

4A Failure and success

Can you speak French?

No, I've never been able to learn a foreign language.

1 GRAMMAR can, could, be able to

- a 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again' is a well-known English saying. What does it mean?
- b More recently other people have invented different ways of continuing the saying. Which one do you like best?

- If at first you don't succeed,
 ...give up
 ...blame your parents
 ...destroy all the evidence that you tried
 ...do it the way your mother told you to
 ...skydiving is not for you



- c Look at the definition of *be able to*. What other verb is it similar to?

be able to (do something) to have the ability, opportunity, time, etc. to do something: *Will you be able to come to the meeting next week?*

- d Read about three people who have tried (but failed) to learn something, and complete the texts with A–G.

- A I was able to
 B Not being able to
 C I just wasn't able to
 D I will never be able to
 E I would suddenly be able to
 F I've always wanted to be able to
 G we would never be able to

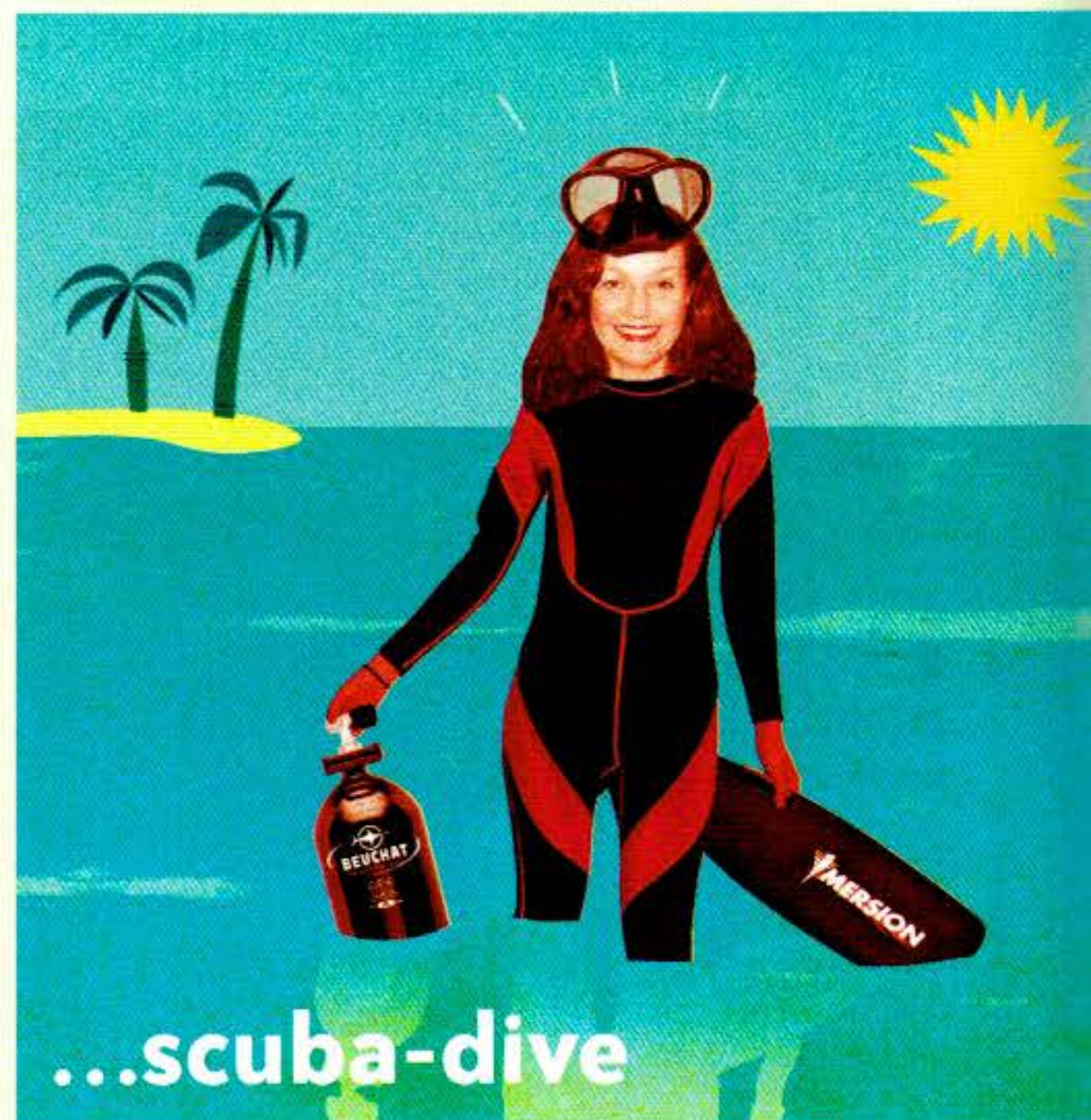
- e Read the article again. Why did they have problems? Have they completely given up trying? Have you ever tried to learn something and given up? Why?

