

Modal Verbs

English modal verbs are often challenging for many reasons, including both grammar and meaning. Here are some important general guidelines on the use of modal verbs:

1) English modal verbs are auxiliary verbs – they are always combined with other verbs to show complete meanings.

2) There are both single-word modal verbs and phrasal modal verbs.

The single-word modal verbs are:

can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would

Phrasal modal verbs include the following:

be able to, be going to, be supposed to, had better, have to, have got to, ought to, used to

3) All the single-word modal verbs above are followed by the simple form of verbs:

NOT this: ~~He may knows the answer.~~

NOR this: ~~He may knowing the answer.~~

NOR this: ~~He may know the answer.~~

NOR this: ~~He may known the answer.~~

BUT this: *He may know the answer.*

4) Most of the phrasal modal verbs include to:

be able to, be going to, be supposed to, have to, have got to, ought to, used to

With these phrasal modal verbs, the simple form of a verb follows to:

He's able to help us.

He's going to help us.

He's supposed to help us.

He has to help us.

He's got to help us.

He ought to help us.

He used to help us.

5) One of the phrasal modal verbs, 'had better', does not include 'to'.

Use the simple form of a verb after 'had better':

He'd better help us. (NOT: He'd better to help us.)

6) All of the modal verbs show meaning. When they are used with a verb, they show someone's feeling or attitude toward the action or situation that the verb shows.

7) Every modal verb has more than one use and/or meaning.

Special Note: In some grammar books, '**dare**' and '**need**' are included in lists of modals because their "behavior," in some situations, is similar to the "behavior" of modals:

'**Dare**' can be used with or without 'to' and a simple verb in negative statements and in questions:

He didn't dare (to) leave early. / Do I dare (to) leave early?

'**Need**' can be used with not and a simple verb:

He need not leave early.

SUPPLEMENT: 'Need' as a modal

As a modal verb, 'need' is most typically used in negative sentences or in affirmative sentences with a negative meaning. It expresses absence of necessity or obligation, and it is followed by a bare infinitive:

*Nobody **need** think that we are rich.*

*She **need** not arrive (needn't arrive) so early.*

*If you want good results, you will **need** to work harder.*

'**Need**' as a modal verb also occurs in interrogative sentences, but this use is much more formal:

Need you make so much noise? (MORE COMMON = Do you need to make so much noise?)

If used in statements, 'need to' is often used in the same context as 'have to' meaning necessity, but many times, 'need to' is used to express something that is less urgent, something in which you have a choice:

I have to work late tonight.

I need to work late tonight.

"CAN" is one of the most commonly used modal verbs in English. It can be used to express ability or opportunity, to request or offer permission, and to show possibility or impossibility.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| • I can ride a horse. | ABILITY |
| • We can stay with my brother when we are in Paris. | OPPORTUNITY |
| • She cannot stay out after 10 PM. | PERMISSION |
| • Can you hand me the stapler? | REQUEST |
| • Any child can grow up to be president. | POSSIBILITY |
| • It cannot be done. | IMPOSSIBILITY / INABILITY |

"COULD" is a modal verb used to express possibility or past ability as well as to make suggestions and requests. "Could" is also commonly used in conditional sentences as the conditional form of "can."

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| • Extreme rain could cause the river to flood the city. | POSSIBILITY |
| • Nancy could ski like a pro by the age of 11. | PAST ABILITY |
| • You could see a movie or go out to dinner. | SUGGESTION |
| • Could I use your computer to email my boss? | REQUEST |
| • We could go on the trip, if I didn't have to work this weekend. | CONDITIONAL |

"HAD BETTER" is most commonly used to make recommendations. It can also be used to express desperate hope as well as warn people.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| • You had better take your umbrella with you today. | RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE |
| • That bus had better get here soon! | DESPERATE HOPE |
| • You had better watch the way you talk to me in the future! | WARNING |

"HAVE TO" is used to express certainty, necessity, and obligation.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • This answer has to be correct. | CERTAINTY |
| • The soup has to be stirred continuously to prevent burning. | NECESSITY |
| • They have to leave early. | OBLIGATION |

