UNIT 9

Grammar

Modals and semi-modals

- The nine main modals (*will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must*) have only one form (ie they do not change tense or person) and are followed by a simple or continuous bare infinitive (eg *could + do, be doing, have done, have been doing*). They can also be followed by a bare infinitive in the passive (eg *could + be done, have been done*).
- Semi-modals have similar meanings to modals. They include: *need (to), ought to, had better* and *have (got) to*.
- Some semi-modals, such as *had better*, do not change tense or person. Others, such as *have (got) to*, do.
- Some semi-modals can be used in combination with modals, producing phrases such as *might have to*.

Ability

Real ability	Current or general ability	*can, can't*	*You **can't** really **speak** seven languages fluently, **can** you?*
	Past ability	*could, couldn't*	*There's no way you **could read** when you were two!*
	Decisions made now about future ability	*can, can't, could, couldn't*	*I **can get** you a paper when I go to the shop, if you like.*
	Future ability	*will/won't be able to*	*One day, maybe, all adults **will be able to read** and write.*
Hypothetical ability	Current or general hypothetical ability	*could, couldn't*	*I **couldn't go** on a quiz show. I'd be too scared!*
	Future hypothetical ability	*could, couldn't*	*I **could go** with them to the cinema tomorrow but I won't because I've already seen the film.*
	Past hypothetical ability	*could have, couldn't have*	*They **could have asked** the Prime Minister much more searching questions. I wonder why they didn't.*

Watch out!

- The full negative form of modals is written as two words, eg *could not*. The exception is *cannot*, which is one word.
- *Can* and *could* cannot be used as infinitives. We can use *to be able to* instead.
  ✓ *I'd love **to be able to** come with you to the cinema tomorrow but I just can't.*
- We don't usually use *could* for past ability on one occasion. We use *was/were able to, managed* or *succeeded*, etc.
  ✓ *Luckily, she **was able to** finish the article in time.*
  However, with verbs such as *see, hear, feel*, etc we can use *could* for past ability on one occasion.
  ✓ *I **could see** that she was tired.*

Permission

Asking for permission	*may, could, couldn't, can, can't*	***Can** I **finish** watching this before I go to bed?*
Giving/refusing permission	*may, may not, could, couldn't, can, can't*	*No, you **can't**.*

Watch out!

- *May* is more polite and formal than *could*, and *could* is more polite and formal than *can*.
- We don't usually use modals to talk about past permission. We can use *was/were allowed to*.
  ✓ *We **were allowed to** buy one comic each.*
- However, we do use *could* to talk about past permission in reported speech. (see Unit 25 for more information)
  ✓ *Mum said we **could** buy one comic each.*

Advice

Asking for and giving advice	*should, shouldn't, ought to, oughtn't to, had better*	*You **should try** to get that poem published.*

Watch out!

- We can only use *hadn't better* in questions.
  ✓ ***Hadn't** you **better** check that these facts are actually true?*
- We can also use *might/may as well* to give advice and make suggestions. This suggests that, although the suggestion is not perfect, there is no better option.
  ✓ *We **may as well** watch this as there's nothing else on.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Criticism

Criticising past behaviour	*should have, shouldn't have, ought to have, oughtn't to have*	*You **shouldn't have spoken** to Mrs Todd like that.*
Expressing annoyance at past behaviour	*could have, might have*	*You **could/might have told** me you were going to be late!*
Criticising general behaviour	*will*	*He **will** slam the door every time he goes out.*
Criticising a specific example of someone's general behaviour	*would*	*You **would** take the car just when I wanted to go out.*

Watch out!

We can also use *might as well* to suggest criticism.

✓ *I **might as well** be dead for all you care.*

Obligation

Current or general obligation	*must, mustn't, have (got) to, need (to)*	*You **have to be** a good communicator to be a press spokesperson.*
A lack of current or general obligation	*don't have to, haven't got to, needn't, don't need (to)*	*You **don't** always **need to have** a degree to become a journalist.*
Future obligation	*will have to, must, mustn't, have (got) to, (will) need (to)*	*You**'ll have to do** quite a lot of research before you write this report.*
A lack of future obligation	*don't/won't have to, haven't got to, needn't, don't/won't need (to)*	*I'm glad we **won't have to write** any more essays on this course.*
Past obligation	*had to, needed (to)*	*We **had to come up with** three questions each.*
A lack of past obligation	*didn't have to, didn't need (to), needn't have*	*In the past, politicians **didn't have to deal with** being in a 24-hour media spotlight.*

Watch out!

