

4B

Yes, I can!

Can you play the piano?

No, but I'd love to be able to.

G ability and possibility: can, could, be able to **V** -ed / -ing adjectives **P** sentence stress

1 GRAMMAR ability and possibility

a Look at the list of skills. With a partner, find...

- two that you can do.
- two that you can't do.
- two that you could do when you were ten years old.
- two that you couldn't do when you were ten years old.

change a car wheel do yoga dance salsa
 knit or sew play a musical instrument play tennis
 ride a bike run 5 km sing well ski swim
 take good photos use an Excel spreadsheet
 type fast

b **4.12** Look at the photos. Listen and complete the conversations.



c Look at conversations 1 and 2 in b again. Complete the sentences.

- 1 You can't use _____ in the infinitive or present perfect.
- 2 Be able to means the same as _____.

d **G** p.139 Grammar Bank 4B

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

- something that you would like to be able to do
- something you've tried to learn, but have never been able to do well
- something you learned to do after a lot of effort
- something you can do, but you'd like to be able to do better
- something you think all young people should be able to do before they leave school

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

I'd like to be able to ski, but I don't think I'll ever learn, because I don't live near the mountains.

2 PRONUNCIATION sentence stress

a **4.15** Listen to four sentences. Write the stressed words in the pink boxes.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

b Look at the stressed words and try to remember the unstressed words. Then listen again to check and write them in.

c Listen again and repeat the sentences. Copy the rhythm.

d **4.16** Listen and make new sentences with the verbs or verb phrases you hear.

- 1 *I'd love to be able to ski.*
ride a horse (*I'd love to be able to ride a horse.*
- 2 *We won't be able to come.*
park (*We won't be able to park.*

3 LISTENING

- a Read the text. Do you believe Malcolm Gladwell or Josh Kaufman?

Learn a new skill in 20 hours

It was Malcolm Gladwell, the popular writer on modern psychology, who popularized the idea that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to really master a new skill, such as playing the piano. But in this non-stop world, who has that kind of time? In his book *The First 20 Hours*, Josh Kaufman tells you how to learn any new skill really quickly. By completing just 20 hours of focused practice, you'll be able to go from knowing absolutely nothing to performing well. But is it really possible? Matt Rudd, a *Sunday Times* journalist, decided to give it a try.

- b Read about Matt's past experience of learning the trumpet. Why do you think he gave up so fast?

Matt Rudd learns the trumpet

I haven't played a musical instrument for years. Five years ago, I got a trumpet for my birthday and I tried to learn it, but I gave up after seven minutes, and it ended up in the garage. So here I am, a beginner again.



- c **4.17** Listen and match the sounds with the music words in **bold**.

- three different **musical instruments** playing together
- five **notes** from C to G
- a **high note** and a **low note**
- an **octave**
- a **tune**
- somebody **busking**

- d **4.18** Now listen to Matt talking about his experience. Choose the best summary.

- 1 He didn't learn anything at all.
- 2 He learned something, but not enough.
- 3 He learned a lot.

- e Listen again. For each stage, **circle** the correct word or phrase.

1 hour

He feels *optimistic* / *pessimistic*.

2 hours

He feels *pleased* / *unhappy* with his progress.

5 hours

He thinks the online trumpet teacher is *annoying* / *great*.

9 hours

He's *frustrated* by how little he can play / He's *happy* because he can play simple tunes.

14 hours

He's *really enjoying himself* / He's *depressed* and wants to give up.

15 hours

Matilda Lloyd tells him he's doing *well* / *badly*.

17 hours

He feels *optimistic again* / *disappointed*.

20 hours

He thinks he'll probably give up / He thinks he'll be able to improve.

- f Do you think Matt will continue learning the trumpet. Why (not)?

4 SPEAKING

Work in small groups. Answer the question below for the different skills.

How well do you think you'd be able to do these things after learning for 20 hours?

- play a musical instrument
- draw a portrait
- design and build a website
- take professional-quality photos
- cook a three-course meal
- ski or windsurf
- give first aid
- drive
- dance the tango
- draw a portrait
- draw a portrait

5 VOCABULARY

-ed / -ing adjectives

a Complete the sentences with *annoyed* or *annoying*.

- 1 Matt thought the online trumpet teacher was _____.
- 2 Matt was _____ because he could only play simple tunes.



🔍 -ed and -ing adjectives

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

We use the adjective ending in *-ed* for the person who has the feeling, e.g. Matt. We use the adjective ending in *-ing* for the person or situation that produces the feeling, e.g. the trumpet teacher.

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

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

c 🎧 4.19 Listen and check. Underline the stressed syllable in the adjectives.

d Ask and answer the questions in **b** with a partner. Ask for more information.

6 READING & SPEAKING







- a How long have you been learning English? Has anyone ever given you a useful tip which has helped you learn?
- b Read some tips on a forum for learning English outside class. Do you do any of these things?



Does anyone have any good tips for practising English outside class? I'm a B1 level (I think – I hope!) and I'm studying in Colombia...

