

UNIT 1: MODALS OF ABILITY

A Trip to Egypt



Can, Be able to

- Use these to express an ability that a person has. This ability may be natural or acquired, or mental or physical.

- 1.1 *From our hotel room, we can see many colorful feluccas on the Nile.*
- 1.2 *If Mark wants to ride a camel, he can ride one at the Pyramids.*
- 1.3 *Our tour guide, Ahmed, is able to drink five cups of tea in an hour and go to sleep afterward.*

Future: Can & Will be able to

- Use ***will be able to*** for all future abilities.
- Don't use ***can*** when the future ability is learned or acquired.

- 1.4 *After I study Arabic, I'll be able to read and write better. (This is a learned or acquired ability.)*
- 1.5 *We can go shopping in Port Said next week. (This ability is not learned or acquired.)*

Past: Could & Was/were able to

- Use these to express past abilities.

- 1.6 *We couldn't get too close to the Sphinx because it's being repaired.*
- 1.7 *Wagdi was able to go to Alexandria to visit his family.*

Be Careful: Negative Ability vs. Prohibition

- ❑ Don't confuse negative Modals of Ability with Modals of Prohibition. See Unit 2 for Modals of Prohibition.

1.8 *You can't take pictures in the Egyptian Museum. (It's prohibited by law.)*

1.9 *I can't take pictures of Old Cairo today. (I left my camera on the tour bus.)*

Related Expression: Know how to

- ❑ Use this to express an **acquired ability** only. Most of the time it refers to a skill you have. A skill is something you learn by practicing.

1.10 *Do you know how to say "Thank you" in Arabic?*

1.11 *I don't know how to get to the Khan el-Khalili. People say it's a great place to shop.*

1.12 *Maha and Shahira didn't know how to snorkel before they went to Hurghada.*

Exercises

Exercise A. Read the conversation. Underline all the Modals of Ability and any Related Expressions.

The Friend Who Can't

Farida: Let's go out and do something. I'm tired of staying inside all day.

Ahmed: You're right. Let's go for a swim.

Farida: I can't. I don't know how to swim.

Ahmed: That's OK. Do you want to go for a bike ride?

Farida: I can't ride a bike, either.

Ahmed: Really? I didn't know that. How about a movie, then?

Farida: I'd love to, but I can't see without my glasses. I left them at school.

Ahmed: Oh, that's too bad. (*Thinks.*) I know! We can play some music. I know how to play the guitar, and you can sing with me.

Farida: Maybe you'll be able to play, but I certainly won't be able to sing.

Ahmed: Oh, come on. I know you sing really well.

Farida: OK, I'll sing. But you have to sing with me.

Ahmed: All right, but don't laugh at me when you hear how terrible I sound. I really can't sing at all.

Write all the things Farida and Ahmed can and can't do.

Exercise B. Write three sentences about what each person can or is able to do.

1. A musician

A musician can read music.

2. A doctor

3. A mother

4. A tour guide

5. A police officer

6. A taxi driver

Exercise C. Write five things you can and can't do in the chart below. After you finish, write five sentences about things a friend or a classmate can and can't do.

CAN	CAN'T

Exercise D. Use could and was/were able to and fill in the blanks in these conversations. Use the appropriate positive, negative, or question forms. Some conversations have more than one correct answer.

1. Mother and Daughter

Mother: Did you see the doctor today?

Daughter: No, I _____ get in. She was too busy, but I can see her next week.

2. Boss and Employee

Boss: _____ find the information I wanted?

Employee: No, I wasn't. I'll try again tomorrow.

3. Two Co-workers

Co-worker 1: I _____ come to work yesterday because of the snow.

Co-worker 2: Oh, I _____ because my new truck never has any problems in the snow.

4. Two Friends

Friend 1: Hi. I haven't seen you in a long time. Did you have a nice vacation?

Friend 2: No, I never went. I _____ get time off from work. And, I _____ afford it, anyway.

5. Daughter and Father

Daughter: What did you do to my new car?

Father: Well, it was raining really hard. I _____ see and I _____ stop in time. Before I knew what was happening, I hit a tree.

Daughter: Oh no! How can I get to work tomorrow?

6. Two Sisters

Sister 1: What do you think you're doing? That's my new sweater.

Sister 2: I _____ find mine, so I just borrowed yours.

Sister 1: Sorry, but I'm wearing it tonight.

Exercise E. Use Past Modals of Ability to write a question and a positive and negative response for each statement.

1. I can speak French.

Could you speak French (five years ago)? (Question)

Yes, I could speak it, but not very well. (Positive)

No, I couldn't speak it at all. (Negative)

2. My friend is able to run very fast.

_____ (Question)

_____ (Positive)

_____ (Negative)

3. Metwally and Omar can play the piano well.

_____ (Question)

_____ (Positive)

_____ (Negative)

4. Khalid knows how to do many things on the computer.

_____ (Question)

_____ (Positive)

_____ (Negative)

5. Rafik is able to travel to many countries.

_____ (Question)

_____ (Positive)

_____ (Negative)



Exercise F. Use Past Modals of Ability to write three short conversations. Use the conversations in Exercises D and E to help you.

Exercise G. Read the sentences with Future Modals of Ability. Underline the modals that are not correct and rewrite them with the correct forms.

1. Next year, I can speak Arabic very well.
2. Next year, I can return and visit the Pyramids in Egypt.
3. Alia can play the piano very well in two years if she practices every day.
4. Mustafa will be able to go with us next week, but not tonight.
5. I can belly dance after I finish this dance class.
6. I can take pictures in the Egyptian Museum if I remember to bring my camera.
7. You can eat cheap and delicious food around Tahrir Square in Cairo.
8. You can drive like a professional after you take the driving course next month.
9. Farida can swim after school if the pool is open.
10. Ali can paint better pictures if he works harder.



