English Modal Verb: Can / Can't

(PT: saber, conseguir, poder)

There are four contexts for the modal verb 'can' – ability, possibility, request (or offer) and permission. The word 'can' is always followed by a verb in the base form (without 'to'), and we don't use auxiliary verbs with 'can'. There is only one form of the modal verb 'can':

I can	we can
he can	they can
she can	you can
it can	

1. Ability

- I can play the piano.
- I can't play the guitar.
- I can play football.
- I can speak English but I can't speak French.
- He can play football but he can't play basketball.
- Can you play chess? Yes, I can.
- Can he play tennis? No, he can't.

2. Possibility

- Can you hear me? Yes, I can.
- Can you work late today? No, I can't.
- I can't work tomorrow, I'm sick.

3. Request/Offer

- Can you help me, please? Yes, of course.
- Can I help you? Yes please.
- Can you send it to me by email? No problem.
- Can you pay the bill? Leave it with me.

4. Permission

- Can I sit here? Yes.
- Can I have a menu, please? Certainly.
- Can you give me a menu, please? Here it is.
- Can I go to the bathroom, please? Yes, sure.
- Can I drink some water, please? Of course.

Exercise: Translate using *can* or *can't:*

1. Ele sabe cozinhar.

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2. Eu não sei nadar, mas sei correr.

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3. Ele não consegue me ver.

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4. Você pode me emprestar uma caneta?

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5. Ela sabe falar inglês? Não, ela não sabe.

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6. Você pode ir para minha festa amanhã? Sim, posso.

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