

- 1 Look at the table that shows what the people could do and how old they were when they could do it for the first time. Then complete the sentences with the past simple form of *can* and *be* and another verb.

	Martha	my grandparents	Andy	Brad
play the piano	✓ 7	✓ 16	✗	✓ 12
use a computer	✓ 5	✓ 75	✓ 7	✓ 13
ride a bike	✓ 10	✓ 8	✓ 8	✗
speak foreign languages	French ✓ 16	✗	Spanish ✓ 25	French ✓ 16 Spanish ✓ 15 Italian ✓ 18
write their name	✓ 5	✓ 4	✓ 6	✓ 5

- Martha \_\_\_\_\_ the piano when she \_\_\_\_\_ five.
- My grandparents \_\_\_\_\_ a computer when they \_\_\_\_\_ teenagers.
- Andy \_\_\_\_\_ a bike when he \_\_\_\_\_ ten.
- Brad \_\_\_\_\_ three languages when he \_\_\_\_\_ a teenager.
- Martha \_\_\_\_\_ a bike when she \_\_\_\_\_ eleven.
- My grandparents \_\_\_\_\_ their names when they \_\_\_\_\_ five.
- Andy \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish when he \_\_\_\_\_ a teenager.
- Brad \_\_\_\_\_ his name when he \_\_\_\_\_ four.

- 2 Write more sentences about what the people could or couldn't do at certain ages.

- |                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Martha could _____          | 5 Martha couldn't _____          |
| _____                         | _____                            |
| 2 My grandparents could _____ | 6 My grandparents couldn't _____ |
| _____                         | _____                            |
| 3 Andy could _____            | 7 Andy couldn't _____            |
| _____                         | _____                            |
| 4 Brad could _____            | 8 Brad couldn't _____            |
| _____                         | _____                            |

- 3 **SPEAKING** Work in small groups. Ask and answer questions.

**Find someone who ...**

- could go out with their friends at the weekends when they were a young child. \_\_\_\_\_
- couldn't do their homework last week because it was really difficult. \_\_\_\_\_
- could cook a meal when they were ten. \_\_\_\_\_
- couldn't buy something recently because it was very expensive. \_\_\_\_\_
- could speak a foreign language when they were seven. \_\_\_\_\_
- couldn't swim when they were ten. \_\_\_\_\_
- couldn't go on holiday once because they were ill. \_\_\_\_\_
- couldn't sleep when they were in bed this week. \_\_\_\_\_

## 6D Past simple: *be* and *can*

**Aims:** To review and practise the past simple of *be* and *can*.

**Time:** 10–15 minutes

**Materials:** 1 handout for each student

### Exercise 1

- Give each student a handout and draw their attention to the table. Check understanding by asking: *Could Martha play the piano when she was six?* (No, she couldn't.)
- Students work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences with the past simple form of *can* and *be* and another suitable verb.
- Check answers with the class.

#### KEY

- 1 couldn't play, was
- 2 couldn't use, were
- 3 could ride, was
- 4 could speak, was
- 5 could ride, was
- 6 could write, were
- 7 couldn't speak, was
- 8 couldn't write, was

### Exercise 2

- Students work individually to complete the sentences with more information from the table in exercise 1.
- Check answers with the class.

#### KEY

##### Possible answers

- 1 Martha could use a computer when she was seven.
- 2 My grandparents could play the piano when they were eighteen.
- 3 Andy could write his name when he was ten.
- 4 Brad could use a computer when he was thirteen.
- 5 Martha couldn't speak French when she was fourteen.
- 6 My grandparents couldn't ride a bike when they were six.
- 7 Andy couldn't write his name when he was five.
- 8 Brad couldn't play the piano when he was eleven.

### Exercise 3

- Students work in groups of four to six. Explain that they must ask questions to find people who could and couldn't do the things.
- With a **weaker class**, you might want to elicit and drill the questions that they need to ask to find out the information, e.g. *Could you go out with your friends at the weekends when you were a young child?*
- Set a time limit of five minutes, and encourage students to talk to as many different students in their group as possible.
- Discuss the answers as a class and try to find one person in the class for each sentence.