

# MODAL VERBS

## FORM

- Modal verbs don't take the **3rd person sg. -s**
- They are **defective** verbs
- They are not followed by to infinitive, but by **BARE INFINITIVE**
- They don't need **auxiliary verbs** for the question and negative forms
- Note: **cannot = can't**
- Some are considered to be **semi-modal verbs**: ought to, have to, need
  - Laura has to go home.
  - She doesn't have to go home
  - Carmelo ought to study more

## USE:

### ABILITY:

- **Can** : Claudia can ride a bike
- **Cannot / can't**: Tamara cannot drive
- **Could**: Andrea could ride a bike when she was 6.
- **To be able to**: Noelia is able to ride a bike

### PERMISSION /PROHIBITION

- Nuria **can** go out on Saturday night
- Elena **cannot** go out on Saturday night
- You **mustn't** use the phone while you are driving
- **To be allowed to**: Nuria is allowed to go out on Saturday night

### OBLIGATION

- Adrián **must** study more to pass
- David **has to** attend meetings for class representatives.

### NECESSITY

- **Need to**: You need to study harder

### LACK OF OBLIGATION

- Ivanna **doesn't have to** wear a uniform
- Ivanna **needn't** wear a uniform.

## ADVICE

- Claudia **should** go to the doctor.
- Martín **ought to** go to the doctor.
- Adrián **shouldn't** have friends such as Martín.
- Adrián **ought not to** have friends such as Martín.

## POSIBILITY

- **Can** : Rugby can be a dangerous sport. A certain degree. (60% chances)
- **Could / May / might**: It may rain tomorrow. A lower degree. (50-20%)
- **Can't**: certainty that something is impossible (0% chances)
- **Must**: certainty that something is true (100% chances)

## POLITENESS

- **Can: requests** – Can you open the window?
- **Could: polite requests and suggestions** – Could you open the window, please?
- **May: polite requests** – May I open the window, please?  
May I have the salt, please?
- **Would: formal request or offer** – Would you open the window?/Would you like some tea?
- **Shall: polite offer or request (first person)** – Shall I help you?