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to be able to; have the ability, power, or skill to.She can solve the problem easily, I'm sure.to know how to.He can play chess, although he's not particularly good at it.to have the power or means to.A dictator can impose his will on the people.to have the right or qualifications to.He can change whatever he wishes in the script.may; have permission to.Can I speak to you for a moment?to have the possibility.A coin can land on either side. can , can , canst , can , can , could , could , couldst , could , could , can , can , could , cunning .a sealed container for food, beverages, etc., as of aluminum, sheet iron coated with tin, or other metal.a receptacle for garbage, ashes, etc..a bucket, pail, or other container for holding or carrying liquids.a drinking cup; tankard.a metal or plastic container for holding film on cores or reels.Slang: Usually Vulgar. toilet; bathroom.Slang. jail.He's been in the can for a week.Slang: Sometimes Vulgar. buttocks.Slang. cans, a set of headphones designed to cover the ears.Military Slang. a depth charge.a destroyer.to preserve by sealing in a can, jar, etc.Slang. to dismiss; fire.Slang. to throw (something) away.Slang. to put a stop to.to record, as on film or tape.a container, esp for liquids, usually of thin sheet metalanother name (esp US) for tinAlso called: canful. the contents of a can or the amount a can will holda slang word for prisona slang word for toilet or buttocks See toiletnavy a slang word for destroyerslang navy a depth chargea shallow cylindrical metal container of varying size used for storing and handling filminformal a complicated problemSee carry(of a film, piece of music, etc) having been recorded, processed, edited, etcinformal arranged or agreedthe contract is almost in the can“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012to put (food, etc) into a can or cans; preserve in a canslang (tr) to dismiss from a jobinformal (tr) to stop (doing something annoying or making an annoying noise) (esp in the phrase can it!)informal (tr) to reject or discard“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012used as an auxiliary to indicate ability, skill, or fitness to perform a taskI can run a mile in under four minutesused as an auxiliary to indicate permission or the right to somethingused as an auxiliary to indicate knowledge of how to do somethinghe can speak three languages fluentlyused as an auxiliary to indicate the possibility, opportunity, or likelihoodmy trainer says I can win the race if I really work hard“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012“Collins English Dictionary — Complete & Unabridged” 2012 Digital Edition © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd. 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1998, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2012Can but and cannot but are formal and now somewhat old-fashioned expressions suggesting that there is no possible alternative to doing something. Can but is equivalent to can only: We can but do our best. Cannot but is the equivalent of cannot help but: We cannot but protest against these injustices. See also help.Can1 and may1 are frequently but not always interchangeable in senses indicating possibility: A power failure can (or may) occur at any time. Despite the insistence by some, that can means only “to be able” and may means “to be permitted,” both are regularly used in seeking or granting permission: Can (or May) I borrow your glue gun? You can (or may) use it tomorrow. Sentences using can occur chiefly in spoken English. May in this sense occurs more frequently in formal contexts: May I address the court, Your Honor? In negative constructions, can't or cannot is more common than may not : You can't have it today. I need it myself. The contraction mayn't is rare.Origin of can1First recorded before 900; Middle English, Old English, present indicative singular 1st, 3rd person of cunnan “to know, know how”; cognate with German, Old Norse, Gothic kann; ken, know 1Origin of can2First recorded before 1000; Middle English canne, can(e), Old English canne, cognate with German kanne, Old Norse kanna, all perhaps from West Germanic; compare Late Latin canna “small vessel”Origin of can1Old English canne; related to Old Norse, Old High German kanna, Irish gann, Swedish kana sledOrigin of can2Old English cunnan; related to Old Norse kunna, Old High German kunnan, Latin cognōscere to know, Sanskrit jānāti he knows; see ken , uncouthExamples