Language focus Unit 4: Expresar Habilidad

1. *Can* y *be able to*

*Can* y *be able to* se usan para expresar habilidad. Sin embargo, both used to express *can* solo tiene forma presente (*can*) y forma pasada (*could*). Si necesitamos otra forma verba, usamos *be able.*

**Presente** 🡪 She can / is able to speak three languages fluently.

**Pasado** 🡪 She could / was able to read when she was two.

**Infinitivo** 🡪 I’d like to be able to ski.

**Presente Perfecto** 🡪 He’s never been able to save money.

**Will (futuro)** 🡪 She’ll be able to drive to work when she passes her test.

**HABILIDAD EN EL PRESENTE**

Podemos usar *can* o *be able to* para hablar de habilidad en el presente. *Be able to* es más formal que *can*.

*I can run faster than you.*

*He is able to speak without moving his lips*.

La forma negative de *can* es *can’t* o *cannot*. Para formar la negative de *be able to*, usamos *not* delante de *able*. También se puede usar *be unable to*.

*I cannot understand why she married him.*

*Many of my students aren’t able / are unable to pronounce the word ‘taught’ correctly.*

*Be capable of* + gerundio también se usa para expresar habilida. Significa tener la habilidad, capacidad o potencial de hacer algo.

*The team has some excellent players and is capable of winning the championship*.

La negativa es *be incapable of* + gerundio. También se puede poner *not* delante de *capable*.

*She is incapable/isn’t capable of looking after herself*.

**HABILIDAD EN EL PASADO**

1 Cuando hablamos de habilidad general en el pasado, podemos usar tanto *could* como *was / were able*.

*She could sing really well when she was a child.*

*My grandfather could play the trumpet when he was 90.*

*Be capable of* can also be used in the past.

*Joe wasn’t capable of making toast without burning it*.

2 Cuando hablamos de habilidad para hacer algo en una ocasión en el pasado, **NO PODEMOS USAR *COULD* (podía)**. Tenemos que usar: *was/were able to, managed to + infinitive o succeeded in* + gerundio (pude/logré/conseguí).

*I managed to / was able to speak / succeeded in speaking to Frank last night.*

*Yesterday the firefighters were able to / managed to control / succeeded in controlling the flames.*

\*Sin embargo, *could* sí se puede usar para expresar habilidad para hacer algo en una occasion en el pasado caundo va con verbos de los sentidos: *see, smell, hear, feel, sense, taste*.

*I knew my wife had arrived; I could smell her perfume*.

Cuando hablamos de INHABILIDAD para hacer algo en una occasion en el pasado, podemos usar: *COULDN’T, WASN’T / WEREN’T ABLE TO, DIDN’T MANAGE TO* and *DIDN’T SUCCEED IN* are all possible. **TODAS VALEN TANTO PARA HABILIDAD GENERAL COMO ESPECÍFICA:**

*I couldn’t do the homework yesterday*.