"HAVE GOT TO" is used to express necessity and obligation.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • Drivers have got to get a license to drive a car in the US. | NECESSITY |
| • I have got to be at work by 8:30 AM. | OBLIGATION |

"MAY" is a modal verb most commonly used to express possibility. It can also be used to give or request permission, although this usage is becoming less common.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • Cheryl may be at home, or perhaps at work. | POSSIBILITY |
| • Johnny, you may leave the table when you have finished your dinner. | GIVE PERMISSION |
| • May I use your bathroom? | REQUEST PERMISSION |

"MIGHT" is a modal verb most commonly used to express possibility. It is also often used in conditional sentences. English speakers can also use "might" to make suggestions or requests (this is generally less common in American English).

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • Your purse might be in the living room. | POSSIBILITY |
| • If I didn't have to work, I might go with you. | CONDITIONAL |
| • You might visit the botanical gardens during your visit. | SUGGESTION |
| • Might I borrow your pen? | REQUEST |

"MUST" is a modal verb most commonly used to express certainty. It can also be used to express necessity or strong recommendation, although native speakers prefer the more flexible form "have to." "Must not" can be used to prohibit actions, but this sounds very severe; speakers prefer to use softer modal verbs such as "should not" or "ought not" to dissuade rather than prohibit.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| • This must be the right address! | CERTAINTY |
| • Students must pass an entrance examination to study at this school. | NECESSITY |
| • You must take some medicine for that cough. | STRONG RECOMMENDATION |
| • Jenny, you must not play in the street! | PROHIBITION |
| • It must not be very hard to do. | PROBABILITY |

"NEED" is most typically used in negative sentences or in affirmative sentences with a negative meaning. It expresses absence of necessity or obligation, and it is followed by a bare infinitive.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| • Nobody need think that we are rich. | ABSENCE OF NECESSITY |
| • She need not arrive (needn't arrive) so early. | ABSENCE OF NECESSITY |
| • If you want good results, you will need to work harder. | OBLIGATION |

If used in statements, 'need to' is often used in the same context as 'have to' meaning necessity, but many times, 'need to' is used to express something that is less urgent, something in which you have a choice:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • I need to work late tonight. = I <u>have to</u> work late tonight. | NECESSITY |
|---|-----------|

"OUGHT TO" is used to advise or make recommendations. "Ought to" also expresses assumption or expectation as well as strong probability, often with the idea that something is deserved. "Ought not" (without "to") is used to advise against doing something, although American English may tend to prefer the less formal forms "should not" or "had better not."

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • You ought to stop smoking. | RECOMMENDATION |
| • Jim ought to get the promotion. | IT IS EXPECTED BECAUSE HE DESERVES IT. |
| • This stock ought to increase in value. | PROBABILITY |
| • Mark ought not drink so much. | ADVICE AGAINST SOMETHING (NOTICE THERE IS NO "TO") |

"SHALL" is a modal verb used to indicate future action. It is most commonly used in sentences with "I" or "we," and is often found in suggestions, such as "Shall we go?" "Shall" is also frequently used in promises or voluntary actions. In formal English, the use of "shall" to describe future events often expresses inevitability or predestination. "Shall" is much more commonly heard in British English than in American English; American English tends to prefer the use of other forms, although sometimes "shall" is used in suggestions or formalized language.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • Shall I help you? | SUGGESTION |
| • I shall never forget where I came from. | PROMISE |
| • He shall become our next king. | PREDESTINATION |
| • I'm afraid Mr. Smith shall become our new director. | INEVITABILITY |

"SHOULD" is a modal verb most commonly used to make recommendations or give advice. It can also be used to express obligation as well as expectation.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • When you go to Berlin, you should visit the palaces in Potsdam. | RECOMMENDATION |
| • You should focus more on your family and less on work. | ADVICE |
| • I really should be in the office by 7:00 AM. | OBLIGATION |
| • By now, they should already be in Dubai. | EXPECTATION |

"WILL" is a modal verb used with promises or voluntary actions that take place in the future. "Will" can also be used to make predictions about the future.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • I promise that I will write you every single day. | PROMISE |
| • I will make dinner tonight. | VOLUNTARY ACTION |
| • He thinks it will rain tomorrow. | PREDICTION |

"WOULD" is a modal verb most commonly used to create conditional verb forms. It also serves as the past form of the modal verb "will." Additionally, "would" can indicate repetition in the past.

