

■ Modals and semi-modals

- The nine main modals (*will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must*) have only one form (ie they do not change tense or person) and are followed by a simple or continuous bare infinitive (eg *could + do, be doing, have done, have been doing*). They can also be followed by a bare infinitive in the passive (eg *could + be done, have been done*).
- Semi-modals have similar meanings to modals. They include: *need (to), ought to, had better* and *have (got) to*.
- Some semi-modals, such as *had better*, do not change tense or person. Others, such as *have (got) to*, do.
- Some semi-modals can be used in combination with modals, producing phrases such as *might have to*.

Ability

Real ability	Current or general ability	<i>can, can't</i>	You can't really speak seven languages fluently, can you?
	Past ability	<i>could, couldn't</i>	There's no way you could read when you were two!
	Decisions made now about future ability	<i>can, can't, could, couldn't</i>	I can get you a paper when I go to the shop, if you like.
	Future ability	<i>will/won't be able to</i>	One day, maybe, all adults will be able to read and write.
Hypothetical ability	Current or general hypothetical ability	<i>could, couldn't</i>	I couldn't go on a quiz show. I'd be too scared!
	Future hypothetical ability	<i>could, couldn't</i>	I could go with them to the cinema tomorrow but I won't because I've already seen the film.
	Past hypothetical ability	<i>could have, couldn't have</i>	They could have asked the Prime Minister much more searching questions. I wonder why they didn't.

Watch out!

- The full negative form of modals is written as two words, eg *could not*. The exception is *cannot*, which is one word.
- Can* and *could* cannot be used as infinitives. We can use *to be able to* instead.
✓ I'd love **to be able to** come with you to the cinema tomorrow but I just *can't*.
- We don't usually use *could* for past ability on one occasion. We use *was/were able to, managed or succeeded*, etc.
✓ Luckily, she **was able to** finish the article in time.
However, with verbs such as *see, hear, feel*, etc we can use *could* for past ability on one occasion.
✓ I **could see** that she was tired.

Permission

Asking for permission	<i>may, could, couldn't, can, can't</i>	Can I finish watching this before I go to bed?
Giving/refusing permission	<i>may, may not, could, couldn't, can, can't</i>	No, you can't .

Watch out!

- May* is more polite and formal than *could*, and *could* is more polite and formal than *can*.
- We don't usually use modals to talk about past permission. We can use *was/were allowed to*.
✓ We **were allowed to** buy one comic each.
- However, we do use *could* to talk about past permission in reported speech. (see Unit 25 for more information)
✓ Mum said we **could** buy one comic each.

Advice

Asking for and giving advice	<i>should, shouldn't, ought to, oughtn't to, had better</i>	You should try to get that poem published.
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Watch out!

- We can only use *hadn't better* in questions.
✓ **Hadn't you better** check that these facts are actually true?
- We can also use *might/may* as well to give advice and make suggestions. This suggests that, although the suggestion is not perfect, there is no better option.
✓ We **may as well** watch this as there's nothing else on.

Criticism

Criticising past behaviour	should have, shouldn't have, ought to have, oughtn't to have	You shouldn't have spoken to Mrs Todd like that.
Expressing annoyance at past behaviour	could have, might have	You could/might have told me you were going to be late!
Criticising general behaviour	will	He will slam the door every time he goes out.
Criticising a specific example of someone's general behaviour	would	You would take the car just when I wanted to go out.

Watch out!

We can also use *might* as well to suggest criticism.

✓ I **might as well** be dead for all you care.

Obligation

Current or general obligation	must, mustn't, have (got) to, need (to)	You have to be a good communicator to be a press spokesperson.
A lack of current or general obligation	don't have to, haven't got to, needn't, don't need (to)	You don't always need to have a degree to become a journalist.
Future obligation	will have to, must, mustn't, have (got) to, (will) need (to)	You ll have to do quite a lot of research before you write this report.
A lack of future obligation	don't/won't have to, haven't got to, needn't, don't/won't need (to)	I'm glad we won't have to write any more essays on this course.
Past obligation	had to, needed (to)	We had to come up with three questions each.
A lack of past obligation	didn't have to, didn't need (to), needn't have	In the past, politicians didn't have to deal with being in a 24-hour media spotlight.

