Unit 13 · Expressing Ability

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **ability**: what people **can** and **can't** do
- **reasons**: **because**, **since**, **as** + a whole sentence; **because of** + a noun

Song: what a hen can do

- *A hen can…*: lay a big brown egg, stand on one leg, run, walk, say *bawk*
- the turn: what a hen **can't** do: read and write, **like you**
- rhymes in pairs: *egg / leg, walk / bawk*
- **can** never changes (*a hen can*, never *cans*); the verb after it is plain (*can lay*, never *can lays*)
- negative: **can't** or **cannot** (one word); no *to*: *I can swim*, never *I can to swim*

Reading I: The Baby Quail

- a **Jataka** story: an old Buddhist tale of the Buddha's earlier lives

1. the **Enlightened Being** is born as a tiny **quail**: little feet and wings, but can't walk or fly yet; his parents feed him
2. a huge **forest fire**; every bird that can fly flies off at the first smoke; his parents stay by the nest, then must fly away too, or die
3. trees burning and **crackling**; he can't save himself; he seems **helpless**
4. he thinks of his parents: they loved him **unselfishly**, fed him without **greed**, stayed till the last moment, **risked** their lives, but **couldn't carry** him; he thanks them, wishes them safe, well and happy
5. wings, but can't fly; feet, but can't run; but he **can still think**: his mind is all he has left
6. the **miracle**: the Enlightened Being in him wakes up; he feels powerful; he wishes by the **power of truth** that every **trapped** creature is saved and the spot stays safe from fire for a **million years**; it happens

- the story turns on *can / can't*: he can't walk, fly or run; his parents can't carry him; he **can** think, be grateful, wish others well
- A (same meanings): nearer → **close**; sound → **noise**; powerless → **helpless**; surprising → **amazing**; out of danger → **safe**

Key words

enlightened: wise and free from wrong ideas.
quail: a small, round, brown bird that lives on the ground.
crackling: making short, sharp sounds, like wood in a fire.
helpless: not able to do anything to help yourself.
unselfishly: thinking of others before yourself.
greed: wanting more than you need.
risk: to put something in danger.
miracle: a wonderful thing that can't be explained.
trapped: caught in a place you can't get out of.

Speaking: can and can't

Question	Yes	No
Can you climb a tree?	Yes, I **can**.	No, I **can't**.
Can she sing?	Yes, she **can**.	No, she **can't**.

- a short answer stops at *can*: *Yes, I can.*, never *Yes, I can play.*; never *Yes, I can't* or *No, I can*
- the six pictures: sing, carry a heavy load, play the madal, dance, play football (one boy on a crutch), swim

Who can do what (✓ can, ✗ can't)

	Madan	Ashim	Aarim	Nima
play table tennis	✓	✓	✗	✓
ride a bike	✓	✗	✓	✗
type fast	✓	✓	✓	✗
speak Newari	✗	✗	✗	✓

- two abilities: *He can play table tennis **and** type fast.* · *She can't ride a bike **or** type fast.*
- after *can't*, **or**, not *and*
- **Newari** = the Newar people's language (its speakers: **Nepal Bhasa**)

Listening: a call to the hospital

- a phone call to a hospital's **inquiry desk**, in the **afternoon** (*Good afternoon*)
- **Pemba** works at the desk; **Phurba** wants to see a doctor: **Dr. Raghu Yadav**
- Phurba asks for **Tuesday morning**: no, the doctor comes in at **2 p.m.**
- Phurba works in an **office** (9 to 5) → best time **5:30 p.m.**
- Pemba **registers** Phurba's name
- to meet a doctor: phone or go, **register** at the desk, a ticket, wait your turn

Grammar: because, since, as, because of

Word	What follows	Example
because	a whole sentence (a verb)	*He was absent **because** he was sick.*
since	a whole sentence	***Since** I was hungry, I ate first.*
as	a whole sentence	***As** he wasn't ready, we went without him.*
because of	a noun or noun phrase (no verb)	*Amar won a prize **because of** his honesty.*

- test: **a verb in the reason?** yes → *because / since / as*; no → *because of* (*the traffic jam, his hard work*)
- **because**: the reason is **new** and important; usually **after** the main part; answers *Why?* alone (*Because the bus broke down.*)

