

### Uses of *Could*: Summary

#### 1. POLITE REQUEST

*Could* you open the window, please?

#### 2. PERMISSION

*Could* I borrow a dollar for a Coke?

#### 3. PAST ABILITY/INABILITY

I *could* swim 3 miles when I was younger.

I *couldn't* drive until I was 17 years old.

#### 4. GUESS

Present: I didn't see Chuck this morning. He *could* be sick.

Present Continuous: I've been trying to reach Keiko for an hour.  
*She could be talking* to her boyfriend.

#### 5. PAST POSSIBILITY THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN

Mariko *could* have gotten an "A" on the test, but she didn't study.

Tom *could* have finished his essay, but he went to the movies instead.

#### 6. IMPOSSIBILITY

Present: A: Janice weighs 150 pounds.

B: She *couldn't* weigh 150. She's only 5'2" and wears size 8.

Past: A: I saw Henry at the disco last night.

B: You *couldn't have* seen him at the disco. I was studying with him at the library all night.