

# Modal verb makeover

Improve your English with dynamic verbs

# Structure

## Modals: Introduction

What, when and how

## Modals

Traditional vs Quasi

## Modals: Obligation

Must, have to, mustn't, needn't

## Modals: Suggestions

Should, ought to, had better

## Modals: Probability

May, Might, Must

## Modals: Permission

Can vs Could vs Able to

# Modal Verbs



*Confusing verbs*

Modals (also called modal verbs, modal auxiliary verbs, modal auxiliaries) are special verbs that behave irregularly in English.

They are different from normal verbs like for example: work, play, visit..

They give additional information about the **function** of the main verb that follows it. They have a great variety of **communicative functions**.

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Modal verbs

What?

# Modal Verbs



## When?

Probability:	His parents must be so proud.
Possibility:	Judging by the weather, it might rain today.
Ability:	She can speak 3 languages fluently.
Permission:	Could I go to the bathroom?
Request:	Would you close the window?
Suggestion:	You should try Spanish ham.
Obligation:	You must wash your hands before cutting the vegetables.

These are the most common

Using modal verbs in a sentence is simple. For the present simple we use these rules

1. Modal verbs go before the main verb (except for questions)
2. Modal verbs always go with the bare infinitive.

e.g. I can speak English well!

Can she speak English well?

**Modal Verbs**

**How?**

# Modal Verbs



## Other present tenses

### Present continuous

After the modal verb, use the word *be* followed by the *-ing* form of the main verb.

e.g. *I should be going.*

### Present perfect continuous

You can add a modal verb before a verb in the present perfect continuous tense without changing much. However, when using a modal verb, you must always use “have,” never “had,” even if the subject is third-person.

modal verb + *have been* + verb in *-ing* form

e.g. *She must have been sleeping.*

## Modal Verbs

### Past tenses

Past tenses and present perfect

2 modal verbs in particular have a simple past tense: **can** and **will**.

If you want to use either of those in any of the past tenses, you must first conjugate them into their past tense form:

Can	->	could
Will	->	would

None of the modal verbs can be used in the past perfect or the past perfect continuous



# Modal Verbs



There are 9 accepted modal verbs in English. Remember that some modal verbs can have a double meaning.

1. Shall
2. Should
3. Can
4. Could
5. May
6. Might
7. Must
8. Will
9. Would

Similar to modals verbs, quasi-modal verbs are common auxiliary verbs in the English language that express modality, which is the expression of subjective attitudes and opinions including possibility, necessity, and contingency. Also referred to as semi-modal verbs, the four quasi-modal verbs in English are:

- Ought to
  - Need to
  - Has to
  - Had better
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Quasi-Modals

Explained



# Modal Verbs



- **Obligation**
- Advice or Suggestion
- Probability
- Ability & Permission

# Obligations



## Obligation

Must – Internal

Have to – External

Mustn't – Negative (prohibition)

## No Obligation

Don't have to

Needn't

## Must

Must means that there is an internal obligation. We use it to express an obligation that we impose on ourselves.

I must remember to finish the reports today!

*It's my responsibility to do it.*



## Have to



Have to is use to express an external obligation. This could refer to regulations, orders, rules or laws.

I have to drive on the correct side of the street.

You have to pay your taxes.

# Mustn't

We use mustn't (always contracted) when we talk about a negative obligation: a prohibition.







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## Don't have to & needn't

To indicate the absence of an obligation we use “Don't have to” or “needn't”.

You **don't have to** work on Sunday

You **needn't** work on Sunday



# Obligations Overview



## Obligation

## No obligation

### Present

*Internal*

*external*

*prohibition*

I must go

I have to go

I mustn't go

I don't have to go = I needn't go

### Past

I had to go

I wasn't supposed to go

I didn't have to go ≠ I needn't have gone

# Obligations



## Translations

PHRASE	SIGNIFICADO
I must exercise more.	Debo hacer más ejercicio.
You mustn't wear shorts to the office.	No debes llevar pantalones cortos a la oficina.
The students don't have to worry.	Los alumnos no tienen que preocuparse.
Carlos has to improve his performance.	Carlos tiene que mejorar su rendimiento.
You needn't translate the text.	No es necesario que traduzcas el texto.
We needn't have brought our boots.	No necesitábamos haber traído las botas
George wasn't supposed to touch the paintings.	Jorge no debió tocar los cuadros.
Did you have to study English in school?	¿Tuviste que estudiar inglés en el colegio?



# Modal Verbs

- Obligation
- **Advice or Suggestion**
- Probability
- Ability & Permission

# Suggestions

## Should

**Should** I stay or **should** I go?

I **should** study more

I **shouldn't** go to bed late

## Ought to

You **ought to** know basic maths.

You **ought not to** speak with your mouth full\*

Ought to = never in a question

Had better

I **had better** be careful when I drive in the rain.

I **had better** remember the rules.

