

56 Modal verbs

Modal verbs are very common in English. They are used to talk about a variety of things, particularly possibilities, obligations, and deductions.



56.1 REWRITE THE SENTENCES, PUTTING THE WORDS IN THE CORRECT ORDER

you me Could where is? library tell the

Could you tell me where the library is?

1 learn computer. You a should to how use

2 cake? Could piece have another I of

3 run corridor. the You not in must

4 languages My fluently. sister four can speak

5 I Can with give you shopping? a hand your

6 moment? your lend Could pen you me a for

7 be from That must letter college. Ken's



56.2 MATCH THE PICTURES TO THE CORRECT SENTENCES



Can I get you a drink?

Maybe I should call my mother.

Can I help you with your bag?

You mustn't be late for work again.



56.3 REWRITE THE SENTENCES AS QUESTIONS

Simon can speak Irish fluently.

Can Simon speak Irish fluently?

1 I can help you clean up.

2 Phil should study math in college.

3 Graham can play the violin.

4 Peter has to go to the meeting.

5 She can have another chocolate.

6 Angela could drive us to the party.



56.4 REWRITE THE SENTENCES USING THE NEGATIVE

Students must bring a calculator.

Students must not bring a calculator.

1 Leroy can repair your oven.

2 My grandma could speak Welsh.

3 You should eat more red meat.

4 Louisa can swim well.

5 Students have to wear uniforms.

6 You can have another piece of cake.

57 Ability

"Can" is a modal verb that describes what someone is able to do. It is used in different forms to describe past and present abilities.

57.1 MATCH THE PICTURES TO THE CORRECT SENTENCES



Emma can make beautiful dresses.



Tina can dance really well.



Chris can repair your car.



Jamie can't lift that box. I'll help him.



I can't solve this. It's too difficult.



Rita can cook the most amazing dishes.



Chloe can speak three languages.



I can't climb that mountain.

57.2 REWRITE THE SENTENCES IN THE CORRECT ORDER

box. can't I that reach

I can't reach that box.

1 the Jonathan can guitar. play

2 can't We door. open the

3 well. really can Amy sing

4 Lizzie car. cannot a drive

5 can trees. Femi climb

6 languages. can five speak Marion

7 that piano. Derek can't move



57.3 MATCH THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SENTENCES TO THE CORRECT ENDINGS

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| | I couldn't buy a new laptop | → | make wonderful cakes. |
| 1 | My grandmother could | | You need a new one. |
| 2 | I couldn't fix your phone. | | because they were too expensive. |
| 3 | When I was a child, | | because I felt ill. |
| 4 | Martha could play the piano | | I could run much faster. |
| 5 | I couldn't come to the party | | Jen could already speak six languages. |
| 6 | When she was six, | | when she was four years old. |



57.4 MATCH THE PRESENT SENTENCES TO THE CORRECT FUTURE SENTENCES

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| | I can play most of this piece now. | → | I'll be able to speak it fluently by the summer. |
| 1 | I can already speak some Spanish. | | I'll be able to play the whole thing by next week. |
| 2 | I can't find my passport. | | In the future, we'll be able to travel to other planets. |
| 3 | We can already travel to the moon. | | I'm hoping I will be able to fix it soon. |
| 4 | I still haven't been able to repair your old clock. | | I won't be able to take my flight without it. |

58 Permission, requests, and offers

"Can," "could," and "may" are used to ask permission to do something or to ask someone to do something for you. They can also be used to offer to help someone.



58.1 MARK WHETHER EACH SENTENCE IS FORMAL OR INFORMAL

Could you be quiet, please?

Formal ☒

Informal ☐

- 1 Could you tell me where the bank is, please?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 2 Can I play outside now?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 3 May I introduce my sister, Kay?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 4 Can I have some more cake?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 5 Could you turn down the radio, please?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 6 May I go home earlier today?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐

- 7 Can I sit here?

Formal ☐

Informal ☐



58.2 MARK WHETHER EACH SENTENCE IS A REQUEST OR AN OFFER

Can I help you at all?

