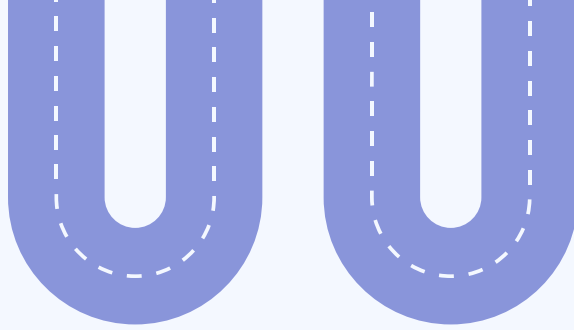
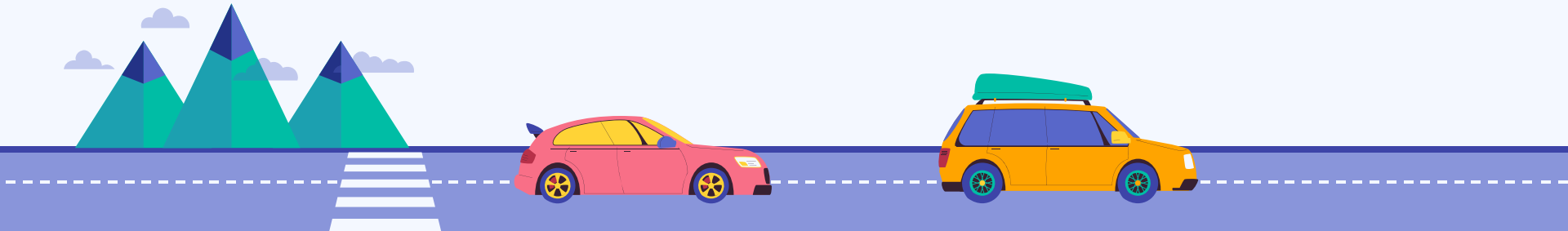


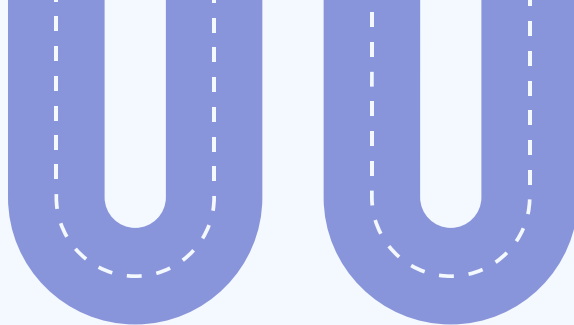
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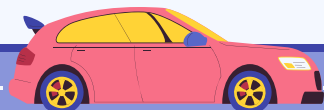
Ability	Possibility	Obligation



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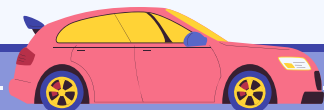
Ability	Possibility	Obligation
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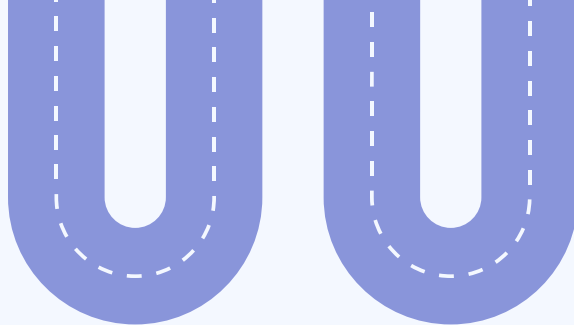
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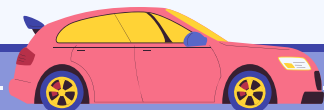
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wanted to go, as we did, we couldn't get, we succeeded in, they didn't speak, we managed to communicate	were able to eat, could afford	



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Ability	Possibility	Obligation
wanted to go, as we did, we couldn't get, we succeeded in, they didn't speak, we managed to communicate	were able to eat, could afford	we had to get, had to be heated



The golden era of the great express trains conjures up feelings of nostalgia, romance and beautiful views. Last year, my publishers sent me and a photographer on ten amazing journeys as research for a *Great Railways* travel guide. Here are my top three.

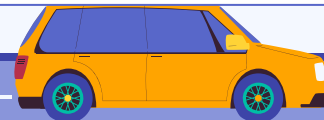
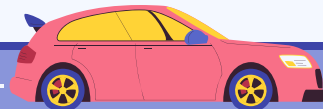
In the past, if you wanted to go from Beijing (the capital of China) to Lhasa, the journey was long and difficult, including a gruelling 48-hour bus journey. Now, you can travel from Beijing to Lhasa on the Qinghai–Tibet line, as we did. It still isn't easy, however, and we couldn't get tickets at first because of the bureaucracy – we had to get a special permit to travel through Tibet. The line includes the Tanggula Pass – at 5,072 metres above sea level, it's the world's highest rail track. It also includes the 1,338-metre-long Fenghuoshan Tunnel, which, at 4,905 metres above sea level, is the highest rail tunnel in the world. On our journey, extra oxygen was pumped into our carriages to counter the high altitude. Even the water in the toilets had to be heated to prevent freezing. The views of the Himalayas were absolutely breathtaking and this is a journey that will live long in my memory.