- f Look at phrases A–G again. What tense or form is *be able to* in each one? What tenses or forms does *can* have?

- g ► **p.138 Grammar Bank 4A.** Learn more about *can*, *could*, and *be able to*, and practise them.

- h ► **Communication** *Guess the sentence A p.105 B p.109.*

I've never been able to...

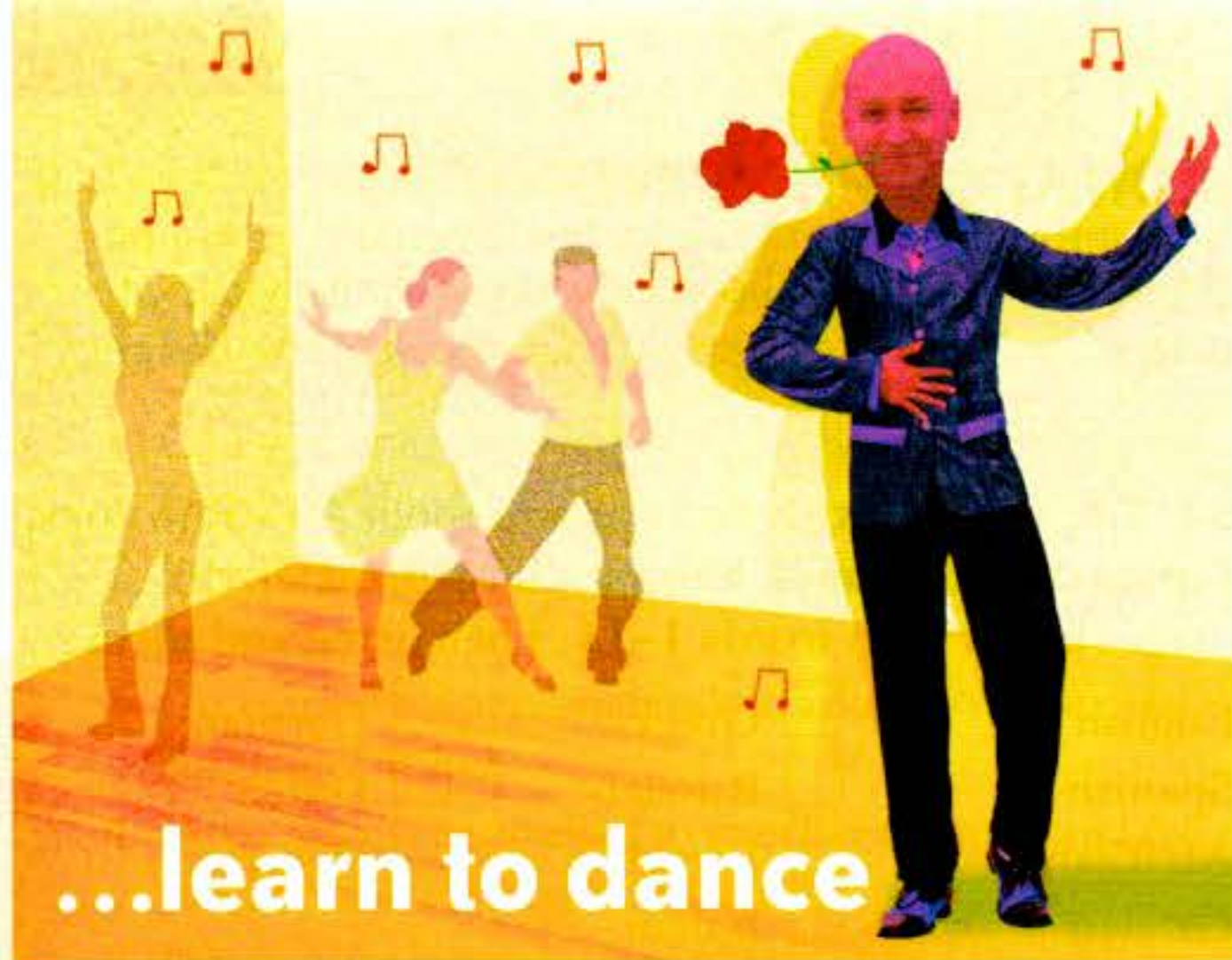


...scuba-dive

I really wanted to learn. Maybe it was because of that scene in one of the very first James Bond films, where a beautiful actress comes out of the sea looking fabulous, with oxygen bottles on her back – I could see myself looking just like her. So, two years ago I booked a holiday which included a week's