

MODAL VERBS - SIMPLE FORMS

MODAL VERBS	USE	MODAL VERB + V (INFINITIVE) or MODAL VERB + BE + V (ING)
CAN	Possibility, ability and permission in the present or future. neg. – deduction of something impossible	I can understand Italian but I can't speak it. Can I go to the party? She can't be at home, I saw her 10 minutes ago. He can't be sleeping, it's 11 o'clock!
COULD	Ability, possibility and permission in the past. Polite requests	He could swim when he was only four. I couldn't understand him. Could you help me, please?
BE ABLE TO	Ability and opportunity in the past, present or future (specific occasion)	I am able to get all the work done. Were you able to stop the car in time? They won't be able to stop it.
MAY	Possible and probable actions in the future. Ask for permission (polite). Possible deductions.	I may go out for a drink if I finish early. May I take a photo? He may not go to the party. He's sick.
MIGHT	Possible actions in the future. Possible deductions.	I might be working late tomorrow. He might not be at home now. What might happen?
MUST	Obligation, necessity. Deductions of something certain. Neg. – prohibition	You must take your medication regularly. My glasses must be here somewhere. He mustn't tell anyone what I said.
HAVE TO	Obligation in the present, past or future. Neg. – No obligation.	I have to work on Sundays. Did you have to show your passport? She doesn't have to wear a uniform at work.
NEED TO / NEEDN'T	Necessity Not necessary	I need to finish this report before I leave. You needn't go if you don't want to.
WOULD	Hypothetical situations in the present/future. Past habitual actions	Would you go without me? They would eat lots of ice creams in their childhood.
SHALL	Offers, suggestions (only in questions and only with the subjects: I / We)	Shall I close the window? Shall we dance?
SHOULD / OUGHT TO / HAD BETTER	Advice. Logical consequence.	You should accept the job. She ought to be working. They should be here by now.

MODAL VERBS - PERFECT FORMS

MODAL VERBS	USE	MODAL VERB + HAVE + V (participle) or MODAL VERB + HAVE + BEEN + V (-ING)
CAN 'T	Deduction of something impossible in the past.	She can't have committed the crime. She was with me all night.
COULD	A reference to something that did not happen.	You could have cut yourself playing with that knife!
MAY / MIGHT	Possible past deductions.	She may have been working when I called her this morning. I might have gone if I hadn't had so much work. He might not have heard the message.
MUST	Certain past deductions.	These clothes are filthy, the children must have been playing in the garden.
SHOULD / OUGHT TO	To show regret or criticism about a past event.	You should have accepted the job! You ought to have told me.
NEEDN'T	Something which was done but it wasn't necessary after all.	I needn't have taken my jacket. The day was bright and sunny.
WOULD	Used in third conditional to describe a hypothetical consequence that didn't happen.	If you had asked me, I would have helped you.

MODALS AND MODAL PERFECTS

A/ Match the modals or modal perfects in I with their uses in II.

I

1. Shall I help you with that heavy bag?
2. You should have done all the homework
3. She didn't answer the phone so she must have left.
4. I need to clean my room. I promised my mum that I would.
5. I think that they might have left.
6. Would you sign your name here, please?
7. It's not fair. I ought to have received a prize too.
8. You mustn't use this computer.

II

- a. a logical conclusion about a past event.
- b. formal request
- c. Prohibition
- d. Offer
- e. unfulfilled expectation
- f. Obligation
- g. advice which was not followed
- h. a guess about something which happened

B/ Choose the correct answer.

1. She could walk / could have walked before she was a year old.
2. The party was supposed to be a secret. You shouldn't say / shouldn't have said anything.
3. I'm not sure, but I might leave / might have left early tonight.
4. I'm not afraid to go alone. You needn't have come / needn't come with me.
5. It's late. You must be / must have been very tired.
6. You ought to introduce / ought to have introduced me to your friends. I didn't know anyone's name.

C/ Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Use a modal perfect.

1. Nobody told her anything about the argument. She (know) about it.
2. We arrived too early. We (be) in such a hurry.
3. She (leave) the office because her coat and bag aren't here.
4. I (drive) to work, but the weather was so nice that I decided to walk.
5. It's possible that I (forget) to tell Joe about the meeting.
6. You (call) her on her birthday. She never forgets to call you.

D/ Rewrite each sentence using a modal or modal perfect. There may be more than one answer.

1. It isn't necessary for them to finish the job tonight.

They the job tonight.

2. It's possible that I took your jacket by mistake.

I your jacket by mistake.

3. That man knows how to speak four languages.

That man speak four languages.

4. I didn't wear a sunhat, and now my head hurts.

My head hurts. I a sunhat.

5. It rained last night so the grass is wet.

It The grass is wet.

6. The man you saw wasn't Jack. He's been abroad since the summer.

You He's been abroad since the summer.

E/ Complete each sentence B so that it has a similar meaning to sentence A. Use a modal verb from the box and **the correct form of the verb in bold**!

CAN'T - MAY - MIGHT NOT - MUST

1. I'm sure schools 50 years ago weren't the same as they are nowadays.

BE

Schools 50 years ago very different from nowadays.

2. It's possible Josef went to school by bus.

TAKE

Josef the bus to school.

3. I'm sure their holiday wasn't very nice because the weather was so bad.

HAVE

With such terrible weather, they a very nice holiday.

4. I wonder if Jane remembers how to get here.

FORGET

Jane how to get here.

5. I'm sure Chloe isn't still looking for her watch.

FIND

Chloe her watch by now.

6. We are going in the wrong direction.

MISS

Yes, we a turning.

7. Shakespeare and Voltaire weren't alive at the same time, so they definitely never met.

KNOW

Shakespeare and Voltaire weren't alive at the same time, so they each other.

8. Alison looks happy about her exam results, so she's certainly done well.

DO

Alison looks happy about her exam results, so she well.

9. I'm not sure it's right to blame Ray for that mistake.

MAKE

Ray that mistake.

10. Joe can't open the door. Maybe he can't remember where he put the key.

LOSE

Joe can't open the door. He the key.