

Pre-Reading for Module 1

Spoken Correspondence

GRAMMAR POINTS : MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs that provide additional and specific meaning to the main verb of the sentence. Modal verbs can be used to express ability, permission, advice, obligation, offers, and possibility.

Type	Modal Verbs	Example of Sentences
ABILITY	<i>Can, Could</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wina can write an SEO-based article. Arvin could make game apps when he was in high school.
PERMISSION	<i>Can, Could May, Would</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could I borrow your laptop, please? May I call you later after the meeting ends?
ADVICE	<i>Should Shouldn't</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I think you should learn Python and R. Both of the languages are widely used in many start-ups.
OBLIGATION	<i>Must Have To</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must check your spelling before submitting the doc! Linda has to do self-study after her absence.
POSSIBILITY	<i>Might, May Could, Can</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website design looks nice, it might cost more than our budget Such an error could happen, sometimes.
OFFERS	<i>Can, May Would, Shall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May I help you? Would you like a drink?


When we use modal verbs as an affirmative or negative statement, the structure of the sentence is:

Subject Modal Main verb
I can help.

However, when we use it as an interrogative statement, the structure of the sentence becomes:

Modal Subject Main verb
Can I help?

When using can to make a request, the request may sometimes sound a little direct; however, it depends a lot on the tone of your voice. Therefore, if you use 'can' to make a request, make sure you use a polite and friendly tone.



***Can you further explain the issues the client is facing right now?
Can you add more words to the description?***

Another commonly used modal verb for making requests is 'could'. Requests formed using could sound more polite.

***Could you please postpone this meeting until next week?
Could you provide the sales data of the first quarter by the end of the day?***

KEY PHRASES

SPOKEN CORRESPONDENCE

To be able to speak effectively, you need to remember some key phrases or sentences that are often used in a professional business setting. If you want to be fluent in English quickly, you need to practice using these key phrases outside of the class with your classmates.

MAKING A CALL

*"Hello/Hi,
My name is [name].
"I am from [company]/from [department].
May I speak with [recipient's name]?"*

INTRODUCTION

*"Yes, this is [your name]. To whom am I speaking?"
"I am sorry but I think you have the wrong number."
"How may I help you, [caller's name]?"*

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

*"Could you please clarify (...)"
"I'm not sure I understand. Did you mean (...)"
"Could you elaborate on that?"
"Sorry but I don't quite follow what you're saying about (...)"*

ACCEPTING AND DECLINING A REQUEST

*"Sure, that's not a problem"
"I'm sorry, but I don't think I can do that."*

FOLLOWING UP

*"I would like to follow up our conversation about (...)"
"Hello, this is [your name] from [company name]. I'm returning your call about [topic]."*

GIVING NEGATIVE INFORMATION

Explain and give reason:

"We can all agree that this feature has more complexities than the ones before. This is reflected by the amount of time we need to complete it. We have discussed it with our team and here's our plan to mitigate the issues"

BAD NETWORK CONNECTION

*"I'm sorry I can't hear you. Could you please repeat that?"
"I'm sorry, (I think) you're breaking up. Could you say that one more time?"
"Can I call you back in five minutes?" "I'm on the train, and the reception is not great. We might lose the connection. If we do, I'll call you right back."*

ONLINE MEETING

*"I apologize for the difficulties.
May I leave the room first and then re-enter?" Please give me five minutes to change the device."
"I am sorry, I think the internet reception is not really good in my place.
May I turn my camera off so you can hear my voice better?"*

BUSINESS CALL ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO

During the class, you will have the time to practice using key phrases in a role-play. Below are the scenarios that you may practice together with your peers.

Further instruction will be given in class.

SCENARIO 1

Reggy: You would like to speak with Tria from ABC software development agency. You call her because you know that she is working as a Web Developer and you are interested in how to build an interactive website for your own e-commerce.

Tria: You are the Web Developer at ABC software development agency. You knew Reggy from a networking event and think that he might be a potential client. You try to explain to Reggy about the details of the product and services, even though sometimes your connection is unstable

SCENARIO 2

Livia: You are working as the Head of Marketing. You are calling to schedule a meeting with Kevin, the Head of the Business Intelligence department at your company. You want to meet on Tuesday morning to discuss the customers' insight and behaviour related to the newly launched apps. The meeting is urgent because you need the data soon.

Kevin: You are the Head of the Business Intelligence department. You are going to be out of the office until next week. You try to meet halfway with Livia so she is able to get what she needs.

SCENARIO 3

You may create an imaginary scenario about two or three people having a business phone call or online meeting, either to ask about a product/service, to arrange a meeting, to follow-up a sales proposal, or any scenario that you see fit.