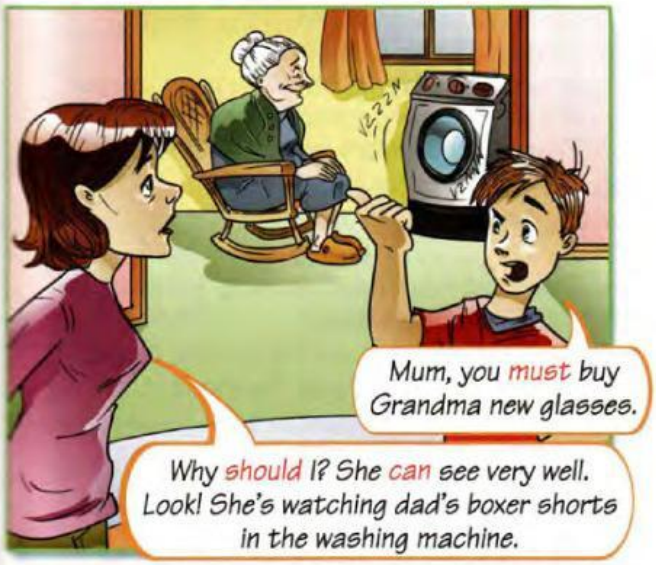
Modal Verbs

3

8 **Listen and repeat. Then act out.**





- **The modal verbs are: can, could, may, might, must, ought to, will, would, shall, and should. They do not take -s in the third person singular.** ***He can*** *ride fast.* **They come before the subject in questions and are followed by 'not' in negations.** *"**Could I** leave now?" "I'm afraid you **can't** leave."* **The modal verbs are followed by an infinitive without to except for 'ought to'.** *She **could leave** early but she really **ought to stay** till the end.* **Each modal verb normally has more than one use.** ***Shall*** *I help you with the dishes?* (offer) ***Shall*** *we go out tonight?* (suggestion)
- **Certain verbs or expressions have virtually the same meaning as some modals. These are: need (= must), had better (= should), have to/have got to (= must), be able to (= can), used to (= would), etc.** *I **have got to** hurry to catch the bus.* (= I must hurry.)
- **We use modal verbs to express: ability, advice, criticism, logical assumptions, necessity, offers, obligation/duty, permission, possibility, probability, prohibition, requests or suggestions.**

Functions of Modal Verbs and Synonymous Expressions

Use	Present/Future	Past
ability	He **can** read Arabic. She**'s able to** run a marathon.	He **could/was able to** read Arabic when he was four. (repeated action – ability in the past) He **was able to** ride a bike when he was ten.
possibility	He **can** win the race. (90% certain) They **could** still be at school. (50% certain; it's possible they are still at school.) Tom **may** be studying in his room. (perhaps; 50% certain; it's possible that he's studying.) He **might** want some more food. (40% certain; perhaps he wants some more food.) **It is likely** that he will arrive tonight. **He is likely to** arrive tonight.	She **could have** been killed in the car crash. (Luckily, she wasn't killed.) He **may have** spoken to Jenny yesterday. (Perhaps he spoke to Jenny.) He **might have** forgotten. (Perhaps he has forgotten.) **It was likely that** he had arrived the day before. **He was likely to** have arrived the day before.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Modal Verbs