- We are 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).
- Using *must* for questions is extremely formal. We usually use *have to*.
  ✓ ***Do** you **have to** have a degree to be a journalist?*
- *Mustn't* is used for prohibition. *Don't have to* is used for a lack of obligation.
- We can use *didn't have to* and *didn't need to* for things that we did or didn't actually do. However, we only use *needn't have done* for things that we actually did but weren't obliged to do.

Degrees of certainty

Certainty (or near certainty) about now, the future or generally	*will, would, must, can, can't, could, couldn't*	*'There's someone at the door.' 'That**'ll be** the postman.' 'It **can't be**. He's already been.'*
Certainty (or near certainty) about the past	*will have, won't have, would have, wouldn't have, must have, can't have, couldn't have*	*'They **won't have heard** the news, will they?' 'They **must have heard** by now, surely.'*
Probability about now, the future or generally	*should, shouldn't, ought to, oughtn't to, may/might well (not), could well, might easily*	*'The weather **should be** good tomorrow, shouldn't it?' 'Actually, the forecast said it **may well rain**.'*
Probability about the past	*should have, shouldn't have, ought to have, oughtn't to have, may/might well (not) have, might easily (not) have*	*'Jan **should have finished** writing her article by now, shouldn't she?' 'She **may well have done,** but I haven't seen it yet.'*
Possibility about now, the future or generally	*could, may (not), might, mightn't, may/might/could just*	*I **might (just) have** time to get to the library before it closes.*
Possibility about the real past	*could have, may (not) have, might have, mightn't have*	*Jim **might not have checked** his e-mail yet.*

Watch out!

should and *should have* can be used in *that* clauses after words expressing importance and reactions.

✓ *It's strange that you **should** say that.* ✓ *Was it necessary that Alan **should have been invited** to the meeting?*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

1 You **can't / couldn't** really talk when you were one year old, **can / could** you?
2 We **can / could** give you a lift home tonight, if you want.
3 I wish I **can / could** speak Russian, then **I'd be able to / I could** read Tolstoy in the original.
4 Excuse me, **could / may** you tell me how to get to the leisure centre from here?
5 I'm afraid we **can't / won't be able to** come to the wedding after all.
6 Thankfully, we **could / managed to** get to the airport just in time so we didn't miss the plane.
7 Dawn couldn't **go / have gone** to the barbecue as she had to work.
8 Would you like to **could / be able to** buy the flat you're renting?
9 In a thousand years, **can humans / will humans be able to** travel faster than the speed of light?
10 'Mum, can I watch TV and do my homework later?'
'No, you **may / might** not!'
11 We could **catch / have caught** the last train after all, but of course we didn't know that at the time.
12 **Mayn't / Can't** I at least stay up till the end of the film?
13 Everyone **could / was able to** tell that Julie was upset about something.
14 **May / Can** I open the window, please? It's a little stuffy in here.
15 Because we had guests last Saturday, the kids **could / were allowed to** stay up till midnight.

B Write a verb from the box in the correct form in each gap.

do • eat • feel • go • have • invite • provide • recover • sit • speak • stand • work

1 It seems there's nothing anybody can ..... to stop the conflict escalating further.
2 She couldn't ..... anything in her left arm for about two hours. She said it was completely numb.
3 I don't think the Prime Minister will ever manage ..... from this scandal.
4 Can I ..... Tracy round after tea? We want to play my new computer game.
5 Liz has had another ice cream so why can't I ..... one? It's not fair!
6 When I was a child, my brothers and sisters and I weren't allowed ..... with the grown-ups except on special occasions.
7 Darren's allergic to wheat, so he can't ..... bread under any circumstances.
8 Dominic had said he spoke German, but when we got there it turned out he couldn't ..... a word!
9 I'd love to be able ..... from home, but in my job it's just not possible.
10 James could ..... for Parliament at the last election – he had enough support – but he wasn't willing to sacrifice his privacy.
11 A small cot for babies can ..... if you ask at reception.
12 We couldn't ..... to the concert anyway as Jamie wasn't very well.

