

CEFR A1 · TEENS (11–16)

Can You Swim? *What can you do?*

Can you swim? Can you ride a bike? Learn how to use **can** and **can't** to talk about your abilities — the things you can and can't do!

🕒 45 minutes

📖 can / can't for ability

🔗 Abilities & Skills

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

1

WARM-UP

Think before you start

1. What is one thing you can do very well?
2. What is one thing you can't do, but you want to learn?
3. Can you swim? Can you ride a bike? Can you cook?
4. What can your best friend do that you can't do?

2

GRAMMAR FOCUS

can — for things you are able to do

We use **can** for **ability**. It is the same for everyone (no -s), and we use the **base verb** after it.

POSITIVE

I / You / He / She / We / They + can + verb = I can dance

NEGATIVE

subject + can't (cannot) + verb = I can't sing

QUESTION

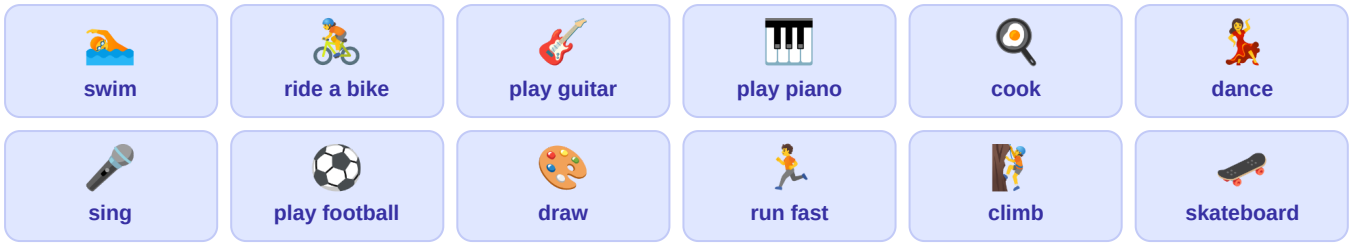
Can + subject + verb ? = Can you swim?

ANSWERS

Yes, I can. · No, he can't.

3 VOCABULARY IN ACTION

Things you can do — action verbs



REMEMBER!	EXAMPLE
Same for everyone (no -s)	I can swim. He can swim. (NOT: he cans)
Use the base verb (no to)	I can play. (NOT: I can to play)
can't = cannot	I can't sing = I cannot sing
Questions: put can first	Can you dance?

- very well
- a little
- quite well
- not at all
- really well
- fast / slowly

4 KEY VOCABULARY

Words you'll meet in the story

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
swim <i>VERB</i>	to move through water with your body	<i>I can swim in the sea.</i>
ride <i>VERB</i>	to sit on and control a bike or horse	<i>She can ride a bike very well.</i>
climb <i>VERB</i>	to go up something, using hands and feet	<i>Monkeys can climb trees.</i>
ability <i>NOUN</i>	something you are able to do; a skill	<i>Singing is a special ability.</i>
learn <i>VERB</i>	to get a new skill or knowledge	<i>I want to learn to play guitar.</i>
practise <i>VERB</i>	to do again and again to get better	<i>She practises the piano every day.</i>
team <i>NOUN</i>	a group who play or work together	<i>He plays football in a team.</i>
brave <i>ADJ.</i>	not afraid; ready to do hard things	<i>You are brave to climb that high!</i>
amazing <i>ADJ.</i>	very, very good; surprising in a good way	<i>She is an amazing dancer.</i>
together <i>ADV.</i>	with each other; not alone	<i>We can sing together.</i>

Everybody Can Do Something: *the school talent show*

Next week is the school talent show! Everybody can do something special — but what? Four students tell us about the things they can (and can't!) do. Read and look for *can* and *can't*!

Diego — “I can dance!”

Hi! I'm Diego. For the talent show, I can **dance**! I can dance very well — hip-hop is my favourite. I **practise** every day in my bedroom. But there is a problem: I can't sing! When I sing, my little sister puts her hands over her ears! So in the show, I can dance, but I can't sing at the same time. That's OK — everybody is good at something different. My friend Lucia can sing like an angel, but she can't dance. Together, we are a great team!

Lucia — “I can sing, but...”

