A modal auxiliary verb is used to modify the mood of a verb. Here is a list of the modal auxiliary verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can-Could</th>
<th>May-Might</th>
<th>Shall-Should</th>
<th>Will-Would</th>
<th>Must-Have to</th>
<th>Dought to-Had better</th>
<th>Used to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Can:** “Can” is used to express ability, willingness, permission, or possibility. The negative of can is “cannot” or the contraction “can’t”.

Example: I **can** cook dinner.

In this example “can” expresses the **ability** to cook dinner.

Example: **Can** you pass me the ketchup?

In this example “**Can**” expresses the **willingness** pass me the ketchup.

Example: **Can** I use your pencil?

In this example “**Can**” expresses the **permission** to use your pencil.

Example: Intense light **can** hurt your eyes.

In this example “**can**” expresses the **possibility** of intense light to hurt your eyes.

**Directions:** Say how “**can**” is used in each sentence. Circle “A” if it is used to express ability, “W” if it is used to express willingness, “Per” if it is used to express permission and “Pos” if it is used to express possibility.

1) I can tie my shoes.  **A  W  Per  Pos**

2) Can I have a piece of gum? **A  W  Per  Pos**

3) If you ride a motorcycle, you can fall.  **A  W  Per  Pos**

4) Can you get me a drink of water? **A  W  Per  Pos**

5) I can speak English well.   **A  W  Per  Pos**
6) He can use my basketball if he wants to.  A  W  Per  Pos

7) Can they clean my car while I am at work?  A  W  Per  Pos

8) Can squirrels fly?  A  W  Per  Pos

9) It can snow if it gets very cold.  A  W  Per  Pos

10) I can help you with your homework if you like.  A  W  Per  Pos

Directions: Now make your own sentences using “can”.

1) ________________________________

2) ________________________________

Could: “Could” has at least three functions. First, it can replace “can” and give the phrase a more conditional tone. Second, it can function as a the past tense of “can”. Third, it can function in the same way as “might” or “may”, suggesting that something is a possibility. The negative of can is “could not” or the contraction “couldn’t”.

Example: You could have been an astronaut if you wanted to.

In this example “could” expresses the conditional ability to be an astronaut in the past.

Example: He couldn’t let me have his pencil because he needed it.

In this example “couldn’t” expresses the lack of permission to have his pencil in the past.

Example: Jane could be at the store right now.

In this example “could” expresses the possibility that Jane is at the store in the present. “Could” functions the same way as “might” or “may” in this sentence.

Directions: Circle the correct auxiliary modal verb in each sentence.

Example: I (can, could) jump very high in college.

1) I (could, can) help you with your homework now.

2) Five years ago, I (cannot, couldn’t) play the piano.

3) I (can, could) get an A on the test.
4) I (can, could) run ten miles if I train hard enough.

5) We (can, could) speak English well.

6) Matt (could, can) be sick today.

7) The volleyball team (can, could) go to the Olympics this year if they are lucky.

8) I think I (can, could) help you learn math if you promise to study hard.

9) (Can, Could) we go to the zoo tomorrow?

10) I (cannot, couldn’t) run that fast when I was six years old.

Directions: Now make your own sentences using “could”.

1) ________________________________________________________________

2) ________________________________________________________________