

MODAL VERBS

MODALS

CAN

Can is used to express ability.

He can swim very well.

I can't play this game. It's too complicated.

CAN – MAY

Can and *May* are used to ask for or give permission.

May is also used to express possibility.

May I leave earlier today?

No, you may not leave earlier today.

You can't drive my car because you're 16.

I may go away for a few weeks.

MUST

Must is used to express obligation,
You must stop when the lights are red.

Must is also used to express prohibition,
You mustn't cross the road now.

SHOULD – SHOULDN'T

Should is used to give advice or to tell people
something is/ isn't a good thing to do

You're coughing a lot. You should stop smoking.
You shouldn't ride your bicycle at night without lights. It's dangerous.

WOULD

Would is used to offer something or invite,
Would you like a cup of coffee?

Would is also used in conditional sentences.

If I had enough time, I would do that.

PRACTICE

Complete the sentences with the correct modal:



1. Before you walk on the street, you
_____ look right and left for traffic.

a. can c. would
b. must d. shouldn't

2. You _____ ride your bike on the sidewalk.

a. can't c. wouldn't
b. can d. may

3. You _____ be listening to music while you're in your bike.

a. can c. must
b. shouldn't d. may



4. You _____ keep your ears open for cars.

a. should c. wouldn't
b. must d. may

5. you ride a bike safely? I'm not sure.

a. Can c. Must
b. Shouldn't d. May

6. If you ride safely, I _____ let you ride your bike by yourself



a. would c. shouldn't
b. may d. should

7. When you ride a bike, you _____ see the signal
turns and lane changes.

a. shouldn't c. must
b. would d. mustn't

8. You _____ forget to put on a helmet.

a. mustn't b. should
b. wouldn't c. can

9. _____ you use the front and rear brakes well?

a. Should c. Can
b. Must d. Would

10. _____ you like to ride my bike now?

a. Can c. Should
b. Would d. May

11. If I were you, I _____ buy a new bicycle. Yours is too old!

a. would c. wouldn't
b. should d. must

12. Carol _____ win the first prize. She's been training a lot!

a. shouldn't c. may
b. would d. can't



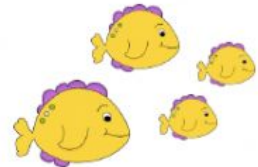
MODAL VERBS

Circle the correct answer



1. That **can/can't/ought to** be Jason- he's on a mission to Mars.
2. You **might/mustn't/have to** smoke in hospitals and schools- it's forbidden.
3. That **will/must/needn't** be the correct answer- I checked it 3 times.
4. In 200 years people **won't/may not/didn't have to** cook any longer- kitchens will disappear.
5. Babies **might/can't/shouldn't** read comic books.
6. His doctor told him that he **would/ought to/can** lose weight or he will become very ill.
8. We **shouldn't/didn't have to/couldn't** wear uniforms to school on Friday because we had a school trip.

Circle the correct reason for the modal verb



1. His teacher said that he **should** study more at home. **certain/advice/ability/forbidden**
2. That **can't** be Kobe Bryant over there- he lives in LA- not New York. **certain/advice/ability/impossibility**
3. You didn't **have to** study for the test after all- the teacher was absent.
certain/advice/not necessary/forbidden
4. His dentist said that he **ought to** brush his teeth twice a day or he will get a lot of cavities..
certain/ strong advice/ability/forbidden
5. You **mustn't** break the laws of a country even when you are traveling abroad.
certain/ability/not necessary/forbidden

KEY ANSWERS

Key

1. must
2. can't
3. shouldn't
4. should
5. Can
6. may
7. must
8. mustn't
9. Can
10. Would
11. Would
12. may

KEY ANSWERS

1. That's **can/can't/ought to** be Jason- he's on a mission to Mars.
2. You **might/mustn't/have to** smoke in hospitals and schools- it's forbidden.
3. That **will/must/needn't** be the correct answer- I checked it 3 times.
4. In 200 years people **won't/may not/didn't have to** cook any longer- kitchen will have disappeared.
5. You **weren't able to/needn't have/shouldn't have** made dessert for the party- we had already ordered three cakes
6. Babies **might/can't/shouldn't** read comic books.
7. His doctor told him that he **would/ought to/can** lose weight or he will become very ill.
8. We **shouldn't/didn't have to/couldn't** wear uniforms to school on Friday because we had a school trip.

Circle the correct reason for the modal verb

1. His teacher said that he should study more at home. **certain/advice/ability/forbidden**
2. That can't be Kobe Bryant over there- he lives in LA- not New York. **certain/advice/ability/forbidden**
3. You needn't have studied for the test after all- the teacher was absent.

certain/advice/not necessary/forbidden

4. His dentist said that he ought to brush his teeth twice a day or will get a lot of cavities..

certain/ strong advice/ability/forbidden

5. You mustn't break the laws of a country- even when you are travelling abroad.

certain/ability/not necessary/forbidden