

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Modal Shift Lab Answer Key

(Answers will vary slightly depending on student phrasing, but examples are provided below.)

1. I could help you finish your poster if you need me. - Sounds more polite or uncertain.
2. Can you open the window a little, please? - Less formal, more direct.
3. I could solve this puzzle in under a minute. - Suggests past ability or possibility.
4. Can I borrow your headphones for the bus ride? - Less formal, more direct.
5. I could play the piano better now than last year. - Suggests possibility, not confirmed ability.
6. Can you pass me the salt, please? - More casual, less polite tone.
7. I could visit my grandparents every weekend. - Sounds uncertain or conditional.
8. Can I get an extension on the essay deadline? - Less formal, straightforward request.
9. I can run three miles easily when I was younger. - Incorrect meaning; should shift to present ability (now vs. past).
10. Could you please explain that again? - More polite and respectful.

### Teacher's Guide

- **Skill Focus:** Strengthens understanding of how *can* and *could* change tone, time, or certainty in speech and writing.
- **Differentiation Tips:**
  - Allow students to act out each pair to hear the tone difference.
  - Provide sentence stems (e.g., "I can \_\_," "Could you \_\_?") for struggling learners.
- **Engagement Idea:** Create a "Tone Switch Challenge" where partners read both versions dramatically to emphasize how tone shifts.
- **Extension Activity:** Have students write a short paragraph using both *can* and *could* intentionally, then underline and label each for meaning (ability, possibility, or politeness).