

## 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 <sup>1</sup>be 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 <sup>2</sup>was able to / could give me lessons and so I started. Unfortunately, after the first few lessons, I realized that I'd never <sup>3</sup>can / be able to play this game. One of the problems was that I <sup>4</sup>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 <sup>5</sup>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 <sup>6</sup>be able to / can play tennis!



### It's never too late

My 78-year-old grandfather <sup>7</sup>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 <sup>8</sup>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 <sup>9</sup>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 <sup>10</sup>'s able to / can use the internet really well and send emails. What he loves most is <sup>11</sup>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 <sup>12</sup>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.

**4A** *can, could, be able to*

- a 2 both possible 3 be able to 4 both possible  
5 not being able to 6 be able to 7 both possible  
8 be able to 9 both possible 10 both possible  
11 being able to 12 both possible
- b 2 couldn't 3 be able to 4 can 5 been able to  
6 couldn't 7 being able to 8 can't 9 Being able to  
10 be able to 11 be able to 12 can't