● Modals: ability, permission, advice, criticism, obligation and necessity, degrees of certainty

Form

- All modals (*will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must*) and the semi-modal *ought to* have only one form.
- Modals are followed by the bare infinitive (simple or continuous) or the bare perfect infinitive
  eg *Toby **should be** very fit by now.*
  *Toby **should have recovered** by now.*
- The semi-modals *have to* and *need to* change their form depending on person and tense
  eg *The doctor said I **had/needed to** give up red meat.*

Modals: ability

Use	Modal	Example
Expressing ability now or generally	*can*	*I **can** run a kilometre in four minutes.*
Expressing decisions made now about future ability	*can*	*We **can** meet at the gym tomorrow, if you like.*
Expressing ability in the past	*could*	*I **could** do fifty press-ups with one hand when I was younger.*
Expressing ability in present, future or general hypothetical situations	*could*	*If only I **could** quit smoking!*
Expressing ability in past hypothetical situations	*could* + perfect infinitive	*I **could have roasted** the potatoes, but I decided that boiling them was healthier.*

Watch out!

- We use *be able to* for the infinitive and other tenses.
  - ✓ *I'd love **to be able to** fit into these jeans again!* (infinitive)
  - ✓ *I'**ll be able to** leave hospital in a few weeks, apparently.* (future)
  - ✓ *I'**ve been able to** swim since I was five.* (present perfect)

Modals: permission

Use	Modal	Example
Asking for and giving permission now, for the future or generally	*may* *could* *can*	***May / Could / Can** I see the doctor, please?*

Watch out!

- *May* is more polite than *could*, and *could* is more polite than *can*.
- We don't usually use a modal to talk about past permission.
  - ✓ *I **was allowed to** wear a knee support during the match.*
  - ✗ ~~*I **could** wear a knee support during the match.*~~
- However, we do use *could* to talk about past permission in reported speech.
  - ✓ *The coach said I **could** wear a knee support during the match.*

Modals: advice

Use	Modal	Example
Asking for and giving advice now, for the future or generally	*should* *ought to*	*You **ought to / should** cut down on the amount of red meat you eat.*

Modals: criticism

Use	Modal	Example
Criticising past behaviour	*should* *ought to* (+ perfect infinitive)	*He **ought to / should have made** more of an effort with his diet.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Modals: obligation and necessity

Use	Modal	Example
Expressing obligation or necessity	*must / have to / need to*	*I **must / have to / need to** pick up that prescription from the chemist on the way home.*
Expressing lack of obligation or necessity	*needn't / don't have to / don't need to*	*You **needn't / don't have to / don't need to** pick up that prescription from the chemist as I'll get it while I'm in town.*
Expressing past obligation	*had to*	*I **had to** take the pills three times a day for two weeks.*
Expressing lack of past obligation	*needn't* (+ perfect infinitive) / *didn't have to / didn't need to*	*I **needn't have gone / didn't have to go / didn't need to go** to the doctor.*

Watch out!

- There is usually no difference in meaning between *must* and *have to*. However, we are sometimes more likely to use *must* for personal obligation (making our own decision about what we must do) and *have to* for external obligation (someone else making a decision about what we must do).
- We can also use *will have/need to* to express future obligation.
  - ✓ *You**'ll have/need to** be more careful about what you eat in future.*
- It is unusual to use *must* for questions. We usually use *have/need to*.
  - ✓ ***Do** I **have/need to** take this medicine before every meal?*
- *Must* cannot be used as an infinitive. Use *to have to*.
  - ✓ *I'd hate **to have to** have injections every day.*
  - ✗ ~~*I'd hate **to must** have injections every day.*~~
- *Mustn't* and *don't/doesn't have/need to* have different meanings.
  - ✓ *You **mustn't** do that!* (Don't do that!)
  - ✓ *You **don't have/need to** do that.* (You can do that if you want to but it's not necessary.)
- *Needn't* (+ perfect infinitive) always refers to an action that happened.
  Didn't have to and *didn't need to* can refer to actions that did or didn't happen.
  - ✓ *I **needn't have gone** to the doctor.* (I went but it wasn't necessary.)
  - ✓ *I **didn't have/need to** go to the doctor because I suddenly felt better.* (I didn't go.)
  - ✓ *I **didn't have/need to** go to the doctor but I went just to be on the safe side.* (I did go.)
- Be careful with the verb *need*. It can also take the *-ing* form.
  - ✓ *I need to sterilise this syringe.*
  - ✓ *This syringe needs sterilis**ing**.*

Modals: degrees of certainty

Use	Modal	Example
Expressing certainty (or near certainty) about now or generally	*must* *can't* *couldn't*	*That **must** be the district nurse at the door.* *These **can't / couldn't** be the pills; they're the wrong colour.*
Expressing certainty (or near certainty) about the past	*must* *can't* *couldn't* (+ perfect infinitive)	*She **must have been** in a lot of pain.* *His leg **can't / couldn't have been** in plaster for two years!*
Expressing probability about now, the future or generally	*should* *ought to*	*You **ought to / should** feel better in a few days, as long as you get lots of rest.*
Expressing probability about the past	*should* *ought to* (+ perfect infinitive)	*The bruise **ought to / should have disappeared** days ago. I wonder why it didn't.*
Expressing possibility about now, the future or generally	*could* *may* *might*	*You should talk to your doctor first because that diet **could / may / might** be dangerous.*
Expressing possibility about the real past	*could* *may* *might* (+ perfect infinitive)	*That **could / may / might have been** the doctor who rang earlier while we were out.*
Expressing possibility about a hypothetical past	*could* *might* (+ perfect infinitive)	*It's a good thing you went to the doctor or you **could / might have become** quite ill.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A If a word or phrase in bold is correct, put a tick (✓). If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly on the line.

