



Discuss The Phrase **Answers**

Read each sentence then identify the function of the word in bold. What is the speaker trying to express - ability, request, permission, suggestion, possibility, success/failure, skill.

1. I **can** play the guitar really well.
General ability/skill in the present tense.
2. **Could** you help me carry these bags?
Polite request.
3. Sorry, I **couldn't** finish the report yesterday.
Specific past inability/failure. You could also use "was't able to".
4. I'll **be able to** join the meeting tomorrow.
Formal future ability.
5. You **can** borrow my car if you need it.
Informal permission.
6. When I was younger, I **could** run very fast.
General ability/skill in the past tense.
7. I'm not sure, but we **could** go see a movie tonight.
Polite suggestion and hypothetical plan for the future.
8. He **was able to** solve the problem after hours of work.
Specific past success.
9. **Can** you open the window, please?
Informal request.

10. I've never **been able to** eat spicy food.

Present perfect inability.

11. **Could** I ask you a personal question?

Polite formal request.

12. She **can't** swim very well.

General inability/skill in the present tense.

13. We **can** see the mountains from here on a clear day.

Present possibility.

14. I **could** hear someone calling my name outside.

General ability/perception in the past tense.

15. They **will be able to** finish the project before the deadline.

Future ability/success.