

Unit 28: CAN

Can is a modal verb. Unit 27 shows you how to make correct sentences with it. This unit shows you when you can use it.

1 Ability

- a GENERAL** **EXAMPLES:** She **can assist** a customer.
He is an employee but he **cannot make** a sale.
- NOTICE:** **cannot** is one word
- b NOW** **EXAMPLES:** **Can** you **see** the sale sign?
I **can't see** the small one.
- c FUTURE** **EXAMPLES:** I'm afraid I **can't see** you this week but I can next week.
- NOTICE:** also **be able to** (Unit 36)

2 Possibility

- a GENERAL** **EXAMPLES:** Saturdays **can be** very busy days to shop.
- b NOT POSSIBLE** **EXAMPLES:** You **can't be** shopping now, you don't have any money.
They **can't have got** their money back. They didn't have their receipts.
- NOTICE:** use **must** (Unit 33) for strong probability

3 Permission

- a STATEMENT** **EXAMPLES:** You **cannot return** merchandise without a receipt.
Customers **can return** merchandise with a receipt.
- NOTICE:** more friendly than **may** (Unit 30)
- b REQUEST** **EXAMPLES:** **Can I pay** by debit?
Can I have a receipt please?
- NOTICE:** **could** (Unit 29) is more polite

4 Asking for help

EXAMPLES: Can you **give** me a hand?
Can you **tell** me the time?

NOTICE: also **could** (Unit 29); also **will** (Unit 31)

5 Polite offers

EXAMPLES: Can I **help** you?
Can I **get** you larger size?

NOTICE: also **will** (Unit 31); also **shall** (Unit 31)