have not been reviewed.However, school leaders are obliged to keep children safe in hot weather and make necessary adjustments, especially as children can be more vulnerable to heat-related issues than adults.The move will determine whether production can go ahead in the controversial Scottish fields Rosebank and Jackdaw - but gives no indication as to whether ministers would give their approval.It could also harm peace talks that have the potential to re-shape the entire region of the South Caucasus, after Armenia's bitter defeat in a war against Azerbaijan.Surf Beach is a good spot, although the parking lot can fill up quickly.But while there may be a real personal cost to keeping a dinner date with a friend when you’re tired, overwhelmed or emotionally spent, there can be serious costs to breaking that commitment as well.bottle bucket canister jar package Definitions and idiom definitions from Dictionary.com Unabridged, based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2023Idioms from The American Heritage® Idioms Dictionary copyright © 2002, 2001, 1995 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.camwoodCanaBrowse#aabbccddeeffgghhiijjkkllmmnnooppqqrrsstuuvvwwxxyyzzAboutCareersContact usCookies, terms, & privacyHelpFollow usGet the Word of the Day every day!© 2025 Dictionary.com, LLC ca, canned, canning, cans, could Meanings Synonyms Sentences Used to indicate physical or mental ability. I can carry both suitcases. Can you remember the war? Used to indicate possession of a specified power, right, or privilege. The president can veto congressional bills. Used to indicate possession of a specified capability or skill. I can tune the harpsichord as well as play it. Used to indicate possibility or probability. I wonder if my long lost neighbor can still be alive. Such things can and do happen. Used to indicate that which is permitted, as by conscience or feelings. One can hardly blame you for being upset. More Verb Definitions (33) Any of various containers usually or traditionally cylindrical, made of metal, and with a separate cover. A milk can, a garbage can, a can of shoe polish. A container made of tinned iron or other metal, in which foods or other perishable products are sealed for preservation. The contents of such a container. The amount that a can holds. More Noun Definitions (6) More Abbreviation Definitions (1) Something that is easily accomplished, especially a routine catch of a fly ball in baseball. A complex or difficult problem. Completed and ready for release, as a film or scene of a film. recorded, filmed, taped, etc. but not yet released for sale, exhibition, broadcast, viewing, etc. From Middle English canne, from Old English canne (“glass, container, cup, can”), from Proto-Germanic *kannō (“can, tankard, mug, cup”), perhaps from Proto-Indo-European *gan-, *gandʰ- (“a vessel”). Cognate with Scots can (“can”), West Frisian kanne (“a jug, pitcher”), Dutch kan (“pot, mug”), German Kanne (“can, tankard, mug”), Danish kande (“can, mug, a measure”), Swedish kanna (“can, tankard, mug”), Icelandic kanna (“a can”). From Wiktionary From Middle English can (first and third person singular of cunnen, connen "to be able, know how") from Old English can(n), first and third person singular of cunnan (“to know how”), from Proto-Germanic *kunnaną, from Proto-Indo-European, *ǵnéh₃-. Compare Dutch kunnen, Low German können, German können, Danish kunne. More at canny, cunning. From Wiktionary Middle English first and third person sing. present tense of connen to know how from Old English cunnan gnō- in Indo-European roots From American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition Middle English first and third person sing. present tense of connen to know how from Old English cunnan gnō- in Indo-European roots From American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th EditionMiddle English canne a water container from Old English From American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition Modals are special verbs, such as can or must, which behave very irregularly in English. Englishpage.com's in-depth modal tutorial will help you learn what makes modal verbs special. Study the modal descriptions and complete the exercises to take another step towards English fluency. 1. Read the introduction titled What are Modal Verbs? 