

Modals verbs

Advanced English Grammar

What are modal verbs?

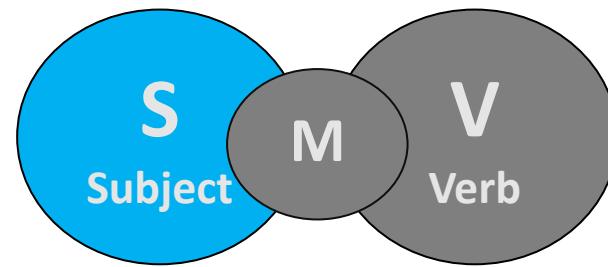
- They are:
 - Ought to

- Can
- Could
- May
- Might
- Must
- Shall
- Should
- Will
- Would

They are **Auxiliary verbs** that provide additional and specific meaning to the main verb of the sentence

Modal verbs are sometimes referred to as **Modal Auxiliary verbs** because they **help** other verbs

How do we use modals?



Example: **Mary** could play the piano

They do not accept conjugation
They do not need other auxiliary verbs

Form

There is no “**s**” in singular

There is no “**do / does**” in the question

There is no “**don’t / doesn’t**” in the negative

- He **can** ski He can**s** ski or He can **ski****s**
- **Would** you like to come with me?
Do you **would** like to come with me?
- They **can’t** be serious
They **don’t** can be serious

Form

Modal verbs do not have **infinitives** or **-ing** forms

~~to can / caning~~

~~to must /musting~~

Modal verbs are followed by an infinitive without **to**

She must study

We should have gone the other way

He could play football in his youth (general ability)

Form

Modal verbs do not have all the tenses

Modal verbs use other verbs to complete the tenses

Can is completed with **be able to**

Must is completed with **have to**

They can play piano = They will be able to play the piano in the future

You must come early = You had to come early yesterday

What do they express?

**They can have more than one meaning
depending on the situations**

To understand it better we are going to divide them into
3 categories

- 1. Single Concept Modal:** they have **one** meaning
- 2. Double Concept Modal:** they have **two** meanings
- 3. Modals in past:** They are used to express a situation in the past

Categories

Single concept Modals	Double Concept Modals	Modals in Past
Will Might Should Ought to Had better	May Must Would Shall Could Can	Would have Could have Might have Should have May have Must have

Single Concept Modal

Modal	Concept	Examples
Will	Future	Joe will travel to NY next week
Might	Small probability	I might move to Canada some day
Should	Recommendation	You should go to the doctor
Ought to	Formal recommendation	We ought to know about first aids
Had better	Warning	I had better study or I will fail the test

Double Concept Modal

Modal	Concept	Examples
May (1)	Permission	May I come in?
May (2)	Good probability	We may visit Mexico this summer
Must (1)	Responsibility	Everyone must pay taxes
Must (2)	Assumption	She didn't arrive. She must be sick
Would (1)	Past (used to)	When I was young, I would play soccer
Would (2)	Present unreal	I would buy the car but I can't afford it

Double Concept Modal

Modal	Concept	Examples
Shall (1)	Educated expression Offer	Excuse me, I shall go now Shall I clean it?
Shall (2)	Contractual obligation	The company shall pay on January 1st
Could (1)	Unreal Ability	I could go if I had time
Could (2)	Past Ability	She could play the piano, not anymore
Can (1)	Present Ability	We can speak English
Can (2)	Permission	Can I have a sweet?

Modals in the Past

- They are modals referred to actions that happened in the past

MODAL + HAVE + verb in past participle

It must **have been** a difficult decision

They should **have invited** her to their wedding

MODALS: ABILITY

CAN: Expresses ability in the present or generally: I can run a kilometre in four minutes.

It is used for decisions made about future ability:
We can meet at the gym tomorrow.

COULD: Expresses ability in the past.

In sentences (if only) it expresses ability in the present, future and in general hypothetical situations: If only you could come

COULD HAVE+ PAST PTC: Expresses ability in past hypothetical situations: I could have roasted the turkey.

For other tenses: BE ABLE TO+INFINITIVE

MODALS- PERMISSION

MAY (more polite than 'could'): May I go out?

COULD(more polite than 'can'): Could you repeat, please?

CAN(informal use): Can I go to the toilet?

These modal verbs express giving permission now or for the future.

For the past we have 'could' or 'be allowed to': I could go out with my friends/ I was allowed to go out with my friends.

MODALS- ADVICE

SHOULD+ INFINITIVE / SHOULDN'T+ INFINITIVE
OUGHT TO

These verbs are used for giving advice now, for the future or generally:

You should go to the doctor now.

He ought to study for the exam.

They shouldn't buy things if they have little money.

MODALS- DEGREES OF CERTAINTY

MUST/CAN'T/COULDN'T} Express certainty about now or the future: That must be the new manager/ She can't be so old. She looks very young.

MUST/CAN'T/COULDN'T HAVE + PAST PTC} Express certainty about the past: She must have been in a lot of pain/ They couldn't have been on holiday for so long.

SHOULD/OUGHT TO} Express probability about now, the future or generally: You ought to feel better in a few days.

SHOULD/OUGHT TO HAVE+ PAST PTC} Express probability about the past: They bruises ought to have disappeared in a few days.

MODALS- DEGREE OF CERTAINTY (CONT.)

COULD/MAY/MIGHT} Express possibility about now, the future or generally: You should talk to your doctor because that diet might be dangerous.

COULD/MAY/MIGHT HAVE+ PAST PTC} Express possibility about the past: That might have been the doctor who rang while we were out.

COULD/MIGHT HAVE+ PAST PTC} Express possibility about a hypothetical past: If you didn't follow your doctor's advice, you could have become quite ill.

MODALS- CRITICISM

SHOULD HAVE+ PAST PTC.

OUGHT TO HAVE+ PAST PTC.

These forms express a criticism of past behaviour.

He ought to have made more effort.

He should have eaten more before going out.

MODALS- OBLIGATION AND NECESSITY

MUST/ HAVE TO/ NEED TO} Express an obligation or necessity: I must /have to/need to study for the exam.

NEEDN'T/DON'T HAVE TO/DON'T NEED TO} Express no obligation or necessity: You needn't/don't have to/don't need to go to the shop. There is a lot of food in the fridge.

HAD TO} Expresses a past obligation: He had to study hard for his exams.

NEEDN'T HAVE+ PAST PTC} Expresses a lack of past obligation (an action that happened): They needn't have gone to the shop. There was plenty of food in the fridge.