Nelson, Medellín

Comments

- 1  One very easy thing you can do is to change the language to English on your phone, laptop, or tablet. That way, you're reading English every day and you learn a lot of vocabulary without really noticing – for example, the things you see on your screen. I've found it really helpful.
Sara, Brazil
- 2  My tip is to do things that you already like doing, but in English. So, for example, if you're interested in a sport or in photography, read about it in English. If you like the cinema, watch films in English with subtitles. I'm interested in jazz, so I read magazines and articles online in English. For me, it's better than reading books.
Marc, Switzerland
- 3  The thing that really helped me to improve my English was having an Australian boyfriend. He didn't speak any Hungarian, so we spoke English all the time, and I improved really quickly. So my tip is: try to find an English-speaking boyfriend or girlfriend!
Ágnes, Hungary
- 4  I think that learning vocabulary is very important, so I got a vocabulary app for my phone. It has a lot of useful words, all in categories, but it also lets me add my own words and phrases, too. The best thing is that I can test myself whenever I get a quiet moment, like on the bus, and it just takes a couple of minutes.
Vasily, Russia
- 5  My tip is to learn to sing songs in English. First, I find the words online and try to understand them. Then I go to YouTube and sing along with the singer and try to copy the way he or she sings – fantastic for your pronunciation. Then, when I can do it well, I get a karaoke version of the song and I sing it. It's fun, and my English has improved.
Sandra, Italy
- 6  Practise saying things in your head. It could be anything – you could describe your job or your holiday plans, or talk about yourself or your family, or what's happening in the news. Then, when you really need to speak English, it's easier, because you've done it in your head. (I do this on the way to my English class every week.)
Marta, Mexico

- c Read the tips again and match them to something that you think the person has learned to say in English.

☐ All you need is love, love. Love is all you need.

☐ Are you sure you want to shut down your computer now?

☐ Why don't we stay in and watch a movie tonight, honey?

☐ I work for Samsung. I'm a computer programmer. I've been working there for three years.

☐ outgoing – shy
generous – mean
friendly – unfriendly

☐ Saxophonist Tim Garland will reunite with his former partner in Celtic jazz group Lammas.

- d Look at two sentences with reflexive pronouns from the tips in b. How do you say them in your language? Then read the information box.

- 1 I can test myself whenever I get a quiet moment.
- 2 ...talk about yourself or your family...

🔍 Reflexive pronouns

We use reflexive pronouns (*myself, yourself, etc.*) when the object of a verb is the same as the subject. We can also use reflexive pronouns to emphasize the subject of an action, e.g. *I painted the kitchen myself.*

- e Which subject pronouns do these words go with?

themselves herself ourselves yourselves
himself itself

- f 🎧 4.20 Listen and say the sentences with different pronouns.

- 1) She's cut herself. You... (You've cut yourself.

- g Talk to a partner.

- Which of the tips in b do you think are the best for learning English? Are there any you don't think would work for you?
- Are there any tips that you could easily put into practice?
- What other things do you do to improve your English outside class (e.g. visit chat websites, listen to audiobooks)?

7 🎥 VIDEO LISTENING

- a Do you know anybody who speaks two or more languages well? Which languages do they speak? How did they learn them?



- b You're going to watch an interview with Alex Rawlings, who speaks 11 languages. Match greetings 1–11 to the languages. Then watch Part 1 and check.

1 Afrikaans	French	Italian
Catalan	German	Russian
Dutch	Greek	Spanish
English	Hebrew	

- c Now watch Part 2. Why does Alex mention...?

- 1 a completely new adventure
- 2 Greek and German
- 3 Chinese and Slovene
- 4 British and Irish languages, a recent trip to Wales
- 5 Russian
- 6 YouTube; vocabulary and grammar

- d Watch Part 3 and answer the questions.

- 1 Why do people sometimes fail to learn a language?
- 2 Why did Alex find Afrikaans easy to learn?
- 3 Why do the British and Americans find it difficult to learn foreign languages?
- 4 Complete Alex's tips:
You never _____ learning a language.
Try to spend _____ a day on the language you are learning.

ability and possibility: can, could, be able to

can / could



Our daughter could play the violin when she was three.

I **can** speak three languages fluently.
 Jenny **can't** come tonight. She's ill.
 Our daughter **could** play the violin when she was three.
 They **couldn't** wait because they were in a hurry.

4.13

- 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. 4.14
 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.

- 1 We use *be able to* + infinitive for ability and possibility, especially where there is no form of *can*, e.g. present perfect, infinitive, gerund, future, 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 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 soon.
- 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 a new car.
- 9 Linda's 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.

b 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 can speak five languages. I hate _____ communicate with people in their own language.
- 7 Fortunately, firefighters _____ rescue everybody from the burning house.
- 8 I'm very sorry, but we _____ come to your wedding next month. We'll be on holiday.
- 9 You're looking worse. _____ you _____ contact the doctor yet?
- 10 The manager _____ see you right now because she's in a meeting.

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