Request ☐

Offer ☒

- 1 May I make a reservation for 8pm?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 2 Can I offer you something to eat?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 3 Can you lend me 10 dollars?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 4 Can I get you something to drink?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 5 Can you help me with this report?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 6 May I leave the table, please?

Request ☐

Offer ☐

- 7 Shall I take your coat for you?

Request ☐

Offer ☐



58.3 MATCH THE PICTURES TO THE CORRECT SENTENCES



May I take
your order?

Shall I open the
door for you?

Shall I carry
it for you?

Can I take
your coat?



58.4 REWRITE THE SENTENCES, CORRECTING THE ERRORS

Can my husband comes to the party, too?

Can my husband come to the party, too?



1 Could sit I here, please?



2 I may make an appointment, please?



3 Could I having a piece of your pizza?



4 I can get you something to drink?



5 Can have I the chicken and a salad, please?



6 Could you to tell me the way to the museum?



59 Suggestions and advice

The modal verb "could" can be used to offer suggestions. "Could" is not as strong as "should." It communicates gentle advice.



59.1 MATCH THE SITUATIONS TO THE CORRECT ADVICE

It looks like it's very cold outside.

You should take it out for a walk.

1 My dog keeps barking. It's so irritating.

You should wear a coat and some gloves.

2 It's really hot and sunny outside.

You should try talking to a native speaker.

3 I want to learn how to speak good English.

You should put on some sunscreen.

4 My son doesn't have many friends.

She should try to relax before bed.

5 My wife can't sleep at night.

He should join a club or take up a hobby.

6 I don't know what to buy my girlfriend.

You should go home and get some sleep.

7 My cousin wants to lose some weight.

You could make a little card for her as a gift.

8 I'm not feeling well at all.

You should try to save money regularly.

9 I can't afford to go on vacation this summer.

He should eat less cake and exercise more.



59.2 REWRITE THE ADVICE USING "HAD BETTER" OR "HAD BETTER NOT"

You ought to leave now, or you'll miss the bus.

You had better leave now, or you'll miss the bus.

- 1 It's going to rain. You should take an umbrella.

- 2 The train's been canceled. We ought to take a taxi.

- 3 It's icy outside. You shouldn't drive tonight.

- 4 I'm late for the meeting. I should call my boss.



59.3 MARK THE BEST ADVICE TO EACH SITUATION

I'm late for the meeting!



You should hurry up!



You should eat something.



1

I want to keep fit.



If I were you, I'd watch more TV.



If I were you, I'd try jogging.



2

What should I visit in your town?



You really must visit the castle.



You should turn left at the hotel.



3

My hair is getting much too long.



You ought to go on vacation more.



You ought to go to the barbershop.



4

My son wants to get a pet that's easy to look after.



He could get a dog. He'll need to walk it twice a day.



He should get a cat. They're quite independent.



5

What should I wear for the party tonight?



You could wear jeans and shirt.



You should buy some balloons.



60 Obligations

In English, "have to" or "must" are used when talking about obligations or things that are necessary. They are often used to give important instructions.



60.1 MATCH THE SITUATIONS TO THE CORRECT OBLIGATIONS

My eyesight is absolutely terrible.

You have to go. It's about the new IT system.

1 There's a meeting in 10 minutes, but I'm too busy.

You really must go to the optician.

2 I've just remembered it's my grandmother's birthday today.

Yes. All our workers must wear a helmet at all times.

3 I've got too much homework to do.

The council must do something to stop people from littering.

4 I'm feeling much better now. The pain has gone.

You must call her right away!

5 There's so much litter in town.

He had to go home because his daughter's unwell.

6 Why are you driving so slowly here?

You won't have to do any when the summer break comes!

7 I forgot to bring my helmet. Does it matter?

You must not lift anything heavy for two weeks.

8 Why isn't Juan at the meeting today?

In that case, you don't have to take your medication any longer.

9 I hurt my back while I was moving house.

I have to keep to the speed limit.



60.2 COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING "MUST NOT" OR "DON'T HAVE TO"



You don't have to come swimming, but you are invited.

1



I _____ wear a suit for work, but I wear one anyway.

