

COMMUNICATION

Hidden talents

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_3031X

LANGUAGE

English

Learning outcomes

- I can use a range of vocabulary and phrases relating to talent, ability and skills.
- I can accurately use the modal verbs 'can' and 'could' to describe present and past ability.

Warm-up

1. **Write three statements** (two true and one false) into the chat about your skills and abilities.
2. **Ask your classmates questions** to find out which statements are true and which are false.



I can stand on my head...


I'm the best cook out of all my friends...

*I can remember all the words of a song
after hearing it once...*



Reading

Read the excerpt from a blog post below.



Discover your hidden talents



Forget about 'being a natural'

You don't have to be good at something right from the start. Practice makes perfect.


Think about what you enjoy doing in your free time

What activities do you spend the most time on? You could be an expert in your particular area of interest and not even know it!




Reading

Read the rest of the blog post below.



Discover your hidden talents



Ask your friends and family

Some gifts are less obvious. You might have a talent for bringing people together or giving great advice!

Don't be afraid to try something totally new

You won't know until you try! You might be surprised by what you learn about yourself!



Forget about '**being a natural.**'

Choose the correct definition:

to be a natural means:

...that you have learned a skill over time,
by practising it.

or

...that you are very good at something
straight away, or without having to try
hard.

Reflect on the text (1)

“Some gifts are less obvious. You might have a talent for bringing people together or giving great advice!”

Do you agree that some gifts are less obvious than others?

How would you describe the skills or talents mentioned in the quote?

Do you think you have any gifts that are less obvious?

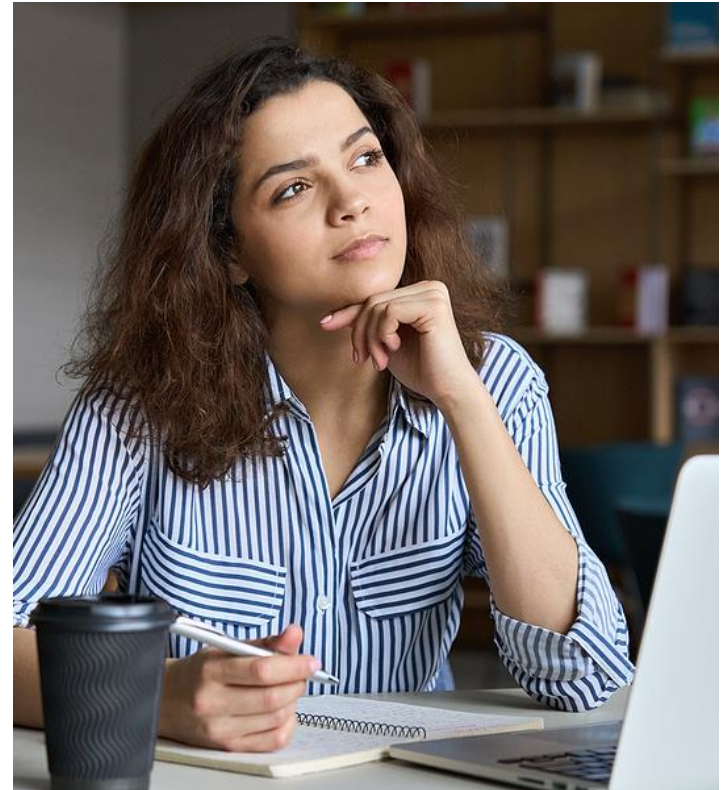




Reflect on the text (2)

Read the tips from the blog again. Can you think of any other advice to add?
(Option: **use breakout rooms**. Afterwards, add your ideas to the list as a class.)

- 1 Forget about 'being a natural.'
- 2 Think about what you enjoy doing in your free time.
- 3 Ask your friends and family.
- 4 Don't be afraid to try something totally new.





Reader responses

Skim the texts quickly in silence. Then **read them out loud** and **fill in the gaps** using the vocabulary in the boxes.

Sally

I've always been _____
and I have a _____ in a
simple way. I used to help my
friend's kids with their maths
homework. When she saw how
much Sarah's grades improved,
my friend suggested I start my
own tutoring business. I now
have twelve regular clients and
am considering expanding!

