

4A GRAMMAR *can, could, be able to* (ability and possession)

a Circle the correct verb. Sometimes both verbs are possible.

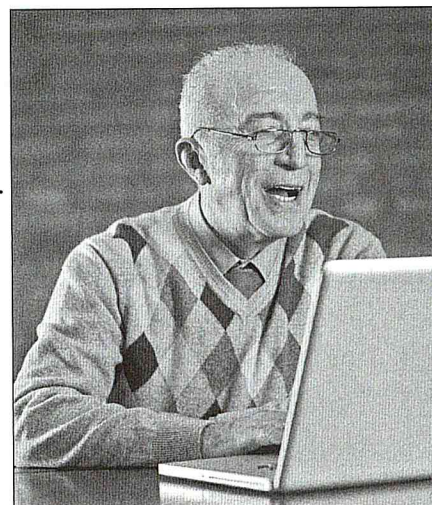
Anyone for tennis?

I love all sports and have always wanted to ¹be able to / **can** play tennis. So, last year, at the age of 45, I decided to learn. I was really happy when I found a teacher who ²**was able to** / **could** give me lessons and so I started. Unfortunately, after the first few lessons, I realized that I'd never ³**can** / **be able to** play this game. One of the problems was that I ⁴**couldn't** / **wasn't able to** move fast enough because I am not very fit. The other problem is that tennis is not an easy sport to learn quickly. I hated ⁵**not can** / **not being able to** hit the ball over the net. It was really frustrating! Did I learn anything? Yes, I did... that I'll never ⁶**be able to** / **can** play tennis!



It's never too late

My 78-year-old grandfather ⁷**couldn't** / **wasn't able to** even turn on a computer until about two years ago. All that changed when he decided that he wanted to ⁸**can** / **be able to** use the internet and he did a course at his local Adult Education Centre. Although he really enjoyed the course, he ⁹**couldn't** / **wasn't able to** put what he learnt in his classes into practice because he didn't have a computer. So, for his birthday I bought him his own laptop and that's when he really started learning! Now, he ¹⁰**'s able to** / **can** use the internet really well and send emails. What he loves most is ¹¹**can** / **being able to** speak and see his grandchildren on Skype at least once a week. They live in Australia and if he didn't have a computer, he ¹²**couldn't** / **wouldn't be able to** keep in touch with them so much.



b Complete the sentences with *can* / *can't* or *could* / *couldn't*. If a form of *can* / *could* isn't possible, complete the sentence with a form of *be able to*.

- At the end of the six-week course, you'll be able to design your own website.
- Masha called me yesterday because she _____ remember how to get to my house.
- Simon isn't going to _____ finish the report by the end of the day.
- Pierre has passed his driving test so now he _____ drive his father's car.
- I haven't _____ speak to Harry for over three weeks. He never answers his phone.
- The train was delayed so I _____ get to the meeting on time.
- Miriam hates not _____ play chess as well as Luke. He always beats her and she's a really bad loser!
- Sometimes when you're on Skype you _____ hear the other person very well.
- _____ do what you like is the best thing about a holiday.
- I'm afraid I won't _____ go away this weekend. I'm too busy.
- You should _____ do this exercise without any help. It's quite easy.
- We _____ park here: there are no spaces.

activation

c Cover the stories in a. In pairs, tell each other the stories from memory.