intensive course. On the first day of the course I was incredibly excited. First we had two hours of theory, and then we went into the sea to put it into practice. But as soon as I went under the water I discovered that I suffered from claustrophobia. ¹ _____ do it. After about half an hour I gave up. Every evening for the rest of my holiday I had to listen to my scuba-diving classmates talking about all the wonderful things they had seen that day on their diving excursions. ² _____ join in the conversation was very frustrating.

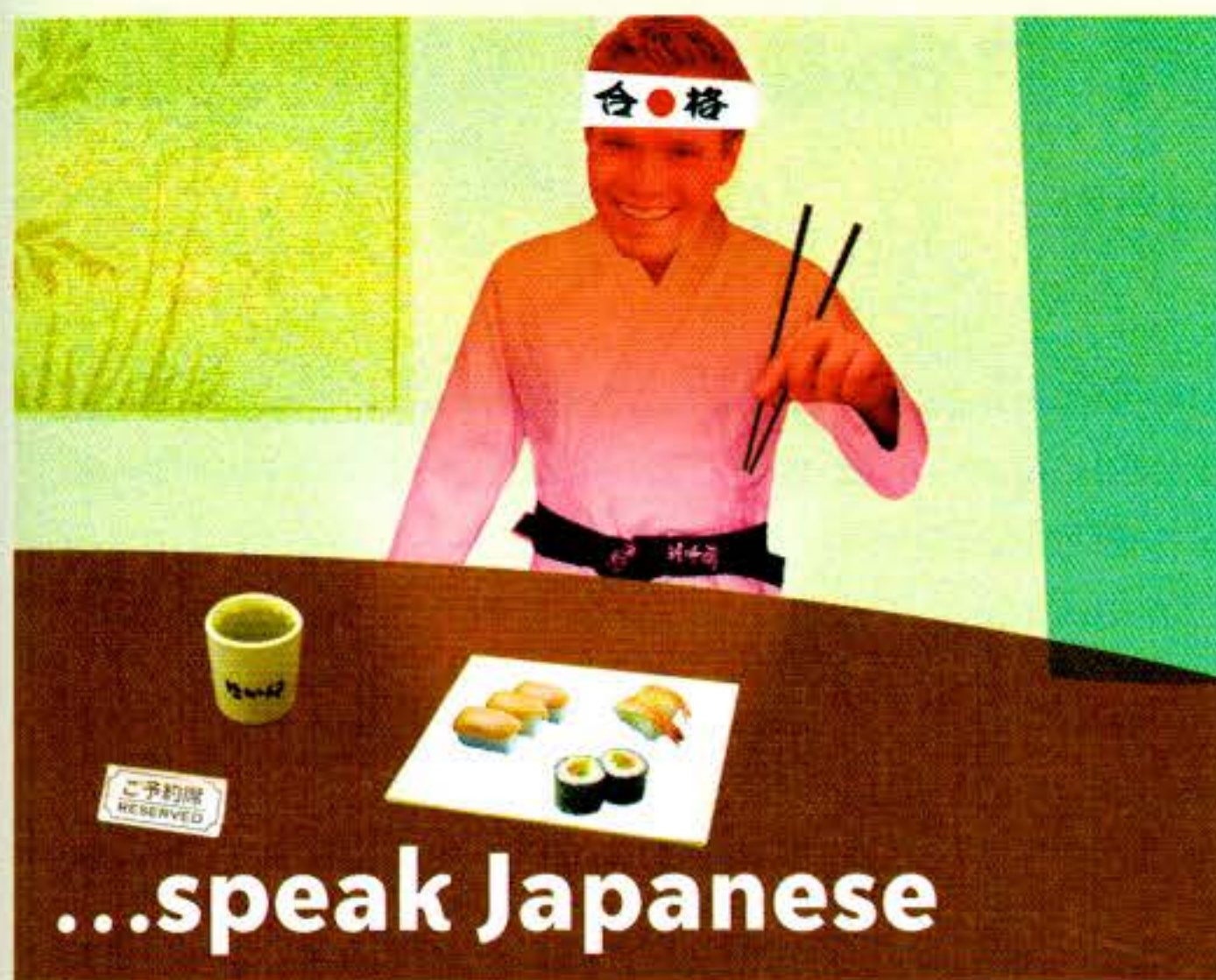
I still love swimming and snorkelling, but I think that I have to accept that ³ _____ scuba-dive.

