

12. When she was a baby, she ____ talk.
a) can't
b) couldn't
c) not could
d) didn't can
13. He ____ run a marathon in under three hours when he was 25.
a) can
b) was
c) could
d) is able
14. We ____ see the stars clearly from our old house in the countryside.
a) can
b) were
c) are able to
d) could
15. I ____ sleep last night because of the noise.
a) couldn't
b) can't
c) didn't could
d) wasn't can
16. ____ your parents drive when they were 18?
a) Can
b) Could
c) Did
d) Were
17. She ____ sing very well, but she never performed in public.
a) can
b) is able to
c) was
d) could
18. We ____ finish the project on time. It was too difficult.
a) couldn't
b) can't
c) didn't could
d) weren't
19. In the 1990s, people ____ use the internet easily. It was very slow.
a) can't
b) couldn't
c) not could
d) didn't can
20. A: Could you ride a horse as a child? B: No, I ____.
a) can't
b) didn't
c) couldn't
d) wasn't



Answers

1. c) could
2. a) could
3. d) couldn't
4. b) could
5. c) Could
6. d) couldn't
7. a) could
8. b) couldn't
9. d) could
10. c) couldn't
11. a) Could
12. b) couldn't
13. c) could
14. d) could
15. a) couldn't
16. b) Could
17. d) could
18. a) couldn't
19. b) couldn't
20. c) couldn't



Explanations

1. “could” (c)

Use 'could' to talk about a general ability you had in the past. 'When I was young' signals past time.

2. “could” (a)

Use 'could' for a general ability someone had in the past. She had this ability at age four.

3. “couldn't” (d)

Use 'couldn't' (= could not) for past inability. 'Didn't could' and 'not could' are not correct.

4. “could” (b)

Use 'could' for a general past ability. 'When he was younger' clearly signals a past time period.

5. “Could” (c)

Use 'Could + subject + base verb?' to ask about past ability. The phrase 'when you were a child' confirms past time.

6. “couldn't” (d)

Use 'couldn't' to describe an inability that existed in the past. 'Didn't can' is never correct in English.

7. “could” (a)

'Could' describes a general ability in the past. 'As a teenager' shows we are talking about a past period.

8. “couldn't” (b)

Use 'couldn't' for something someone was not able to do in the past. The past tense 'got lost' confirms past time.

9. “could” (d)

'Could' expresses a general ability someone had over a past period. 'When she was young' is the past time marker.

10. “couldn't” (c)

Use 'couldn't' for past inability. 'She spoke' (past simple) tells us the situation was in the past.

11. “Could” (a)

Use 'Could' to ask about ability in the past. 'Before they moved' signals a past time frame.

12. “couldn't” (b)

Babies cannot talk — use 'couldn't' because 'when she was a baby' is in the past.

13. “could” (c)

'Could' describes what he was generally able to do at age 25 — a past general ability.

14. “could” (d)

'Our old house' tells us this is a past situation. Use 'could' for a general ability or possibility in the past.

15. “couldn't” (a)

'Last night' is a past time expression. Use 'couldn't' for something you were unable to do.

16. “Could” (b)

Ask about past ability with 'Could + subject + base verb?'. 'When they were 18' is the past time marker.

17. “could” (d)

'Could' for past ability + 'never performed' (past simple) — both parts describe a past situation.

18. “couldn't” (a)

Use 'couldn't' for past inability. 'It was too difficult' (past simple) confirms the past context.

19. “couldn't” (b)

'In the 1990s' is a clear past time reference. Use 'couldn't' for a general inability during that period.

20. “couldn't” (c)

Short negative answer to a 'Could ...?' question: No, I couldn't. Match the modal in the question.