

CAN/COULD & BE ABLE TO

Normally, **can/could** and **be able to** have the same meaning and can be used interchangeably.

1. When we need to use BE ABLE TO:

We have to use *be able to* in **Past Perfect, Present Perfect**.

Example: My brother **had been able to** speak French fluently before moving to Canada.
She **has been able to** swim since she was 5.

We often use *will be able to* more than *can* when talking about **the future**.

Example: People **will be able to** drive flying cars in 50 years.

We use *be able to* = **manage to, succeed in**

Example: The fire-fighters **were able to** rescued all the trapped victims.

2. When we need to use CAN/COULD:

We use *can/could* to talk about **a possibility**.

Example: Be careful. It **can** rain soon.

We use *can/could* to talk about **a talent**.

Example: He **can** play the piano very well.

He **could** run 50 miles a day even when he was 70.

We use *can/could* for **request** or **permission**:

Example: **Can/May** I go home early?

Could you pass me the salt, please?