2. Complete the exercises below. Each exercise has links to the modals covered. And don't miss our Modal Final Test. Modal Verb Exercises What are Modal Verbs? Modal verbs are special verbs which behave very differently from normal verbs. Here are some important differences: 1. Modal verbs do not take "-s" in the third person. Examples: He can speak Chinese. She should be here by 9:00. 2. You use "not" to make modal verbs negative, even in simple present and simple past. Examples: He should not be late. They might not come to the party. 3. Many modal verbs cannot be used in the past tenses or the future tenses. Examples: He will can go with us. Not Correct She musted study very hard. Not Correct Can Could May Might Must Ought to Shall Should Will Would For the purposes of this tutorial, we have included some expressions which are not modal verbs including had better, have to, and have got to. These expressions are closely related to modals in meaning and are often interchanged with them.Learn English at Englishpage.com! "Can" is one of the most commonly used modal verbs in English. It can be used to express ability or opportunity, to request or offer permission, and to show possibility or impossibility. Examples: I can ride a horse. We can stay with my brother when we are in Paris. She cannot stay out after 10 PM. Can you hand me the stapler? Any child can grow up to be president. Most modal verbs behave quite irregularly in the past and the future. Study the chart below to learn how "can" behaves in different contexts. Modal Use Positive Forms1. = Present 2. = Past 3. = Future Negative Forms1. = Present 2. = Past 3. = Future Also use: can 1. I can speak Chinese. 2. SHIFT TO "COULD" I could speak Chinese when I was a kid. 3. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" I will be able to speak Chinese by the time I finish my course. 1. I can't speak Swahili. 2. SHIFT TO "COULD" I couldn't speak Swahili. 3. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" I won't be able to speak Swahili. be able to can 1. With a burst of adrenaline, people can pick up cars. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" With a sudden burst of adrenaline, he was able to lift the car off the child's leg. 3. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" With a sudden burst of adrenaline, he will be able to lift the car. 1. Even with a burst of adrenaline, people can't pick up something that heavy. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" Even the weight lifter, wasn't able to lift the car off the child's leg. 3. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" Even three men working together won't be able to lift the car. be able to can 1. I have some free time. I can help her now. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" I had some free time yesterday. I was able to help her at that time. 3. I'll have some free time tomorrow. I can help her then. 1. I don't have any time. I can't help her now. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ABLE TO" I didn't have time yesterday. I wasn't able to help her at that time. 3. I won't have any time later. I can't help her then. be able to can 1. I can drive Susan's car when she is out of town. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ALLOWED TO " I was allowed to drive Susan's car while she was out of town last week. 3. I can drive Susan's car while she is out of town next week. 1. I can't drive Susan's car when she is out of town. 2. SHIFT TO "BE ALLOWED TO " I wasn't allowed to drive Susan's car while she was out of town last week. 3. I can't drive Susan's car while she is out of town next week. may can Can I have a glass of water? Can you give me a lift to school? Can't I have a glass of water? Can't you give me a lift to school? could, may can Anyone can become rich and famous if they know the right people. Learning a language can be a real challenge. It can't cost more than a dollar or two. You can't be 45! I thought you were about 18 years old. could Can Exercises Learn English at Englishpage.com! Princeton's WordNet4.5 / 2 votescan, tin, tin cannouniartight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.can, canfulnounthe quantity contained in a cancan, can buoynouna buoy with a round bottom and conical topbuttocks, nates, arse, butt, backside, bum, buns, can, fundament, hindquarters, hind end, keister, posterior, prat, rear, rear end, rump, stern, seat, tail, tail end, tooshie, tush, bottom, behind, derriere, fanny, assnounthe fleshy part of the human body that you sit on"he deserves a good kick in the butt"; "are you going to sit on your fanny and do nothing?"toilet, can, commode, crapper, pot, potty, stool, thronenouna plumbing