EXAMPLES:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • If he were an actor, he would be in adventure movies. | CONDITIONAL |
| • I knew that she would be very successful in her career. | PAST OF "WILL" |
| • When they first met, they would always have picnics on the beach. | REPETITION |

Modal Verb PRACTICE:

Fill in the blank spaces in the sentences

below (1 - 30) with the correct Modal Verb → → → → → → → → → → according to the function the sentence is attempting to express ↓ ↓ ↓

ONE WORD per blank space.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| (1) You _____ listen to the professor during the lecture. | NECESSITY |
| (2) He _____ to be home by seven o'clock. | PROBABILITY |
| (3) What _____ you do if you lost your job? | CONDITIONAL |
| (4) _____ I come with you? | REQUEST |
| (5) I _____ to renew my visa next week. | NECESSITY |
| (6) You _____ be in two places at the same time. | IMPOSSIBILITY / INABILITY |
| (7) You _____ better clean this mess up, or you won't get any ice cream. | WARNING |
| (8) There _____ be other problems that we don't know about. | POSSIBILITY |
| (9) This particular type of car _____ drive cross country. | ABILITY |
| (10) It _____ be hard to work 60-hours a week. | PROBABILITY |
| (11) When I was in college I _____ stay up all night without consequence. | PAST ABILITY |
| (12) If I inherited a billion dollars, I _____ buy Google. | CONDITIONAL |
| (13) You _____ not have worried about the dinner - it was delicious! | ABSENCE OF NECESSITY |
| (14) _____ I sit down here? | REQUEST PERMISSION |
| (15) You really _____ get a good job unless you go to university. | INABILITY |
| (16) I _____ send you the results when I get them. | VOLUNTARY ACTION / PROMISE |
| (17) Margaret _____ not jump to conclusions. | ADVICE |
| (18) If Sara's parents agree, you _____ go to the sleepover at her house this weekend. | PERMISSION / POSSIBILITY |
| (19) We _____ go to dinner after the movie. | SUGGESTION / POSSIBILITY |
| (20) A reader _____ borrow up to six books at any one time. | GIVE PERMISSION |
| (21) If you're not working tomorrow, we _____ go on a picnic. | CONDITIONAL |
| (22) I _____ to get a birthday present for my wife. | OBLIGATION |
| (23) You _____ better pay attention, or you will fail the exam! | RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE / WARNING |
| (24) You _____ try using a little more basil in the sauce next time. | SUGGESTION |
| (25) If you rest, you _____ feel better. | PREDICTION / CONDITIONAL |
| (26) My dry cleaning _____ be ready this afternoon. | EXPECTATION |
| (27) You _____ to be nicer to your little brother. | RECOMMENDATION |
| (28) I _____ have to cancel my plans for Saturday night. | POSSIBILITY |
| (29) We _____ visit my sister when we are in Brighton. | OPPORTUNITY / ABILITY |
| (30) You _____ be wearing your seat belt. | OBLIGATION |

May and Might When Expressing Possibility

In popular usage and speech, **may** and **might** are used interchangeably when referring to possibility and probability, but there is a slight difference between the two.

May is used to express what is possible, factual, or could be factual. For example:

- He **may** lose his job.
- We **may** go on vacation.
- I **may** have dessert after dinner.

Might is used to express what is hypothetical, counterfactual, or remotely possible. For example:

- If you hurry, you **might** get there on time.
- If I had shown up on time, I **might** have kept my job.
- If I win the lottery, I **might** buy a Ferrari.