Bea, USA



I ⁴ _____ dance salsa, and when I was working in Ecuador there were free classes, so I joined. But the art of salsa is to keep your arms still and move your hips, and I just couldn't do it. When I hear music my arms start moving, but my hips don't. After about ten hours of classes ⁵ _____ do the basic steps, but I was dancing like a robot! I didn't give up, but soon everyone in the class was dancing and I was just slowly moving from side to side and counting out loud 'one, two, three, four'. It was a bit embarrassing. I was sure that one day ⁶ _____ do it – but that never happened. I can still remember the first two steps and I still try to dance when I hear a salsa tune – as long as nobody is watching!

Sean, UK



I love Manga – Japanese comics – and I tried to learn Japanese, but I found it incredibly difficult and I gave up after two years. I think oriental languages, which have symbols instead of words, are extremely hard to learn for people who are more used to Roman letters. Also my teacher, a Japanese woman, didn't speak Spanish very well, which didn't help! She was a very charming woman, but she was a bit disappointed with us, and you could see that she thought that ⁷ _____ learn. However, one day she invited us to dinner and gave us some delicious traditional Japanese food, and since then I often go to Japanese restaurants. So I learnt to love the food, if not to speak the language!

Joaquin, Spain

2 PRONUNCIATION sentence stress

- a (2 36))) Listen and repeat the sentences. Copy the rhythm.

- 1 I'd **love** to be **able** to **ski**.
- 2 We **won't** be **able** to **come**.
- 3 I've **never** been **able** to **dance**.
- 4 She **hates not** being **able** to **drive**.

- b (2 37))) Listen again. Make new sentences with the verbs or verb phrases you hear.

))) I'd love to be able to ski. **Ride a horse**
 { I'd love to be able to ride a horse.

))) We won't be able to come. **Park**
 { We won't be able to park.

3 SPEAKING

- a Look at the topics. Choose two or three and think about what you could say for them.



Something you've tried to learn, but have never been able to do well.

Something you learnt to do after a lot of effort.

Something you can do, but you'd like to be able to do better.

Something new that you would like to be able to do.

Something you are learning to do and that you hope you'll soon be able to do well.

Something you think all young people should be able to do before they leave school.

- b Work with a partner. Tell him / her about the things you chose in a. Give reasons or explanations for each one.

{ I've never been able to ski, and now I don't think I'll ever learn. I always wanted to learn, but I don't live near mountains...

4 VOCABULARY -ed / -ing adjectives



a Look at the photo. Complete the sentences with *bored* or *boring*.

- 1 The film was _____.
- 2 The audience were _____.

-ed and -ing adjectives

Many adjectives for feelings have two possible forms, either ending in *-ed* or in *-ing*, e.g. **frustrated** and **frustrating**.

We use the adjective ending in *-ed* for the person who has the feeling (*I was very frustrated that I couldn't scuba-dive*). We use the adjective ending in *-ing* for a person or situation that produces the feeling (*I couldn't join in the conversation, which was very frustrating*).

b Read the information box. Then complete the adjectives with *-ed* or *-ing*.

