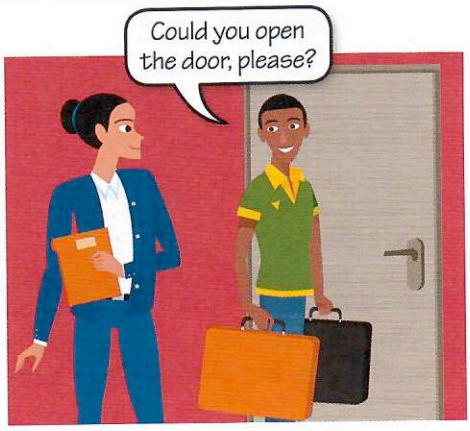
Unit 30

can and could

A



He **can play** the piano.



can + *infinitive* (**can do** / **can play** / **can come** etc.):

I/we/you/they he/she/it	**can** **can't (cannot)**	**do** **play** **see** **come** etc.

can	I/we/you/they he/she/it	**do?** **play?** **see?** **come?** etc.

B

I can do something = I *know how* to do it, or *it is possible* for me to do it:

- I **can play** the piano. My brother **can play** the piano too.
- Sarah **can speak** Italian, but she **can't speak** Spanish.
- A: **Can** you **swim**?
  B: Yes, but I'm not a very good swimmer.
- A: **Can** you **change** twenty pounds?
  B: I'm sorry, I **can't**.
- I'm having a party next week, but Paul and Rachel **can't come**.

C

For the past (yesterday / last week etc.), we use **could**/**couldn't**:

- When I was young, I **could run** very fast.
- Before Maria came to Britain, she **couldn't understand** much English. Now she **can understand** everything.
- I was tired last night, but I **couldn't sleep**.
- I had a party last week, but Paul and Rachel **couldn't come**.

D

Can you ... ? Could you ... ? Can I ... ? Could I ... ?

We use **Can you ... ?** or **Could you ... ?** when we ask people to do things:

- **Can you** open the door, please? *or* **Could you** open the door, please?
- **Can you** wait a moment, please? *or* **Could you** wait ... ?

We use **Can I have ... ?** or **Can I get ... ?** to ask for something:

- **Can I have** a glass of water, please? *or* **Can I get** ... ?

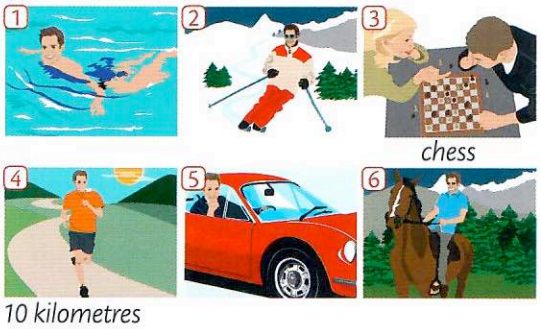
Can I ... ? or **Could I ... ?** = is it OK to do something?:

- **Can I** sit here?
- Tom, **could I** borrow your umbrella?

May I ... ? ➜ **Unit 29**

Exercises

30.1 Ask Steve if he can do these things:





You — Steve

1 Can you swim?
2 .....
3 .....
4 .....
5 .....
6 .....

Can you do these things? Write sentences about yourself. Use **I can** or **I can't**.