Right away we notice that **might** deals with situations that are speculative or did not actually happen, i.e. hypothetical, whereas **may** deals with situations that are possible or could be factual.

An easy way to express/remember this difference is that **might** suggests a lower probability than does **may**. If something is very far-fetched (nepravděpodobný / za vlny přitažený), you probably want to use **might**.

Might is the Past Tense of May

The second distinction, which is the more important of the two, between these two words is that **might** is the past tense of **may**. In most confusing situations, you can easily make the correct choice by remembering this fact. For example:

- He **might** have called earlier, but I was not home. (Past tense)
- The criminal **might** not have been caught, had you not sounded the alarm. (Past tense)
- I **may** go to the movies tonight. (Present tense)

If you can determine the tense of your sentence, you can easily choose between **might** or **may**.

Can You Use Might/May Have Interchangeably?

Some people claim that you can use **might have** and **may have** interchangeably, but this is a bad idea. **May have** should not be used in the past tense.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary's 2012 Usage Panel survey, the vast majority of experts disagree with using **might have** and **may have** in the same contexts. AHD provided their panel with the following two sentences:

- If John Lennon had not been shot, the Beatles **might have** gotten back together.
- If John Lennon had not been shot, the Beatles **may have** gotten back together.

In the survey, 97 percent of the Usage Panelist found the first sentence to be acceptable while only 32 percent found the second sentence to be acceptable.

Far from just a few grammar-loving pedants, the majority of experts view this distinction as necessary, and if you're writing for any kind of professional audience, you will want to make sure you're keeping these two words separated.

May and Might When Asking Permission

May and **might** can also both be used when asking for permission. For example:

- You **may** have another piece of cake.
- **May** I go to the restroom?
- **Might** I ask when the movie starts?
- **Might** I ask for a favor?

When asking for permission, **may** is much more common than **might**.

While both of these words can be used to ask permission, if you're not careful, they can lead to ambiguity (nejednoznačnost / dvojsmysl(nost) / nejasnost). For example, if you were to ask the question:

- **May** I go to the movies tonight?

You will want to be clear when you go to tell your friends whether or not you received permission. For example:

- I **may not** go to the movies tonight.

When you say this, do you mean "I am not allowed to go to the movies tonight" or do you mean "I might not go to the movies tonight"?

In situations like this, it's best to use **might** to avoid any confusion that might arise.

- I **might** not go to the movies tonight.

Summary

It's important to keep **might** vs. **may** separated so you can maintain clarity in your writing.

Might carries with it less probability and applies to hypothetical and counterfactual situations. **Might** is also the past tense of **may**.

May applies to situations that are possible or could be possible.

When talking about something that is not happening, it can be better to use **might** to avoid confusion with the permissive **may**.

Some helpful vocabulary for reading exercise below:

agent (n.) – a professional (in Real Estate, property)
 available (adj.) – ready; able to be used, easily be bought or found
 condominium (n.) – an independent living space or unit in a larger building or complex
 eager (adj.) – be excited about something that will happen
 flake (expression) – an unreliable person
 furnish (v.) – put furniture and other things into a room or house
 lease (n.) – a legal agreement to pay rent; *We have a twelve-month lease.*
 listings (pl. n.) – information about available places to live (in newspaper or an online database)
 purchases (pl. n.) – buys
 show up (verbal expression) – appear as expected or agreed

Read the following text and select the modal form that best completes the sentences (1 - 16) and the context from the options below (a, b, c or d).

Moving into an Apartment

Before this year, I (1) _____ move out of my parents' house because I did not have a job. But now that I have finished college and have a job, I realize that living at home (2) _____ drive my parents and me crazy. Unfortunately, it's not so easy to find an apartment in the city. Without an agent, you (3) _____ not be able to find all the available listings. Because of my agent's help, I found a wonderful condominium this morning and signed the lease. Before now, I couldn't sign a lease, but now I (4) _____ because I am twenty-one.