C If the word in bold is correct, put a tick. If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly.

1 Shouldn't you **getting** planning permission before you start building? .....
2 Gavin really ought not to **be** worn casual clothes to the interview last week. .....
3 She might have **gave** us a call to let us know she was all right. .....
4 You **should** better get a second opinion before you do anything drastic like knock down a supporting wall. .....
5 I don't think you **must** go to school today if you're not feeling well. .....
6 We definitely **should** not judge Karen until we know exactly what happened. .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7 I probably won't get the job but I **should** as well apply for it, I suppose. .....
8 You **could** have told us you'd changed your mind about the holiday. How are we going to find a fourth person at this late stage? .....
9 We had **rather** book the tickets now, hadn't we? They might have sold out on the day. .....
10 Terry **would** leave his bedroom in such a mess all the time. It's just not good enough. .....
11 Michael was late, but then again he **will** be. .....
12 You **may** have asked me if I wanted to come with you! You know I need to go to the bank! .....

D Write a word or short phrase in each gap so that the second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

1 I would suggest seeing a doctor if it doesn't clear up.
You had ..... a doctor if it doesn't clear up.

2 It was typical of Jerry to forget to feed the cat, wasn't it?
Jerry ..... to feed the cat, ... he?

3 I'm annoyed Diana didn't invite us to her engagement party.
Diana ..... us to her engagement party.

4 Buying a yellow car was a mistake – everyone thinks I drive a taxi!
I ..... a yellow car – everyone thinks I drive a taxi!

5 Teenagers are noisy, aren't they?
Teenagers ..... make so much noise, ... they?

6 It won't harm us to see what special offers are on at the moment.
We ..... what special offers are on at the moment.

7 Don't you think you should type that essay, rather than write it in pen?
..... better type that essay, rather than write it in pen?

8 It would probably have been a good idea if you'd asked Dad what he thought.
You ..... to ..... Dad what he thought.

E Write a word from the box in each gap. You will need two of the words twice.

doesn't • got • had • has • have • must • needn't • will

1 I ..... have bothered preparing so much food; nobody ate anything anyway.
2 Do you ..... to have that music on so loud? I can't concentrate!
3 You ..... call before you come round, as we'll definitely be in.
4 It was difficult, but I knew I ..... to apologise.
5 Trisha ..... need to get a summer job as her parents are quite well-off.
6 ..... you have to be there in court yourself, or can a lawyer represent you?
7 We didn't ..... to wear a uniform to school today, so I went in jeans and a T-shirt.
8 I think Damien ..... to stay in hospital for the next four or five weeks.
9 Children ..... not be left unattended under any circumstances.
10 We haven't ..... to move out for another six months, but we've started looking for a new place anyway.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F **Complete using *must*, *have to*, *need* or *need to* in the correct form and the correct form of the words in brackets.**

1 You ..... (**pay**) me back now, but of course you can if you like!
2 Dogs ..... (**keep**) on a leash at all times.
3 If Linda ..... (**pick up**) from school tomorrow, maybe we could spend the afternoon in town.
4 We ..... (**rely**) on phone lines in the future as we'll all have mobile phones which connect to the Internet.
5 The invitations ..... (**send off**) soon otherwise they won't get there in time.
6 Sorry I'm late. I ..... (**get**) a few things from the supermarket on my way here.
7 ..... (**you / make**) a fuss to get your money back, or was the manager quite reasonable?
8 You ..... (**believe**) everything Graham tells you. He's lied to me before.
9 Thankfully we ..... (**put**) Flossie in a cattery as our neighbours offered to feed her.
10 What time ..... (**farmers / get up**) every morning?
11 I'd hate ..... (**commute**) to work every morning and evening, wouldn't you?
12 Although we took CDs with us we actually ..... (**do**) as there was no CD player to play them on.