2



I'm staying in bed because I _____ go to work today.

3



You _____ stay in the sun too long. You'll get burned.

4



You _____ touch that pan. It's hot.

5



You _____ be great at tennis to enjoy it.

6



I have a secret, but you _____ tell anyone else.



60.3 REWRITE THE SENTENCES IN THE FUTURE

Students must use a laptop.

Students will have to use a laptop.

1 Everyone must leave before 5pm.

2 You must inform your manager.

3 Brenda has to go home early today.

4 She must pay for the damage.



60.4 REWRITE THE SENTENCES IN THE PAST

Joe must come in early.

Joe had to come in early.

1 The managers must apologize.

2 Greg must eat all the broccoli.

3 Joe has to work very hard today.

4 I must rest all this week.

61 Making deductions

Modal verbs can also be used to talk about how likely or unlikely something is. They can be used to guess and make deductions about what has happened or is happening now.



61.1 MATCH THE PICTURES TO THE CORRECT SENTENCES



Look! Janet must have passed her driving test.

There's no answer. George must be out.

He can't be the plumber. He's wearing a suit.

It looks like Sam could win this race.



61.2 CROSS OUT THE INCORRECT WORDS IN EACH SENTENCE

Dan has been off work for days. He **must** / ~~cannot~~ be sick.

- 1 Alina drank all the water. She **must** / **can** have been really thirsty.
- 2 I can't read this. I **could not** / **might** need new glasses.
- 3 Ben **can't** / **might** have stolen the vase. He was with me last night.
- 4 The journey home takes ages. The children **must** / **can** be so bored.
- 5 I can't find my wallet. I **must** / **can't** have dropped it somewhere.



61.3 FILL IN THE GAPS, PUTTING THE WORDS IN THE CORRECT ORDER

It's freezing in this house! The heating must have broken.

1 I can't find my purse. I on have it might left the bus.

2 I keep sneezing. I think a have I might cold.

3 Veronika is crying. She failed have her must test.

4 What's that animal with brown fur? It bear be could a.



61.4 MATCH THE CORRESPONDING SENTENCES TOGETHER

I haven't heard from Kate today.

1 Jon works for the local zoo.

2 What was that noise?

3 Ivana's driving a brand-new sports car.

4 Mabel's team lost the match.

5 The cake I made tastes horrible.

That must be so interesting.

It must have cost a lot of money.

She might have lost her phone.

You can't have followed the recipe properly.

There might be a burglar downstairs.

She can't be feeling very happy.

62 Possibility

Modal verbs can be used to talk about possibility, or to express uncertainty. "Might" is the most common modal verb used for this purpose.



62.1 LOOK AT THE PICTURES AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCES USING THE PHRASES IN THE PANEL



The weather forecast said it might rain on Saturday.



4 I can't find my keys. I _____ them at work.



1 It looks like my team _____ tonight's game!



5 If you don't hurry, you _____ the deadline!



2 I _____ some driving lessons if I can afford them.



6 I think we _____ lost. We'd better ask someone.



3 I think the train _____ canceled.



7 I _____ the building by the end of the year.

might take

might not finish

might win

might have left

might be

~~might rain~~

might have been

might miss



62.2 MARK THE SENTENCES THAT ARE CORRECT

Irene said she might goes to the theater tonight.

☐

Irene said she might go to the theater tonight.

☒

① I might have forget to turn off the iron.

☐

I might have forgotten to turn off the iron.

☐

② The forecast said it might snow later.

☐

The forecast said it might snowing later.

☐

③ Karl might not come to the party this evening.

☐

Karl might come not to the party this evening.

☐

④ Jon may have gone away for the weekend.

☐

Jon can have gone away for the weekend.

☐


62.3 REWRITE THE SENTENCES, PUTTING THE WORDS IN THE CORRECT ORDER

not

door

I

locked

earlier.

might

have

the

I might not have locked the door earlier.

①

not

be

the

I

come

might

to

able

movies.

to

②

zoo

might

the

I

go

next

to

weekend.

③

Sue

delayed

traffic.

might

of

be

the

because

④

later.

might

like

It

looks

it

rain