- 1 What do you think is the most **excit**___ sport to watch?
- 2 What's the most **amaz**___ scenery you've ever seen?
- 3 What music do you listen to if you feel **depress**___?
- 4 Have you ever been **disappoint**___ by a birthday present?
- 5 Which do you find more **tir**___, speaking English or listening to English?
- 6 What's the most **embarrass**___ thing that's ever happened to you?
- 7 Are you **frighten**___ of heights?
- 8 Do you feel very **tir**___ in the morning?
- 9 Who's the most **bor**___ person you know?
- 10 Do you ever get **frustrat**___ by technology?

c **2 38**) Listen and check. Underline the stressed syllable in the adjectives.

d Ask and answer the questions in pairs. Ask for more information.

5 READING & SPEAKING

a Do you know anybody who speaks more than two languages? Which languages do they speak? How did they learn?

b **2 39**) You are going to read an article about Alex Rawlings, who speaks 11 languages. Before you read, match the languages below with words 1–11. Then listen and check.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Greek | <input type="checkbox"/> German |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Afrikaans | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catalan | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | |

c Read the article. Which language(s)...?

- 1 did he learn as a child
- 2 is he studying at university
- 3 does he like best
- 4 is he planning to learn next
- 5 did he wish he had been able to speak when he was a child
- 6 was the first one he taught himself
- 7 did he find the most difficult

1 **Hallo**

2 **Guten Tag**

He's English, but he can speak eleven languages

Alex Rawlings has been named the UK's most **multilingual** student, in a competition run by a dictionary publisher.

The German and Russian student from London, who is only 20 years old, can speak 11 languages **fluently**. In a video for the BBC News website he demonstrated his **skills** by speaking in all of them, changing quickly from one to another. Rawlings said that winning the competition was 'a bit of a shock'. He explained, 'I saw the competition advertised and I heard something about a free iPad. I never imagined that it would generate this amount of media attention.'

As a child, Rawlings' mother, who is half Greek, used to speak to him in English, Greek, and French, and he often visited his family in Greece.

He said that he has always been interested in languages. 'My dad worked in Japan for four years and I was always frustrated that I couldn't speak to the kids because of the **language barrier**.' After visiting Holland at the age of 14 he decided to learn Dutch with CDs and books. 'When I went back I could talk to people. It was great.'

d Look at the **highlighted** words and phrases related to language learning, and work out their meaning from the context. Then ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- 1 Can you or anyone in your family speak another language fluently?
- 2 Do you know any basic phrases in any other languages?
- 3 Do you have a personal link to another country or language? Why?
- 4 Have you ever travelled to another country and felt that there was a real language barrier?
- 5 What other languages would you like to be able to speak? Why?



He taught himself many of the languages with 'teach yourself' books, but also by watching films, listening to music, and travelling to the countries themselves.

Of all the languages he speaks, Rawlings says that Russian, which he has been learning for a year and a half, is the hardest. He said, 'There seem to be **more exceptions than rules!**' He added, 'I especially like Greek because I think it's beautiful and, because of my mother, I have a strong personal **link** to the country and to the language.'

'Everyone should learn languages, especially if they travel abroad. If you make the effort to learn even the most **basic phrases** wherever you go, it instantly shows the person you're speaking to that you respect their culture. Going around speaking English loudly and getting frustrated at people is tactless and rude.'

The next language Rawlings hopes to learn is Arabic, but 'only once I've finished my degree and got some more time on my hands. For now I need to concentrate on my German and Russian, so I can prepare for my finals.'

Glossary
finals the last exams that students take at university

e Read the grammar information box. Then complete 1–5 with a reflexive pronoun.

Reflexive pronouns

He taught **himself** many of the languages with 'teach **yourself**' books.

We use reflexive pronouns (*myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*) when the object of a verb is the same as the subject, e.g. *He taught himself Russian.* = he was his own teacher.

