

MODALS (NOTES)

Definition

- A modal is a type of auxiliary (helping) verb that is used to express: ability, possibility, permission or obligation.
- We can use these modal verbs (also called modals of deduction, speculation or certainty) when we want to make a guess about something. We choose the verb depending on how sure we are.

List of Modal Verbs

- Can
- Could
- May
- Might
- Will
- Would
- Shall
- Should
- Ought to
- Must
- Need



Structure



Subject	Modal Verb	Main Verb	Complement
I We They You He She It	Must Can Should May Will	Go	To sleep
		Drink	Some water
		Eat	Some food
		Do	Some exercise

Important Points

- Modal Verbs do not add s/es/ies to the third person singular.



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Subject: English Grammar

- Modal Verbs don't need auxiliaries to form negative and interrogative

Exp : She should stay.
~~She doesn't should stay.~~ → **She shouldn't stay.**
~~Why does she stay?~~ → **Why should she stay?**

- Modal Verbs do not have **infinitives** or **-ing** forms

~~to~~ can / ~~caning~~ ~~to~~ must / ~~musting~~

- Modal verbs are followed by an infinitive without to

She **must** study
 We **should** have gone the other way
 He **could** play football in his youth (general ability)

- **Modals in the Past:** Modal Verb + Have + Past Participle

It **must have been** a difficult decision
 They **should have invited** her to their wedding

- **What do they express:** Modals can have more than one meaning depending on the situations.

Single concept Modals	Double Concept Modals	Modals in Past
Will	May	Would have
Might	Must	Could have
Should	Would	Might have
Ought to	Shall	Should have
Had better	Could	May have
	Can	Must have

- **Single Concept Modal:** they have one meaning

Modal	Concept	Examples
Will	Future	Joe will travel to NY next week
Might	Small probability	I might move to Canada some day
Should	Recommendation	You should go to the doctor
Ought to	Formal recommendation	We ought to know about first aids
Had better	Warning	I had better study or I will fail the test

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- **Double Concept Modal:** they have two meanings

Modal	Concept	Examples
May (1)	Permission	May I come in?
May (2)	Good probability	We may visit Mexico this summer
Must (1)	Responsibility	Everyone must pay taxes
Must (2)	Assumption	She didn't arrive. She must be sick
Would (1)	Past (used to)	When I was young, I would play soccer
Would (2)	Present unreal	I would buy the car but I can't afford it

1. Use of "Can"

- To express ability or power.
 - He can read this language.
 - He can lift this heavy box.
- To express permission.
 - You can eat this chocolate.
 - She can never enter this house.

<u>Use</u>	→	<u>Example</u>
Ability / Possibility	→	They can control their own work.
Impossibility	→	We can't fix it.
Asking for permission	→	Can I bring here?
Request	→	Can you help me?

2. Use of "Could"

- To show power or ability in past.
 - She could dance well in youth
 - We could complete this task.
- To show possibility in past.
 - She could buy a pen if she had money.
 - Ramu could play cricket if there had been no rain.
- To make a polite request.
 - Could you help me now?
 - Could they spare that meat?
- To show condition.
 - If we had got up earlier, we could have completed this.
 - We could have seen the match if there had been electricity supply. (Condition)

Topic: Modals**Subject:** English Grammar**3. Use of "May"**

1. To express permission, possibility.
 1. May I go there? (Permission)
 2. It may rain heavily. (Possibility)
2. To express wish, prayer.
 1. May you live long ! (Wish)
 2. May God bless you with fortune ! (Prayer)
3. To express purpose.
 1. She works that she may prosper.
 2. We study that we may pass in the exam.

4. Use of "Might"

1. To show permission, possibility in the past.
 1. The leader told us that we might spend this amount. (Permission)
 2. I might be sent to the hostel. (Possibility)
2. To express purpose in the past.
 1. He wore a scarf that he might not burn his skin.
 2. We rushed that we might not miss our train.
3. To make a request.
 1. If possible, you might bring me a glass of water.
 2. Condition allowing, they might be seeking a favour from me.
4. To make suggestion or criticism.
 1. They might look for other venues. (Suggestion)
 2. She might have picked other issues. (Criticism)

5. Use of "Would"

1. To show past habit and unreal condition.
 1. He would rise at 5 O' Clock. (Past habit)
 2. What would you like to have? Tea or coffee.
2. To make a polite request.
 1. Would you lend me your pen?
 2. Would you give me your scooter?