I **had better** not insult the police officer

Strong Suggestion:

Had better



## The modal verb of suggestion in the past is relatively easy

She            **should**            do her homework  
You           **ought to**           call your mother  
I               **had better**       finish the report.

She            **should have done**       her homework  
You           **should have called**      your mother  
I               **should have finished**    the report

Pointless?

Suggestions in the past

# Suggestions



## Translations

PHRASE	SIGNIFICADO
The accountant had better attend the meeting.	Más vale que el contable asista a la reunion.
We should be ashamed.	Nos debería dar vergüenza.
Why should I go alone?	¿Por qué debería ir yo solo?
She had better study, otherwise she will fail.	Más vale que estudie porque si no suspenderá.
They ought to pay a deposit.	Deberían pagar una fianza
They should go fishing before it gets too late.	Deberían ir a pescar antes de que se haga tarde.
You should have attended your English class.	Deberías haber asistido a tu clase de inglés.
Who should have done it?	¿Quién lo debería haber hecho?



# Modal Verbs

- Obligation
- Advice or Suggestion
- **Probability**
- Ability & Permission



# Probability



## Probable

Must – 90 %

Could – 60%

May / Might – 50%

## Improbable

Must not – 10%

Couldn't – 5%

Can't – 1%

## Must

Must means that there is a very high probability

These kids look a lot alike and they are close. They must be siblings.

*It's a logical conclusion.*





## May or Might?



May or might express 50% probability.

It's May 1<sup>st</sup>. Brian isn't at work. He might be at the movies. He may be at home.

May = might except in reported speech, when we only use 'might'

# Must not

We use must not when there isn't much probability = 10%

Notice the difference between “must not” and “mustn’t”

**You mustn't exercise**  
Prohibition



**You must not exercise**  
Logical conclusion



## The past = modal verb + have + past participle

I must be crazy.

I must have been crazy.

You could have a fever.

You could have had a fever.

He may arrive late.

He might have arrived late.

Probability

In the past

# Probability



## Translations

SIGNIFICADO	PHRASE
Puede que tengas razón.	You may/might be right.
Ese hombre debe de ser mayor.	That man must be old.
No deben de tener mucho dinero.	They must not have a lot of money.
No puede ser.	It can't be.
Debéis de estar cansados.	You must be tired.
El no debe de trabajar mucho.	He must not work very much.
Puede que haya una toalla.	There might be a towel.
Puede que ella no lo sepa.	She may/might not know.

# Modal Verbs

- Obligation
- Advice or Suggestion
- Probability
- **Ability & Permission**





# Ability & Permission



## Can

Can I take the file home?

I can speak three languages.

I can't see him

## Able to

I'm sorry, I'm not able to respond.

Is he able to read the text?

We're not able to finish on time



## The past of can = could

I can't see very well

I couldn't see very well

I can speak English

My grandfather could speak German

I am able work at night

I was able to finish my work early

**Ability & Permission**

**In the past**

## Important details

### Can vs Could?

To avoid using Spanglish, remember the following:

1. Can and could are most common.
2. Can and could are only used in the past and present.
3. Could is used for general ability and able to is used for specific ability.

**Remember that could has many translations!**

# To be able, can & could



## Translations

PHRASE	SIGNIFICADO
We can see the mountain from our window.	Podemos ver la montaña desde nuestra Ventana.
They were able to evacuate the building in time.	Pudieron evacuar el edificio a tiempo.
Have they been able to contact Brian?	¿Han podido contactar con Brian?
How many languages can she speak?	¿Cuántos idiomas puede hablar ella?
They couldn't sell alcohol after 11pm	No podían vender alcohol después de las once.
We couldn't see well at the cinema	No veíamos bien en el cine.
The doctor was able to save the patient.	El doctor pudo salvar al paciente.
You should be able to set up the Ikea table	Deberíais poder montar la mesa de Ikea.

# Relationships

## Vocabulary & Idioms



## Idiomatic Expressions

- A. To bury the hatchet can be difficult if you can't find common ground
  - B. The awards dinner gave me the opportunity rub shoulders with notable people in my industry
  - C. My boss breathing down my neck makes me feel like he doesn't trust me
  - D. They have been attached at the hip since working on the UK project last year.
  - E. Brian and I go back years
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# Idiomatic Expressions



## Through thick and thin

During the good times and the bad times.

*E.g. My best friend has been there through thick and thin.*

## Be an item

To be romantically involved

*E.g. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie were an item for a long time*

# Relationship Phrasal Verbs



## Fall out

To have a fight with someone

## Back off

To give someone space

## Fall for

To be romantically interested in someone

## Hit it off

To immediately like someone

## Get on/along well

To have a good relationship with someone

## Make up

To end a fight

# Relationship Phrasal Verbs



## Have a fling

To have a short intense relationship with someone

## Break up

To end a relationship

## To tie the knot

To get married

## To ask someone out

To ask if they want to go on a date with you

## Chat up

To have a casual conversation with someone in order to get to know them better

## Make out

To kiss romantically



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# Thanks!

Does anyone have any questions?