We also use reflexive pronouns to emphasize the subject of an action, e.g. *We painted the kitchen ourselves.*

- 1 I always test _____ on new vocabulary – it's a good way to remember it.
- 2 My uncle built the house _____. It took him three years.
- 3 This light is automatic. It turns _____ on and off.
- 4 Did you fix the computer _____? Well done!
- 5 My sister's so vain! Every time she passes a mirror, she looks at _____ in it!

6 LISTENING & SPEAKING

a (2 40)) You're going to listen to six advanced students of English giving a tip which has helped them to learn. Listen once and complete their tip. Then compare your notes with a partner.



TIP 1: Change the language to English on all the _____ you have, for example on your _____, or _____, or _____.

TIP 2: Do things that you _____, but in English.



TIP 3: Try to find an English-speaking _____ or _____.

TIP 4: Get a _____ app for your phone.



TIP 5: Book yourself a _____ in an _____.

TIP 6: Listen to as many _____ as possible in English, and then _____ them.



b Listen again. Try to add more details about each tip.

c Talk to a partner.

- Do you already do any of these things?
- Which do you think is the best tip?
- Which tip could you easily put into practice? Try it!
- What other things do you do to improve your English outside class (e.g. visit chat websites, listen to audio books)?

can, could, be able to (ability and possibility)

can / could

I **can** speak three languages fluently.
 Jenny **can't** come tonight. She's ill.
 My cousin **could** play the violin when she was three.
 They **couldn't** wait because they were in a hurry.
Could you open the door for me, please?

- *can* is a modal verb. It only has a present form (which can be used with future meaning) and a past or conditional form (*could*).
- For all other tenses and forms, we use *be able to* + infinitive.

be able to + infinitive

- 1 Luke **has been able to** swim since he was three.
 I'd like **to be able to** ski.
 I love **being able to** stay in bed late on Sunday morning.
 You'll **be able to** practise your English in London.
- 2 Fortunately, I **am able to** accept your invitation.
 My colleagues **weren't able to** come to yesterday's meeting.

2 34)))



2 35)))

- 1 We use *be able to* + infinitive for ability and possibility, especially where there is no form of *can*, e.g. future, present perfect, infinitive and gerund, etc.
- 2 We sometimes use *be able to* in the present and past (instead of *can* / *could*), usually if we want to be more formal.

- a Complete with the correct form of *be able to* (+, -, or ?).

I've never been able to scuba dive.

- 1 Her mobile has been switched off all morning, so I _____ talk to her yet.
- 2 I don't like noisy bars. I like _____ have a conversation without shouting.
- 3 I _____ leave home when I get a job.
- 4 We're having a party next Saturday. _____ you _____ come?
- 5 You need _____ swim before you can go in a canoe.
- 6 I'm going to France next week, but I don't speak French. I hate _____ communicate with people.
- 7 Fortunately, firefighters _____ rescue all of the people trapped inside the burning house.
- 8 I'm very sorry, but we _____ go to your wedding next month. We'll be on holiday.
- 9 I'm feeling a bit worse. _____ you _____ contact the doctor yet?
- 10 The manager _____ see you right now because he's in a meeting.

- b Circle the correct form. Tick ✓ if both are possible.



I've always wanted to can / be able to dance salsa.

- 1 My little boy couldn't / wasn't able to speak until he was nearly two years old.
- 2 She's much better after her operation. She'll can / be able to walk again in a few months.
- 3 He hasn't could / been able to mend my bike yet. He'll do it tomorrow.
- 4 It's the weekend at last! I love can / being able to go out with my friends.
- 5 When we lived on the coast, we used to can / be able to go to the beach every day.
- 6 I can't / 'm not able to send any emails at the moment. My computer isn't working.
- 7 I could / was able to read before I started school.
- 8 We won't can / be able to go on holiday this year because we need to spend a lot of money on the house.
- 9 Linda's really pleased because she's finally could / been able to find a part-time job.
- 10 Alex can / is able to speak Portuguese fluently after living in Lisbon for ten years.

Rob Four? That's pretty young.
Kerri Yeah, the guitar was nearly as big as me!
Rob I think that your new album is your best yet.
It's a lot quieter and more experimental than your earlier albums.

Kerri Thank you! I think it's my best work.

Rob So what have you been doing recently?

Kerri Well, I've been writing and recording some new songs. And I've played at some of the summer festivals in the UK.