Damon

I was never very _____
in school. Team sports just
aren't my thing. But then I
started running to keep fit and
discovered a new passion. At
first, I _____ five km
without feeling exhausted. But I
joined an athletics group in my
hometown and am currently
training for my first marathon!

gifted at sports

knack for
explaining things

good with
numbers

couldn't run

Review: *can* and *could*

Read the example sentence below. Then **complete** the blue box.



Damon

At first, I couldn't run five km without feeling exhausted...

- We use the modal verb **can** to talk about ability.
- When we talk about **past ability** we use _____.
- Can you think of something that you couldn't do in the past, but can do now? What has changed?

I have a knack for explaining things in a simple way.



to have a knack for (doing) something is a more informal way of saying you have a special ability or skill.



Phrases for talking about ability

Match the phrases with the **correct preposition**.

1 to be good

a for...

2 to be gifted

b at/with...

3 to have a knack

c on/in/at...

4 to have a talent

d at...

5 to be an expert

e for...





Complete the sentences

Match a sentence beginning (1-5) with the appropriate ending (a-e).

1 My friend Ana is really **good**...

2 Sarah is an **expert**...

3 You have a **talent**...

4 Tom is **gifted**...

5 My dad has a **knack**

a **on** nineteenth century French art. She reads art history books for fun.

b **for** cooking. I think he should have been a chef.

c **for** making people feel special. You're a really good listener.

d **at** music. He hears a song once and can play it on the piano straight away.

e **with** kids. She's not afraid to be silly and act like a child herself!



Use the vocabulary from the lesson to help you.

to be a natural...





End of the lesson

Idiom

to do something in (your) sleep

Meaning: to have practised something so much, or be so good at something, that it becomes automatic (you can do it without effort)

Example: I've cycled that route so many times, I could do it in my sleep!



Additional practice



Multiple choice



- 1 My brother is very good _____ kids. I often leave my children with him.
a. for b. on c. at d. with
- 2 Jamie has a knack _____ cooking delicious vegetarian meals.
a. with b. at c. for d. on
- 3 She is gifted _____ singing. She regularly performs in venues around the city.
a. for b. at c. on d. with
- 4 My manager has a knack _____ giving very clear instructions.
a. at b. with c. on d. for
- 5 My teacher is an expert _____ British history. I learn so much in her classes.
a. with b. on c. for d. at



Brainstorm

Think about your talents. **Practise** talking about them using the **phrasal verbs** from the lesson. Add the **correct preposition** in each case.

1

to be gifted

2

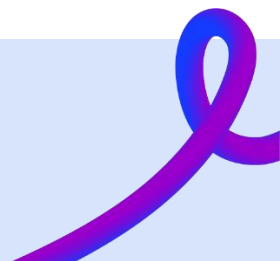
to be an expert

3

to have a knack

4

to have a talent





Unscramble

1

she

2

child

3

a

4

swim



5

couldn't

6

she

7

when

8

was



a

can

b

different

c

of

d

yoga

e

positions

f

lots

g

do

h

I





Discuss



**Describe something
you could do when you
were younger that you
can't now.**



**Is there anything that
you couldn't do that
you can now?**





Free practice

Practise talking about each of the talents in the pictures using the vocabulary from the lesson.

1



2



3



4



5



*I have a knack for...
I could...*

*I can't...
I'm not gifted at*



Answer key

P.9:

Text 1 1. good with numbers 2. knack for explaining things

Text 2 1. gifted at sports 2. couldn't run

P.10: Talking about past ability: could

P.12: 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (e) 5. (c)

P.13: 1. (a), (e) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (d) 5. (b)

P.18: 1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (b)

P.20: 1. When she was a child, she couldn't swim. 2. I can do lots of yoga positions.



Summary

Describing skills, talents and abilities:

- Some people have skills that you would never expect
- They could be a natural at something, or they could improve by practising
- Hidden talents might be cooking, music, or standing on your head!

Can and could:

- We use the modal verb *can* to talk about ability
- When we talk about past ability, we use *could*
- *At first, I **couldn't** run 5km. Now I **can** do it in under 25 minutes!*

Useful phrases:

- to have a talent (for)...
- to be an expert (in/on)...
- to be good/gifted (at)...
- to be good (with),,,

Real-life language:

- to have a knack (for) ...
- to be a natural



Vocabulary

to be a natural (at)...

to have a knack (for)...

to be gifted (at)...

to be good (with)

to be an expert (in/on)...

It's (not) my thing

to discover (a) passion (for)...

grade