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 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 was able to / could give me lessons and so I started. Unfortunately, after the first few lessons, I realized that I’d never can / be able to play this game. One of the problems was that I 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 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 be able to / can play tennis!

It’s never too late

My 78-year-old grandfather 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 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 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’s able to / can use the internet really well and send emails. What he loves most is 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 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.

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

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