



Can, Could, Be Able To Common Mistakes



Luckily, I could find my keys
after searching for a hour! 

When talking about a one-time past success of failure, we need the verb “be able to”.



Luckily, I could find my keys
after searching for a hour! 

Luckily, I was able to find my
keys after searching for a hour! 



Yesterday, I can't finish my
report. X

Past ability requires could/couldn't. In the case of
success/failure, you could also use "be able to".



Yesterday, I can't finish my
report. X

Yesterday, I couldn't finish my
report. ✓



I can send it tomorrow. **X**

Generally, future plans should use “be able to”.
However, many native speakers may use can in this case.



I can send it tomorrow. 

I'll be able to send it tomorrow. 



Excuse me, can you open the
window?



When asking politely, especially requesting, it's
better to use could.



Excuse me, can you open the window?



Excuse me, could you open the window?

