

Modal Verbs

What are modal verbs?

4 They are:

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

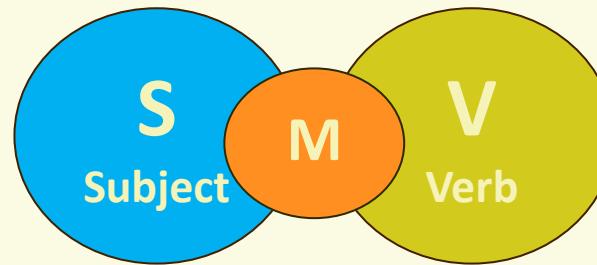
- Ought to

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**

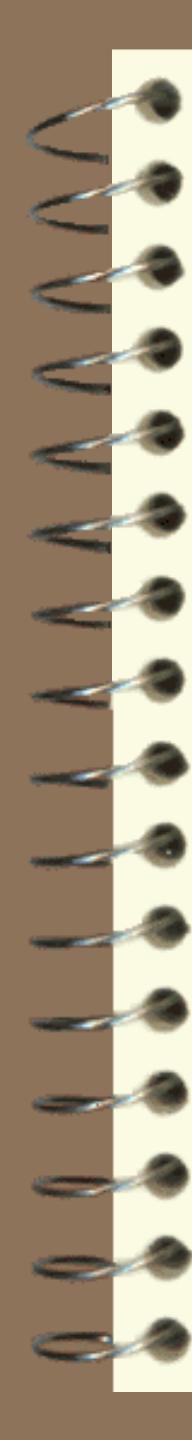
Modal verbs use other verbs to complete the tenses

Can is completed with **be able to**

Must is completed with **have to**

You **must** play the piano

They **want to** come to play the piano in the future



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	May	Would have
Might	Must	Could have
Should	Would	Might have
Ought to	Shall	Should have
Had better	Could	May have
	Can	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

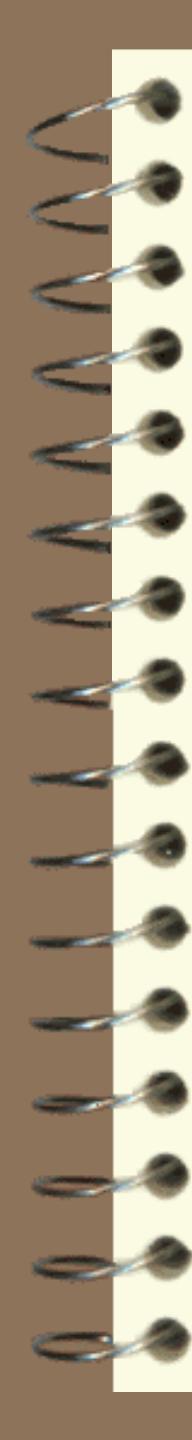
Double Concept Modal

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?

	PROBABILITY/ POSSIBILITY	ABILITY	PERMISSION	OBLIGATION/ ADVICE	OFFERS
CAN		I can play the piano	Can I go out tonight?		
CAN'T	She can't be his mum. She's too young	I can't speak German	Can I borrow the car? No, I can't.		
MIGHT	It might rain tomorrow				
COULD	It could rain tomorrow	I could already read when I was two	Could I see your passport please, sir?		
MAY	It may rain tomorrow		May I leave the table?		
MUST	She must be his sister because they look alike.			You must leave before the clock strikes twelve.	
HAVE TO				I have to study tonight.	
SHALL				You shall pay on Tuesday	Shall I help you?
SHOULD / OUGHT TO				You should see it. It's excellent.	
HAD BETTER				You had better sleep more.	
WOULD					Would you like a drink?



