

# MODAL VERBS



# Definition

A **modal verb** is a verb used in combination with a **main verb** to express obligation, prohibition, ability, etc.

EX: Ralph can **speaks** three languages.

You shouldn't **smoke**.

# Remember!

1. These verbs cannot form all the **tenses**. They don't have neither infinitive not participle form. For this reason, other verbs are required to complete the different tenses.
2. They **don't add "S"** to the 3rd person singular in the present perfect (Except the verbs "have to" and "be able to")

# Remember!

3. All the verbs are **followed by an infinitive** without to (Except “ought to”, “have to”, “be able to” and “used to”).
4. To form **questions** we invert the order subject-verb. To form negative sentences we add “not” to the modal verb.

# ABILITY

<b>can</b>	to talk about ability	I can play the piano. (=am able to, know how to)
<b>be able to</b>	can has no infinitive, -ing form or participles, so we use be able to	I'd like to be able to play the piano. People will soon be able to live on other planets.
<b>could</b>	someone had the general ability to do sth	I could swim when I was four. (=was able to)
<b>was/were able to</b>	to say that someone had the ability to do something in a particular situation	I was tired but I was able to swim back. (not could) (=managed to/succeeded in: when it was difficult.)
<b>could</b>	With verbs of perception (see, hear, smell, taste, feel) and verbs of thinking (understand, remember), we use could when we actually did these things in particular situations.	We could see a man in the garden. She didn't speak very clearly, but I could understand what she said.
<b>could not</b>	for both general ability and particular situations	My grandmother couldn't speak German. He tried very hard, but he couldn't swim

# POSSIBILITY

**can**

to talk about theoretical possibility

Anyone can learn to swim. (=It's possible for anyone to learn to swim.)

**could**

to talk about theoretical possibility  
in the past

My brother could be really horrible as a child. (=My brother was sometimes horrible when he was...)

# OBLIGATION AND NECESSITY

<p><b>must</b> <b>mustn't have to</b></p>	<p>The authority comes from the speaker. there is an obligation not to do sth the authority comes from outside the speaker</p>	<p>You must be home by 10 o'clock. I must go and see the doctor. (I think it is necessary.) You mustn't get up today. You've got a bad cold. I have to be home by 10 o'clock. (My parents insist.) You have to drive on the left in Britain.</p>
<p><b>don't have to</b> <b>don't need to</b> <b>needn't</b> <b>(haven't got to)</b></p>	<p>to say that it is not necessary to do something</p>	<p>I don't have to / don't need to get up. I'm on holiday. I needn't (haven't got to) get up today.</p>
<p><b>didn't need to</b></p>	<p>past form of don't need to. It often means that someone didn't do something.</p>	<p>I didn't need to unlock the door: it was unlocked. She didn't need to go out, but she went anyway.</p>

# DEDUCTION, POSSIBILITY AND PROBABILITY

<b>+ must</b>	to say that we are sure about something	There's a light on. There must be someone in.
<b>can't - negative must</b>	to say that sth is impossible - cf. must	Annie can't be asleep. There's a light on in her room.
<b>should/ought to</b>	sth is probable at the time of speaking	Ann should be at work. She's normally there at 9.
<b>may (not)  might (not)</b>	to say that perhaps sth will happen in the future or that sth is true now  less sure than may. The interrogative is normally expressed by do you think? or be+likely to + infinitive.	It may be cold tomorrow. (=Perhaps it will be cold.) There's someone at the door. It may be Liz. We might go to the beach tomorrow. Do you think he believes your story?
<b>- could</b>	less sure than might	Is the plane likely to be late? Simon could be in the living room.



