***Verbs***

**Modal Auxiliary Verbs**

Can

Could

May

Might

Must

Will

Would

Should

Shall

Ought to

**Ability**

Can (present/near future)

Could (past)

Will be able to (distant future)

**Past Ability**

General: - Could/Couldnt

Specific occasion: - When I was a child I could swim.

- Was able to/couldn’t

- There was a lot of traffic but I was able to arrive on time.

- Yesterday I couldn’t go out because I had to study.

**Permission**

Interrogative only; present/future only;

Can (informal)

Could (formal)

May (super formal)

**Requests**

Interrogative; present/future; YOU

Can/Could

Will/would ((formal/informal)

**Offering**

Can I get you a cup of coffee?

Could I get you a cup of coffee?

Shall I bring you some tea? (formal)

*Alternative non-modal ways:*

*Would you like some coffee?*

*Do you want some coffee?*

*How about a coffee?*

*What about having a coffee? (neutral)*

*Let’s have a coffee (neutral)*

**Proposal/Suggestion**

Shall we go to the cinema after dinner?

**Probability**

Based on perceived certainty of the speaker

Low certainty: may, might

Moderate cartainty: could, can(generalized possibility)

High certainty: will, won’t (sure it won’t happen)

**Should**(expectation of something, rooted in facts = quite sure)

**Obligation/prohibition**

Strong positive obligation: must, have to, need to

Must: personal obligations (moral, personal, etc.)

Have to: external obligations (rules, laws, etc.)

Weak positive obligation (advice): should, ought to

No obligation (not necessary): don’t have to, don’t need to

Needn’t + base form