

● Modals: ability, permission, advice, criticism, obligation and necessity, degrees of certainty

- Form**
- All modals (*will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must*) and the semi-modal *ought to* have only one form.
 - Modals are followed by the bare infinitive (simple or continuous) or the bare perfect infinitive eg *Toby **should be** very fit by now.*
*Toby **should have recovered** by now.*
 - The semi-modals *have to* and *need to* change their form depending on person and tense eg *The doctor said I **had/needed to** give up red meat.*

Modals: ability

Use	Modal	Example
Expressing ability now or generally	<i>can</i>	<i>I can run a kilometre in four minutes.</i>
Expressing decisions made now about future ability	<i>can</i>	<i>We can meet at the gym tomorrow, if you like.</i>
Expressing ability in the past	<i>could</i>	<i>I could do fifty press-ups with one hand when I was younger.</i>
Expressing ability in present, future or general hypothetical situations	<i>could</i>	<i>If only I could quit smoking!</i>
Expressing ability in past hypothetical situations	<i>could + perfect infinitive</i>	<i>I could have roasted the potatoes, but I decided that boiling them was healthier.</i>

Watch out!

- We use *be able to* for the infinitive and other tenses.
 - ✓ *I'd love **to be able to** fit into these jeans again!* (infinitive)
 - ✓ *I'll **be able to** leave hospital in a few weeks, apparently.* (future)
 - ✓ *I've **been able to** swim since I was five.* (present perfect)

Modals: permission

Use	Modal	Example
Asking for and giving permission now, for the future or generally	<i>may</i> <i>could</i> <i>can</i>	<i>May / Could / Can I see the doctor, please?</i>

Watch out!

- *May* is more polite than *could*, and *could* is more polite than *can*.
- We don't usually use a modal to talk about past permission.
 - ✓ *I **was allowed to** wear a knee support during the match.*
 - ✗ *I **could** wear a knee support during the match.*
- However, we do use *could* to talk about past permission in reported speech.
 - ✓ *The coach said I **could** wear a knee support during the match.*

Modals: advice

Use	Modal	Example
Asking for and giving advice now, for the future or generally	<i>should</i> <i>ought to</i>	<i>You ought to / should cut down on the amount of red meat you eat.</i>

Modals: criticism

Use	Modal	Example
Criticising past behaviour	<i>should</i> <i>ought to</i> (+ perfect infinitive)	<i>He ought to / should have made more of an effort with his diet.</i>