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Basics: Can and Could - Ability and Permission

Easy | A1 | Elementary | Beginners | Modal verb | Questions | Negation | English Grammar Basics

1. Choose the correct words to complete this millennial's diary entry about the perks of growing up.

"When I was ten, I _____ only watch one hour of television a day. Now that I live alone, I _____ eat ice cream for breakfast if I want to!"

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** can
- **B)** could
- **C)** must

Blank 2

- **A)** can
- **B)** could
- **C)** would

2. Complete the retired superhero's memoir by choosing the correct verbs.

When I was in my twenties, I ___ lift a bus with one hand, but now I ___ barely open a jar of pickles!

Select one.

- **A)** can / could
- **B)** could / can
- **C)** could / could
- **D)** can / can

3. Select the correct option for each blank to help the café worker ask a tall customer for a favor.

"Excuse me, _____ you possibly help me reach those coffee beans on the top shelf? I _____ lift heavy boxes all day without a problem, but I am simply not tall enough to reach up there!"

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** are
- **B)** could
- **C)** was

Blank 2

- **A)** could
- **B)** can
- **C)** am

4. Help the hungry roommate ask a polite question.

___ I please borrow your secret stash of chocolate? I promise to replace it tomorrow!

Select one.

- **A)** Do
- **B)** Could
- **C)** Must
- **D)** Am

5. Help the college freshman complete this humorous roommate introduction email by selecting the correct option for each blank.

"Hi! I'm Alex. Fun fact about me: When I was five years old, I _____ memorize entire dinosaur encyclopedias. Now that I am twenty, I _____ even remember where I put my keys five minutes ago. I look forward to living together!"

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** can
- **B)** could
- **C)** am

Blank 2

- **A)** could
- **B)** can't
- **C)** couldn't

6. Help Grandpa finish his slightly exaggerated life story by choosing the correct verb for each blank.

"When I was twenty, I _____ lift a desk with one hand! But these days, I _____ even lift this cup."

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** can
- **B)** could
- **C)** will

Blank 2

- **A)** couldn't
- **B)** shouldn't
- **C)** can't

7. Help Captain Awesome update his superhero dating profile so he can find his perfect match! Select ALL the sentences that correctly describe his amazing abilities.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** I can lift a car with one hand!
- **B)** When I was a baby, I could fly around the nursery.
- **C)** I can to shoot lasers from my eyes.
- **D)** I could invisible whenever I want.

8. Help Liam ask his roommate to borrow his famously lucky, neon-green sweater for an upcoming retro party. Select ALL the grammatically correct ways he might ask for permission.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** Can I borrow your neon sweater tonight?
- **B)** Could I borrow your neon sweater tonight?
- **C)** Could I borrowed your neon sweater tonight?
- **D)** Can I borrowing your neon sweater tonight?

9. Help Agent 007-and-a-half finish his top-secret mission report by choosing the correct words for each blank.

"Yesterday, I _____ sneak past the laser beams because I sneezed loudly. Now, the commander says I _____ touch any of the explosive gadgets."

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** can't
- **B)** mustn't
- **C)** couldn't

Blank 2

- **A)** can't
- **B)** couldn't
- **C)** won't

10. Read the grumpy resident cat's strict list of house rules for the new puppy. Select ALL the sentences that correctly use modal verbs to express ability or deny permission.

Select all that apply.

- **A)** You can't sleep on the good sofa; it is exclusively mine.
- **B)** When I was younger, I could catch three toy mice at once.
- **C)** You cannot eating my expensive gourmet cat food.
- **D)** You couldn't to bark while I am taking my afternoon nap.

11. Complete the teenager's dramatic plea to their parents by choosing the best word for each gap.

"Mom, _____ I please go to the rock concert tonight? I promise I will finish all my homework first! It is so unfair—I know my older sister _____ stay out until midnight when she was my age!"

Choose the correct option for each gap.

Blank 1

- **A)** do
- **B)** can
- **C)** am

Blank 2

- **A)** can
- **B)** could
- **C)** is

12. Choose the right word to complete the dramatic cat owner's warning to a guest.

You ___ sit on that velvet armchair. Sir Fluffington has claimed it as his throne, and he does not share.

Select one.

- **A)** can't
- **B)** couldn't
- **C)** aren't
- **D)** haven't