Exercise H. Imagine that you were alive in 1900. What could and couldn't you do? Write 5 sentences.

I couldn't drive a car.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Imagine that you will be alive in 2501. What will you be able to do? What won't you be able to do? Write 5 sentences.

1. *I'll be able to see my friend when we talk on the phone.*

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Exercise I. Read the story. After you read, underline all the Modals of Ability and Related Expressions. Then answer the questions.

The Old Man and His Magical Powers

There is a small village in the northern mountains where a strange and mysterious old man lives. From the village, I can see his dark wooden house way up in the mountains, but I never see him at all.

People say he's strange and mysterious because he can do magical things. They say he can make things appear and disappear at any time. He can become invisible and walk through the village streets at night, and no one is able to see him. He knows how to grow beautiful flowers outside in the winter time. I once saw lovely red roses blooming in front of his house even though the ground was covered with snow. Some people say that he can talk to wild animals. Others claim that he can understand what the animals say to him. Maybe the animals are the only real friends he has.

I'm surprised to hear of all the mysterious and magical things he can do. But I often wonder how he is able to stay alive without going to the village to buy food and other supplies.

Many villagers ask, "How can he live that way? How is he able to survive the long years and hard winters alone?"

How can I answer them? I can't. I can only continue looking for him and hoping that one day I'll be able to meet him and ask him these questions myself.

Questions: What do you think about the old man?

1. Where does the old man get his special powers?
2. How is he able to survive without going to the village?
3. Do you know any stories about people who can do strange and mysterious things?
4. If you could have any one magical power, what would you like to be able to do?

More Practice

Write the story in the Past. Make all the necessary changes.

(Answers on page 117)

Answer Key

Unit 1: ABILITY/EGYPT

Exercise A *page 2*

- I can't.
- I don't know how to swim.
- I can't ride a bike, either.
- I can't see without my glasses.
- We can play some music.
- I know how to play guitar, and you can sing with me.
- Maybe you'll be able to play, but I certainly won't be able to sing.
- I really can't sing at all.

Exercise B *(Possible Answers) page 3*

1. A musician can read music. (*A musician is able to read music.*)
A musician can play many instruments.
A musician can sing very well.
2. A doctor can see many patients.
A doctor can understand many diseases.
A doctor can give good advice to her patients.
3. A mother can take care of her children.
A mother can work very hard outside the house.
A mother can prepare the dinner.
4. A tour guide can show tourists many ancient temples.
A tour guide can help tourists buy souvenirs.
A tour guide can explain the history of a city to tourists.

5. A police officer can help people.
A police officer can write parking tickets.
A police officer can investigate crimes.

6. A taxi driver in Cairo can take tourists to the Pyramids.
A taxi driver in Cairo can drive in a lot of traffic.
A taxi driver in Cairo can show you many interesting sites in Egypt.

Exercise C *(Possible Answers) page 4*

- I can speak English. (I am able to...)
- I can play the piano.
- I can ride a bicycle.
- I can run three miles.
- I can visit my friends.
- I can't ride a horse. (I'm not able to...)
- I can't speak Italian.
- I can't see without my glasses.
- I can't cook very well.
- I can't write in Arabic.

Exercise D *page 4*

1. Daughter: couldn't/wasn't able to...
2. Boss: Could you/Were you able to...?
3. Co-worker 1: couldn't/wasn't able to...
Co-worker 2: could...
4. Friend 2: couldn't/wasn't able to...
couldn't/wasn't able to...
5. Father: couldn't
couldn't
6. Sister 2: couldn't/wasn't able to...

Exercise E *page 5*

2. Was your friend able to run fast (before)?
Yes, she/he was.
No, she/he wasn't.
3. Could Metwally and Omar play the piano (last year)?
Yes, they could.
No, they couldn't.
4. Did Khalid know how to do many things on the computer (last September)?
Yes, he did.
No, he didn't.
5. Was Rafik able to travel to many countries (when he was young)?
Yes, he was.
No, he wasn't.

Exercise G *page 6*

1. Next year, I will be able to speak Arabic very well.
2. CORRECT
3. Alia will be able to play the piano...
4. CORRECT
5. I will be able to belly dance...
6. CORRECT
7. CORRECT
8. You will be able to drive...
9. CORRECT
10. Ali will be able to paint...

Exercise H (*Possible Answers*) *page 7*

1. I couldn't drive a car. (I wasn't able to drive...)
 2. I could talk on the telephone.
 3. I could work on my farm.
 4. I couldn't watch TV.
 5. I could relax with my family and neighbors.
1. I'll be able to see my friend when we talk on the telephone.
 2. I'll be able to spend the weekend on the moon.

3. I'll be able to eat food from a tube.
4. I'll be able to stay in my house and do everything.
5. I'll be able to drive a space ship.

Exercise I *page 8*

I can see his dark wooden house...
...he can do magical things.
They say he can make things appear
and disappear at any time.
He can become invisible and walk
through the village streets...
...and no one is able to see him.
He knows how to grow beautiful
flowers outside...
...he can talk to wild animals.
...he can understand what the animals
say to him.
...he can do.
I often wonder how he is able to stay
alive...
How can he live that way?
How is he able to survive the long
years and hard winters alone?
How can I answer them?
I can't.
I can only continue looking for him...
...one day I'll be able to meet him and
ask these questions myself.

UNIT 2: PROHIBITION/ECUADOR**Exercise A** *page 10*

2. You mustn't/can't wear... (People mustn't/can't...)
3. You mustn't/can't take...
4. You mustn't/can't park...
5. You mustn't/can't throw...
6. You mustn't/can't eat...
7. You mustn't/can't wear...
8. You mustn't/can't cut