G **Write one word in each gap.**

A tabloid editor speaks

As editor of the most popular British tabloid, I need (**1**) ..... make sure we give our readers what they want. And what do they want? Scandal. It is my job to tell the readers when a celebrity has done something they should not have (**2**) ..... , or when a politician (**3**) ..... to have done something but didn't. One accusation that is often levelled at tabloids is that we think we (**4**) ..... not need to worry about the truth, but that is just not true. I have (**5**) ..... be shown proof from at least two sources before I run a story. As a newspaper, you have (**6**) ..... to get your facts right and you (**7**) ..... not print a story just because you want it to be true. There are times when, in retrospect, we (**8**) ..... not have been so careful and could have broken a story days before we did, but we (**9**) ..... to have absolute proof first.

I often get asked why so many celebrities sell their stories to us. The truth is that we tell them we are going to run a story about them anyway, so they realise they might as (**10**) ..... put their side of the story across. They know they (**11**) ..... definitely have to speak out at some point, so why wait? And, let's face it, celebrities need to (**12**) ..... talked about constantly or they stop being famous, so they (**13**) ..... not complain, in my view.

What I would say to celebrities and politicians that do criticise tabloids is that you (**14**) ..... not fear us if you haven't done anything wrong. But if you have, you (**15**) ..... better look out, because we are going to catch you.

H **Circle the correct word or phrase. If both are correct, circle both.**

1 'Did you hear a noise?'
'**That'll / That must** probably be the cat.'

2 'I had to walk all the way here.'
'You must **be / have been** exhausted. Put your feet up. I'll make us a nice cup of tea.'

3 'Your favourite programme's on.'
'It **mustn't / can't** be. It's only half past five.'

4 'Andy made me redo every single one of the reports.'
'You **must / can** have been furious.'

5 'Laura walked right past me in the street without saying a word.'
'She **can't / couldn't** have seen you.'

6 'I can't believe I got the final question in the pop quiz wrong.'
'Don't worry. I **wouldn't / won't** have known the answer either.'

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7 'I can't wait to get that blue top tomorrow.'
'I wouldn't get too excited. They only had one left, so they **may / might** well have sold out.'

8 'It's got very cold.'
'Yes, I think it **must / might** easily snow tonight.'

9 'I can't wait till Roger gets here!'
'He should **land / have landed** by now, so he'll be here in about an hour.'

10 'I hope they've got some tickets left.'
'We **should / might** just be lucky and get the last two.'

I Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

1 It's possible that Greg didn't go to Swansea after all. **not**
Greg ..... to Swansea after all.

2 It's quite likely that Sasha was lying about what Doug said. **well**
Sasha ..... about what Doug said.

3 The most likely situation is that they awarded Grandpa the medal during the war. **must**
Grandpa ..... during the war.

4 I'd be surprised if Derek has already arrived. **ought**
Derek ..... yet.

5 Jake, is it definite that they haven't announced the winner yet? **will**
Jake, ... announced yet?

6 It's highly likely that Stephen was listening. **may**
Stephen ..... listening.

7 It's not possible that Andrew is half Spanish. **be**
Andrew ..... half Spanish.

J Choose the correct answer.

1 Even in a million years, we ..... go back in time.
A couldn't C won't be able to
B can't D aren't able to

2 I ..... at the exam paper lying on Mr Gregson's desk, but I didn't want to risk it.
A could look C can have looked
B can look D could have looked

3 ..... Eliot better tell his mum what happened?
A Mustn't C Shouldn't
B Oughtn't D Hadn't

4 You ..... have let us know you'd changed your phone number.
A may C would
B could D will

5 ..... lectures at your university?
A Haven't students got to have attended
B Needn't students have attended
C Mustn't students to attend
D Don't students have to attend

6 We ..... as well try to sell this old sofa before throwing it out.
A could C might
B should D can

7 Jeremy may well not ..... about the accident yet.
A tell C have told
B to tell D have been told

8 It's essential that the documents ..... be destroyed immediately.
A should C ought to
B would D had better

9 Luckily I ..... a new pair of sunglasses as I found mine at the bottom of a bag.
A needn't have bought C needed not to buy
B didn't need to buy D hadn't to buy

10 I'm thinking of going on *Million Euro Spender*; I'd love to ..... spend a million euros in one day!
A have to C can
B must D be able

LIVEWORKSHEETS