All train enthusiasts want to travel on the longest and most famous railway of all – the Trans-Siberian Express. It runs from Russia's capital, Moscow, to Vladivostok, on the western shore of the Sea of Japan. It is 9,198 kilometres long, spans eight time zones, and it takes about seven days to complete its

journey. We took a more leisurely 14-day journey that included several stops. We succeeded in getting first-class tickets; our sleeping carriages were stylish and luxurious and we had impeccable service and cuisine.i

For me, the highlight was skirting the scenic Lake Baikal, the largest freshwater lake in the world. We then travelled via Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, and were able to eat in a yurt, the round felt-covered tent traditionally used by Mongolian nomads. It is amazing to think that in 1891, Tsar Alexander III had said, "Let the railway be built." And here I was on it. My memories of frosted plains and snowy steppes will always stay with me, but our best memory was making good friends with a wonderful Russian couple, and although they didn't speak much English and we certainly didn't speak any Russian, we managed to communicate very well.

In the past, only the wealthiest could afford the level of luxury offered by the Orient Express. The Express attracted the rich and the famous, including royalty, and was made a household name by writers such as Agatha Christie and Graham Greene. Our journey to London – via Italy, Austria, Switzerland and France – on the Orient Express, with its unmatched comfort, was 31 hours of railway heaven. We boarded in Venice and immediately entered a world of stylish travel. Stepping up on the brass plates to board felt like we were being transported back to the 1920s. We made our way past the restaurant and saloon cars with ladies' drawing rooms, to our cabin in carriage H and enjoyed some of Europe's finest window seats. Everything was done for us – we didn't need to lift a finger. It is an icon of passenger rail. Extravagantly elegant, it has everything – opulence, romance, and the food we were served was out of this world.



**Which of the verbs from the previous exercise are full modals?
(Full modals do not change in the third person and are followed by the infinitive.)**



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COULDN'T/COULD



Choose the correct verb forms.

1. We use *can* / *was able to* / *could* to talk about general abilities in the past.
2. We use *must* / *had to* to talk about obligation in the past.
3. We use *managed to* / *could* to suggest that we had difficulty in achieving the action.
4. The verb *manage to* is similar to *must* / *succeed in*.
5. We use the -ing form of the verb after *manage to* / *succeed in*.



GRAMMAR TIP

We do not use **could** to talk about a single action that we did in the past. Instead we use **was able to** or **managed to**.

~~I could get my visa for the States yesterday.~~

I **was able to / managed to** get my visa for the States yesterday.

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Modal verbs: ability, possibility, obligation (past)

- Use **could** or **was/were able to** to talk about a general **ability/possibility** in the past.

*When I was young I **could** run for miles without getting tired.*

*Years ago people **were able to** drive without taking a test.*

- ! But to talk about a **single action in the past** we only use **was able to**, not could.

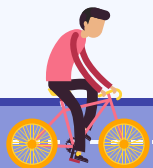
~~*There was a bus strike, but I **could** get a lift with a colleague. ✗*~~

*There was a bus strike, but I **was able to** get a lift with a colleague. ✓*

- Use **couldn't** or **wasn't/weren't able to** for a **negative possibility** in the past.

*I lost my key and I **couldn't** find it.*

*When I was young I **wasn't able to** stay out late.*



Modal verbs: ability, possibility, obligation (past)

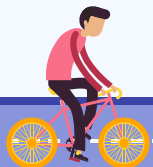
- Use **manage to** or **succeed in** to talk about something you did that was difficult. **!** Use the **-ing** form of the verb after succeed in.

*Our flight was cancelled, but **we managed to** get seats on the next one.
After several phone calls we **succeeded in** speaking to the manager.*



Modal verbs: ability, possibility, obligation (past)

- Use **had to** to talk about **obligation** in the past.
*I **had to** get a visa when I went to the USA last summer.*
- Use **didn't have to** to talk about a **lack of obligation** in the past.
*At my old school we **didn't have to** wear a uniform.*
- Use **couldn't** to talk about a **negative obligation (a prohibition)** in the past.
*We **couldn't use** calculators in class when I was at school.*



Choose the most appropriate alternative in the text. Sometimes both alternatives are correct.

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The train journey from Golmud to Lhasa takes a day. Although most of it is really high, we didn't have any altitude problems and we 6 *were able to / had to* enjoy the fabulous scenery. It's so high, they have to heat the water in the toilets to stop it from freezing, but we 7 *didn't need to / had to* use them anyway. Our train attendant was very helpful. Her English was not great, but she still 8 *had to / succeeded in* getting her message across and pointing out interesting sights to us, such as herds of wild Tibetan antelopes.

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Dream Vacation

Your team works for a **travel agency**. Your job is to **invent** and **promote** a unique travel package for your clients. Your presentation must be **3–5 minutes long**.

What your presentation MUST include

- **Destination**

Where will your clients go? What makes this place special or iconic?

- **The Journey**

How will travellers get to the destination? (train, spaceship, submarine, flying taxi, teleportation pod, dragon, etc.)

- **Length of stay**

How many days will the trip last?

- **Accommodation**

Where will they stay? Hotel, castle, capsule pod, underwater lodge?

- **Activities & experiences**

What will travellers be able to do?

What might happen?

Will anything be prohibited?

Will they have to follow any rules?

- **Price**

How much will it cost?

OR What will it cost you?

Your presentation must include examples of:

1. Modal verbs for the FUTURE

- ability: *will be able to*
- possibility: *may, might, could*
- obligation: *will have to / won't have to*
- prohibition: *can't*
- lack of obligation: *won't need to / won't have to*

2. Modal verbs for the PAST

If you include a “previous customer review” inside your presentation.

could / was able to / couldn't / wasn't able to / had to / didn't have to / managed to / succeeded in