My name is Lucia, and Diego is right — I can sing! People say I have an **amazing** voice. I can sing high notes and low notes. But can I dance? No, I can't! I have two left feet. When I try to dance, I fall over! So in the talent show, I can stand still and sing, and Diego can dance around me. We are very different, but we make a good team. Can you sing *and* dance? You are very lucky!

Sam — “I can do magic!”

Hello, I'm Sam. My talent is special: I can do magic tricks! I can make a coin disappear, and I can find your card in the pack. I **learn** a new trick every week from videos. My mum can't understand how I do it! “Sam, how can you do that?” she always asks. But a good magician never tells his secret. Can you keep a secret? Then maybe one day I can teach you a trick... but only if you're **brave** enough to be on stage!

Priya — “I can't... yet!”

My name is Priya, and this is my problem: last year, I couldn't do anything for the talent show. I can't sing, I can't dance, and I can't do magic. But this year is different! Six months ago, I couldn't **swim**, and I couldn't **climb**. But I practised and practised. Now I can climb the big wall at the sports centre — all the way to the top! For the talent show, I can show everyone my climbing. The lesson is simple: today you can't, but tomorrow, with practice, you can!

So — what can you do?

Diego can dance, Lucia can sing, Sam can do magic, and Priya can climb. Four students, four very different **abilities**. Nobody can do everything — and that's wonderful! Some people can draw, some can run fast, some can make people laugh, and some are very good at being a kind friend. What can *you* do? And what do you want to learn next?

Editor's note: Remember Priya's words: “Today you can't, but tomorrow, with practice, you can!” Every skill starts with “I can't... yet.” What is one thing you want to learn? Write it down and start today!

6 PRACTICE
Fill in the blanks

Complete each sentence with can, can't, or a verb. Remember: can is the same for everyone, and we use the base verb after it!

- 1 Diego _____ dance very well. (*positive*)
- 2 Lucia _____ dance — she falls over! (*negative*)
- 3 _____ you play the piano? (*question*)
- 4 “Can you swim?” — “Yes, I _____.” (*short answer*)
- 5 Monkeys can _____ trees very fast. (*verb: go up*)
- 6 She can _____ in the sea. (*verb: move in water*)
- 7 “Can he sing?” — “No, he _____.” (*short answer*)
- 8 If you _____ every day, you can learn it. (*verb: do again and again*)


7 SPEAKING
Can you...?

 Can you swim? Can you ride a bike?

 Can you play a musical instrument? Which one?

 Can you cook? What can you make?

 What can you do really well? What can't you do?

 What is one thing you want to learn to do?

EXAMPLE CONVERSATION

A: Can you play the guitar?

B: Yes, I can! I practise every day. Can you?

A: No, I can't. But I can play the piano a little. Can you swim?

B: Yes, I can swim very well. But I can't ride a horse!

8 WRITING
What I can and can't do (50–70 words)

Write about the things you can and can't do. Use can and can't. Try to include:

- at least 3 things you can do (I can...)
- at least 2 things you can't do (I can't...)
- one thing you do very well or a little
- one thing you want to learn

Check your understanding

1 Choose the correct sentence:

- A She cans swim. B She can swims.
 C She can swim. D She can to swim.

2 What does “can't” mean?

- A can B cannot
 C can too D will

3 Make a question: “_____ you ride a bike?”

- A Do B Are
 C Can D Is

4 “Can you swim?” — correct short answer (yes):

- A Yes, I do. B Yes, I can.
 C Yes, I am. D Yes, I swim.

5 “Can he sing?” — correct short answer (no):

- A No, he don't. B No, he isn't.
 C No, he can't. D No, he not.

6 Which sentence is CORRECT?

- A He can plays football. B He can play football.
 C He can to play football. D He cans play football.

7 I am not able to cook. = I _____ cook.

- A can B can't
 C am D do

8 Which verb completes it: “Monkeys can _____ trees.”

- A swim B climb
 C read D drive

✓ Answer Key — for teachers

Fill in the blanks: 1. can 2. can't 3. Can 4. can 5. climb 6. swim 7. can't 8. practise

Quiz: 1. C 2. B 3. C 4. B 5. C 6. B 7. B 8. B