

# Modals verbs

Advanced English Grammar

# What are modal verbs?

- They are:

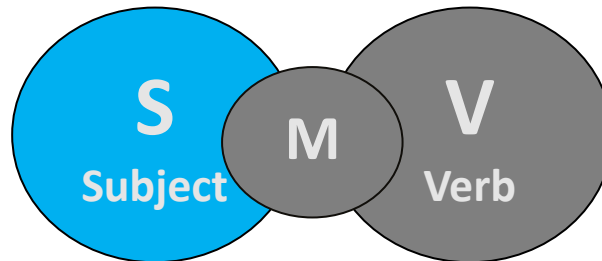
- Can
- Could
- May
- Might
- Must
- Shall
- Should
- Will
- Would

- Ought to

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

<b>Single concept Modals</b>	<b>Double Concept Modals</b>	<b>Modals in Past</b>
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
<b>Will</b>	Future	Joe will travel to NY next week
<b>Might</b>	Small probability	I might move to Canada some day
<b>Should</b>	Recommendation	You should go to the doctor
<b>Ought to</b>	Formal recommendation	We ought to know about first aids
<b>Had better</b>	Warning	I had better study or I will fail the test

# Double Concept Modal

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

# Double Concept Modal

Modal	Concept	Examples
<b>Shall (1)</b>	Educated expression Offer	Excuse me, I shall go now Shall I clean it?
<b>Shall (2)</b>	Contractual obligation	The company shall pay on January 1st
<b>Could (1)</b>	Unreal Ability	I could go if I had time
<b>Could (2)</b>	Past Ability	She could play the piano, not anymore
<b>Can (1)</b>	Present Ability	We can speak English
<b>Can (2)</b>	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/UGHT TO** Express probability about now, the future or generally: You ought to feel better in a few days.

**SHOULD/UGHT 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.