

# 3

## We couldn't take our phones to school

### 1 Read the story. Was life easy eighty years ago?

**Grandma:** Hi, Betty, what's that noise?

**Betty:** Oh, hi! It's Mom. She's vacuuming the living room.

**Grandma:** Lucky her! Our vacuum cleaner is broken. This morning I had to sweep the floor with a broom!

**Betty:** Well, with your new coffee maker, you could have a cup of coffee after that.

**Grandma:** Yes! And, because my washing machine was working, I didn't have to wash our clothes by hand, like my grandma had to do.

**Betty:** Was her life difficult?

**Grandma:** Yes, it was! Eighty years ago, there were electric vacuum cleaners and washing machines in some houses, but not in hers.

**Betty:** What about you? Could you call your friends when you were a child?

**Grandma:** Of course, Betty! But we couldn't take our phones to school like you do.

**Betty:** Did you have a TV?

**Grandma:** Yes, we did. But we couldn't change the channels from our couches. There were no remote controls!



### 2 Read and circle T (true) or F (false).

- 1 There were remote controls when Betty's grandma was young. T / F
- 2 Betty's grandma used her washing machine this morning. T / F
- 3 Betty's grandma could call her friends when she was young. T / F
- 4 Betty's mom is doing the dishes. T / F

### 3 Read the text again. Underline sentences with *had to*, *didn't have to*, *could*, and *couldn't*. Then fill in the table.

#### Grammar

Betty's grandmother	<u>had to</u> sweep the floor with a broom.
	..... wash her clothes by hand this morning.
	..... have a cup of coffee.
	<u>couldn't</u> take her phone to school when she was a child.

## 4 Circle the correct answer.

- 1 Fifty years ago, dishwashers weren't very common. People *had to* / *didn't have to* do the dishes after every meal.
- 2 After the electric vacuum cleaner became popular, people *didn't have to* / *had to* sweep floors. They *couldn't* / *could* clean a room in a few minutes.
- 3 The first microwave ovens were 1.5 meters tall and weighed 360 kilos. Families *could* / *couldn't* have one at home. Only some restaurants *could* / *couldn't* afford them.

## 5 Read the sentences and decide which sentence talks about ability and which talks about obligation. Write A (ability) or O (obligation) next to the correct sentence.

- 1 I could watch television, but I couldn't change the channels from the couch. ....
- 2 We had to help with the chores, so that our mom didn't have to work so hard. ....

## 6 Complete the story with *had to*, *didn't have to*, *could*, or *couldn't*.

When he was young, Elijah couldn't finish high school because he (1) ..... work to help his family. One of his teachers realized Elijah was very smart. She told him that she (2) ..... help him finish school, but Elijah (3) ..... come to her house every day after work and study. Elijah (4) ..... study a lot, but he managed to get high grades. Because of that, he (5) ..... get a scholarship and (6) ..... pay the tuition to go to college. He's a lawyer now!

## 7 Imagine you are twenty years old. Tell a friend what you had to or didn't have to do and what you could or couldn't do when you were ten. Use the phrases in the box to help you.

clean my room   watch television   make the beds  
play at the park   do the laundry   take out the trash   do the dishes  
meet friends   use parents' computer   drive a car

*When I was ten years old, I had to clean my room, but I didn't have to take out the trash.*

*I could meet my friends at the park, but I couldn't drive a car.*