Watch out!

- We are more likely to use *must* for personal obligation (making our own decision about what we must do) and *have to* for external obligation (someone else making a decision about what we must do).
- Using *must* for questions is extremely formal. We usually use *have to*.
✓ **Do you have to** have a degree to be a journalist?
- *Mustn't* is used for prohibition. *Don't have to* is used for a lack of obligation.
- We can use *didn't have to* and *didn't need to* for things that we did or didn't actually do. However, we only use *needn't have done* for things that we actually did but weren't obliged to do.

Degrees of certainty

Certainty (or near certainty) about now, the future or generally	will, would, must, can, can't, could, couldn't	'There's someone at the door.' 'That ll be the postman.' 'It can't be . He's already been.'
Certainty (or near certainty) about the past	will have, won't have, would have, wouldn't have, must have, can't have, couldn't have	'They won't have heard the news, will they?' 'They must have heard by now, surely.'
Probability about now, the future or generally	should, shouldn't, ought to, oughtn't to, may/might well (not), could well, might easily	'The weather should be good tomorrow, shouldn't it?' 'Actually, the forecast said it may well rain .'
Probability about the past	should have, shouldn't have, ought to have, oughtn't to have, may/might well (not) have, might easily (not) have	'Jan should have finished writing her article by now, shouldn't she?' 'She may well have done , but I haven't seen it yet.'
Possibility about now, the future or generally	could, may (not), might, mightn't, may/might/could just	I might (just) have time to get to the library before it closes.
Possibility about the real past	could have, may (not) have, might have, mightn't have	Jim might not have checked his e-mail yet.

Watch out!

should and *should have* can be used in *that* clauses after words expressing importance and reactions.

✓ It's strange that you **should** say that. ✓ Was it necessary that Alan **should have been invited** to the meeting?

A Circle the correct word or phrase. If both are correct, circle both.

- 1 You **can't** / **couldn't** really talk when you were one year old, **can** / **could** you?
- 2 We **can** / **could** give you a lift home tonight, if you want.
- 3 I wish I **can** / **could** speak Russian, then I'd be able to / I **could** read Tolstoy in the original.
- 4 Excuse me, **could** / **may** you tell me how to get to the leisure centre from here?
- 5 I'm afraid we **can't** / **won't be able to** come to the wedding after all.
- 6 Thankfully, we **could** / **managed to** get to the airport just in time so we didn't miss the plane.
- 7 Dawn couldn't **go** / **have gone** to the barbecue as she had to work.
- 8 Would you like to **could** / **be able to** buy the flat you're renting?
- 9 In a thousand years, **can humans** / **will humans be able to** travel faster than the speed of light?
- 10 'Mum, can I watch TV and do my homework later?'
'No, you **may** / **might** not!'
- 11 We could **catch** / **have caught** the last train after all, but of course we didn't know that at the time.
- 12 **Mayn't** / **Can't** I at least stay up till the end of the film?
- 13 Everyone **could** / **was able to** tell that Julie was upset about something.
- 14 **May** / **Can** I open the window, please? It's a little stuffy in here.
- 15 Because we had guests last Saturday, the kids **could** / **were allowed to** stay up till midnight.

B Write a verb from the box in the correct form in each gap.

do • eat • feel • go • have • invite • provide • recover • sit • speak • stand • work

- 1 It seems there's nothing anybody can to stop the conflict escalating further.
- 2 She couldn't anything in her left arm for about two hours. She said it was completely numb.
- 3 I don't think the Prime Minister will ever manage from this scandal.
- 4 Can I Tracy round after tea? We want to play my new computer game.
- 5 Liz has had another ice cream so why can't I one? It's not fair!
- 6 When I was a child, my brothers and sisters and I weren't allowed with the grown-ups except on special occasions.
- 7 Darren's allergic to wheat, so he can't bread under any circumstances.
- 8 Dominic had said he spoke German, but when we got there it turned out he couldn't a word!
- 9 I'd love to be able from home, but in my job it's just not possible.
- 10 James could for Parliament at the last election – he had enough support – but he wasn't willing to sacrifice his privacy.
- 11 A small cot for babies can if you ask at reception.
- 12 We couldn't to the concert anyway as Jamie wasn't very well.

