

MODAL VERBS STRUCTURE & USE

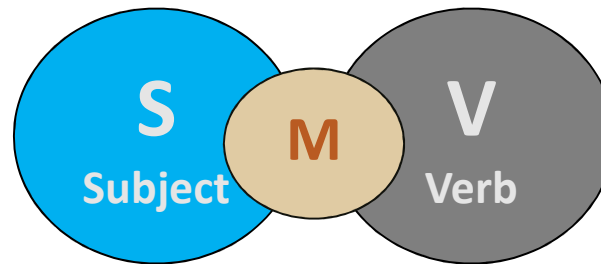


What are modal verbs?

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

They are **Auxiliary** verbs that provide additional and specific meaning to the main verb of the sentence

How do we use modals?



Example: **Mary** **could** play the piano

They do not accept conjugation
They do not need other auxiliary verbs

Form

There is no “s” in singular
There is no “do / does” in the question
There is no “don’t / doesn’t” in the negative

❏ He can ski He cans ski or He can skis X

❏ Would you like to come with me?

Do you would like to come with me? X

❏ They can’t be serious

They don’t can be serious X

Form

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 (strong obligation)

We **should** have gone the other way (recommendation)

He **could** play football in his youth (ability in the past)

Form

Modal verbs do **not** have **all the tenses**

Modal verbs use other verbs to complete the tenses

Can is completed with **be able to**

Must is completed with **have to**

They **can** play the piano

They will **be able to** play the piano in the future

You **must** come early

You **had to** come early yesterday

What do they express?

They can have more than one meaning depending on the situations

1. **Single Concept Modal:** they have **one** meaning
2. **Double Concept Modal:** they have **two** meanings
3. **Modals in past:** They are used to express a situation in the past

Categories

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

Single Concept Modal

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

Double Concept Modal

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

Double Concept Modal

Modal	Concept	Examples
Shall (1)	Educated expression Offer	Excuse me, I shall go now Shall I clean it?
Shall (2)	Contractual obligation	The company shall pay on January 1st
Could (1)	Unreal Ability	I could go if I had time
Could (2)	Past Ability	She could play the piano (but she can't anymore)
Can (1)	Present Ability	We can speak English
Can (2)	Permission	Can I have a candy?

Modals in the Past

- They are modals referred to actions that happened in the past

MODAL + HAVE + verb in past participle

It **must have been** a difficult decision

They **should have invited** her to their wedding

MODAL PERFECT	USES	EXAMPLES
MUST HAVE + P.P.	Logical conclusion on a past event	Peter has arrived late. He <u>must have been</u> in a traffic jam
MAY / MIGHT HAVE + P.P.	Deduction on a past event	Joe <u>may / might have taken</u> the wrong train.
COULD HAVE + P.P.	Possibility to do something, gone unfulfilled	You <u>could have played</u> better
COULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Certainty that something couldn't have happened	He <u>couldn't have passed</u> because he hadn't studied enough
WOULD HAVE + P.P.	Desire to do something, but impossibility to do it for external causes	I <u>would have visited</u> you, but I forgot your address
SHOULD / OUGHT TO HAVE + P.P.	Lament on something that should have been done	You <u>should / ought to have warned</u> me earlier
SHOULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Critique on something that shouldn't have happened	He <u>shouldn't have told</u> them
NEEDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Something that wasn't necessary doing	You <u>needn't have bought</u> it .

Modals-like verbs:

A few verbs which often serve as **modals** too.
They need to be conjugated.

Modal	Concept	Example
Like to	Enjoy	I like to watch TV
Want to	Desire	John wants to buy a car
Need to	Necessity	We really needed to talk to you
Have to	Obligation	Susan had to pay the rent
Have got to	Have to	I've got to go now
Look forward to	Future plan	I look forward to seeing you again

Can vs. Could

1. Ability

I **can** play the guitar.

He **can** lift heavy weights.

She **can** beat anyone at chess.



Could - past tense of can

I **could** play the guitar when I was in school.

He **could** lift heavy weights until he had the accident.

She **could** beat anyone at chess in her prime!

Can vs. Could

2. Possibility - could

The train **could** be late. (*present*)

If you don't study, you **could** fail the exam. (*future*)

Robert **could** have gotten the job if he had gone to the interview. (*past*)

Can - general possibility

You **can** catch a cold if you go out in the rain.

Traveling across Europe **can** be quite expensive.



Can vs. Could

3. Polite expressions

(a) Making suggestions - *could*

We *could* try that new Italian restaurant tonight.

You *could* ask your sister to lend you some money.

(b) Making requests - *can* and *could*

Can / Could you pass me the salt (please)?

Can / Could I speak to Rahul (please)?

Can vs. Could

3. Polite expressions

(c) Making offers - *can* and *could*

Can / Could I get you something to drink (sir)?

Can / Could I help you with that (madam)?

(d) Asking for permission - *can* and *could*

Can / Could I borrow your pen (please)?

Can / Could I take the day off tomorrow?

Practise

1. My son ___ be home by now. Where can he be?
a. Have to b. would **c. should** d. could
2. I think your thumb is broken. You ___ go to the emergency room.
a. Might b. could **c. ought to** d. can
3. If you are interested in losing weight, you _____ try this new diet.
a. Could b. mustn't c. don't have to d. had to
4. John's fallen down the stairs! I _____ call an ambulance!
a. Will b. might c. may d. ought to
5. You _____ come too early. We won't leave until 9 o'clock.
a. Has to b. must **c. needn't** d. can't

Practise

6. Children _____ be accompanied by an adult at the zoo.
a. Ought to **b. must** c. would d. mustn't
7. You _____ talk during tests. It's forbidden!
a. don't have to **b. mustn't** c. couldn't d. ought to
8. I can feel the heat. We _____ be near the fire.
a. Can b. would **c. must** d. have to
9. They _____ hear him because he was whispering.
a. Wouldn't b. mustn't c. shouldn't **d. couldn't**
10. You've never heard of Leonardo da Vinci? You _____ be serious!
a. Must b. had to **c. can't** d. shouldn't

Practise

11. _____ you like to have dinner with me tonight?
a. Could b. may c. should **d. would**
12. You _____ let him hear about the party tomorrow. It's a surprise!
a. mustn't b. wouldn't c. couldn't d. can
13. _____ I speak to the Chief Councillor, please?
a. Must **b. May** c. Would d. Need
14. He has arrived late. He _____ missed the bus
a. Must have b. Should have c. Could have d. must