

## Unit 28: CAN

**Can** is a modal verb. Unit 27 shows you how to make correct sentences with it. This unit shows you when you can use it.

### 1 Ability

- a GENERAL**      **EXAMPLES:** She **can speak** good English.  
Kiwis are birds but they **cannot** fly.
- NOTICE:**      **cannot** is one word
- b NOW**      **EXAMPLES:** **Can you hear** me?  
I **can't see** anything. It's dark.
- c FUTURE**      **EXAMPLES:** I'm afraid I **can't see** you this week but I can next week.
- NOTICE:**      also **be able to** (Unit 36)

### 2 Possibility

- a GENERAL**      **EXAMPLES:** Canada **can be** very cold in the winter.
- b NOT POSSIBLE**      **EXAMPLES:** He **can't be** working now. It's much too late.  
They **can't have got** lost. They know the way.
- NOTICE:**      use **must** (Unit 33) for strong probability

### 3 Permission

- a STATEMENT**      **EXAMPLES:** You **cannot drive** without a licence.  
Passengers **can smoke** outside of the terminal.
- NOTICE:**      more friendly than **may** (Unit 30)
- b REQUEST**      **EXAMPLES:** **Can I borrow** your pen?  
**Can I have** the red one please?
- NOTICE:**      **could** (Unit 29) is more polite

### 4 Asking for help

- EXAMPLES:**      **Can you give** me a hand?

**Can you tell** me the time?

**NOTICE:** also **could** (Unit 29); also **will** (Unit 31)

## **5 Polite offers**

**EXAMPLES:** **Can I help** you?

**Can I get** you some food?

**NOTICE:** also **will** (Unit 31); also **shall** (Unit 31)