C If the word in bold is correct, put a tick. If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly.

- 1 Shouldn't you **getting** planning permission before you start building?
- 2 Gavin really ought not to **be** worn casual clothes to the interview last week.
- 3 She might have **gave** us a call to let us know she was all right.
- 4 You **should** better get a second opinion before you do anything drastic like knock down a supporting wall.
- 5 I don't think you **must** go to school today if you're not feeling well.
- 6 We definitely **should** not judge Karen until we know exactly what happened.

- 7 I probably won't get the job but I **should** as well apply for it, I suppose.
- 8 You **could** have told us you'd changed your mind about the holiday. How are we going to find a fourth person at this late stage?
- 9 We had **rather** book the tickets now, hadn't we? They might have sold out on the day.
- 10 Terry **would** leave his bedroom in such a mess all the time. It's just not good enough.
- 11 Michael was late, but then again he **will** be.
- 12 You **may** have asked me if I wanted to come with you! You know I need to go to the bank!

D Write a word or short phrase in each gap so that the second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- 1 I would suggest seeing a doctor if it doesn't clear up.
You had a doctor if it doesn't clear up.
- 2 It was typical of Jerry to forget to feed the cat, wasn't it?
Jerry to feed the cat, he?
- 3 I'm annoyed Diana didn't invite us to her engagement party.
Diana us to her engagement party.
- 4 Buying a yellow car was a mistake – everyone thinks I drive a taxi!
I a yellow car – everyone thinks I drive a taxi!
- 5 Teenagers are noisy, aren't they?
Teenagers make so much noise, they?
- 6 It won't harm us to see what special offers are on at the moment.
We what special offers are on at the moment.
- 7 Don't you think you should type that essay, rather than write it in pen?
..... better type that essay, rather than write it in pen?
- 8 It would probably have been a good idea if you'd asked Dad what he thought.
You to Dad what he thought.

E Write a word from the box in each gap. You will need two of the words twice.

doesn't • got • had • has • have • must • needn't • will

- 1 I have bothered preparing so much food; nobody ate anything anyway.
- 2 Do you to have that music on so loud? I can't concentrate!
- 3 You call before you come round, as we'll definitely be in.
- 4 It was difficult, but I knew I to apologise.
- 5 Trisha need to get a summer job as her parents are quite well-off.
- 6 you have to be there in court yourself, or can a lawyer represent you?
- 7 We didn't to wear a uniform to school today, so I went in jeans and a T-shirt.
- 8 I think Damien to stay in hospital for the next four or five weeks.
- 9 Children not be left unattended under any circumstances.
- 10 We haven't to move out for another six months, but we've started looking for a new place anyway.

F Complete using *must*, *have to*, *need* or *need to* in the correct form and the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 You (pay) me back now, but of course you can if you like!
- 2 Dogs (keep) on a leash at all times.
- 3 If Linda (pick up) from school tomorrow, maybe we could spend the afternoon in town.
- 4 We (rely) on phone lines in the future as we'll all have mobile phones which connect to the Internet.
- 5 The invitations (send off) soon otherwise they won't get there in time.
- 6 Sorry I'm late. I (get) a few things from the supermarket on my way here.
- 7 (you / make) a fuss to get your money back, or was the manager quite reasonable?
- 8 You (believe) everything Graham tells you. He's lied to me before.
- 9 Thankfully we (put) Flossie in a cattery as our neighbours offered to feed her.
- 10 What time (farmers / get up) every morning?
- 11 I'd hate (commute) to work every morning and evening, wouldn't you?
- 12 Although we took CDs with us we actually (do) as there was no CD player to play them on.

G Write one word in each gap.