I asked my friends to help me move because I knew that I (5) _____ fit all my possessions into my little car. My best friend said, "I (6) _____ able to help you move next week." He added, "I (7) _____ rather help earlier in the morning than later in the afternoon." My father also offered to help me move. He (8) _____ really be eager to have me move out!

Another friend told me that he (9) _____ me move, but he never showed up. What a flake! With the help of three friends, I (10) _____ get all my possessions into the new condo.

My parents are happy for me, but warned, "You (11) _____ spend all your money each month. Save a little extra money for unexpected emergencies." I know that everyone (12) _____ to save a little extra money, but it is hard with so many bills to pay. I made a few purchases. The first thing that I (13) _____ was furniture. I (14) _____ on the wood floor, but it was too hard, so I bought a sofa-bed.

It (15) _____ about a year until I am able to completely furnish my apartment. By this time next year, I (16) _____ a lot about living independently.

- | | | | | |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| (1) | a) may not | b) cannot | c) could not | d) shall not |
| (2) | a) could | b) should | c) would have | d) should have |
| (3) | a) shall | b) should | c) might | d) can |
| (4) | a) able | b) can | c) have to | d) can do |
| (5) | a) shall not | b) not able to | c) had better not | d) couldn't |
| (6) | a) will be | b) could be | c) must be | d) have got to be |
| (7) | a) --- | b) shall | c) might | d) would |
| (8) | a) must to | b) will | c) must | d) ought to |
| (9) | a) would help | b) would to help | c) was going help | d) should help |
| (10) | a) am able to | b) can | c) was able to | d) could have |
| (11) | a) mustn't | b) don't have to | c) shall not have | d) aren't able to |
| (12) | a) must | b) is supposed | c) had better | d) need |
| (13) | a) must have | b) had to have | c) must have had | d) would have had |
| (14) | a) should sleep | b) must have slept | c) could have slept | d) am able to sleep |
| (15) | a) must take | b) will have taken | c) would take | d) will take |
| (16) | a) must learn | b) will learn | c) would learn | d) will have learned |

Modal / Auxiliary Verbs PRACTICE 3: Key Word Sentence Transformations**[Page 7]**

For Questions 1-15, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence using the word given. **Do not change** the word given. You must use between two (2) and five (5) words including the word given.

- (1) He looks really disappointed. Obviously, he expected to win the race. EXPECTED
He looks really disappointed. He _____ to win the race.
- (2) I'm sure he's not Michael Jackson. He died a few years ago! BE
He _____ because he died a few years ago.
- (3) I'm sure he didn't understand what I was saying to him. MISUNDERSTOOD
He _____ what I was saying to him.
- (4) I prefer to arrive an hour early. RATHER
I _____ an hour early.
- (5) It was very bad of you to use my mobile without asking my permission. OUGHT
You _____ before you used my mobile.
- (6) He is so rich that I am sure he is always happy. MUST
He is so rich that _____ happy.
- (7) I went to the office then remembered it was my day off. HAVE
I _____ the office as it was my day off.
- (8) You were expected to answer all the questions on the exam paper. ANSWERED
You _____ all the questions on the examination paper.
- (9) He looks so pale that I'm sure he has seen a ghost. MUST
He _____ ghost because now he looks very pale.
- (10) Perhaps we missed the correct turning. MIGHT
We _____ the correct turning.
- (11) I'm afraid you can't smoke in here. ALLOWED
You _____ in here.
- (12) They will expect you to wear a suit for the interview. HAVE
You _____ a suit for the interview.
- (13) I'd see a doctor if I were you. OUGHT
You _____ a doctor.
- (14) He couldn't swim until he was in his twenties. ABLE
He _____ until he was in his twenties.
- (15) We got a table at the restaurant without a reservation. NEED
We _____ book a table at the restaurant.

Academic Vocabulary / Word Formation

Complete the following sentences (1 - 24) by filling in the blank spaces with **the proper form of the word given for that sentence**. Use ONLY ONE word per blank space: DO NOT add any words [e.g. prepositions].

