Unit 13 · Ability and Reasons

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **ability**: **can / can't** (now), **could / couldn't** (the past); **reasons**: **because, since, as** + a sentence, **because of** + a noun
- a story (*A Terrifying Night*), a poem (*The Echoing Green*), two fables; the letter **r**; a news story

Getting started

- **can + plain verb** and a reason: *The runner **can run** fast, because he trains every day.*
- **song**: *Any … can …, few can …*: the easy half quick, the hard half needs patience, courage or skill
  - any man can **claim**, any girl can **blink**, any kid can **chatter**, any gang can **scatter**, any soul can **sleep**, any dog can **weep**
  - few can **find**, **land**, **form** a team, **inform**, **wait**

Reading I: A Terrifying Night

- told in the **first person** (*I, we*), looking back
- the steps:
  1. after a war, the writer and his brother stay with their **uncle**, back from **abroad**; he has **rented** a **cottage** but **rarely** stays: no comfortable furniture, broken windows, the roof **leaks**, the house **damp**
  2. after supper, stories of his **adventures** by the fire; the writer is very tired but **can't bear to miss** a story
  3. a loud **crash** upstairs, in the boys' bedroom; the uncle laughs: the roof must have fallen in
  4. the room full of **dust**; when it clears, a big piece of the **ceiling** has **collapsed** onto the writer's **pillow**: he could have been **injured**, even killed
  5. all sleep downstairs; next morning the boys leave for London; the uncle **gives up** the cottage
- **the twist**: staying up for the stories saved him; the uncle's joke came true
- answers:
  - stayed up: wanted to hear **all** the stories
  - the fallen ceiling was clear **after the dust began to clear**
  - **leaked** = let the rain in; **injured** = wounded
  - rented, not bought; not slept upstairs: the roof **might collapse at any moment**
- **telling it as the uncle**: *I, my nephews*, the past all through

Key words

abroad: in or to another country.
cottage: a small country house.
rent: pay to use someone else's house.
rarely: not often.
leak: let water in or out through a crack.
damp: a little wet, unpleasantly.
adventure: an exciting, sometimes dangerous experience.
can't bear to: really don't want to.
terrifying: very frightening.
exclaim: say suddenly and loudly.
collapse: fall down suddenly.
injured: hurt, wounded.
give up: stop having or doing.
mocking: laughing unkindly.
consent: agree to.
overtake: catch up and go past.
merry: happy, cheerful.
folk: people.
weary: very tired.
descend: go down.
arise: come up, rise.

Pronunciation: the letter r

- **British**: r is said only before a **vowel sound**; at the end of a word or before a consonant it is silent (the vowel a little longer)
- **American**: every r is said; both right, keep to one
- **r said**: train, story, roof, very, the first r of brother
- **r silent** (British): war, for, our, were, other, wear, the last r of brother, otherwise
- *war* /wɔː/ rhymes with *saw*; *wear* /weə/ with *air*
- **linking r**: a vowel next → the r comes back: *for an hour*, *our uncle*

Grammar I: can and could

	Now	The past
able	*I **can** swim.*	*I **could** swim when I was six.*
not able	*I **can't** (cannot) swim.*	*I **couldn't** swim then.*
question	***Can** you swim?*	***Could** you swim when you were six?*
short answer	*Yes, I **can**. No, I **can't**.*	*Yes, I **could**. No, I **couldn't**.*

- after can / could: the **plain verb** (not *can swims*, *can to swim*)
- **can** never takes **-s**; *cannot* is one word
- questions: **can** comes first, no *do* (*Can he drive?*, not *Does he can drive?*)
- could for the past: look for a past time (*when I was a child, last year*); *could* also = polite requests, guesses
- from the story: *The writer **could see** nothing **because of** the thick dust. They **couldn't sleep** upstairs **because** the roof might fall in.*
- answers: **Can he** drive a car? · Yes, **they can**. · **couldn't swim** · **Could you** draw · **can swim**

Grammar II: because, since, as, because of

Word	Then	Example
because	a sentence (with a verb)	*He can't run **because** he hurt his leg.*
since	a sentence	***Since** it was raining, we played indoors.*
as	a sentence	***As** she was tired, she went to bed early.*
because of	a noun or pronoun, no verb	*He can't run **because of** his bad leg.*

- **since, as** usually start the sentence, a comma after the reason; **because** usually in the middle

- test: cover the word, look at what follows: a verb → **because**; only a noun → **because of**
- answers (D): because of (the storm) · since · As · because of (his illness) · as · since · As · because of (the rain) · because of (her) · because · because of (the traffic) · because (the traffic **was** terrible)
- answers (II): because of the rain · because he was feeling dizzy · because of your mother · because it was raining · because of the traffic · because the traffic was terrible · because he knew · because of his illness · because of the strike · Because of the language problem

Listening: what can they do?