7 I .....
8 .....
9 .....
10 .....
11 .....
12 .....

30.2 Complete these sentences. Use **can** or **can't** + one of these verbs:

~~come~~ **find** **hear** **see** **speak**

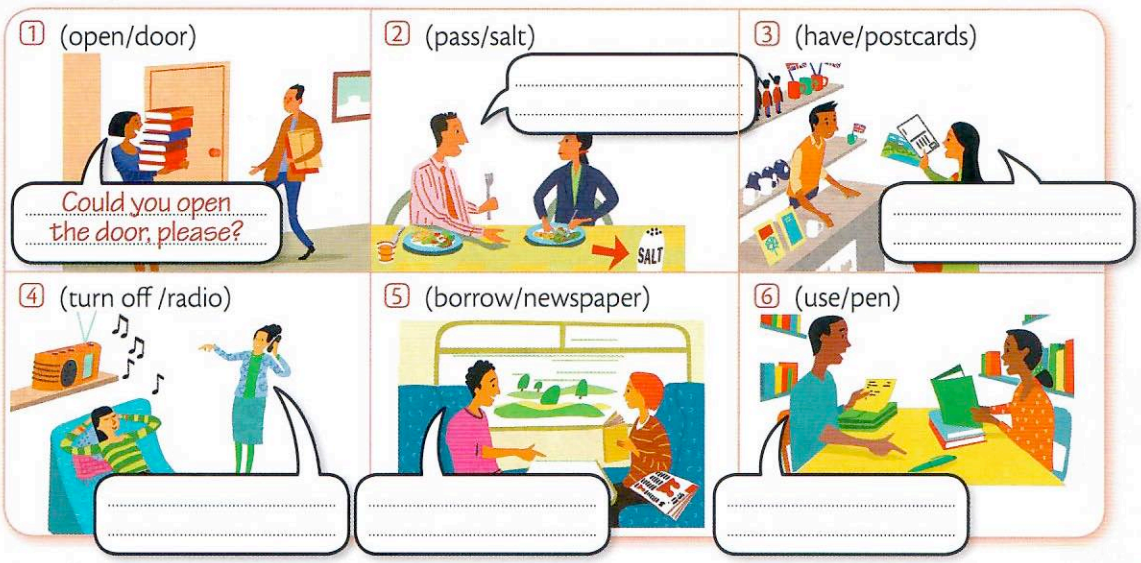
1 I'm sorry, but we *can't come* to your party next Saturday.
2 I like this hotel room. You ..... the mountains from the window.
3 You are speaking very quietly. I ..... you.
4 Have you seen my bag? I ..... it.
5 Catherine got the job because she ..... five languages.

30.3 Complete these sentences. Use **can't** or **couldn't** + one of these verbs:

decide **eat** **find** **go** **go** ~~**sleep**~~

1 I was tired, but I *couldn't sleep*.
2 I wasn't hungry yesterday. I ..... my dinner.
3 Kate doesn't know what to do. She ..... .
4 I wanted to speak to Mark yesterday, but I ..... him.
5 James ..... to the concert next Saturday. He has to work.
6 Paula ..... to the meeting last week. She was ill.

30.4 What do you say in these situations? Use **can** or **could**.



Unit 32

should

A



should + *infinitive*
(**should do** / **should watch** etc.):

I/we/you/they he/she/it	**should** **shouldn't**	**do** **stop** **go** **watch** etc.

B

You **should** do something = it is a good thing to do, it is the right thing to do:

- Tom doesn't study enough. He **should study** harder.
- It's a good film. You **should go** and see it.
- When you play tennis, you **should** always **watch** the ball.

C

You **shouldn't** do something = it is not a good thing to do.
Shouldn't = should not:

- Tom **shouldn't go** to bed so late.
- You watch TV all the time. You **shouldn't watch** TV so much.

D

We often say **I think** ... **should** ...

I think ... **should** ... :

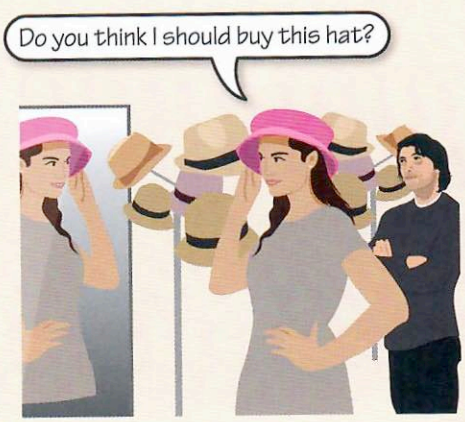
- **I think** Lisa **should buy** some new clothes.
  (= I think it is a good idea.)
- It's late. **I think** I **should go** home now.
- A: Shall I buy this coat?
  B: Yes, **I think** you **should**.