- (1) ABSENCE She has been _____ from school for several days.
- (2) ABILITY You should be _____ to evaluate your own work.
- (3) ADVISE I really need to get some basic financial _____.
- (4) CERTAINTY Without treatment, she will almost _____ die.
- (5) CHALLENGING The role will be the biggest _____ of his acting career.
- (6) DIED Do you believe in life after _____?
- (7) EXPRESS I could tell from the _____ on her face that something serious had happened.
- (8) FLEXIBLE He tried to impress me by _____ his huge muscles.
- (9) FREQUENTLY Houses are sold here with greater _____ than in most other parts of the country.
- (10) HARMFUL There were those who found the joke offensive, but Johnson insisted it was just a bit of _____ fun.
- (11) NECESSITY Is it _____ for all of us to be present at the meeting this afternoon?
- (12) OBLIGATION Tenants are _____ to pay their rent on time.
- (13) POSSESSIONS Different workers _____ different skills.
- (14) PREFER Choosing furniture is largely a matter of personal _____.
- (15) RECOMMENDATIONS This book is highly _____ by teachers.
- (16) REPETITION Please don't _____ what I've just told you to anyone else.
- (17) RESERVATION These seats are _____ for the elderly and women with babies.
- (18) SEVERE Their daughter was _____ injured in a car accident.
- (19) SITUATION The school is _____ near the park.
- (20) STATEMENTS It is often _____ that humans use only 10 per cent of their brain.
- (21) SUGGESTIONS I _____ that we wait a while before we make any firm decisions.
- (22) UNFORTUNATELY You're very _____ to have found such a nice house.
- (23) URGENT "Come straight away!" she said _____.
- (24) WONDERFUL The sight of the Grand Canyon stretching out before them filled them with _____.

Prepositions

Complete the following sentences (1 - 15) by filling in the blank spaces with the proper preposition. You may use ONLY ONE word for each blank space.

- (1) Atheists do not believe _____ God.
- (2) Two atoms of hydrogen combine _____ one atom of oxygen to form a molecule of water.
- (3) It's important to focus _____ your strengths and to minimize your weaknesses.
- (4) There was a flash of light followed _____ an explosion.
- (5) Drinking lots of water is good _____ the complexion.*
- (6) We did an analysis of the way that government money has been spent _____ the past.
- (7) Donald is 30 years old, but he still lives _____ home with his parents.
- (8) He was unwilling to make a prediction _____ which books would sell best in the coming year.
- (9) Two huge boulders had to be moved out _____ the way before the trucks could get through.
- (10) The whole ceremony took place _____ complete silence.
- (11) The chainsaw is a dangerous tool - it should be used _____ great care.
- (12) No artificial sweeteners are used _____ this product.
- (13) Sulphur is also used _____ sterilize equipment.
- (14) Did you go _____ the office today?
- (15) I often read English magazines, but with the help _____ a dictionary.

* complexion = the natural appearance of the skin on a person's face, especially its colour or quality.

Both **cannot** and **can not** are acceptable spellings, but the first is much more usual. *Cannot* belongs to a certain category of helping verbs and almost always appears as a single word. There are very rare occasions, however, where it is appropriate to have the words separated.

WHEN TO USE CANNOT

What does cannot mean? *Cannot* is a contraction of the two words *can* and *not*. It functions as an auxiliary verb that describes an action as *impossible* or *not allowed*.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- *You cannot have any pudding until you eat your meat.*
- *You cannot possibly jump far enough to reach the other side of the chasm.*
- *But it cannot be easy for Woods to forget how he started 2015: with a first-round withdrawal and three scores in the 80s in his first six events.* –The New York Times

On a more technical level, *cannot* is a negative modal auxiliary verb. Modal verbs, like *can*, modify grammatical mood; in other words, they reflect a person's perception of the possibility, likelihood, obligation, or necessity of an action or event.

The verb *can* communicates the potential mood, which indicates likelihood or possibility. In the contraction *cannot*, the likelihood or possibility is negated, therefore expressing impossibility or denial.

