



'Can' and 'Can't'

# Examples of 'Can' and 'Can't'

- I can play football.
- I cannot play football.
- I can't play football.
- Can I play football?
- Can I play football now?
- I can play football well.
- I can't play football today.
- Yes, I can.
- No, I can't.
- I can play football, can't I?

# Can, can't: Grammar Chart

## CAN / CAN'T – FORM & USE

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### FORM

#### POSITIVE

I/You/He/She/etc. **can** sing.

#### NEGATIVE

I/You/He/She/etc. **cannot** sing.  
I/You/He/She/etc. **can't** sing.

#### QUESTION

**Can** I/You/He/She/etc. **sing**?

#### SHORT ANSWER

**Yes**, I/You/He/She/etc. **can**.  
**No**, I/You/He/She/etc. **cannot**.  
**No**, I/You/He/She/etc. **can't**.

### USE

#### ABILITY

- ⇒ Laura **can** sing very well.
- ⇒ I **can't** speak German.

#### PERMISSION

- ⇒ **Can** I sit here?
- ⇒ You **can't** park your car here.

#### POSSIBILITY

- ⇒ I **can't** come to the party.
- ⇒ Can you go?

#### ORDERING / ASKING FOR SOMETHING

- ⇒ **Can** I have a soda, please?
- ⇒ Can you drive me to the station?

✗ She cans swim.

✓ She can swim.

✗ Do you can speak English?

✓ Can you speak English?

✗ I can't to come.

✓ I can't come.

COMMON

⚠

MISTAKES

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# Can, can't: Form - Infinitive without 'to'

- We use **can + infinitive** without **to**.
- I **can swim**. (Correct)
- I **can to swim**. (Incorrect)
- We **can't come**. (Correct)
- We **can't to come**. (Incorrect)

# Can, can't: Form - Don't use '-s' after he/she/it

- We don't add **-s** after **he/she/it**. We use **can** for all persons.
- He **can** swim. (Correct)
- He **cans** swim. (Incorrect)

# Can, can't: Form - Don't use 'do/don't'

- **Can** is an auxiliary verb and has a negative and interrogative form.
- We don't use **do/don't** to make questions and negatives.
- **Can** you swim? (Correct)
- **Do** you **can** swim? (Incorrect)
- He **can't** swim. (Correct)
- He **don't can** swim. (Incorrect)

# Can, can't: Use - Ability

- We use **can/can't** to talk about **ability** in the present (=things that we know how to do).
- Laura **can sing** very well.
- I **can't speak** German.

# Can, can't: Use - Possibility & Permission

- We use **can/can't** to ask for **permission** or to say if something is **possible** or not.
- **Can** I sit here?
- You **can't vote** if you aren't 18 years old.
- I'm sorry, but I **can't come** to the party.



# Can, can't: Use - Ask for something

- We use **can/can't** to **ask for something** and to **order** in bars, restaurants, shops, etc.
- **Can you lend** me some money?
- **Can I have** some water, please?
- **Can I have** a burger and a soda?