fixture for defecation and urinationtoilet, lavatory, lav, can, john, privy, bathroomverba room or building equipped with one or more toiletscan, tin, put upverbpreserve in a can or tin"tinned foods are not very tasty"displace, fire, give notice, can, dismiss, give the axe, send away, sack, force out, give the sack, terminateverbterminate the employment of; discharge from an office or position"The boss fired his secretary today"; "The company terminated 25% of its workers"Samuel Johnson's Dictionary0.0 / 0 votesCannounA cup; generally a cup made of metal, or some other matter than earth.Etymology: canne, Sax.I hate it as an unfill’d can. William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night. One tree, the coco, affordeth stuff for housing, cloathing, shipping, meat, drink, and can. Nehemiah Grew, Cosmologia Sacra. His empty can, with ears half worn away,Was hung on high, to boast the triumph of the day. Dryden.Canverblt is sometimes, though rarely, used alone; but is in constant use as an expression of the potential mood;Etymology: konnen, Dutch.1. To be able; to have power. In place there is licence to do good and evil, whereof the latter is a curse; for, in evil, the best condition is not to will; the second not to can. Francis Bacon, Essays, №. 11. O, there’s the wonder!Mecænas and Agrippa, who can mostWith Cæsar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,Driv’n from his house, sollicits her revenge,And Dolabella, who was once his friend. John Dryden, All for Love. He can away with no company, whose discourse goes beyond what claret and dissoluteness inspires. John Locke.2. It expresses the potential mood; as, I can do it. If she can make me blest? She only can:Empire, and wealth, and all she brings beside,Are but the train and trappings of her love. Dryden.3. It is distinguished from may, as power from permission; I can do it; it is in my power: I may do it; it is allowed me: but, in poetry, they are confounded.4. Can is used of the person with the verb active, where may is used; of the thing, with the verb passive; as, I can do it; it may be done.ChatGPT0.0 / 0 votescanThe word "can" is a modal verb that is used to indicate the ability or capability of someone or something to do a specific action or task. It implies that the person or thing has the capacity, skill, or permission to accomplish or perform the mentioned action.Webster Dictionary3.0 / 1 voteCanan obs. form of began, imp. & p. p. of Begin, sometimes used in old poetry. [See Gan.]Cannouna drinking cup; a vessel for holding liquidsCannouna vessel or case of tinned iron or of sheet metal, of various forms, but usually cylindrical; as, a can of tomatoes; an oil can; a milk canCanverbto preserve by putting in sealed cansCanto know; to understandCanto be able to do; to have power or influenceCanto be able; -- followed by an infinitive without to; as, I can go, but do not wish toEtymology: [OE. & AS. canne; akin to D. Kan, G. Kanne, OHG. channa, Sw. Kanna, Dan. kande.]Wikidata0.0 / 0 votesCANCan was a German experimental rock band formed in Cologne, West Germany in 1968. Later labeled as one of the first krautrock groups, they transcended mainstream influences and incorporated strong minimalist and world music elements into their often psychedelic music. Can constructed their music largely through collective spontaneous composition—which the band differentiated from improvisation in the jazz sense—sampling themselves in the studio and editing down the results; bassist/chief engineer Holger Czukay referred to Can's live and studio performances as "instant compositions". They had occasional commercial success, with singles such as "Spoon" and "I Want More" reaching national singles charts. Through albums such as Monster Movie, Tago Mago, Ege Bamyasi and Future Days, the band exerted a considerable influence on avant-garde, experimental, underground, ambient, new wave and electronic music.Chambers 20th Century Dictionary0.0 / 0 votesCankan, v.i. to be able: to have sufficient power:—pa.t. Could.—Can is used for gan in M. E. and even in Spenser. [A.S. cunnan, to know (how to do a thing), to be able, pres. indic. can; Goth. kunnan, Ger. können, to be able. See Know.]Cankan, n. a vessel for holding or carrying liquids, generally of tinned iron, with a handle over the top: a chimney-pot: a vessel of tin-plate in which meat, fruit, &c. are hermetically sealed for exporting—in England usually called a tin: a drinking-mug.—v.t. to put up for preservation in cans.