Use**Example**

permission → **Would you mind if I brought a friend with me?**

Request → **Would you mind waiting a moment?**

Invitation → **Would you like to play basketball this Friday?**

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6. Use of “Should or Ought to”

1. To express duty and obligation.
 1. The police should protect us. (Duty)
 2. You should respect your parents. (Obligation)
2. To show advice, suggestion.
 1. They should follow the rules. (Suggestion)
 2. You should take medicine. (Advice)
3. To express imagination.
 1. Should you lose your money, go to ATM.
 2. Should you forget password, retry then.
4. To express probability, polite command.
 1. She should be in the library. (Probability)
 2. You should play the game fairly. (Polite command)

Use

Saying what’s
right or correct



Example

**He is ought to finish
this report by next**

7. Use of “Must”

1. To show prohibition, compulsion.
 1. You must not touch this.
 2. She must feel sorry for you.
2. To show necessity or obligation.
 1. Team must win the game.
 2. You must pay your bill on time.
3. To show the strong advice.
 1. Police must take care of emotions of the criminals.
 2. Leaders must promise what is viable to them.

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8. Use of “Shall/ Will”

1. Shall 1st person subject-I, We
2. Will 2nd and 3rd person subject – You, he, she, it, they.
 But, to show the emphasis, it can be interchanged with each other.
3. Will 1st person subject-I, we
4. Shall 2nd and 3rd person subject – You, he, she, it, , they.
 e.g.

1. I shall go. (Simple future)
2. I will go. (Determination)
3. She will win. (Simple future)
4. She shall win. (Emphasized act)

<u>Use</u>	→	<u>Example</u>
Offer	→	Shall I help you with your luggage?
Suggestion	→	Shall we say 2.30 then?
Permission	→	Shall I do that or will you?

<u>Use</u>	→	<u>Example</u>
decisions	→	I can't see any taxis so I'll walk
Offer	→	I'll do that for you if you like.
Promise	→	I'll come back on Monday.

9. Use of “Used to”

1. To express a past habit.
 1. She used to go to perform in movies or a dramas.
 2. I used to play cricket in 2005.
2. To express a habit of present that has its roots in the past.
 1. My grandfather is not used to sweets.
 2. I am used to a life full of struggle.

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10. Use of "Need"

1. To express prohibition.

1. She need not use that computer.
2. They need not manipulate the files.

2. To express doubt.

1. Need I go there.
2. Need we plan in advance.

3. To express Necessity or Requirement

- I **need to** drop by his room to pick up a book.
(Present)
- I **needed to** drink a few cups of coffee in order to stay awake. (Past)

• Modal Verbs and Tenses

• Simple

I could work
He could work
It could work
They could work

• Continuous

I could be working
He could be working
It could be working
They could be working

• Perfect

I could have worked
He could have worked
It could have worked
They could have worked

• Perfect continuous

I could have been working
He could have been working
It could have been working
They could have been working

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• **Modals: Present and Past**

	Modals in the Present	Modals in the Past
Obligation	You must / have to stop when the traffic lights are red.	You had to stop.
Advice	You should see a doctor.	You should have seen a doctor
Prohibition	You mustn't smoke here.	You mustn't have smoked there.
Ability	I can run fast.	I could run fast. now I am old.
Certainty	He has a Rolls Royce. He must be very rich. He can't be American. His English is terrible.	He must have been rich. He had a big house and an expensive car. He can't have written that poem. He was illiterate.
Permission	Can I go out?	She could drive her father's car when she was only 15.
Possibility	It may / can / could / might rain. It's cloudy.	I guess it may / can / could / might have been Lacy on the phone.
Lack of necessity	You don't have to / needn't buy any tomatoes. There are plenty in the fridge.	You didn't have to / didn't need to buy tomatoes.

• **Modals in the Past - Summarized**

Modal	Concept	Example
Would have	Past unreal action	I would have bought the car, but I didn't have money
Could have	Past unreal Ability	She could have taken the flight
May have	Past unreal Possibility	We may have passed the test, but it was in French
Might have	Past Unreal Small Probability	You might have sold the house, if you really needed the money
Should have	Past unreal Recommendation	You should have listened to the doctor
Must have	Past unreal Assumption	We must have been crazy!

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• **Modals Summarized**

	PROBABILITY/ POSSIBILITY	ABILITY	PERMISSION	OBLIGATION/ ADVICE	OFFERS
CAN		I can play the piano	Can I go out tonight?		
CAN'T	She can't be his mum. She 's too young	I can't speak German	Can I borrow the car? No, I can't.		
MIGHT	It might rain tomorrow				
COULD	It could rain tomorrow	I could already read when I was two	Could I see your passport please, sir?		
MAY	It may rain tomorrow		May I leave the table?		
MUST	She must be his sister because they look alike.			You must leave before the clock strikes twelve.	
HAVE TO				I have to study tonight.	
SHALL				You shall pay on Tuesday	Shall I help you?
SHOULD / OUGHT TO				You should see it. It's excellent.	
HAD BETTER				You had better sleep more.	
WOULD					Would you like a drink?