IS CANNOT ONE WORD?

Most people probably know the aforementioned information; they understand the meaning of *cannot*. The primary question at hand is, "Is *cannot* one word?"

In most cases—say 99 percent of ordinary writing—*cannot* will appear as a single word. There are only rare circumstances that *cannot* should appear as two words—and most of these should probably be rewritten anyway.

Cannot can also be shortened into the contraction *can't*, which means the same thing.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- *You can't drive faster than the speed limit and expect to avoid getting a ticket.*

Remember, however, to avoid contractions in formal writing.

WHEN TO USE CAN NOT

What does can not mean? *Can not*, as two separate words, is not a proper verb phrase. When describing an action which is impossible, you should **always** use *cannot*.

The words *can* and *not* should only appear together when they are part of separate but adjacent phrases.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- *By buying two cakes, Alina can not only have her cake, but eat it, too.*

In this sentence, *not* is a part of another construction, i.e., *not only...but /too*. In this case, you would separate *cannot* into two words.

You might also simply rework the sentence as a whole.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- *Since Alina bought two cakes, she can now have her cake and eat it too.*

A TRICK TO REMEMBER THE DIFFERENCE

A good rule of thumb is that *cannot* is always one word, never two. Of course, rules are meant to be broken, and sometimes, albeit rarely, *cannot* can appear as two words. In these rare cases where it is appropriate, you would be well advised to simply rephrase your sentence, but if you insist on keeping it as it is, just remember that *can not* must be a part of two separate constructions to be correct.

CANNOT

- *The government cannot be seen to give in to terrorists' demands.*
- *It feels terrible when your child is ill and you cannot help them.*
- *Obviously the school cannot function without teachers.*
- *These plants cannot survive in very cold conditions.*
- *Some sounds cannot be detected by the human ear.*

CAN NOT

- *We **can not only** break even, but also turn a profit.*
- *The company's new product **can not only** reduce emissions, but also trap some of the existing greenhouse gasses.*
- *These green industries **can not only** create more jobs, but also promote sustainable development of the land.*
- *They **can not only** take all of your money, but destroy your entire life with a single keystroke.*

Overall, CANNOT is better for formal writing.

Reading Comprehension

Read the following passage and for each of the blank spaces (1 - 15) choose the best answer (a, b, c or d). Then look at the comprehension questions and choose the best answer (a, b, c, d or e) for each of the questions (1 - 7).

In the early 1920's, settlers came to Alaska looking (1) _____ gold. They traveled by boat to the coastal towns of Seward and Knik, and from there by land into the gold fields. The trail they used to travel inland is known today (2) _____ the Iditarod Trail, one of the National Historic Trails designated by the Congress of the United States. The Iditarod Trail quickly (3) _____ a major thoroughfare in Alaska, as the mail and supplies were carried across this trail. (4) _____ also used it to get from place to place, including the priests, ministers, and judges who had to travel between villages. In the winter, the settlers' only (5) _____ travel down this trail was via dog sled.

Once the gold rush ended, many gold-seekers went back (6) _____ where they had come from, and suddenly there was much less travel on the Iditarod Trail. The introduction of the airplane in the late 1920's meant dog teams were no longer the standard **mode** of transportation, and of course with the airplane carrying the mail and supplies, there was less need for land travel in general. The final blow to the use of the dog teams was the (7) _____ of snowmobiles.

By the mid 1960's, most Alaskans didn't even know the Iditarod Trail (8) _____, or that dog teams had played a crucial role in Alaska's early settlements. Dorothy G. Page, a **self-made historian**, recognized how few people knew about the former use of sled dogs as working animals and about the Iditarod Trail's role in Alaska's colorful history. To raise awareness about this aspect (9) _____ Alaskan history, she came up with the idea to have a dog sled race over the Iditarod Trail. She presented her idea to an enthusiastic *musher*, as dog sled drivers are known, named Joe Redington, Sr. Soon the Pages and the Redingtons were working together (10) _____ the idea of the Iditarod race.

