

CAN AND COULD

A2-B1 | Ability, permission and requests

1 Look at the meaning.



CAN

ability now / informal permission

I can swim.



COULD

ability in the past

I could read at five.



COULD

a polite request or question

Could you help me?

2 Notice the form.

CAN / COULD + base verb

She can speak Spanish. | We could see the sea from our hotel.

Do not use to after can or could.

3 Compare requests.

CAN

friendly and informal

Can you pass the salt?

COULD

more polite

Could you pass the salt?

4 Read more examples.

- **I can meet you after work.**
- My grandfather **could run very fast when he was young.**
- **Can I use your phone?**
- **Could you repeat that, please?**