

ESOL 44 - Level 4 Communication

Pronunciation: can / can't (Video: [youtube.com/watch?v=fhRjyNHIB7M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhRjyNHIB7M))

Rules: Vowel sounds in **can** and **can't**

The vowel sound **can** reduces to [kn]. Stress the main verb: I [kn] **go**.

The vowel sound **can't** is clear. Stress both **can't** and the verb: I **can't go**.

Pair practice (adapted from *Clear Speech*)

Say sentence a or b. Your partner answers with the matching response.

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| 1. a. I can go. | Oh, good! |
| b. I can't go. | That's too bad! |
| 2. a. She can do it. | That's wonderful. |
| b. She can't do it. | She should try harder. |
| 3. a. Where can we go? | To the beach. |
| b. Where can't we go? | To the mountains. |
| 4. a. We can leave now. | Okay, I'll get my coat. |
| b. We can't leave now. | All right, I'll wait. |
| 5. a. Can you lift it? | Of course. |
| b. Can't you lift it? | No, it's too heavy. |
| 6. a. When can we meet? | Any time. |
| b. When can't we meet? | Late at night. |
| 7. a. I can help you. | Thank you. |
| b. I can't help you. | I'll ask someone else. |
| 8. a. Why can they go? | They have permission. |
| b. Why can't they go? | It's too dangerous. |
| 9. a. She can run ten miles. | That's amazing! |
| b. She can't run ten miles. | It's too difficult. |