A tabloid editor speaks

As editor of the most popular British tabloid, I need (1) make sure we give our readers what they want. And what do they want? Scandal. It is my job to tell the readers when a celebrity has done something they should not have (2), or when a politician (3) to have done something but didn't. One accusation that is often levelled at tabloids is that we think we (4) not need to worry about the truth, but that is just not true. I have (5) be shown proof from at least two sources before I run a story. As a newspaper, you have (6) to get your facts right and you (7) not print a story just because you want it to be true. There are times when, in retrospect, we (8) not have been so careful and

could have broken a story days before we did, but we (9) to have absolute proof first. I often get asked why so many celebrities sell their stories to us. The truth is that we tell them we are going to run a story about them anyway, so they realise they might as (10) put their side of the story across. They know they (11) definitely have to speak out at some point, so why wait? And, let's face it, celebrities need to (12) talked about constantly or they stop being famous, so they (13) not complain, in my view. What I would say to celebrities and politicians that do criticise tabloids is that you (14) not fear us if you haven't done anything wrong. But if you have, you (15) better look out, because we are going to catch you.

H Circle the correct word or phrase. If both are correct, circle both.

- 1 'Did you hear a noise?'
'That'll / That must probably be the cat.'
- 2 'I had to walk all the way here.'
'You must be / have been exhausted. Put your feet up. I'll make us a nice cup of tea.'
- 3 'Your favourite programme's on.'
'It mustn't / can't be. It's only half past five.'
- 4 'Andy made me redo every single one of the reports.'
'You must / can have been furious.'
- 5 'Laura walked right past me in the street without saying a word.'
'She can't / couldn't have seen you.'
- 6 'I can't believe I got the final question in the pop quiz wrong.'
'Don't worry. I wouldn't / won't have known the answer either.'

- 7 'I can't wait to get that blue top tomorrow.'
'I wouldn't get too excited. They only had one left, so they **may / might** well have sold out.'
- 8 'It's got very cold.'
'Yes, I think it **must / might** easily snow tonight.'
- 9 'I can't wait till Roger gets here.'
'He should **land / have landed** by now, so he'll be here in about an hour.'
- 10 'I hope they've got some tickets left.'
'We **should / might** just be lucky and get the last two.'

I Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

- 1 It's possible that Greg didn't go to Swansea after all. **not**
Greg to Swansea after all.
- 2 It's quite likely that Sasha was lying about what Doug said. **well**
Sasha about what Doug said.
- 3 The most likely situation is that they awarded Grandpa the medal during the war. **must**
Grandpa during the war.
- 4 I'd be surprised if Derek has already arrived. **ought**
Derek yet.
- 5 Jake, is it definite that they haven't announced the winner yet? **will**
Jake, announced yet?
- 6 It's highly likely that Stephen was listening. **may**
Stephen listening.
- 7 It's not possible that Andrew is half Spanish. **be**
Andrew half Spanish.

J Choose the correct answer.

- 1 Even in a million years, we go back in time.
A couldn't C won't be able to
B can't D aren't able to
 - 2 I at the exam paper lying on Mr Gregson's desk, but I didn't want to risk it.
A could look C can have looked
B can look D could have looked
 - 3 Eliot better tell his mum what happened?
A Mustn't C Shouldn't
B Oughtn't D Hadn't
 - 4 You have let us know you'd changed your phone number.
A may C would
B could D will
 - 5 lectures at your university?
A Haven't students got to have attended
B Needn't students have attended
C Mustn't students to attend
D Don't students have to attend
 - 6 We as well try to sell this old sofa before throwing it out.
A could C might
B should D can
 - 7 Jeremy may well not about the accident yet.
A tell C have told
B to tell D have been told
 - 8 It's essential that the documents be destroyed immediately.
A should C ought to
B would D had better
 - 9 Luckily I a new pair of sunglasses as I found mine at the bottom of a bag.
A needn't have bought C needed not to buy
B didn't need to buy D hadn't to buy
 - 10 I'm thinking of going on *Million Euro Spender*; I'd love to spend a million euros in one day!
A have to C can
B must D be able