

CAN / CAN'T

A1 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Talk about abilities and ask what other people can do.

1. READ: Cooking dinner

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar forms.

Ben: **Can** you cook, Ana?
Ana: Yes, I **can**. I **can** make pasta and soup.
Ben: That's great. I **can't** cook very well.
Ana: **Can** you cut the vegetables?
Ben: Yes, I **can**. What are we making?
Ana: Vegetable soup. You **can** help me!

2. GRAMMAR: Things people can do

Use can or can't + the base verb. The form is the same for all subjects.

Form	Pattern	Example
Positive	Subject + can + verb	She can swim.
Negative	Subject + can't + verb	He can't drive.
Question	Can + subject + verb?	Can you cook?

can't = cannot. Do not add -s: **She can swim**, not She can swims.

Can you ...? Yes, I can. / No, I can't.

With a question word: **What can you cook? What languages can you speak?**

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct form. The example answer is bold: I can **swim** / swims.

1. She can play / plays tennis.
2. Can / Do can you cook?
3. He can't drive / drives.
4. We can speak / speaks English.
5. Can she dance / dances?
6. They can use / uses a computer.
7. I can't sing / sings well.
8. What can you make / makes?

Read each answer aloud. Check the subject, the noun or the clue.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: A school concert

Write can or can't. Use the information in the conversation.

Mia: We need music for the concert. (1) _____ you play the guitar, Leo?

Leo: Yes, I (2) _____. I play every day.

Mia: Great. Can your sister sing?

Leo: No, she (3) _____. But she (4) _____ play the piano very well.

Mia: I (5) _____ play an instrument. I don't know how. But I can sing.

Leo: Can you sing this song?

Mia: Yes, I (6) _____. We can practise after school.

Leo: I (7) _____ stay today. I've got a dentist appointment. But I (8)

_____ stay tomorrow.

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Make negative sentences. Use can't.

Example: I can ski. **I can't ski.**

1. She can swim.

2. They can drive.

3-4: Make questions. Example: You can cook. **Can you cook?**

3. He can play the guitar.

4. You can use a computer.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Write three true sentences: two things you can do and one thing you can't do.

Example: **I can swim. I can cook pasta. I can't play the piano.**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

1. Ask: **Can you swim? Can you cook? What languages can you speak?**

Ask one more question about an ability.

2. Report two answers. **He can swim, but he can't play the piano.**

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: Cooking dinner

Sample target language from the conversation:

Ben: Can you cook, Ana?

Ana: Yes, I **can**. I **can** make pasta and soup.

Ben: That's great. I **can't** cook very well.

Ana: Can you cut the vegetables?

Ben: Yes, I **can**. What are we making?

Ana: Vegetable soup. You **can** help me!

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. play | 2. Can |
| 3. drive | 4. speak |
| 5. dance | 6. use |
| 7. sing | 8. make |

B. COMPLETE: A school concert

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 1. Can | 2. can |
| 3. can't | 4. can |
| 5. can't | 6. can |
| 7. can't | 8. can |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. She can't swim.
2. They can't drive.
3. Can he play the guitar?
4. Can you use a computer?

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: I can swim. I can cook pasta. I can't play the piano.

Teacher note: Accept cannot as a grammatical negative, but the written task practises can't. For other subjects, short answers use the same can / can't forms.