



# MODAL AND RELATED VERBS

# MODAL AND RELATED VERBS

- They 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.
- Modal verbs are:
  - Can
  - Could
  - May
  - Might
  - Must
  - Will
  - Would
  - Should
  - Ought to

# HOW DO WE FORM MODAL VERBS?

- There is no –s in the third person.
- There is no do/does in questions or don't/doesn't in negatives.
- They are followed by an infinitive without to (except ought to).
- They don't have past forms, infinitives or –ing forms.

# OBLIGATION: should, ought to, must

- Should and ought to express mild obligation, suggestions or advice
  - You're always asking me for money. I think you should spend less.
  - You ought to be more careful with your money.
  - All visitors must show proper ID.
- have to and must express strong obligation
  - You *have to* work hard if you want to succeed.
  - Children *have to* go to school until they are 16.
  - I must get my hair cut.
- have to has all tense forms, while *must* doesn't
  - I *had to* work last night. (Past)
  - You *'ll have to* study hard. (Future)
- You can also use need to with the same meaning

# MUST and HAVE TO

- *Have to* expresses a general obligation, based on a law or rule
- The obligation can also be based on the authority of another person
- *Have to* doesn't express the opinion of the speaker
- In British English, you can use *have got to* instead of *have to*, which is more informal.
- *Must* usually expresses the speaker's personal opinion
- It is associated with a written, more formal style
- *Don't have to* expresses an absence of obligation
  - You don't have to put a photo on your profile.
- *Mustn't* expresses prohibition
  - You mustn't steal other people's things.

# PERMISSION and REQUESTS

- Permission:
  - May / Can / Could I ... ?
  
- Requests:
  - Can / Could / Will / Would you ...?
  
- May is used to give permission, but is very formal (usually can / can't are used).
  - You may go to the bathroom.
  
- Related verbs:
  - Be allowed to
  - Be permitted to
  - Let

# ABILITY

- Ability is expressed with *can*, past tense = *could*
  - He can swim.
- Related verbs:
  - Ability on a specific occasion (don't use *could*):
    - The wall was very high, but Sam managed to / was able to climb it.
  - General ability:
    - One day, I hope I'll be able to swim much faster.

# PROBABILITY

- All modal verbs can be used to express different degrees of possibility.
- may / might / could express uncertainty
  - She could be lost.
- should expresses positive expectation
  - They should be here by now.
- will / must express positive certainty
  - She must be on the bus.
- won't / can't express negative certainty
  - She can't be at home.



# PROBABILITY

- I must post this letter. (= obligation)
- You must be tired. (= deduction, possibility)
  
- Could you help me? (=request)
- We could go to Spain for our holiday. (=possibility)
  
- You may go home now. (=permission)
- A: Where's Anna? B: I'm not sure. She may be at work. (=possibility)

## Related verbs:

- be bound to
- be likely to

# PAST FORMS

Modal verb	Positive	Negative	Past Form
Must	It must be late.		It must have been late.
May	She may be from England.		She may have been from England.
Could	She could be asleep.		She could have been asleep.
Might	He might call.		He might have called.
Should	They should be here by now.		They should have been here by now.
Can't		It can't be late.	It can't have been late.

# EXERCISES

- [Modal verbs of ability exercise 1](#)
- [Modal verbs of obligation exercise 1](#)
- [Modal verbs of probability exercise 1](#)
- [Modal verbs of probability exercise 2](#)
- [Past modals exercise 1 \(could have, should have, would have\)](#)