1 Can you **to speak** French? .....
2 I **can** give you a hand tomorrow morning, if you like. .....
3 I'll **can** take my driving test after a few more lessons. .....
4 Jack **can** play the guitar before he learnt to talk! .....
5 If only I **can** afford to buy that top! .....
6 We **can** have gone up the Eiffel Tower while we were in Paris, but we decided to go to the Louvre instead. .....
7 I could **get** a more expensive computer, but it didn't seem worth it. .....
8 I wish I **could** get out of the maths test tomorrow! .....
9 I bet you'd love to be **can** to get satellite TV. .....
10 You'd better tell the coach if you can't **playing** on Saturday. .....

B Circle the correct word or phrase. If both options are correct, circle both.

1 Hello. **Could / Can** I speak to Mrs Johnson, please?
2 We **could / were allowed to** go home early yesterday because our teacher was ill.
3 The head teacher said we **could / were allowed to** go home.
4 Do you think I **should / could** be worried about these spots on my forehead?
5 You **ought to / should** enter that talent contest!
6 You **couldn't / shouldn't** talk to people like that! It's rude!
7 Alan should **write / have written** two essays in the exam yesterday, not one!
8 No, you **may / should** not go out tonight. You know you're grounded!
9 Diana should have **waited / been waiting** for me at the corner. I wonder where she went.
10 What were you doing in the park? You ought to have **done / been doing** your homework then!
11 Yes, of course you **can / are able to** open the window if you're too hot!

C Write a form of *must*, *have to*, *need* or *need to* in each gap to complete the sentences. If more than one possibility is correct, write all possibilities.

1 Oh, I ..... remember to get some potatoes on the way home tonight.
2 Jason ..... see the headmaster during the next break. I wonder what it's about?
3 We ..... light lots of candles during the power cut two nights ago.
4 I'll ..... start doing my Christmas cards soon. It's nearly December.
5 Carl, you ..... run into the street like that without looking first. It's dangerous!
6 People with solar-powered cars ..... worry about the price of petrol.
7 I wouldn't like to ..... get up at five o'clock every morning.
8 We ..... do any washing-up after the picnic because we'd used disposable plates and cutlery.
9 Do professional musicians ..... practise every day?
10 I ..... have bothered cooking all that food; they'd eaten before they arrived.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

D Complete each second sentence using the word given, so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Write between two and five words in each gap.

1 His lights are on so I'm pretty sure Dan is at home. **as**
Dan ..... his lights are on.

2 Susie's car's not here so she's almost certainly taking Dobber to the vet. **be**
Susie ..... Dobber to the vet since her car's not here.

3 There's no way that boy's Simon. He's much taller! **boy**
That ..... Simon. He's much taller!

4 I'm certain the Winners don't think we're coming tonight; we arranged it for next Tuesday. **expecting**
The Winners ..... tonight; we arranged it for next Tuesday.

5 I bet you were exhausted after such a long journey! **have**
You ..... exhausted after such a long journey!

6 The only explanation is that Evan was on the phone to someone in Australia! **talking**
Evan ..... on the phone to someone in Australia!

7 There's no way Casey won the disco dancing competition – he's got two left feet! **have**
Casey ..... the disco dancing competition – he's got two left feet!

8 I don't believe Helen's been trying to call us all day. The phone hasn't rung once. **been**
Helen ..... to call us all day. The phone hasn't rung once.

E Use the words in the box only once to complete the sentences in Table A. The meaning of the sentences in Table B will help you.

able • cannot • could • had • have • might • must
needn't • mustn't • ought • should • will

Table A	Table B
1 I ..... have left my bag on the bus.	*expressing certainty*
2 In a few months, I'll be ..... to buy a car.	*expressing future ability*
3 I ..... drive when I was thirteen years old!	*expressing past ability*
4 No, you ..... have any more pocket money!	*refusing a request*
5 I think you ..... consider a career in the armed forces.	*giving advice*
6 I ..... forget to phone Julie tonight!	*expressing personal obligation*
7 I ..... to have a filling at the dentist's.	*expressing external obligation in the past*
8 You don't ..... to do Exercise D for homework.	*expressing a lack of obligation*
9 You ..... have to work a lot harder if you want to get a good report.	*expressing future obligation*
10 They ..... to arrive at about 8.	*expressing probability*
11 Sean ..... have got stuck in traffic.	*expressing possibility*
12 I ..... have worried so much about Jan's present. She loved it!	*expressing a lack of past obligation*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F Circle the correct answer.