Modals in the Past

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

MODAL + HAVE + verb in past participle

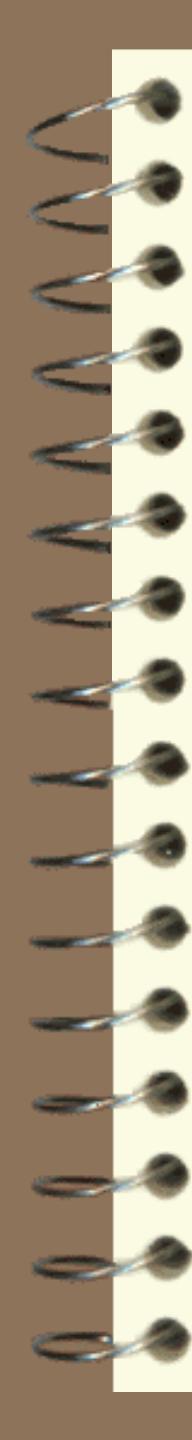
It **must have been** a difficult decision

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

MODAL PERFECT	USES	EXAMPLES
MUST HAVE + P.P.	Conclusión lógica sobre un hecho del pasado	Peter has arrived late. He <u>must have been</u> in a traffic jam
MAY / MIGHT HAVE + P.P.	Una suposición sobre algo pasado	Joe <u>may / might have taken</u> the wrong train.
COULD HAVE + P.P.	Habilidad de haber hecho algo pero finalmente no lo hizo	You <u>could have played</u> better
COULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Certeza de que algo no pudo haber sucedido	He <u>couldn't have passed</u> because you hadn't studied enough
WOULD HAVE + P.P.	Quiso haber hecho algo, pero no pudo hacerlo por causas externas	I <u>would have visited</u> you, but I forgot your address
SHOULD / OUGHT TO HAVE + P.P.	Queja de que algo haya ocurrido en el pasado o lamento de que no se haya cumplido lo que esperábamos	You <u>should / ought to have warned</u> me earlier
SHOULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Crítica sobre un acontecimiento pasado que no debería haber ocurrido	He <u>shouldn't have told</u> them
NEEDN'T HAVE + P.P.	No había necesidad de hacer lo que se hizo en el pasado	You <u>needn't have bought</u> it .

Modals in Past : Modal + have + past participle

Modal	Concept	Example
Would have	Past unreal action	I would have bought the car, but I didn't have money
Could have	Past unreal Ability	She could have taken the flight
May have	Past unreal Possibility	We may have passed the test, but it was in French
Might have	Past Unreal Small Probability	You might have sold the house, if you really needed the money
Should have	Past unreal Recommendation	You should have listened to the doctor
Must have	Past unreal Assumption	We must have been crazy!



A last tip

There are few verbs which often serve as
modals too.

These are modal-like verbs

They need to be conjugated

Modals-like verbs

Modal	Concept	Example
Like to	Enjoy	I like to watch TV
Want to	Desire	John wants to buy a car
Need to	Necessity	We really needed to talk to you
Have to	Obligation	Susan had to pay the rent
Have got to	Have to	I've got to go now
Look forward to	Future plan	I look forward to seeing you again

Practise

1. My son ___ be home by now. Where can he be?
a. Have to b. Would c. Should d. Could
c.
2. I think your thumb is broken. You ___ go to the emergency room.
a. Might b. could c. ought to d. can
c.
3. If you are interested in losing weight, you _____ try this new diet.
a. Could b. mustn't c. don't have to d. had to
a.
4. Johnnie's fallen down the stairs! I _____ call an ambulance!
a. Will b. might c. may d. ought to
a.
5. You _____ come too early. We won't leave until 9 o'clock.
a. Has to b. must c. needn't d. can't
c.

Practise

6. Children _____ be accompanied by an adult at the zoo.
- a. Ought to b. must c. would d. mustn't
7. You _____ talk during tests. It's forbidden!
- a. don't have to b. mustn't c. couldn't d. ought to
8. I can feel the heat. We _____ be near the fire.
- a. Can b. would c. must d. have to
9. They _____ hear him because he was whispering.
- a. Wouldn't b. mustn't c. shouldn't d. couldn't
10. You've never heard of Britney Spears! You _____ be serious!
- a. Must b. had to c. can't d. shouldn't

Practise

11. _____ you like to have dinner with me tonight?

