



Lesson 28

Modals: General Ability in the Past - Could & Couldn't

When we talk about general ability, this is something that once you have learned you can do any time you want, like being able to read or run or speak a language. To describe general ability in the present tense, we use the modal **can** or **can't**.

Examples:

I **can** Play the piano.

Carmen **can't** cook.

To describe general ability in the past, we use the modal **could** or **couldn't**.

Examples:

I **could** swim when I was three.

Jessica **could** speak German when she was a child, but now she has forgotten it.

Rohan **couldn't** dance at all until he took lessons.

Kiara called to ask for directions because she **couldn't** find the house.

