



COULD

Grammar:

COULD

In English, we usually use COULD /couldn't as an equivalent to

1/CAN in the past:

a) **For the verbs of perception FEEL, HEAR, SMELL, SEE and TASTE, but also mental verbs such as REMEMBER and UNDERSTAND.**

Example:

She could smell something burning from where she was at the time.

I couldn't understand what he was saying.

b) **To refer to a capacity or permission we used to have:**

Example: When he was young, he could run the marathon (=he was fit enough to run marathons)

NB: In a specific situation, we use BE ABLE TO:

Example: Yesterday, I was able to repair my mother's car (=I had the capacity to repair my mother's car yesterday ONLY)

2) CAN in the future:

a) **To refer to possible actions or to make suggestions in the future:**

Example: Tomorrow night, she couldn't go to the restaurant with Tom because she is meeting Sam.

When we finish work, we could go to the cinema if you want.

b) **To refer to unrealistic actions or very unlikely to happen:**

Example: I am so happy I could die. (= we use the phrase when we are overjoyed)

The witness could tell the truth today but she is too afraid to speak (=she will probably keep quiet)



Dialogue :

COULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR, PLEASE?

- Sarah: Hi, how are you. I didn't expect to see you in this bookshop!
- Wentworth: I am like you, Sarah. Sometimes, I want to purchase books. I like serendipity so I always have a look in secondhand bookshops, you could find gems!
- Sarah: I agree with you. I think I just found a great book but... if you don't mind me asking. Could you do me a favor, please?
- Wentworth: What is it?
- Sarah: I'm a bit short and I can't reach one book on the top shelf... Could you help me? Could you take the red book called 'numerus clausus' next to the big light green novel by Virginia Woolf?
- Wentworth: Yes. Here you go.
- Sarah: Thanks. Sometimes it is a bit tricky to find a book and take it.
- Wentworth: If I didn't know you, I could think I'm discussing with one of my sisters. You purchase books like clothes. I mean you spot one on a shelf, with a nice cover and you flip the pages over.
- Sarah: That's partly true! Some authors are totally unknown. If I need a specific book, I'll buy it in a regular store. But, when I come here, it's true, I choose differently. The cover of the book, the design, the smell of the book, the font, if there's any writing in it. They are hidden treasures for me.
- Wentworth: For me, half are decent. The other half is made of books people got rid of. I mean, biographies of reality tv stars or photobooks about boybands from 10-20 years ago cannot be considered as gems.
- Sarah: Except if you are a die-hard fan. As the saying goes: 'Different strokes, different folks'. For you, it has no appeal, but it doesn't mean everyone will view it in the same way. You would be surprised how loyal some fans are, because these celebrities usually have a huge fanbase. They spend a lot on related items, collector's pieces. Be it as it may, you cannot overlook this truth.
- Wentworth: You must be a fan!
- Sarah: I was. I could elaborate on it, but you'll mock me. Anyway, I've found my little gem of the day! Have fun serendipitously!! Haha
- Wentworth: Well done, bye!
- Sarah: Bye!