- a girl and a boy, **Billy**, on sports, music, cooking

	Can	Can't
girl	basketball, baseball, run pretty fast	jump very high, soccer (kicking), sing, an instrument
boy	basic cooking, an **omelet**, bake **cookies**	an instrument (no talent), cook very well

- **soccer** = American for **football**

Speaking

- a *Can you…?* question → a **short answer**: *Yes, I can. / No, I can't.*
- **find someone who…**: report *Sujan **can** name ten colors.*
- jobs: *A farmer **can grow** vegetables. A dentist **can treat** you when you have a toothache. A magician **can do** tricks.* (farmer iv · painter vii · cook i · musician ii · carpenter xi · teacher viii · magician x · dentist v · waiter iii · scientist ix · police officer vi)
- a reason that **fits**: *Naren **can't** help you because he is busy. Shital **can** help you because she is good at math.*

Writing

- **a lucky escape**: when and where → what you were doing → what happened → how it ended, how you felt
  - **past simple** for the events, **past continuous** for what was going on (*We **were eating** when the lights went out.*)
- **The Hare and the Tortoise** (Aesop): the order **e, j, h, g, f, b, i, c, a, d**
  - clues: *a hare* introduces him; question before answer; the fox (judge) starts the race; the hare naps; the tortoise passes him; his last run too late
  - lesson: **slow and steady wins the race**
- **The Thirsty Crow**, from hints, in the past:
  - *searches → searched, finds → found, can't → couldn't, is → was, has → had, picks → picked, drops → dropped, rises → rose, can → could*
  - join with *one hot day, at last, but, because, so, one by one*
  - moral: **where there is a will, there is a way**
- **a poem described** in the **present simple**: *The poem **describes** … The sun **shines** … Birds **sing** …*
  - answers: describes, shines, looks, **is** (the sound), sing, mix, sit, play, is, are, watch, think, becomes, comes, grow, return
  - *The sound of bells* is one thing → **is**
- **project:** five workers: name, profession, can do, can't do: *Nitesh is a driver. He can drive a bus, but he can't fly an airplane.*

Reading II: The Echoing Green (a poem)

- by **William Blake**, English poet and painter, *Songs of Innocence* (**1789**); a **green** = a village's open grassy space; **echoing** with bells, birds, children
- one day in three parts:
  1. **morning**: the sun makes the skies **happy**; bells welcome the **spring**; the **skylark** and **thrush** sing; children play
  2. **midday**: **Old John**, **white hair**, under an **oak** with the old **folk**; they laugh and remember their own young days on the same green
  3. **evening**: the little ones are **weary**; the sun **descends**; like birds in a nest they gather round their **mothers' laps**; the green **darkening**
- short lines, a quick beat, rhyming pairs
- the day = a life (morning childhood, Old John old age, evening rest); joy passes from one generation to the next

Extra bit: a news story

- **headline** (a few words, a present verb) → **dateline** (where, when, the agency, **Xinhua**) → **lead** (who, what, where, when) → **details**, most important first
- **Nepal Wins Three Nations Football Tournament**:
  - **29 March** (2021), Dasharath Stadium, Kathmandu; Nepal beat **Bangladesh 2–1**
  - Nepal: **Sanjog Rai** (18th minute), **Bishal Rai** (41st)
  - Bangladesh: **Mahbubur Rahman** (83rd minute)
  - prize **5,000 US dollars** (runners-up 3,000); organized by **ANFA**
  - not their first final: the **1st South Asian Games** (**1984**, Kathmandu, Nepal won) and the 8th (**1999**, Bangladesh won)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ Can you to speak French?
✓ Can you **speak** French?

✗ My brother cans play the guitar.
✓ My brother **can** play the guitar.

✗ When I was five, I can't read.
✓ When I was five, I **couldn't** read.

✗ Does she can swim?
✓ **Can she** swim?

✗ He couldn't sleep because of the dogs were barking.
✓ … **because** the dogs were barking.

✗ I am late because the traffic.
✓ I am late **because of** the traffic.