1 ..... I have a look at those shoes in the window, please?
A Must
B Would
C Should
D Could

2 We ..... pay for the tickets as Josie won them in a competition.
A mustn't
B didn't have to
C couldn't
D hadn't to

3 You really ..... make such a mountain out of a molehill!
A can't
B won't
C mightn't
D shouldn't

4 You won't ..... to connect to the Internet once you've got broadband as you're online twenty-four hours a day.
A need
B must
C ought
D able

5 I hope we ..... find the cinema easily.
A could
B may
C might
D can

6 We couldn't find a hotel room so we ..... sleep in the car. It was awful!
A must
B should
C had to
D could

7 We'd love to ..... afford to go on a round-the-world cruise.
A can
B be able to
C will have to
D have to

8 Fiona can't ..... about the meeting. I reminded her this morning!
A forget
B be forgetting
C have forgotten
D have been forgetting

9 She could ..... in the garage when we came round, which would explain why she didn't hear the bell.
A work
B be working
C have worked
D have been working

10 You'll ..... tell the police that your house was broken into.
A have to
B must
C had to
D should

G Write a modal or semi-modal in each gap to replace the phrase in brackets. Add any other words you need.

1 Bruce ..... (*is able to*) finish most crosswords in under ten minutes.
2 Charlotte didn't get to the Craig David concert because she ..... (*wasn't able to*) get tickets.
3 I ..... (*had the opportunity to go*) to Oxford but I decided to go to a more modern university.
4 You ..... (*were wrong to tell*) Angus. You know he can't keep a secret!
5 If you have a cashpoint card, you ..... (*are not forced to*) go into the bank to get money from your account.
6 We ..... (*were made to*) apologise to the police for wasting their time.
7 That ..... (*almost definitely wasn't*) the last can of soda in the fridge. I bought loads this morning!
8 ..... (*Were you obliged to*) talk about two photographs during the interview?
9 Children ..... (*are not allowed to*) be left unattended.
10 The weather ..... (*will probably*) be good tomorrow.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

H Choose the correct answer.

Choosing a gym

Choosing to go to a gym regularly (**1**) ..... change your life for the better. Don't let it be a decision you regret!

Good gyms have a lot to offer. They (**2**) ..... provide exercise equipment that is just too expensive to buy and their trained staff are (**3**) ..... to provide quality health and fitness advice. But if you're planning to join a gym, you (**4**) ..... definitely ask to look round before you become a member. There are a number of things to bear in mind before choosing which gym to join.

Before the law changed a few years ago, anyone (**5**) ..... set up a gym and even today gyms (**6**) ..... employ trained fitness instructors. Find out what qualifications the staff have. If they're untrained, it's best to go elsewhere.

You (**7**) ..... be put off by the gym's hard sell. Just because they want you to sign up – they want your money, after all – that doesn't mean you (**8**) ..... decide there and then. See a few gyms before you make your final decision.

Ask yourself: What kind of equipment and facilities do they have? There's little point joining a gym and then thinking a few months later, 'I (**9**) ..... have chosen a gym with a pool.' Do you (**10**) ..... book equipment in advance, or can you just turn up and use it? How busy does the gym get? It (**11**) ..... be very pleasant turning up to find there's no room in the changing room and there's a huge queue for each piece of equipment. It (**12**) ..... also be a good idea to talk to people who already go to that gym to find out their opinion.

1	A must	B would	C should	D will have to
2	A can	B could	C would	D must
3	A made	B forced	C allowed	D able
4	A should	B would	C might	D will
5	A can	B could	C might	D may
6	A mustn't	B don't have to	C can't	D shouldn't
7	A mustn't	B couldn't	C won't	D mightn't
8	A can't	B can	C would	D have to
9	A ought to	B must	C have to	D can't
10	A able	B must	C have to	D allowed
11	A won't have to	B doesn't have to	C mustn't	D won't
12	A must	B might	C has to	D ought to

I Write one word in each gap.

When I broke my arm a week ago, I guess it (**1**) ..... to have hurt. But it didn't! We were doing PE at school, and we were making a pyramid. We (**2**) ..... to stand on each other's shoulders. I was right at the top. We (**3**) ..... have been doing it properly because suddenly the pyramid collapsed and we all fell. I landed on my arm.

Mr Jenkins (**4**) ..... have known immediately that I'd broken my arm because he sent someone to call an ambulance. 'Sit still, and don't move your arm at all until the ambulance comes,' he said. I (**5**) ..... still remember the feeling – my arm was numb, and looked very strange, but there was no pain at all. I remember thinking: 'It (**6**) ..... be broken. If it was broken, I'd be in agony.' I suppose not feeling any pain (**7**) ..... have been because I was in shock.

The plaster (**8**) ..... come off in about three weeks but it (**9**) ..... have to stay on longer. It depends on whether the break has healed properly or not. The next three weeks may (**10**) ..... be the best three weeks of my life – no basketball, no playing in the playground, no swimming – but I'm counting my blessings. It (**11**) ..... have been a lot worse!

LIVEWORKSHEETS