Unit 15 · Expressing Ability

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **ability**: what you **can** and **can't** do now; **could** and **couldn't** in the past
- everyone can do some things and can't do others

Getting started

- *The boy **can write**. The builder **can build** a wall.*
- *The boy **can't walk** without his crutch, but he **can play** football!* (not able to do one thing, still able to do many others)
- **song:** eight questions, each ***Can you ...?*** (swim, dive, ride a bike, run, jump, drive a car, sing, dance)
- answer short: ***Yes, I can.*** / ***No, I can't.***

Reading I: The Paralympic Games

- **disability** = a condition of body or mind that makes some things hard (seeing, hearing, walking)
- **Paralympic Games**: international sports for people with disabilities, **shortly after the Olympics, in the same city**
- *para* (Greek) = **beside**: beside the Olympics
- **athletes** from all over the world:
  - **spinal cord** injury → **paralysis** (can't move or feel a part of the body)
  - **missing limbs**; **wheelchairs**, **artificial limbs**
  - blind or seeing only a little
  - **intellectual** disabilities, in some events
- **IPC** (International Paralympic Committee): organizes them **since 1989**
- **two aims:** help athletes reach **excellence**; make the world **respect and admire** people with disabilities

Summer Games (more than a dozen sports)	Winter Games
archery, cycling, rowing, **sitting volleyball**, soccer, swimming, table tennis, **wheelchair basketball**, wheelchair fencing	**ice sledge hockey**, wheelchair curling, skiing

- **fair play:** athletes **compete** with others of **similar** abilities
  - special **equipment**: ice hockey players sit on a low sledge
  - a **guide** for an athlete who can't see
  - swimming and sitting volleyball: **no** wheelchairs or artificial limbs
- **how it began: 1948**, **Ludwig Guttmann**, a doctor, at **Stoke Mandeville Hospital**, England, the day the **London Olympics** opened
- the first athletes: men and women from the **army, navy and air force**, hurt in **World War II**, who couldn't use their legs (**veterans**)
- first Games called "Paralympic": **Rome, 1960**, about 400 athletes, 23 countries; Paris 2024: 4,000+
- **Palesha Goverdhan** (Kathmandu): bronze in taekwondo, Paris **2024**, **Nepal's first** Paralympic medal; Nepal first took part in 2004
- **respect:** talk to them as to anyone; **ask before helping**; keep ramps and paths clear; invite them to play

Key words

disability: a condition that makes some things hard to do.

athlete: a person who is good at sports and takes part.

paralysis: not able to move or feel a part of the body.

intellectual: to do with the mind, thinking and learning.

admiration: a feeling that someone is very good, worth respect.

compete: take part in a game or race to win.

excellence: being very, very good at something.

equipment: the tools you need for a job or a game (no -s).

expert: a person who knows a lot about one thing.

gadget: a small useful tool.

nifty: clever and useful.

predict: say what will happen before it happens.

flash: a sudden bright light; *in a flash* = very quickly.

make a splash: get a lot of attention.

Pronunciation: beats

- **syllable** = one beat; the loud beat in capitals:
  - par-a-**LYM**-pic
  - dis-a-**BIL**-i-ties
  - **WHEEL**-chairs
  - com-pe-**TI**-tions
  - **AR**-cher-y
  - **SOC**-cer
  - ar-ti-**FI**-cial
  - **ATH**-letes
- *athletes* has **two** beats: ATH-leets, not ath-a-leets

Grammar I: can and can't

- **can** = **able** to; **can't** (cannot) = **not able** to

- the same for everyone; after can, the **plain verb**: no -s, no *to*, no -ing

Yes	No	Question
*She **can swim**.*	*She **can't swim**.*	***Can** she **swim**?*
*They **can swim**.*	*They **can't swim**.*	***Can** they **swim**?*

- **cannot** is one word; **can't** its short form
- ***Can you** make me a cup of tea?* = a request
- *I can't believe it!* = what a surprise
- end of a sentence: *Fish can swim, but birds **can't**.*

Grammar II: could and couldn't

	now	in the past
able	**can**	**could**
not able	**can't**	**couldn't**

- *Now I can ride a bike. When I was four, I **couldn't**.*
- *Jack **couldn't** go to work yesterday because he was ill.*
- a past clue (*said, was, yesterday, when I was a child*) → **could / couldn't**
- **second job:** ***Could you** …? **Could I** …?* = a polite request, **now**, not the past (*Could you repeat the question, please?*); *could* is more polite than *can*

Reading II: My Phone (a poem)

- **Poet: Neal Levin**; four verses; the speaker is proud of a phone that can do everything
- **verse 1:** full of **gadgets**; **150 rings**; stores **a thousand numbers** and other **nifty** things
- **verse 2:** sends email and news; **predicts** tomorrow's weather; tells the time (no watch needed)
- **verse 3:** downloads **music**, takes photos **in a flash**, makes **videos and movies**; **makes a splash**
- **verse 4, the joke:** heard that long ago people used phones **to talk**, and isn't sure what that means; it forgot what a phone was made for
- rhymes: *rings / things, away / day, flash / splash, means / beings* (nearly)
- **Alexander Graham Bell**, first phone call, **1876**; camera phones about 2000

Writing: sports and a friend

- **sports I am good at:** the sport → the skills it needs → what I **can** do → how I practice → why I am good at it
- **what my friend can do:** name, age → what she **can** do → what she **can't** do yet → what she **couldn't** do before
- **project:** one interesting thing ten people can do; report

Speaking

- ***Can you** carry a load on your head?* → ***No, I can't.** It is too heavy for me.*
- ability pictures: *The frog **can jump**. The man **can't see**, but he **can walk** with his white cane.*
- **white cane:** tells others the person can't see well; **15 October**, White Cane Safety Day

Listening: Tom and Jane

Statement	
Tom can play the guitar well	**True**: very good at it
Tom takes guitar lessons	**False**: he listens to songs and plays what he hears
Jane can play the piano	**True**
Jane is very good at the piano	**False**

- the **madal**: a two-sided Nepali drum, hung from a strap, played with both hands

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ He can swims well.
✓ He can **swim** well.

✗ Can you to help me?
✓ Can you **help** me?

✗ She cans dance.
✓ She **can** dance.

✗ Can you swim? — Yes, I do.
✓ **Yes, I can.**

✗ I can't lift it yesterday.
✓ I **couldn't** lift it yesterday.

✗ can not
✓ **cannot** (one word) or **can't**

✗ a lot of equipments
✓ a lot of **equipment**