(11) _____ worked to make the first Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race a reality in 1967. The Aurora Dog Musers Club, along with men from the Adult Camp in Sutton, helped clear years of overgrowth from the first nine miles of the Iditarod Trail. To raise (12) _____ in the race, a \$25,000 purse was offered, with Joe Redington donating one acre of his land to help raise the funds. The short race, approximately 27 miles long, was put on a second time in 1969.

(13) _____ these first two successful races, the goal was to (14) _____ the race a little further to the ghost town of Iditarod by 1973. However, in 1972, the U.S. Army reopened the trail as a winter exercise, and so in 1973, the decision was made to take the race all the way to the city of Nome—over 1,000 miles. There were many (15) _____ believed it could not be done and that it was crazy to send a bunch of mushers out into the vast, uninhabited Alaskan wilderness. But the race went! 22 mushers finished that year, and to date over 400 people have completed it.

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|------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| (1) | a) on | b) at | c) to | d) for |
| (2) | a) like | b) such | c) as | d) by |
| (3) | a) became | b) did become | c) had become | d) becoming |
| (4) | a) Persons | b) A people | c) People | d) Peoples |
| (5) | a) way how to | b) means of | c) method for | d) communication to |
| (6) | a) to | b) on | c) by | d) at |
| (7) | a) showing | b) demonstration | c) example | d) appearance |
| (8) | a) was existing | b) existed | c) did exist | d) existence |
| (9) | a) of | b) for | c) with | d) on |
| (10) | a) for promoting | b) on promotion | c) with promoted | d) to promote |
| (11) | a) Many of people | b) Most of people | c) Many people | d) Much people |
| (12) | a) interest | b) interests | c) an interest | d) the interest |
| (13) | a) Afterwards | b) Later | c) After | d) Then |
| (14) | a) longer | b) lengthen | c) longate | d) lengthize |
| (15) | a) , who | b) , which | c) who | d) what |

- (1) The primary purpose of this passage is to...
- a) ...recount the history of the Iditarod trail and the race that memorializes it.
 - b) ...describe the obstacles involved in founding the Iditarod race.
 - c) ...outline the circumstances that led to the establishment of the Iditarod Trail.
 - d) ...reestablish the important place of the Iditarod Trail in Alaska's history
- (2) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that all of the following contributed to the disuse of the Iditarod Trail except...
- a) ...more modern forms of transportation.
 - b) ...depleted gold mines.
 - c) ...highway routes to ghost towns.
 - d) ...reduced demand for land travel.
- (3) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best definition for **'mode'**?
- a) formula
 - b) way
 - c) preference
 - d) option
- (4) According to the passage, the initial Iditarod race...
- a) ...was funded through the sale of musher entrance fees.
 - b) ...was founded by an advocate for Alaskan history.
 - c) ...ended at the ghost town of Iditarod.
 - d) ...boasted a total of 400 entrants.
- (5) As used in paragraph 3, the phrase **'self-made historian'** implies that Dorothy G. Page...
- a) ...was employed by the state to keep its dog sled history alive.
 - b) ...was determined to honor the glories of the gold rush in spite of her questionable credentials.
 - c) ...had pursued the study of Alaska's history out of her own interest.
 - d) ...had personally educated others about Alaska's history.
- (6) In 1925, when a diphtheria outbreak threatened the lives of people in the remote town of Nome, the government used the Iditarod Trail to transport medicine nearly 700 miles to the town. If the author chose to include this fact in the passage, it would best fit in:
- a) paragraph 1
 - b) paragraph 2
 - c) paragraph 3
 - d) paragraph 5
- (7) Based on information in the passage, it can be inferred that because the U.S. Army reopened the Iditarod Trail in 1972, ...
- a) ...more people could compete in the Iditarod race.
 - b) ...the mushers had to get permission from the U.S. Army to hold the race.
 - c) ...the trail was cleared all the way to Nome.
 - d) ...the Iditarod race became a seasonal Army competition.