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## SECRET NINE: THE COMPLEMENT OF POSSIBILITY

THE COMPLEMENT OF POSSIBILITY indicates the possibility or potentiality of an action.

**Pattern :** Verb + 得/不<sup>dé/bù</sup> + complement of result/ directional complement

The complement of result and the directional complement can both be used to form the THE COMPLEMENT OF POSSIBILITY. To indicate possibility, we must put 得 between the verb and the resultative or directional complement. We use 不 to indicate impossibility.

### Example:

- 1) 今天的作业太多了，我做不完。  
Jīntiān de zuòyè tài duō le, wǒ zuò bù wán.  
I have too much homework today, I can't finish it.
- 2) 我的自行车坏了，不知道修得好吗？  
Wǒde zìxíngchē huàile, bù zhīdào xiū de hǎo ma?  
My bike is broken, I don't know whether it can be repaired.
- 3) 这座山太高了，我爬不上去。  
Zhè zuò shān tài gāo le, wǒ pá bú shàngqù.  
This mountain is too high, I can't climb to the top.

### Note:

1. In Chinese, we also use 能<sup>néng</sup> or 可以<sup>kěyǐ</sup> before a verb to express possibility. But we use THE COMPLEMENT OF POSSIBILITY more in spoken Chinese. Or you can use both. For example: 你可以修得好我的自行车吗？ Nǐ kěyǐ xiū de hǎo wǒ de zìxíngchē ma?
2. When we ask for permission, we can only use 能<sup>néng</sup> or 可以<sup>kěyǐ</sup>. For example: “我可以进来吗？ Wǒ kěyǐ jìnlai ma? “, which means “am I allowed to come in?” while 我进得来吗？ Wǒ jìn de lai ma? means “do I have the ability to come in ?”

### Exercise :

**Please translate the following sentences into Chinese.**

- 1) Now I still can't understand Chinese TV program.

现在我还是听不懂中文电视节目。

Xiànzài wǒ háishì tīng bù dǒng zhōngwén diànshì jiémù.

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2) He can drink five beers in ten minutes.

他十分钟喝的完五瓶啤酒。

Tā shí fēnzhōng hē de wán wǔ píng pījiǔ.

3) The door is closed, I can't go out.

门关了，我出不去。

Mén guān le, wǒ chū bú qù.

4) Can you hear me?

你听得见（我说话）吗？

Nǐ tīng dé jiàn (wǒ shuōhuà) ma?