Escuela Preparatoria Número Uno
Talking about abilities
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Talking about abilities

Abstract:

Talking about abilities is one of the communicative skills that are basic while learning to communicate in English. It could be considered as part of the basic personal information someone can provide.

Can is the first modal verb that students have contact with, it is the starting point to learn some others.

Key words: Abilities, permission, can, cannot

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Check the next examples

What do you think of when you see this card?

He is Superman

He can fly
He can freeze objects
He can see through objects
He can lift anything
He can travel at the speed of light

Pramit, S. (2017). Superman [Illustration]. Taken from https://goo.gl/cGF8TJpg

He has super human abilities.

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Check the next examples

He is Hugo Franco

- He can use a computer.
- He can be creative.
- He is very prepared so maybe he can speak two languages.
- He can handle math.

Overhate, R. (2016). Businessman [Illustration]. Taken from https://goo.gl/AHjlzj

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Adapted from Escolaespai (2014). Teacher [photo]. Taken from https://goo.gl/LvwuH3

Adapted from Contreras, L. (2012). Police [photo]. Taken from https://goo.gl/WfWf9x

The last examples have something in common …

Can / Can't

Abilities & Permission

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- It shows in PRESENT that someone has the ***ability*** to do something.

  - Peter's ten years old. He ***CAN*** read and write.

- It's used to make a ***request***.

  - ***CAN*** you help me with my homework, please?

- We use it to ask ***permission*** in informal situations.

  - Mom, ***CAN*** I go out with my friends?

Structure

+ Afirmative form

Subject + can + verb in simple form + complement

Example: Superman **can** freeze objects

- Negative form

Subject + can not + verb in simple form + complement
(contraction can't)

Example: Superman **can't** shrink himself

- Interrogative form

Question word + can + Subject + verb in simple form + complement + ?

Example: What **can** Superman do?

Rules

1. Verb in simple form
It always goes with a verb in simple form, that is, you do not conjugate it.

2. Do not add 's'
You do not add –s to CAN
Incorrect: He **cans** run

3. Do not add 'ing'
You do not add –ING to CAN
Incorrect: He is **canning**

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References

- Davies, P. (2013). *Make It Real Junior A1.1.* México: Editorial UAEH.

- Ocañas, L. (2021). Modal verb CAN (ability and permission) Affirmative, interrogative and negative forms. Retrieved 25 March 2021, from https://avi.cuaed.unam.mx/repositorio/moodle/pluginfile.php/2820/mod_resource/content/11/contenido/index.html

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