Use	Present/Future	Past
probability	They **will** be home soon. (100% certain; prediction) Greg **should** win easily. (90% certain; future only; he'll win easily.) They **ought to** be home by now. (90% certain; they will probably be home.)	– He **should have** received his prize by now. (He has probably received it by now.) They **ought to have** arrived an hour ago. (They have probably arrived.)
logical assumption	She **must** be working. (90% certain – positive; I'm sure she's working.) She **can't** be over forty. (negative; I'm sure she isn't over forty.) He **couldn't** be at work. (negative; I don't think **he's** at work.)	She **must have** been working. (positive; I'm sure she was working.) She **can't have** stolen the money. (negative; I'm sure she didn't steal the money.) He **couldn't have** been at work yesterday. (negative; I don't think he was at work yesterday.)
permission	You **can/can't** borrow my car. (giving or refusing permission; informal) **Could** I use your phone? (more polite; asking for permission) You **may** use the phone. (formal; giving permission) **Might** I speak to Mr Jones, please? (more formal; asking permission) I'm afraid you **can't/mustn't** see the patient. (informal; refusing permission) Children **may not** be left unaccompanied. (formal; refusing permission – written notice)	He **wasn't allowed to/couldn't** cross the border. He **was allowed to** enter the country. *(NOT: ~~could~~)* – – – – –
necessity	I **must** buy a new jacket. (I say so.) He **has to** put some petrol in the car. (necessity coming from outside the speaker) I**'ve got to** go to the bank now. (informal) My car **needs** repairing. or My car **needs to** be repaired. (it's necessary) They **don't have to/don't need to/needn't** come if they don't want to. (it isn't necessary – absence of necessity) I **ought to** get my hair cut. (it's necessary)	I **had to** buy a new jacket. (I was obliged to.) Since his car was being repaired, he **had to** go to York by train. I **had to** go to the bank yesterday. My car **needed** repairing. or My car **needed to** be repaired. (it was necessary) She **didn't have to** go. (it wasn't necessary – absence of necessity) She **didn't have to/didn't need to** buy any apples. (It wasn't necessary for her to buy any apples and she didn't.) He **needn't have** worn such heavy clothes. (It wasn't necessary for him to wear such heavy clothes but he did.)

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Use	Present/Future	Past
advice	You **should** drink more water. (general advice; I advise you) You **ought to** respect the elderly. (I advise you; most people believe this) You **had better** finish it. (it's a good idea; advice on a specific situation) **Shall** I buy that car? (asking for advice)	You **should have** gone to bed earlier last night. (but you didn't) He **ought to have** seen a doctor earlier. (but he didn't) It **would have been better** if you had finished it yesterday. (but you didn't) –
criticism	You **could** at least help me. They **should** try harder. You **ought to** behave yourself.	You **could have** at least helped me last night. They **should have** tried harder. (but they didn't) You **ought to have** behaved yourself yesterday. (It was the right thing to do but you didn't do it.)
obligation	I **must** go on a diet. (I'm obliged to; I say so.) I **have to** go on a diet. (I'm obliged to; the doctor says so.) We **ought to** donate some money to the poor. (It's the right thing to do but people don't always do it.)	I **had to** go on a diet a month ago. I **had to** go on a diet a month ago. We **ought to have** donated some money to the poor. (It was the right thing to do but we didn't do it.)
requests	**Can** I borrow your book? (informal) **Could** I borrow your book? (polite) **May** I have a cup of coffee, please? (formal) **Might** I use your phone? (very formal) **Will** you phone Jane tonight? (very friendly) **Would you mind** sending this fax? (polite)	– – – – – –
offers	**Can** I/we do anything for you? (informal) **Shall** I/we do it for you? (informal) **Would you like me** to help you?	– – –
suggestions	**Shall** we dance? I/We **can** go now if you like. We **could** leave if you want.	– – He **could have** consulted a lawyer.
prohibition	You **can't** smoke there. (you aren't allowed to) You **mustn't** smoke there. (it's forbidden) You **may not** smoke there. (formal)	They **couldn't** smoke there. (they weren't allowed) – –
duty	Everyone **must** obey the law. People **ought to** be more tolerant. (It's the right thing to do but they do not always do it.)	All the villagers **had to** obey the law. He **ought to have** been more tolerant. (It was the right thing to do but he didn't do it.)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Modal Verbs

1 What do these signs mean? Use can/can't or must to form sentences.



1 You can't leave your car here.
2 ..... drive slowly.
3 ..... smoke here.
4 ..... recycle your litter here.
5 ..... take the Underground here.
6 ..... stop here.

