**Modal Verbs**

Must

1. Compulsion-You must do it.
2. Determination- I must see him punished.
3. Certainty-He must be mad. We must all die.
4. Duty- We must obey our parents.

May is used as

1. Permission- You may go now. May I come?
2. Possibility- He may pass. It may rain.
3. A wish-May you be happy. May God bless you.
4. A purpose- He works hard that he may pass.

Might

Might expresses a mild form of request.

Might I go now?

With the perfect infinite have, it indicates failure on account of an unfulfilled condition

He might have recovered if he had proper nursing.

Can

Can expresses

Power or ability- He can run. I can help you

Permission- You can go.

Could

Could is sometimes used for can

To mean ‘feel inclined to’- I am so glad at the news that I could almost dance for joy.

As a polite form of address- Could you tell me the time?

Shall

Shall expresses simple futurity in the first person, command, promise or threat by the speaker in the second and third persons.

I shall go – simple futurity

You or he shall go. – I command

He shall be punished. – I threaten

He shall get a prize. – promise

Will

Will expresses simple futurity in the second and third persons, determination and intention of the speaker in the first person.

I will go there – my determination

You will succeed – simple futurity

He will win the prize – simple futurity.

In Interrogative Sentences

In Interrogative sentences, shall indicates simple futurity, command or desire of the person spoken to in the first person; simple futurity in the second; command or desire of the person spoken to the third;

Shall I go? - Simple futurity or desire or command

Shall you go? - Simple futurity

Shall he go? - Is it your wish that he should go?

In Interrogative sentences will is never used in the first person, but denotes intention or wish of the person spoken to in the second person and simple futurity in the third person:

Will you go? - Is it your desire or intention?

Will he go? - Simple futurity

Should and Would

Should is also used as a principal verb to express:

Duty or obligation in all persons:

You should go there. You, he or I should do it.

Boys should obey there teachers.

Condition, desire, necessity, approval or disapproval etc in all persons.

I am anxious that he should pass.

Should you (=if you should) go there, I would punish you.

I should go if I were you.

A simple child, what should it know of death?

I did not know that he should treat me thus.

Modesty in the first person: I should like it.

Would is also used as a principal verb:

To denote condition or uncertainty. If you would (also should) go there you would see a new sight.

To denote past determination, habit, or action repeated occasionally and irregularly in all persons:

I repeatedly told him to go, but he would not (determination).

While in Calcutta, he would go to New Market. (habit)

To denote wish in all persons:

Do as you would be done by.

Would to God, he would come round soon.

To soften down an expression:

I hope you would kindly lend me the book.

The school should be closed tomorrow- “a certainty and can be spoken only by one in authority.”

The school will be closed tomorrow- “may be said by anybody.”

You or he shall be punished- I threaten

You or he will be punished- a mere statement, the speaker having nothing to do with the punishment.

Shall I go there? – Is it your wish that I should go there?

Shall I (or you) die, if I ( or you) go there? – a simple enquiry about a future event.

Shall he be punished? – Is it your intention to punish him?

Shall you or I be punished? – a simple enquiry.

Will he be punished? – a simple enquiry.

Will you be punished?- Is it your wish to be punished?

Who will say to me no? – an appeal

Who shall say to me no? – a challenge.

What shall you or I do if you fail?- a simple enquiry

What shall he do if he fails? – What do you desire him to do?

What will you do if you fail?- What is your desire if you fail?