Modal verbs

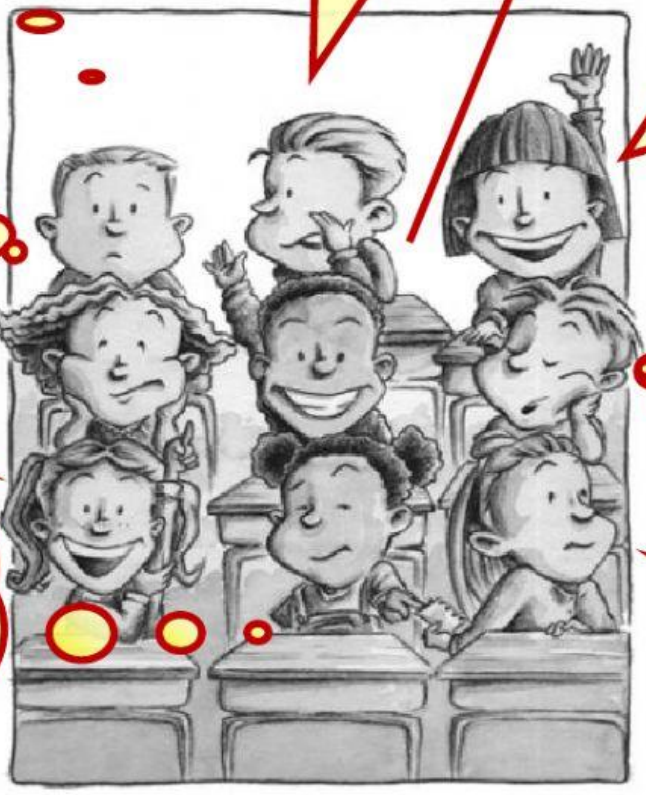
This is a multi-mood classroom! Read the sentences and learn about modals!

Why **can't** this guy just shut up!

David, you **can't** miss the game after class! It's going to be something!

I really like this teacher. She **must** be the best I've had! She surely is!

This **might** be interesting if I didn't have this terrible toothache!



Mrs. Underwood, **may** I answer the question?

Can I answer the question, too?

I **should** take a nap! I'm really sleepy!

This **could** take us to the Principal's office! I hope the teacher doesn't see us!

Will you pass this note to Vicky, please?

Modal verbs may express different things, and their meaning vary according to the context of the sentence. They have no full meaning like the other verbs, and so they are also called **modal auxiliary verbs**. Below, in the boxes, you will find their uses.

Modal verbs have no *–s* on the third person singular; they do not need auxiliary *do* to in the negative and interrogative and after a modal verb there is always another verb in the *infinitive without to* (except *ought to*).

CAN

- ability or capacity
- possibility
- permission

COULD

- ability or capacity (past)
- permission
- possibility

MAY

- permission
- possibility
- prohibition (with *not*)

MIGHT

- past tense of may
- polite request
- remote possibility

CAN'T

- prohibition
- impossibility

MUST

- obligation
- deduction or logical conclusion

MUSTN'T

- negative obligation
- prohibition
- advice

SHOULD

- moral obligation or desirability
- advice

LIVEWORKSHEETS

SHALL
- offer
- suggestion
- threat, command (1st and 2nd persons)

WILL
- request
- offer
- order
- determination

WOULD
- past of will
- habitual action in the past

OUGHT TO
- duty or moral obligation
- advice

A) Now insert the adequate modal verb according to the clues given at the end of the sentences.

1. _____ we go to the cinema tonight? **(SUGGESTION)**
2. Children _____ obey their parents. **(MORAL OBLIGATION)**
3. _____ you give your phone number? **(REQUEST)**
4. I really think you _____ see a doctor. You have been ill for a whole week! **(ADVICE)**
5. Be alert, that _____ happen again! **(POSSIBILITY)**
6. When my father was young, we _____ go for a bike ride in the woods. **(HABIT IN THE PAST)**
7. That _____ be Mary! She was at the supermarket just a while ago! **(IMPOSSIBILITY)**
8. It _____ happen, but I doubt! **(REMOTE POSSIBILITY)**

B) Fill in the gaps with one of the following modal verbs: *can, could, can't, couldn't.*

1. I _____ play the violin, but Sam _____.
2. I _____ sing when I was fourteen, but now I _____.
3. My classmates were speaking too loud and I _____ hear what the teacher said.
4. Now I _____ swim pretty well, but a year ago I _____.
5. Cats _____ run very fast, _____ they?

C) Match the sentences.

1. You look tired.
2. You shouldn't dive into the pool!
3. May I go to the toilet, Mrs. Underwood?
4. I'm sure this is Tom.
5. I'm determined to go to university.

1. ☐ **2.** ☐ **3.** ☐ **4.** ☐ **5.** ☐

a) You can't swim!
b) I promise I will!
c) You should get some sleep.
d) Surely, but come back right away.
e) It must be him.

D) Replace the underlined expression by a modal verb and make the necessary transformations.

1. Mary <u>was able</u> to speak clearly when she was 18 months.
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2. Richard <u>is likely</u> to fail the school year.
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3. Sebastian <u>is able</u> to play the violin.
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4. <u>Am I allowed</u> to speak?
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5. <u>It is impossible for him</u> to drive.
---
6. Babies <u>are capable</u> of swimming.
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7. <u>It is forbidden</u> to smoke in public places.
You ---
8. Children <u>have permission</u> to play outside.
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9. Sara missed school today so she <u>surely</u> is ill.
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10. Teenagers <u>are allowed</u> to go out just this once because they deserve it.
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11. Paul <u>is certain</u> to win the competition.
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12. I <u>am sure</u> I am right.

LIVEWORKSHEETS