Rob And what are you doing while you're in the States?

Kerri I'm going to play at some clubs here in New York, then I'm doing some small gigs in other places. I just want to get to know the country and the people. It's all very new to me.

Jenny Good job, Rob. She isn't the easiest person to interview.

Rob She's OK. And this video clip will work great online.

Don Well, thank you for coming in today, Kerri. Now I suggest we have some lunch. Rob, could you call a taxi?

Rob Er, sure.

2 29)))

Don So when will you be coming back to New York, Kerri?

Kerri Oh, I don't know.

Waitress Hi guys, is everything OK?

Don Yes, it's delicious, thank you.

Waitress That's great!

Kerri New York waiters never leave you alone! I really don't like all this 'Hi guys! Is everything OK?' stuff.

Don What? You mean waiters aren't friendly in London?

Rob Oh, they're very friendly!

Kerri Yes, they're friendly but not too friendly. They don't bother you all the time.

Waitress Can I get you anything else? More drinks, maybe?

Don No thanks. We're fine.

Waitress Fantastic.

Kerri See what I mean? Personally, I think people in London are a lot more easy-going. London's just not as hectic as New York.

Don Sure, we all like peace and quiet. But in my opinion, New York is possibly... well, no, is definitely the greatest city in the world. Don't you agree?

Kerri To be honest, I definitely prefer London.

Don Come on, Rob. You've lived in both. What do you think?

Rob Erm, well, I have to say, London's very special. It's more relaxed, it's got great parks and you can cycle everywhere. It's dangerous to cycle in New York!

Don Why would you cycle when you can drive a car?

Kerri You can't be serious.

Don OK, I agree, London has its own peculiar charm. But if you ask me, nothing compares with a city like New York. The whole world is here!

Kerri But that's the problem. It's too big. There are too many people. Everybody's so stressed out. And nobody has any time for you.

Jenny I don't think that's right, Kerri. New Yorkers are very friendly...

Kerri Oh sure, they can sound friendly with all that 'Have a nice day' stuff. But I always think it's a little bit... fake.

Don You've got to be kidding me!

Rob I'm sorry. I'll just have to take this... Hello?...

Yes... You're who?... The taxi driver?... What did she leave? ... Her cell phone... right, OK. Yes, we're still at the restaurant. See you in about five minutes.

2 32)))

Kerri Thank you for a nice lunch, Don.

Don You're welcome.

Waitress Thanks for coming, guys! Have a nice day.

Don See? Nice, friendly service.

Kerri Maybe. But I think she saw the big tip you left on the table!

Jenny Did you mean what you said in the restaurant, Rob?

Rob Did I mean what?

Jenny About missing London?

Rob Sure, I miss it, Jenny.

Jenny Really?

Rob But hey, not that much! It's just that moving to a new place is always difficult.

Jenny But you don't regret coming here, do you?

Rob No... no... not at all.

Jenny It's just that... you seemed homesick in there. For the parks, the cycling...

Rob Well there are some things I miss but – Oh, hang on a minute. Look over there. Our taxi driver's back.

Taxi driver Excuse me, Ma'am.

Kerri Who me? What is it?

Taxi driver I believe this is your cell phone. You left it in my cab.

Kerri What?... Oh, wow... thank you!

Taxi driver Have a nice day!

Kerri That was so kind of him!

Don See? New Yorkers are really friendly people.

2 40)))