—n.pl. Canned’-goods, meat, fruit, &c. so prepared for preservation.—n. Can’nery, a place where meat, fish, fruit, &c. are canned. [A.S. canne; cf. L. canna, a reed, Gr. kannē, a reed.]Dictionary of Nautical Terms0.0 / 0 votescanA tin vessel used by sailors to drink out of.Editors Contribution0.0 / 0 votescanBe able.We can do easily what is vital, necessary and just.Submitted by MaryC on January 25, 2020 Suggested Resources0.0 / 0 votescanSong lyrics by can -- Explore a large variety of song lyrics performed by can on the Lyrics.com website.CANWhat does CAN stand for? -- Explore the various meanings for the CAN acronym on the Abbreviations.com website.CanCan vs. May -- In this Grammar.com article you will learn the differences between the words Can and May.Surnames Frequency by Census Records0.0 / 0 votesCANAccording to the U.S. Census Bureau, Can is ranked #23750 in terms of the most common surnames in America.The Can surname appeared 1,065 times in the 2010 census and if you were to sample 100,000 people in the United States, approximately 0 would have the surname Can.37.6% or 401 total occurrences were of Hispanic origin.34.1% or 364 total occurrences were White.21.9% or 234 total occurrences were Asian.3.1% or 33 total occurrences were Black.Matched CategoriesBody PartBuoyContainerfulPlumbing FixtureRemoveBritish National CorpusSpoken Corpus FrequencyRank popularity for the word 'CAN' in Spoken Corpus Frequency: #48Written Corpus FrequencyRank popularity for the word 'CAN' in Written Corpus Frequency: #50Nouns FrequencyRank popularity for the word 'CAN' in Nouns Frequency: #2360Verbs FrequencyRank popularity for the word 'CAN' in Verbs Frequency: #7Usage in printed sourcesFrom: Anagrams for CAN »How to pronounce CAN?How to say CAN in sign language?NumerologyChaldean NumerologyThe numerical value of CAN in Chaldean Numerology is: 9Pythagorean NumerologyThe numerical value of CAN in Pythagorean Numerology is: 9Fu Cong:We will be happy to join if they have reduced to our level, the two superpowers need to ... drastically reduce their nuclear capabilities to a level comparable to the level of China, and for that matter to the level of France and the U.K., so that other nuclear states can join in this process.Grazia Vittadini:We can go up to 55 % weight saving, thanks to the fact that we can really just put material where we need it.Terri Burke:You say you have a sincerely held religious belief and you are a private adoption agency or private entity that helps place foster children -- you can say you will not place that child with gay parents .... If I'm Catholic I can say I don't want any Baptists to raise the child.Jay Monahan:When you're in a situation where there's heightened tension on a competitive environment ... it gives you an opportunity to maybe attack some sacred cows or some areas that people said you can never do that.Frank Qian:Even from a young age, if people can develop these good sleep habits of getting enough sleep, making sure they are sleeping without too many distractions and have good sleep hygiene overall, it can greatly benefit their overall long-term health, just like we like to say, ‘it’s never too late to exercise or stop smoking,’ it’s also never too early. And we should be talking about and assessing sleep more often. References poderAragonese,استطاع, امكن, اشتطاع قدّرArabicÿměuš, сумець, магчы, змагчыBelarusianтоалетна чиния, консервна кутия, гюм, умея, мога, уволнявам, захвърлям, консервирамBulgarianllauna, poder, enllaunarCatalan, Valencianplechovka, konev, konzerva, smět, umět, moci, konzervovatCzechcan, medru, gallu, caelWelshbalder, kande, toilet, dåse, vandkande, kunne, må, konservere, holde mund, fyre, afskedige, smide ud, henkogeDanishDose, Pobacken, Kanister, Toilette, Arschbacken, Konservendose, Gießkanne, WC, Klo, können, dürfen, kündigen, einmachen, den Mund halten, die Klappe halten, rausschmeißen, abbrechen, feuernGermanκονσέρβα, μπορώ, δύναμαι, κονσερβοποιώGreekladskatolo, necesejo, pugo, pispoto, rajti, povi, silenti, silentigi, enladigi, maldungiEsperantoregadera, lata, poder, enlatar, echar, cerrar, descartarSpanishvõima, osataEstonianقوطی, توانستن, امکان داشتن, قادر بودنPersiansäilyketölkki, kastelukannu, takamus, purkki, vessa, voida, saada, osata, pystyä, purkittaaFinnishfesses, chiottes, canette, arrosoir, miches, WC, bidon, boîte de conserve, boule, pouvoir, taire, jeter, conserverFrenchin ann, is féidir le, bí, féad, tig leIrishcana, faod, 's urrainn doScottish GaelicjargManx,ᴡᴏᴜʟᴅ ᴄᴀɴ, ᴄᴀɴ, ᴄᴀɴᴅᴏ, ᴄᴀɴᴅᴏᴇᴅ, ᴄᴀɴᴅᴏᴇᴅ, ᴄᴀɴᴅᴏᴇᴅ