

Name: _____

TOPIC: MODAL VERBS

The Golden Rule: Base Form Only

The most common trap on the ITP is following a modal with an infinitive (*to go*), a gerund (*going*), or a conjugated verb (*goes*). **Rule:** A modal is **always** followed by the **base form** of the verb (no "to," no "-s," no "-ed").

- **Incorrect:** *She can to swim. / He must goes.*
- **Correct:** *She can swim. / He must go.*

Categorizing Modals by "Strength"

The TOEFL ITP often tests your ability to distinguish the degree of certainty or obligation.

Category	Modals	ITP Context
Strong Obligation	Must	Used for requirements or "near-certain" deductions.
Advice/Expectation	Should	Used for suggestions or things that are "likely" to happen.
Possibility	May / Might / Could	Used for things that are possible but not guaranteed.
Ability/Permission	Can / Could	<i>Can</i> is present ability; <i>Could</i> is past ability.

Past Modals (The "Have" Rule) To express these concepts in the past, the TOEFL uses Modal + Have + Past Participle. This is a high-frequency structure in the Written Expression (error identification) part of the test.

- **Should have + [v3]:** A regret or a missed opportunity (It didn't happen, but it was a good idea).
- **Must have + [v3]:** A logical conclusion about the past (I'm almost sure it happened).
- **May/Might have + [v3]:** A guess about the past.

4. Common ITP Traps to Watch For

1. **Double Modals:** You cannot use two modals together.
 - o *Incorrect:* "He **will can** go."
 - o *Correct:* "He **will be able to** go."
2. **The "To" Inclusion:** Look for the word "to" hiding after a modal.
 - o *Incorrect:* "They **might to** arrive late."
3. **Subject-Verb Agreement:** Modals **never** change their form. There is no "cans," "musts," or "shoulds" for third-person singular.
 - o *Incorrect:* "The machine **mays** fail."

Expert Tip for the Structure Section:

If you see a blank space followed by a verb in its base form (e.g., _____ study), check the options for a Modal. If you see an underlined Modal, check the verb following it immediately—if it has an *-ing*, *-ed*, or *to*, you've found your error!

Which of these modals do you find most confusing when trying to identify errors in a sentence?

I. Select the word or words that best complete the sentence.

1. Pregnant women who suffer from anemia _____ supplements to raise the level of iron in their blood.
a) **must to give** b) **must be given** c) **given**
2. The study indicates that we _____ increase coverage of supplementation, should try to
a) **try to** b) **must to try to** c) **should try to**
3. The authors noted that their results _____ pregnant women in other low- and middle-income countries.
a) **might apply to** b) **might to apply to** c) **apply**
4. The effect on birth weight _____ depending on the prevalence of iron deficiency.
a) **can vary** b) **can to vary** c) **will to vary**
5. A new, low-cost tool _____ developing-world cities control pollution that kills millions each year.
a) **may to help** b) **may help** c) **may have to help**
6. What are some of the best practices that health and emergency responders _____ in mind when using social media?
a) **should to keep** b) **should keep** c) **will to keep**
7. I _____ rather listen to country music than to jazz.
a) **should** b) **will** c) **would**
8. Joan was absent from school today. She _____ sick.
a) **could be** b) **can be** c) **could to be**
9. _____ you mind if my sister joined us for lunch?
a) **May** b) **Should** c) **Would**
10. George takes tennis lessons. He _____ play tennis.
a) **can** b) **may** c) **might**