- 1 One very easy thing you can do is just change the language to English on all the gadgets you have, for example on your phone, or laptop, or tablet. That way you're reading English every day and without really noticing you just learn a whole lot of vocabulary, for example the things you see on your screen like *Are you sure you want to shut down now*, things like that.
- 2 My tip is to do things that you like doing, but in English. So for example, if you like reading, then read in English, if you like the cinema, watch films in English with subtitles, if you like computer games, play them in English. But don't do things you don't enjoy in your language, I mean if you don't like reading in your language, you'll enjoy it even less in English, and so you probably won't learn anything.
- 3 What really helped me to improve my English was having an Australian boyfriend. He didn't speak any Hungarian – well, not many foreigners do – so we spoke English all the time, and my English improved really quickly. We broke up when he went back to Australia but by then I could speak pretty fluently. We didn't exactly finish as friends, but I'll always be grateful to him for the English I learned. So my tip is try to find an English-speaking boyfriend or girlfriend.
- 4 I've always thought that learning vocabulary is very important, so I bought a vocabulary flash card app for my phone. I write down all the new words and phrases I want to remember in Polish and in English and then when I get a quiet moment I test myself. It really helps me remember new vocabulary. So that's my tip. Get a vocabulary learning app for your phone.
- 5 I think one of the big problems when you're learning something new is motivation, something to make you carry on and not give up. So my tip is to book yourself a holiday in an English-speaking country or a country where people speak very good English, like Holland, as a little reward for yourself and so you can actually practise your English. It's really motivating when you go somewhere and find that people understand you and you can communicate! Last year I went to Amsterdam for a weekend and I had a great time and I spoke a lot of English.
- 6 If you love music, which I do, my tip is to listen to as many songs as possible in English and then learn to sing them. It's so easy nowadays with YouTube. First I download the lyrics and try to understand them. Then I sing along with the singer and try to copy the way he or she sings – this is fantastic for your pronunciation. Then once I can do it well, I go

back to YouTube and get a karaoke version of the song, and then I sing it. It's fun and your English will really improve as a result.

2 48)))

I always thought that good manners were always good manners, wherever you were in the world. But that was until I married Alexander. We met in Russia, when I was a student there, and I always remember when I first met him. He came to my flat one afternoon, and as soon as he came in he said to me, in Russian, *Nalei mnye chai* – which means 'pour me some tea'. Well, I got quite angry and I said, 'Pour it yourself'. I couldn't believe that he hadn't used a 'Could you...?' or a 'please'. To me it sounded really rude. But Alexander explained that in Russian it was fine – you don't have to add any polite words.

Some months later I took Alexander home to meet my parents in the UK. But before we went I had to give him an intensive course in 'pleases' and 'thank you's'. He thought they were completely unnecessary. I also told him how important it was to smile all the time.

Poor Alexander – he complained that when he was in England he felt really stupid, 'like the village idiot' he said, because in Russia if you smile all the time people think that you're mad. And in fact, this is exactly what my husband's friends thought of me the first time I went to Russia because I smiled at everyone, and translated every 'please' and 'thank you' from English into Russian!

Another thing that Alexander just couldn't understand was why people said things like, 'Would you mind passing me the salt, please?' He said, 'It's only the salt, for goodness sake! What do you say in English if you want a real favour?'

He was also amazed when we went to a dinner party in England, and some of the food was...well, it wasn't very nice, but everybody – including me – said, 'Mmm...this is delicious'.

In Russia, people are much more direct. The first time Alexander's mother came to our house for dinner in Moscow, she told me that my soup needed more salt and pepper, that it didn't really taste of anything. I was really annoyed, and later after she left Alexander and I argued about it. Alexander just couldn't see my point. He said, 'Do you prefer your dinner guests to lie?' Actually you know, I think I do. I'd prefer them to say 'that was lovely' even if they didn't mean it.

Anyway, at home we now have an agreement. If we're speaking Russian, he can say 'Pour me some tea', and not say 'thank you' when I give it to him. But when we're speaking English, he has to add a 'please', a 'thank you', and... a smile.

3 8)))

Part 1

Interviewer What made you want to become a referee?

Juan My father was a referee but that didn't influence me – in fact the opposite because I saw all the problems that he had as a referee. But as a child I was always attracted by the idea of being a referee and at school I used to referee all kinds of sports, basketball, handball, volleyball and of course football. I was invited to join the Referee's Federation when I was only 14 years old.

Interviewer Were you good at sport yourself?

Juan Yes, I was a very good handball player. People often think that referees become referees because they are frustrated sportsmen, but this is just not true in most cases in my experience.

Interviewer What was the most exciting match you ever refereed?

Juan It's difficult to choose one match as the most exciting. I remember some of the Real Madrid–Barcelona matches, for example the first one I ever refereed. The atmosphere was incredible in the stadium. But really it's impossible to pick just one – there have been so many.

Interviewer What was the worst experience you ever had as a referee?