2 Identify the use of the modal verbs in bold, then write a synonymous modal verb or expression.

1	**Can** I park my car in your garage?	permission	May I?/Could I?
2	She **must** be home.	.....	.....
3	You **needn't** wear a tie to the interview.	.....	.....
4	**Shall** I cook spaghetti for dinner?	.....	.....
5	Gary **may** come round tonight.	.....	.....
6	You **should** take up a hobby.	.....	.....
7	**Would you mind** moving your car, sir?	.....	.....
8	She **can't** still be at work; it's already 6 pm.	.....	.....
9	**Can** I give you a hand with that bag?	.....	.....
10	Children **must not** play football in the streets.	.....	.....
11	I **have to** see the dentist.	.....	.....
12	The car **needs** filling up with petrol.	.....	.....

3 Tick the correct item, as in the example.

1 He ought to be at home by now.
   a) He is probably at home. ☑
   b) I don't think he's at home. ☐

2 Sarah can't be his sister.
   a) I'm sure Sarah isn't his sister. ☐
   b) I don't think Sarah is his sister. ☐

3 You mustn't use a dictionary in the exam.
   a) It is against the regulations to use a dictionary in the exam. ☐
   b) It isn't necessary to use a dictionary in the exam. ☐

4 If it is not raining tomorrow, we might play football.
   a) We will definitely play football tomorrow. ☐
   b) It is possible that we will play football tomorrow. ☐

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4 Underline the correct word(s).

1 A: **Could** / **May** / **Shall** you tell me where the post office is, please?
B: Certainly. It's down the street on the right.
2 A: You **mustn't** / **needn't** / **couldn't** vacuum the carpet.
B: Oh, have you done it already?
3 A: Are you free on Saturday morning?
B: No, I **have to** / **can** / **shall** go into the office for a couple of hours.
4 A: **Shall** / **Will** / **Would** I get you a glass of water from the kitchen?
B: Yes, please. And **may** / **could** / **shall** you put some ice in it, too?
5 A: I want to pass the driving test this year.
B: You **didn't need to** / **should** / **needn't** take some more lessons.
6 A: **Can** / **Shall** / **Would** I have some ice cream, please?
B: Yes, of course. What flavour would you like?
7 A: Where's Frank? Is he usually this late?
B: Not at all. He **ought** / **must** / **need** to be here by now.
8 A: I threw your old books into the recycling bin.
B: Oh, no! You **mustn't** / **shouldn't** / **can't** have done that. I need some of them for school.

Can/May – Be allowed to (permission)

- **We use can and be allowed to to refer to laws or regulations.**
*People **can't/aren't allowed to** smoke in the building.*
There is a difference in meaning between may and be allowed to in questions.
Study the examples.
a) ***May I** use your phone?* (= Will you allow me to use your phone?)
b) ***Are we allowed to** use the phone?* (= Does the rule permit it?)

5 Fill in: *May I* or *Am I allowed to.*

1 ..... *May I* ..... ask you the time?
2 ..... feed the animals in the zoo?
3 ..... keep pets in my flat?
4 ..... see what you're reading?
5 ..... help you with that suitcase?
6 ..... make personal phone calls?

Can – Could – Was able to (ability)

- **Can expresses ability in the present and future. Could expresses ability in the past. The verb can is used only in the present or future and could in the past. We use be able to to form all the other tenses.** *He **could** climb up mountains before he had an accident. He **can't** climb mountains now but he **had been able to** do so before his accident.*
- **Was able to (= managed to) is used to express ability in the past for either single or repeated actions.** *He **was able to** reach Brighton before midnight.* (single action) *(NOT: ~~could~~)*
- **Could is used in statements to express general ability in the past for repeated actions.** *She **could/was able to** read when she was four.* (**could/was able to** are both correct)
However with feel, hear, see, smell, understand, etc. we normally use could for single actions. *I **could** hear a noise coming from the dining room.* (single action) *(NOT: ~~was able to~~)*
- **Could/Was able to are both used in negations and questions for either single or repeated actions.** *They **weren't able to/couldn't** win the race.* (single action) ***Could you/Were you able to** drive a car when you were fifteen?* (repeated action – general ability in the past).

LIVEWORKSHEETS