

## English A1 · can

Beginner English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

# The holiday verb

can is the verb of ability, permission and requests — and it never, ever changes shape.

## One word for everyone

|           | <b>Form</b>          | <b>Example</b>                 |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| statement | can + base verb      | She can speak three languages. |
| negative  | cannot / can't       | He can't swim.                 |
| question  | Can + person + verb? | Can you cook?                  |

### Use the evidence

Short answers: Yes, I can. / No, I can't. — just can, no verb needed.

## Your turn: the relaxed verb

### Your turn

She can \_\_\_\_ three languages.

- ☐ A. speaks
- ☐ B. speak
- ☐ C. to speak
- ☐ D. speaking

## Three jobs, one word

| Job        | Question           | Meaning          |
|------------|--------------------|------------------|
| ability    | Can you swim?      | Do you know how? |
| permission | Can I borrow this? | Is it allowed?   |
| request    | Can you help me?   | Please do it.    |

### Use the evidence

Can I open the window? asks permission — and only you know if the room is hot.

## Your turn: which job

### Your turn

Can you play the piano? — at a talent show audition, this asks about...

- A. permission
- B. ability
- C. a request
- D. the weather

## No to, no -s

### The Chinese instinct

is one piece, so can to speak sneaks in.

One word for all persons, so she cans  
sneaks in.

### The English rule

can speak — the base form only.

she can swim — can never changes.

## Your turn: the future of can

### Your turn

After this course, I \_\_\_\_ speak English.

- A. will can
- B. will be able to
- C. can to
- D. am can

## Say it aloud

Three abilities and one lie: I can ride a bike. I can cook noodles. I can dance.



Your partner guesses the lie.



One honest can't: I can't dance. I have certificates in not dancing.



Ask: Can you play any instrument? — The triangle counts.

## Check yourself

- She can swim — one word for every person, no -s.
- Can you help me? — can plus base form, no to.
- Can I go now? — permission: flip can to the front.
- Future ability: will be able to — can has no future.