

- Why modal verbs are called modal
 - A modal verb is a type of verb that is used to indicate modality – that is: likelihood, ability, permission and obligation
- Is either “can” or “could” more polite
 - <https://english.stackexchange.com/a/21440>
 - In English, the past tense FORM of both lexical verbs [jump, run, write, etc] and the Historical past tense FORM of modal verbs are used to perform a number of different tasks: politeness/deference/doubt/non- real or counterfactual/... when it comes to the modals, it is the HISTORICAL past tense FORMS which are used, again, to effect a greater sense of politeness, deference/softness/... It's vitally important to remember that this use is only a use of the past tense FORM, it is NOT a true past tense, in the sense of time, use!!