

Modal Auxiliaries: Could

Modal auxiliaries modify the mood of a verb. The verb *could* functions in one of three different ways in a sentence:

- A. It can replace can, giving a phrase a more conditional tone

Could you help me?

- B. It can be the past tense of can

I could have left early last night.

- C. It can suggest that something is a possibility.

We could win the lottery if we bought a ticket.

The negative of can is could not or the contraction couldn't.

DIRECTIONS: Read each sentence. Write the letter of the function could is performing in each sentence.

_____ 1. You could have been a doctor instead of a nurse.

_____ 2. John could still get the part.

_____ 3. Could your father really win the election?

_____ 4. Could you buy me a bottle of water?

_____ 5. Linda could ride a bike when she was three.

_____ 6. We could have won if we'd tried harder.

_____ 7. I couldn't stand to hear that noise anymore, so I left.