# PERMISSION

<b>can</b> <b>could</b> <b>may</b> <b>might</b>	to ask for permission less direct, more polite more formal, less common less direct, more formal style	Can I borrow your dictionary? Could I ask you a personal question? May I make a suggestion? Might I make a suggestion?
<b>can</b> <b>may</b>	to give permission	You can borrow my camera if you want to.
<b>can('t)</b> <b>be (not)</b> <b>allowed to</b>	to talk about things that are permitted or not permitted	You can drive/ are allowed to drive a car in Britain when you are seventeen. You can't smoke here.
<b>could was/</b> <b>were</b> <b>allowed to</b>	to say that we had general permission to do something in the past	When we were children, we could stay up/ were allowed to stay up late on Saturday nights.
<b>was/were</b> <b>allowed to</b>	to say that someone had permission to do something and they did it in a particular past situation	The children were allowed to stay up until midnight last night. (not 'could')

# OBLIGATION AND ADVICE

<b>should ought to</b>	to talk about obligation, to ask for and give advice, and, in general, to say what is right or good	<p>“What should I do?” “You should stop smoking.”</p> <p>You oughtn't to tell lies. (We often prefer 'ought to' to talk about authority which comes from outside the speaker eg from laws or rules.)</p>
<b>had better</b>	to express a strong recommendation in a particular situation. (had better often suggests a kind of threat or warning, and is stronger than should/ought to)	<p>I think it's going to rain. You'd better take an umbrella. It's very late. I'd better go now.</p>
<b>be supposed to</b>	to talk about what people are expected to do because of an arrangement, a rule, or a duty. (we also use supposed to to mean 'said to')	<p>You're supposed to start work at 8.00.</p> <p>You know you're not supposed to smoke here. (That book is supposed to be very good.)</p>
<b>shall</b>	to ask for opinion, advice or instructions	<p>I've missed the bus. What shall I do? Shall I apply for the job or not?</p> <p>How long shall I cook this spaghetti?</p>

# REQUESTS

<b>can</b> <b>could</b> <b>may</b> <b>might</b>	to ask for things less direct and more polite more formal more polite than may	Can I have a glass of water, please? Could I have the bill, please? May I have some more coffee? I wonder if I might use your telephone, please?
<b>can</b> <b>could</b> <b>will</b> <b>would</b>	to ask someone to do something for us less definite, more polite form of can less definite and more polite form of will	Can you help me? Could you do me a favour? Will you switch on the light, please? The phone is ringing. Would you answer it? (=Would you mind answering it?)

# OFFERS

<b>will</b>	to say that we are willing to do sth	I'll help you with your suitcase. Are you hungry? I'll make you something to eat.
<b>shall</b>	to offer to do something	Shall I open the door for you?
<b>can</b>	=do you want me to? ='ability' /	I can post this letter for you. / Can I help you?
<b>could</b>	= 'permission' less direct and more polite than can	I could lend you some money if you want. Could I carry that bag for you?
<b>would like</b>		Would you like me to help you?
<b>would prefer</b>	to make polite offers and invitations	Would you prefer to stay in or go out?
<b>would rather</b>		Would you rather go now?

# SUGGESTIONS

<b>shall</b>	to ask for and make suggestions	Where shall we go? Shall we stay at home?
<b>can</b>  <b>could</b>	to suggest possible actions  less direct and more polite than can	We can watch TV if you like. We could go to the cinema tomorrow.

# MODAL PERFECT VERBS



# MODAL PERFECT

<b>must + have + pp</b>	used for deductions about the past	The shoes you bought must have been expensive.
<b>can't + have + pp</b>	used for deductions about the past	He can't have been there! It was closed!
<b>should/ought to + have + p. participle</b>	1) when we expected sth to happen - either we do not know if it happened or we know it didn't. 2) to say that someone did the wrong thing in the past	They should have arrived. (But I don't know if they have.) They ought to have arrived, but they aren't there yet.  I'm really tired. I shouldn't have stayed up so late.
<b>needn't + have + p. participle</b>	to say that someone did something unnecessarily	I needn't have made so much food for the party. (•I shouldn't have made so much food for the party)
<b>may/might/could + have + p. participle</b>	to talk about possibility in the past	I think she may have been there. (=Perhaps she was... He might /could have lost it. (=Perhaps he has lost it.)
<b>could/might + have + p. participle</b>	to say that something was possible in the past but did not happen	You were very lucky. Someone could have stolen it. He was stupid to do that. He might have died.