



# Modals

## Introduction

Modals (or modal auxiliaries) are helping verbs that express the attitude, mood, or possibility of an action.

They do not change according to the subject and are always followed by the base form of the main verb

## Common Modal Verbs

- Can, Could
- May, Might
- Shall, Should
- Will, Would
- Must, Ought to
- Need, Dare

## Uses of Modal Verbs

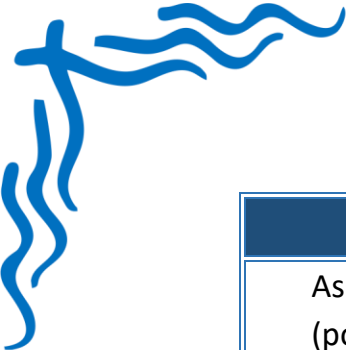
### 1. Ability: Can / Could

Tense	Modal	Use
Present/Future	can	ability or possibility
Past	could	past ability or possibility

#### Examples:

- ❖ He can speak English fluently.
- ❖ She can't drive a car.
- ❖ He could play the guitar when he was young.
- ❖ We couldn't dance at all.

### 2. Permission: May / Can / Could



Purpose	Modal	Example
Ask permission (polite/formal)	may	May I come in?
Give permission	can	You can leave now.
Past permission	could	He could stay up late.
Deny permission	can't / couldn't	You can't smoke here.

### 3. Certainty / Intention / Determination: Shall / Will / Would

Modal	Function	Example
shall	promise/threat (I/we)	We shall overcome.
will	general future, promise, threat	He will help you.
would	certainty in past	That would be Mr. Sharma.

### 4. Possibility: May / Might / Could

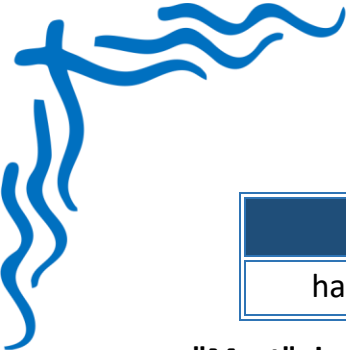
- **May:** Good possibility
- **Might:** Lesser possibility
- **Could:** Another form to express possibility

#### Examples:

- ❖ It may rain today.
- ❖ She might be sleeping.
- ❖ He could be at work.

### 5. Necessity / Compulsion: Must, Have to, Had to

Modal	Use	Example
must	personal necessity	You must study.
have to	external necessity	You have to wear a uniform.



Modal	Use	Example
had to	past necessity	He had to leave early.

**"Must" does not have a past form.**

#### 6. Advice / Suggestion / Moral Obligation: Should / Ought to

Modal	Use	Example
should	advice / mild suggestion	You should rest.
ought to	moral duty	You ought to help the poor.

#### 7. Polite Requests: Can / Could / Would / Will

Modal	Use	Example
can	casual request	Can you pass the salt?
could	polite request	Could you help me?
would	very polite	Would you mind opening the window?

#### 8. Prohibition: Mustn't / Ought not to

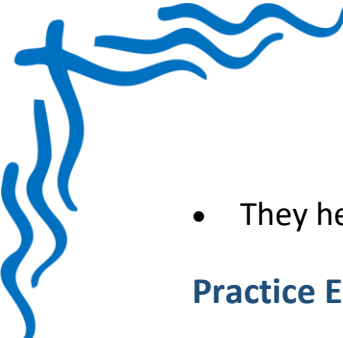
- **Mustn't** = strong prohibition
  - You mustn't talk in the library.
- **Ought not to** = moral disapproval
  - You ought not to lie to your parents.

#### 9. Wishes: May

- May is used to express good wishes.
  - May you live long!
  - May God bless you!

#### Points to Remember

- Modals always take the base form of the main verb (e.g., can go, may leave).
- They do not take -s, -ed, or -ing.

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- They help in expressing attitudes, necessity, possibility, advice, wishes, etc.

### Practice Exercise Ideas

#### A. Fill in with can / can't / could / couldn't:

He \_\_\_\_ swim like a fish.

I \_\_\_\_ help you tomorrow.

She \_\_\_\_ dance when she was younger.

#### B. Use may / can / could to express permission:

\_\_\_\_ I ask a question?

You \_\_\_\_ use my pen.

#### C. Use will / shall / would:

They \_\_\_\_ finish the task on time.

I \_\_\_\_ call you later.

#### D. Use may / might / could for possibility:

It \_\_\_\_ rain today.

He \_\_\_\_ be sleeping.

#### E. Use must / have to / had to for necessity:

You \_\_\_\_ follow the rules.

I \_\_\_\_ go early yesterday.