

# ABILITY & INABILITY IN THE PAST

I. ABILITY IN THE PAST - expresses what one was able to do in the past

A. COULD + Base verb

Peter **could play** baseball when he was a little boy.

B. WAS } ABLE + Infinitive  
WERE } (to + verb)

Sally **was able to find** a seat on the bus yesterday.

II. INABILITY IN THE PAST - expressed what one was unable to do in the past

A. COULDN'T + Base Verb

Louise **couldn't paint** her house yesterday because she was sick.

B. WASN'T } ABLE + INFINITIVE  
WEREN'T } (to + verb)

We **weren't able to see** the full moon last night because it was cloudy.

III. ABILITY / INABILITY IN THE FUTURE - expresses what one is able & unable to do in the future

A. WILL BE ABLE + INFINITIVE  
(to + verb)

I **will be able to take** the English test next week.

B. WON'T BE ABLE + INFINITIVE

John & Mary won't be able *to go* to the movies tomorrow night.

## OBLIGATION

I. OBLIGATION - expresses a present or future obligation.

A. HAVE } GOT + INFINITIVE  
HAS } (to + verb)

He's got *to work* tomorrow morning.

You've got *to finish* your homework.

B. HAVE } + INFINITIVE  
HAS } (to + verb)

We have *to study* for the English test.

Mary has *to cook* dinner for her husband.