I don't think ... **should** ... :

- **I don't think** you **should work** so hard.
  (= I don't think it is a good idea.)
- **I don't think** we **should go** yet. It's too early.

Do you think ... **should** ... ?:

- **Do you think** I **should buy** this hat?
- What time **do you think** we **should go** home?



E

Must is stronger than **should**:

- It's a **good** film. You **should** go and see it.
- It's a **fantastic** film. You **must** go and see it.

F

Another way to say **should** is **ought to**:

- It's a good film. You **ought to go** and see it. (= you should go)
- I think Lisa **ought to buy** some new clothes. (= Lisa should buy)

shall → Units 27–28 **must** → Unit 31

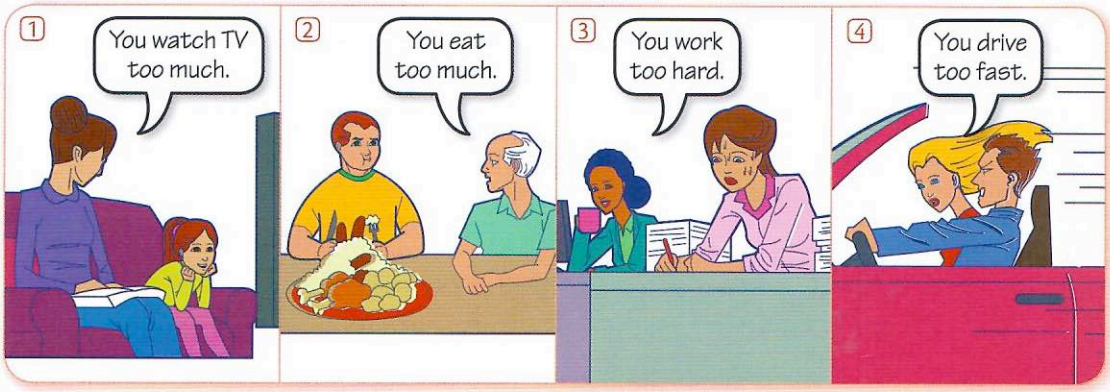
Exercises

32.1 Complete the sentences. Use **you should** + these verbs:

eat **go** **take** **visit** ~~**watch**~~ **wear**

1 When you play tennis, you should watch the ball.
2 It's late and you're very tired. ..... to bed.
3 ..... plenty of fruit and vegetables.
4 If you have time, ... the Science Museum. It's very interesting.
5 When you're driving, ... a seat belt.
6 It's too far to walk from here to the station. ..... a taxi.

32.2 Write about the people in the pictures. Use **He/She shouldn't ... so ...** .



1 She shouldn't watch TV so much.
2 He .....
3 ..... hard.
4 .....

32.3 You are not sure what to do, so you ask a friend. Write questions with **Do you think I should ... ?**

1 You are in a shop. You are trying on a jacket. (buy?)
You ask your friend: Do you think I should buy this jacket?
2 You can't drive. (learn?)
You ask your friend: Do you think .....
3 You don't like your job. (get another job?)
You ask your friend: .....
4 You are going to have a party. (invite Gary?)
You ask your friend: .....

32.4 Write sentences with **I think ... should ...** and **I don't think ... should ...** .

1 We have to get up early tomorrow. (go home now) I think we should go home now.
2 That coat is too big for you. (buy it) I don't think you should buy it.
3 You don't need your car. (sell it) .....
4 Karen needs a rest. (have a holiday) .....
5 Sarah and Dan are too young. (get married) .....
6 You're not well this morning. (go to work) .....
7 James isn't well today. (go to the doctor) .....
8 The hotel is too expensive for us. (stay there) .....

32.5 What do you think? Write sentences with **should**.

1 I think everybody should learn another language.
2 I think everybody .....
3 I think .....
4 I don't think .....
5 I think I should .....