

MODAL VERB: COULD

PAST SIMPLE

Used to talk about what someone or something was able or allowed to do:

- *She walked off before I could say anything.*
- *I could never have achieved this without the encouragement of my husband and family.*
- *I could see by the look on their faces that something was wrong.*
- *I wish I could find (the) time to do more reading.*
- *Even when you win a match you always feel you could have played better.*

PERMISSION

Used as a more polite form of "can" when asking for permission:

- *Could I borrow your pen?*
- *Could we see her now, please?*
- *Could I have some more pudding?*
- *Could I use your bathroom, please?*
- *Could I leave the children with you this morning?*

REQUEST

Used as a more polite form of "can" when asking someone to provide something or do something:

- *Please could you explain why you're so late.*
- *I'm frozen - could you close the window?*
- *I've got rather a full week next week - could we postpone our meeting?*
- *If you could get that report finished by Thursday I'd be very grateful.*
- *Ben, could you hand round the biscuits?*

POSSIBILITY

Used to express possibility, especially slight or uncertain possibility:

- *A lot of crime could be prevented.*
- *She could arrive anytime now.*
- *This new drug could be an important step in the fight against cancer.*

- *Be careful with that stick - you could **have** hit your sister!*

SUGGESTION

Used for making a suggestion:

- *You could offer to buy her a new one.*
- *Could you get a bigger house?*
- *We could try mending it with glue.*
- *I could look after Toby for you.*
- *We could have lunch one day.*

ASK PERMISSION (Present Tense)

Used as a more polite form of can when asking for permission:

- *Could I speak to Mr. Harley, please?*

COULD: FORM

AFFIRMATIVE FORM:

Could comes first in the verb phrase (after the subject and before another verb):

- *We could have lunch early.*

Could cannot be used with another modal verb:

- *We could drive to France*
 - ~~Not: We could might drive to France. or We might could drive to France.~~

NEGATIVE FORM

The negative form of could is couldn't. We don't use don't/doesn't/didn't with could:

- *He couldn't lift that. It's too heavy.*
 - ~~Not: He didn't could lift that ...~~

We can use the full form *could not* in formal contexts or when we want to emphasise something:

- *Fabio was frightened. He could not move his arm. It was stuck.*

QUESTION FORM

The subject and *could* change position to form questions. We don't use *do/does/did*:

- *Could I pay by credit card?*
 - Not: ~~Do I could pay by credit card?~~

We use *could* and *couldn't* in question tags:

- *I could come back tomorrow, couldn't I?*

Conteúdo extraído do site:
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pt/gramatica/gramatica-britanica/modals-and-modality/could>