- **since**, **as**: the reason is **known**, or matters less than the result; usually **first**, with a comma: *As we lost the quarterfinal, we couldn't play in the semi-final.*
- other meanings: *since* = **from a time** (*since 2075*); *as* = **while** (*As I was walking home, it began to rain*) or **like** (*Do as I say*)
- joining: a sentence after *because of* becomes a noun phrase: *There is a strike* → *because of* ***the strike***
- B: a, c **must** be *because of*; in b, d, e, f, g, *because*, *since*, *as* all fit
- *busy* ***with*** *other work*, not *in*

Writing

A. The Lion and the Rabbit (put in order: **i, d, j, e, b, f, h, a, c, g**)

1. a thick forest; a **lion** is its king
2. he orders the animals to come one by one, to be eaten
3. the **rabbit**'s turn; it arrives **late**
4. says there is **another king** in the forest
5. takes the lion to a deep **well**: his own **reflection** in the water
6. the lion jumps in to kill the "king" → is killed; the animals are happy

- a title: *The Lion and the Rabbit* / *The Clever Rabbit*
- from the **Panchatantra** (the lion **Bhasuraka**, a **hare**); also in the *Hitopadesha*
- **reflection**, the everyday word for what you see in water or a mirror

B. An interesting event

- answers **when**, **where**, **who**, **what happened**, **how you felt**
- in the order things happened, in the **past**

Reading II: On Another's Sorrow

- a poem by **William Blake** (1757–1827), English poet and painter; from *Songs of Innocence* (**1789**), printed and colored by hand
- a string of questions; every answer is **No**
- verses 1–2: can I see another's pain and not feel sad, not want to help? can a **father** see his child cry, a **mother** hear her baby **groan** or fear, without sorrow? → *No, never!*
- verses 3–4: can **"he who smiles on all"** (God) hear the **wren**'s grief, the babies' cries, and not sit by the **nest** pouring **pity**, by the **cradle** crying, wiping our tears day and night? → *No, never!*
- the idea: feeling another's sorrow is part of loving, not weakness
- sound: lines rhyme in pairs; short lines that beat like a song; the refrain *Never, never can it be!* twice

Word	Rhymes in the poem
hear	fear, near, tear (from the eye)
rest	nest, breast
hay	day, away
tall	all, small
leaf	grief, relief

- a father **can't** see his child cry, a mother **can't** hear her baby groan, without sorrow
- pity at the nest: **he who smiles on all**, not the mother bird
- words: **woe** great sadness · **grief** deep sorrow · **relief** pain or worry ending · **weep** cry · **infant** a baby · **groan** a low sound of pain · **wren** a tiny brown bird · **pity** sadness for someone suffering · **cradle** a baby's small bed

Project: a picture story

- the lion and the rabbit in about **six** pictures; one sentence in the **past** under each; pinned up in order

Extra bit: the twelve tenses

- 3 times (present, past, future) × 4 aspects = **12**

	Present	Past	Future
Simple	I **cook**	I **cooked**	I **will cook**
Continuous	I **am cooking**	I **was cooking**	I **will be cooking**
Perfect	I **have cooked**	I **had cooked**	I **will have cooked**
Perfect continuous	I **have been cooking**	I **had been cooking**	I **will have been cooking**

- **simple**: a fact, a habit, a finished action
- **continuous** (*be* + *-ing*): in progress at a time (*when you called*, *at seven tonight*)
- **perfect** (*have* + past participle): finished **before** a time (*by eight*, *before Dad came*)
- **perfect continuous** (*have been* + *-ing*): going on for a stretch **up to** a time (*for an hour*)
- the past perfect = the **earlier** of two past events: *The film* ***had started*** *when we arrived.*
- clues: *Look!* → present continuous; *By next Saturday* → future perfect; *for forty minutes* + *when the bus came* → past perfect continuous

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ She can sings well.
✓ She can **sing** well.

✗ He cans speak Newari.
✓ He **can** speak Newari.

✗ Can you to swim?
✓ Can you **swim**?

✗ I can not to come.
✓ I **can't** (cannot) **come**.

✗ Yes, I can play. (short answer)
✓ Yes, I **can**.

✗ She can't ride a bike and type fast.
✓ She can't ride a bike **or** type fast.

✗ The flight was late because the fog.
✓ The flight was late **because of** the fog.

✗ He was busy in other work.
✓ He was busy **with** other work.