

Could. Explanation

✦ Could

We use **could** when we talk about past abilities.

Examples:

- **Could** for ability.
- My sister **could** hold a spider in his hands when she was a child. Now, she hates them.
- I **couldn't travel** to Egypt last summer because my father didn't pay for the trip.
- Linda **could fix** a car when she was a young. Nowadays, she always goes to the car service.
- **Could** your cousin climb the Everest when he lived in Nepal?
- No, he **couldn't**.

Could is a modal verb. Like all modals, **could** come before the base form of the verbs. They also have the same form with all subjects.

★ Affirmative statements

Subject	Could	Base form of verb
I	could	swim
You		
He		
She		
It		
We		
You		
They		

Examples:



I **could play** the guitar when I was a child.



My grandpa **could sing** opera.



When they were younger, they **could run** a marathon.

✦ **Could not / Couldn't**

Could not is the negative of could. **Couldn't** is the short form.

Subject	Could	Base form of verb
I	could not	swim
You		
He		
She		
It		
We		
You		
They		

Examples:



I **couldn't play** the guitar when I was a child.



My grandpa **couldn't sing** opera.



When they were younger, they **couldn't run** a marathon.

✦ Could, in questions

In questions, **could** comes before the subject.

Yes / No questions with short answers

Could	Subject	Base form of verb
Could	you	swim?

Yes	Subject	Could
Yes	I	could.

No	Subject	Could
No	I	couldn't.

Could	Subject	Base form of verb
Could	she	swim?

Yes	Subject	Could
Yes	she	could.

No	Subject	Could
No	she	couldn't.

Examples:

A: **Could** you **play** the guitar when you were a child?

B: **Yes**, I **could**.

A: **Could** grandpa **sing** opera?

B: **No**, he **couldn't**.

A: **Could** they **run** a marathon when they were younger?

B: **Yes**, they **could**.

✦ Information questions

Wh-word	Could	Subject	Base form of verb
When	could	she	walk?

At 11 months.

What	could	he	do?
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He could read and write.

Examples:

A: What instruments **could** you **play** as a child?

B: I **could play** the guitar.

A: What **could** your grandpa **do**?

B: He **could play** sing opera.

A: When **could** they **run** a marathon?

B: When they were in high school.