- a. Could
- b. may
- c. should
- d. would

12. You _____ let him hear about the party tomorrow. It's a surprise!

- a. mustn't
- b. wouldn't
- c. couldn't
- d. can

13. _____ I speak to the Chief of Police, please?

- a. Must
- b. May
- c. Would
- d. Need

14. He has arrived late. He _____ missed the bus

- a. Must have
- b. Should have
- c. Could have
- d. must

More practise

□ Re-write the following sentences using modals so that they have the same meaning.

1. I suggest that you get a good lawyer!

You should get a lawyer

2. A university degree isn't necessary for that job.

needn't have a university degree for that job

You don't have to have a university...

3. Perhaps my father will pick you up.

My father may / might pick you up

4. Eating is forbidden in class!

You mustn't eat in class

More practise

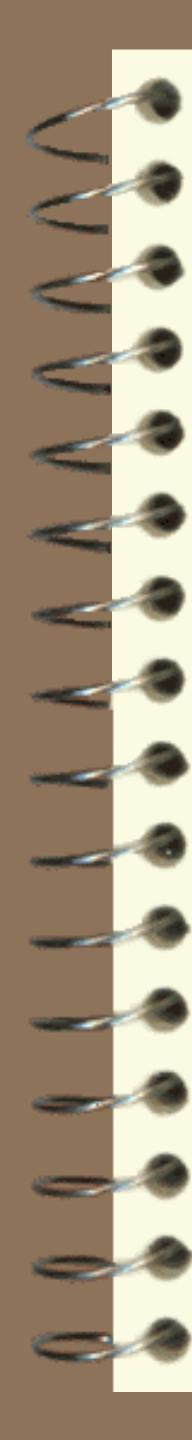
□ Re-write the following sentences using modals so that they have the same meaning.

5. Look at his dirty clothes! I'm sure he is a poor person.

He must be a poor person

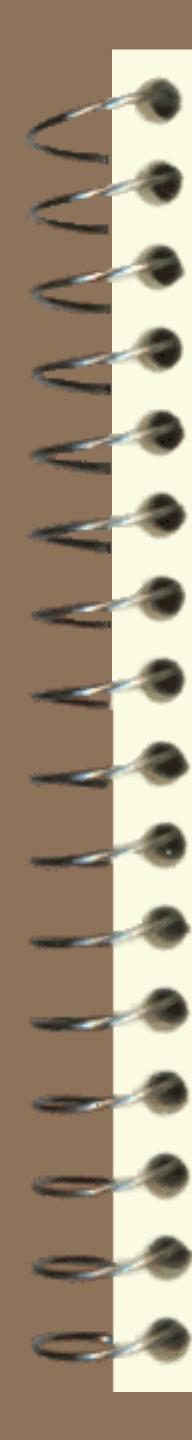
6. I don't believe that the legend of Hercules is true because there're many contradictions.

The legend of Hercules can't be true



Use your imagination

- Think about these situations and create a sentence using modals.**
- 1. We are going to Paris for a weekend. (Make suggestions about things to do)
- 2. We start school in September. (Talk about necessity)
- 3. Margaret is a very talented sportswoman. (Talk about ability)
- 4. You have just won the lottery! (Talk about possibility)
- 5. Peter has got a headache and a congested nose. (Give him some advice)
- 6. You want to borrow your uncle's Mercedes Benz. (Ask for permission politely)



Possible answers

1. We could visit the Louvre / We should go up the Eiffel Tower
2. We have to buy a new notebook
3. She can speak 3 languages! / She is able to play the piano and the violin
4. I might stop working / I may buy a new car / I can travel to New York
5. You should see a doctor / You ought to drink hot tea
6. Can I borrow your car, please? or May I borrow your car, please?