COMITÉ TÉCNICO DE ÁRBITROS

GRAMMAR

CAN (*poder* or *saber*)

PRESENT SIMPLE

Can is an auxiliary verb, a modal auxiliary verb. We use **can** to:

- talk about possibility and ability
- make requests
- ask for or give permission

Structure of Can

subject + can + main verb

The main verb is always the bare infinitive (infinitive without "to")

	subject	auxiliary verb	main verb	
+	I	**can**	play	tennis.
-	He	**cannot**	play	tennis.
		can't		
?	**Can**	you	play	tennis?

Use of can

1) Possibility and Ability

We use *can* to talk about what is possible, what we can do:

- She **can** drive a car
- John **can** speak Spanish
- I **cannot** hear you. (I **can't** hear you)

- **Can** you hear me?

2) Requests and Orders

We often use *can* in a question to ask somebody to do something. This is not a real question but we do not really want to know if the person can do something, we want them to do it! The use of **can** in this way is informal (mainly between friends and family):

- **Can** you make a cup of coffee, please?
- **Can** you put the TV on?
- **Can** you come here a minute?
- **Can** you be quiet!

3) Permission

We sometimes use *can* to ask or give permission for something:

- **Can** I smoke in this room?
- You **can't** smoke here, but you **can** smoke in the garden.

Notice that

- *Can* is underline invariable. There is only one form of *can*.
- The main verb is always the bare infinitive.
- Short answers in questions:

Can you sing? –> Yes, I **can**/ No, I **can't** or No, I **cannot**.

The main verb is always the bare infinitive (infinitive without "to"). We cannot say: **I can ~~to~~ play tennis**

PAST SIMPLE

The past simple of CAN is **COULD**

+ = She **could** swim when she was nine years old.

- = She **could not (= couldn't)** swim when she was nine years old.

? = **Could** she swim when she was nine years old? -> Yes, she **could**/ No, she **couldn't** or No, she **could not**.