not** snowboard.

Rajiv **cannot** snowboard.

Rajiv **can't** snowboard.



NEGATIVE:

can + **not** = **can not** or **cannot**

CONTRACTION:

can + **not** = **can't**



A dog can swim.

can
can't



12-1 Let's Practice

A kitten can't read.

can
can't





**can
can't**

A butterfly can't dance.



Jonas can come to school with us.





(a) Jonas **can come** to school with us.

Can – pronounced “kun” /kən/

(b) Liv **can't come** to school with us.

Can't – pronounced as “ant” /kænt/



**can
can't**

Fish can swim.

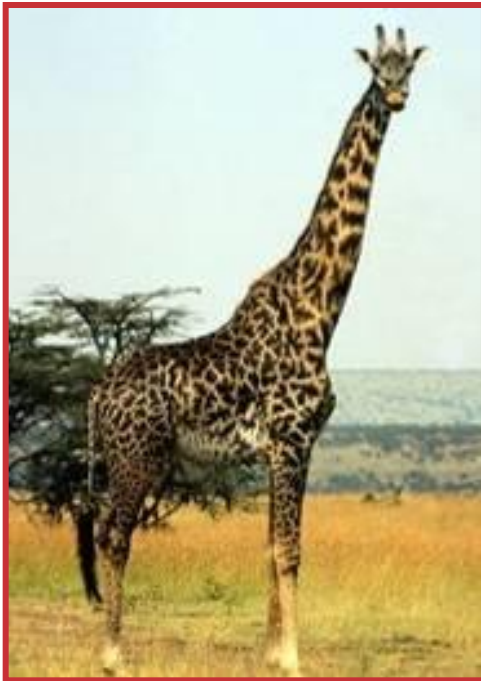
Fish can't fly.





**can
can't**

Giraffes can't roar.



Lions can roar.





Alia can speak Farsi.
Can you speak Farsi?





12-3 USING CAN: QUESTIONS

CAN + **SUBJECT** + **MAIN
VERB**

(a) **Can** **you** **speak** Farsi?

Yes, I can.

No, I can't.

(b) **Can** **Ida** **drive**?

Yes, she can.

No, she can't.



12-3 USING CAN: QUESTIONS

QUESTION + CAN + SUBJECT + MAIN
WORD VERB

(c) **Where** **can** **I** **walk** my dog?

In the park.

(d) **When** **can** **we** **bake** cookies?

On Saturday.



Inga can jump rope.

Can Inga
jump rope?

Yes, she can.





Ari can't play the violin.

Can Ari play
the violin ?

No, he can't.





I can bake a cake.

Can you bake
a cake _____ ?

Yes, I can _____ .





They know how to dance very well.





(a) They can dance.

(b) They *know how to dance*.

} same
meaning

(c) Can you dance?

(d) *Do* you *know how to dance*?

} same
meaning

know how to expresses ability

12-4 Let's Practice

Yes, I
do.

Do you know
how to knit ?



**know how to
knit**



Do you know how
to play golf ?

Yes,
I do.



play golf



Do you know
how to get to
the library ?



get to the library

No,
I don't.





I was in Maine last summer.
I could eat lobster every day.





(a) I am in Maine.

I ***can eat*** lobster every day.

(b) I was in Maine ***last year***.

I ***could eat*** lobster every day when
I was there.

could = past form of ***can***



(c) I **can't watch** TV this afternoon.

I have to do my laundry.

(d) I **could not watch** TV **last Friday**.

I **couldn't watch** TV **last Friday**.

NEGATIVE

could + not = couldn't





(e) ***Could*** *you get* to class before 9:00?

QUESTION

could + *subject* + *main verb*



could couldn't

Last year we went to Thailand.
We could go swimming every day





**could
couldn't**

I couldn't fix the
heater because I didn't
have the right tools.





could couldn't

I couldn't use the blue blanket because it was dirty.





I am able to read very fast.





PRESENT

- (a) I ***am able to read*** very fast.
- (b) I ***can read*** very fast.
- } same meaning



FUTURE

(c) You ***will be able to go***
home Monday.

(d) You ***can go*** home Monday.

} same
meaning





PAST

(e) I ***wasn't able to watch*** a movie last Saturday.

(f) I ***couldn't watch*** a movie last Saturday.

} same
meaning



Jen is deaf.
She can use sign language.

be able to

Jen is deaf.
She is able to use sign language.



He couldn't finish his work.

**be able to
not**

He wasn't able to finish his work.



Goldfish can't sing.

**be able to
not**

Goldfish aren't able to sing.



12-7 USING *VERY* AND *TOO* + ADJECTIVE

The homework is very long,
but you can do it.



12-7 USING *VERY* AND *TOO* + ADJECTIVE

- (a) The homework is **very** *long*, but you ***can*** do it.
- (b) The homework is **too** *long*. You ***can't*** do it.
- (c) The line is **very** *long*, but I ***can*** wait.
- (d) The line is **too** *long*. I ***can't*** wait.

very $\neq$ **too**

very *long* = difficult but possible

too *long* = impossible

12-7 USING *VERY* AND *TOO* + ADJECTIVE

(e) The line is **too** long.

NEGATIVE RESULT:
I can't wait.





(f) These pants are **too** tight.

NEGATIVE RESULT:
I can't wear them.





too very



That mountain
is too high. He
can't climb it.

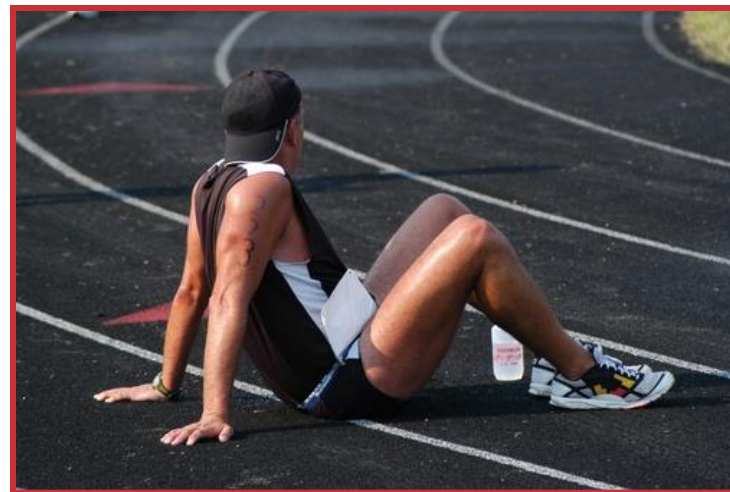


The mountain is
very high, but he
can climb it.



**too
very**

The race is very
long, but he can
finish it.



The race is too
long. He can't
finish it.



**too
very**

**can't
can**



The homework is too difficult. She can't do it.

The homework is very difficult, but she can do it.



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