

Auxiliaries

Ability:

Can(present or future): I can help you with this work.(present) (&) I can help you tomorrow. (future)

Could(past ability): They could play cricket quite well.

To be able to(power, skill or means to do something) : He hasn't been able to win a match since last year.

(Used with all tenses. Used with the infinitive: I have been able to swim since I was 10)

Permission(the action of officially allowing someone to do a particular thing; consent or authorization.):

May(formal): May I come in?

Might(very formal, rarely used): Might I ask you to wash the dishes?

Can(informal): Can I stay here?

Could(polite): Could I go to school with Mom?

Possibility:

May(75%): It may rain tomorrow.

Might(25%): It might snow in the evening.

Can(general statements, is possible): Rahul, can it be true?

Could(possible, but not certain): He could arrive this evening if he comes by bus.

Prohibition:

Must not(not permitted): You must not give any cigarettes to Reena

Can't(against the rules, particularly when we didn't make the rules): You can't smoke in the cabin.

Not to be: You are not to invite her again.

May not(formal): You may not smoke in this room.

Requests(the act or an instance of asking for something):

May(formal): May I have some salt?

Can(Informal): Can you call me this afternoon?

Could(less polite than 'would', more polite than 'can'): Could you lend me your bike, please?

Will(casual): Will you please answer my question?

Might(very polite and formal, rare): Might I have a glass of juice?

Would(more polite): Would you please help him?

Deductions:

Must(sure): He must be about 20 this year.

May(formal): Some services may be delayed due to the Covid crisis.

Might(not sure): He might be stuck in traffic.

Could(not sure): He could be in a meeting.

Should(Expecting to be certain): He should be at home at this time in the evening.

Would: They would be in New York now.

Will: That will be our cousin coming for dinner.

(Will->real possibilities. Would->to talk about the past, imagined possibilities, politeness.)

Duty:

Must(very strong, necessity, legal): You must respect your parents.

Ought(moderately strong, formal, moral obligation or duty): He ought to work harder.

Should(informal, not very strong): He should be kinder to his sister.

Orders:

Must: You must not tell lies.

Shall(formal): You shall bring your notebook next time.

Will: You will stay at home this evening.

To be to: You are to be more silent in the hall.

Necessity(Negative: "need not, don't have to"):

Must(formal): You must study the entire lesson.

To have to(not the speaker's decision or in his control): I have to be at the station at 4 O'clock.

Suggestion:

Shall(formal): Shall I bring a glass of water for you?

Advice:

Must(very strong, need of the hour, necessity): You must visit Sri Lanka.

Ought(moderately strong, formal, morally correct, right thing to do): You ought to study for the Sunday test.

Should(informal, duties and responsibilities): You should see a specialist sooner than later.

Some important points:

Can: Could(past equivalent)

May: Might(past equivalent)

Shall: Should(past equivalent)

Will: Would(past equivalent)

In present time context:

“Could” & “might” are considered as less positive versions of “can” and “may”.

Shall:

Traditional rule: Shall is used with first person pronouns (I & We). “Shall” is archaic.

As far as modern usage is concerned- Will & Shall are equivalent, but “will” is used a bit more.

A main clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and can form a complete sentence on its own. A subordinate clause is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence because it does not express a complete thought.

Independent clause=Main clause=Principal clause |||||Dependent clause=Sub-ordinate clause

Eg,

Although I only started last week, I will be able to complete this project by the end of this month.

Although I only started last week-Sub-ordinate clause.

I will be able to complete this project by the end of this month-Main clause

Conditionals:

If-Clause: If-clause is a conditional clause. A conditional clause is a type of subordinate clause.

0-The Zero Conditional:

If + Simple present->Simple present.(KEY!)

[Nature: permanent truths such as scientific facts or general habits]

If you heat a block of ice, it melts.---If you eat a lot, you get fat.

1-The First Conditional:

If + Simple present tense -> Simple future(will + verb, can + verb, must + verb).(KEY!)

[Nature: Realistic situation in the present/future]

If I win the lottery, I will buy a new flat.---If she helps me, I will help her.

2-The Second Conditional:

If + Simple past tense -> would + verb, could + verb.(KEY!)

[Nature: Unreal(impossible) or improbable situation in the present/future. To talk about things in the future that are probably not going to be true]

If I won the lottery, I would buy a new flat.---If it rained tomorrow, I would dance in the rain.

3-The Third Conditional:

If + Past perfect tense -> would have + past participle, could have + past participle.(KEY!)

[Nature: Unreal(impossible) situation in the past]

If I had won the lottery, I would have bought a new flat.---If she had helped me, I would have helped her.