

Language and learning

8.1 The amazing human brain

Grammar ability (*can, be able to*)

1a Replace the words in bold using *be able to*.

- 1 My **sister can't** walk because she has broken her leg.
My sister isn't able to walk because she has broken her leg.
- 2 Can you **lend me some money** to go to a concert?

- 3 I **can** drive but I haven't got a car.

- 4 We **can** see the sea from the window of our room.

- 5 Can your **boyfriend** speak any foreign languages?

- 6 I'm tired because I **can't** sleep at night.

PRONUNCIATION *to in be able to*

- 8.1))) Listen and check. Notice the weak /tə/ pronunciation of *to* in each sentence.
 - 8.1))) Listen again. Pause the CD and repeat after each sentence.
- 2 Complete the sentences with *can* or *can't* where possible. If not, use *be able to* in the correct form.
 - 1 I can cook, but not as well as my mother.
 - 2 I _____ finish your book by the end of the week, I'm sorry.
 - 3 My nephew _____ play chess very well - he has won several competitions.
 - 4 My grandparents _____ use a computer. They have never learnt.
 - 5 Oh no, it's raining! We _____ have a barbecue tonight.
 - 6 We _____ afford to go on a holiday this year, because we haven't got enough money.

- 3 Complete the text with *can, can't* or the correct form of *be able to* with the verbs in brackets.

Preparing for the future

Scientists say that there are many ways we ¹ can keep (keep) our brains healthy, so that we ² _____ (have) a normal life when we are older.

Learn a new activity

Think of something that you ³ _____ (not do) but you would like to learn: another language perhaps, or a musical instrument. Learning something new exercises your brain, so that you ⁴ _____ (deal) better with new situations in the future.

Do some exercise

A healthy body means a healthy brain. Doctors say that regular exercise might ⁵ _____ (stop) the brain getting ill with Alzheimer's, for example. People who don't go walking, running or swimming might have problems in later life because they ⁶ _____ (sleep).

Have fun

Going out with friends and spending time with relatives ⁷ _____ (make) you feel more positive about life. As you grow older, you will do different things together, but if you have friends, you ⁸ _____ (phone) someone for a chat at any time of the day.

Listen to the silence

You don't have to be active all of the time, and it is important to find a moment when you ⁹ _____ (relax). Our brains need time to rest, as well as our bodies, so that we don't feel stressed. This also prepares us for the future, when we ¹⁰ _____ (not go out) every day.

Vocabulary skills and abilities

4 Complete the table with the phrases in the box.

I'm brilliant I'm good I'm not very good I'm OK
I'm quite good I'm really good I'm very good
I'm terrible I'm useless

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+++		
++		
+	I'm OK	
-		
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5 Use the words to write sentences.

1 My girlfriend / quite good / make speeches.

My girlfriend is quite good at making speeches.

2 You / very good / tell jokes.

3 She / brilliant / organize events.

4 I / not very good / solve computer problems.

5 My husband / terrible / remember people's names.

6 They / good / spell.

7 I / OK / follow instructions.

8 We / useless / make decisions.

9 My daughter / really good / learn languages.

10 I / useless / telling jokes.

6 Complete paragraphs 1–4 with the adjectives in brackets and the correct form of the verbs in the box. Then match the paragraphs to the photos a–d. Write the letter of the photo in the space.

explain fix follow give learn make organize
remember solve take tell understand



- 1 He's quite good at remembering people's names (quite good), but he _____ computer problems (useless). He _____ things clearly (very good). Photo ____
- 2 She _____ events (good), but she _____ languages (not very good). She _____ speeches (very good). Photo ____
- 3 He _____ how things work (very good) and he _____ directions (OK). He _____ things that are broken (really good). Photo ____
- 4 She _____ instructions (quite good) but she _____ jokes (terrible). She _____ care of people (brilliant). Photo ____

I can ...

talk about ability.

Very well

Quite well

More practice

talk about skills and abilities.