## The Use of "Can" & "Could"

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## **Possibility and impossibility**

We use could to show that <u>something is possible</u>, but not certain:

They *could come* by car. (= Maybe they will come by car.)

We use can to make general statements about what is possible:

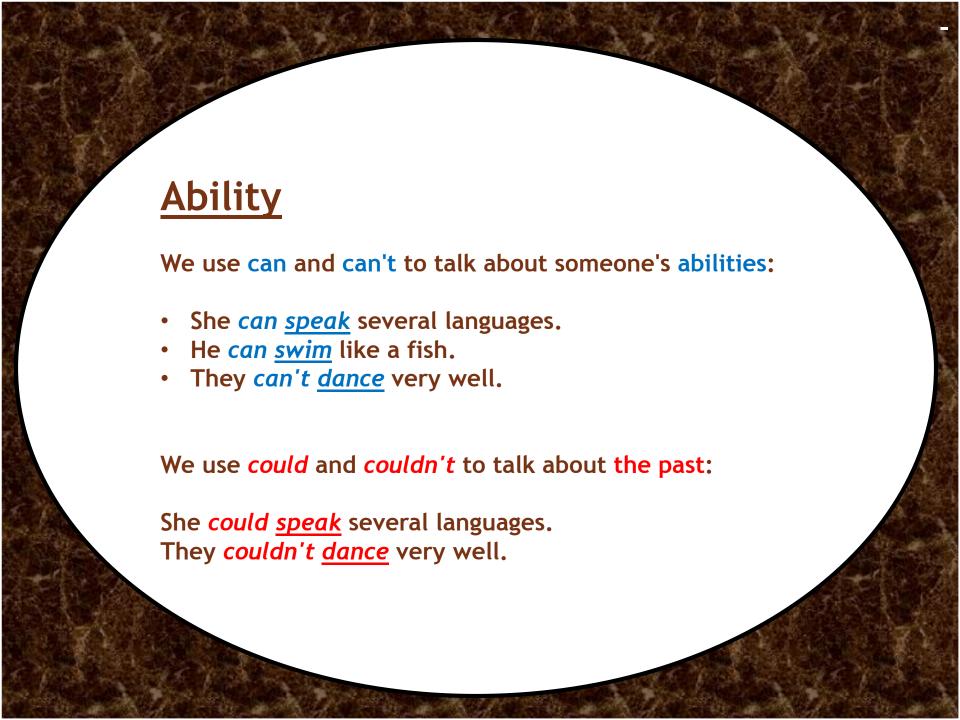
It *can be* very cold here in winter. (= It is sometimes very cold here in winter.)

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We use can't or cannot to say that something is impossible:

That can't be true.

You cannot be serious.



## **Permission**

We use can to ask for permission to do something:

Can I <u>ask</u> a question, please?
Can we <u>go</u> home now?

could is more formal and polite than can:

Could I <u>ask</u> a question please? Could we <u>go</u> home now?

## Thank You