

Do you feel moody, sometimes? Are you cranky, happy, or neutral? Verbs can be “moody,” too, and we express their moods with modal verbs divided roughly into two categories: (1) *(im)possibility / (im)probability / speculating (which is a kind of predicting)*, and (2) *duty / obligation / commands*. Some of them can also do other things, too, but we’ll look at that, soon.

1. Right now, correctly DRAG and DROP these modals into one of the two categories. Watch out! There are more boxes than necessary...otherwise, it would be too easy! (*Heads up! Boxes like to get their content in their upper left hand corners!*)

must/speculation	need/speculating	shall/command	should/speculating	may/command			
be supposed to	can	could	had better	have to	may/possibility	might	must/duty
need/obligation	ought to	shall/possibility	should/duty	will	would		

(im)possibility / (im)probability / speculating

duty / obligation / commands

NO!!!:

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DO THIS TASK BEFORE GOING AHEAD!

2. What about modals that can do more than one thing? Here’s a first peek. **COULD** can talk about *possibility / probability / speculating*, but it can also be used for making *suggestions with no sense of obligation or guilt*, ex., “You have some free time? Hey, you could see a movie!” Even **WOULD** in a *special phrase* can be used to make *suggestions* that sound super polite, but it can also be a bit **passive-aggressive** because these phrases can make the recipient feel **guilty**, if the suggestion isn’t followed, ex., “You have some free time? It would be nice if you spent it with me.” READ these sentences, and TICK the correct answers.

- a. My boss said to me, “You could take Wednesday off, if the Rossi project is done.” sense of guilt no guilt
 b. My mom said it would be nice if I went to visit my grandmother, next week. sense of guilt no guilt
 c. My mom said I could go visit my grandmother, next week, if I finished my book report, first. sense of guilt no guilt
 d. My boss said to me, “It would be nice if you could attend my benefit dinner for the homeless.” sense of guilt no guilt

3. Now decide the **STRENGTH** of the *(im)possibility / (im)probability / speculating* modals by DRAGGING and DROPPING them into their correct boxes. The strength range we study is from SURE (far RIGHT) to UNSURE (far LEFT). (Yes, it’s also sometimes possible to express being completely sure with “I am able to...,” but that’s not in the list, is it?)

can	could	may	might	shall	should	will	would	
								
UNSURE.....SURE								
						AmE/BrE: 		
						BrE: 		

4. Now decide the **STRENGTH** of the *duty / obligation / command* modals from the weakest (far **RIGHT**) to the strongest (far **LEFT**) – each box in order of strength – by **DRAGGING** and **DROPPING** these modals into the correct boxes.

be supposed to	should	had better	have to	must	need	ought to	shall
							
COMMAND	----- DUTY / OBLIGATION + COMPULSION -----			---- DUTY / OBLIGATION + GUILT ----			



5. Negatives affect **MUST** and **HAVE TO** in special ways. **MUSTN'T** becomes a prohibition. **DON'T HAVE TO** becomes 'something not necessary,' ex., “Come to dinner, tonight; you don't have to bring anything.” Is there another way to say this? Sure! You can use the quasi-modal **NEEDN'T + infinitive with NO “to”** (only in the negative, and only if you're speaking BrE!), ex., “I asked him to dinner, tonight; he needn't bring anything.” (Did you notice that as a quasi-modal, **NEED** doesn't use the third person –S?) **CLICK** on the correct option:

- a.) He needn't / mustn't bring a book because there'll be no time to read.
- b.) Come home, quickly, please! You mustn't / don't have to stop to get the dry cleaning, first; we can do it, later.
- c.) Little kids mustn't / don't have to disobey their parents and teachers.

6. **TO SUPPOSE** is a “head” verb...it’s like a weak version of “to think,” but we use **TO BE SUPPOSED TO** as a **quasi-modal** in four situations. Figure out what they are, **READ** the sentences, and **CLICK** and **DRAW** a line from the correct identification of the situations to the sentences.

- a.) He is supposed to go to the bank with his store’s earnings, daily.
- b.) He is supposed to deposit his store’s earnings, daily, but he didn’t, today.
- c.) Oh, man! We missed the train! Now what are we supposed to do?!
- d.) Lots of people believe that eating raw eggs is supposed to cure hangovers.

suggestion of problems

rules and regulations

generally believed

expectations not met



7. You have already seen that **WILL**, **COULD**, **SHOULD**, and **MIGHT** are used for *possibility / probability / speculating / predicting*, and how strong or weak they are. Even **MUST** can be used for *speculating / predicting*, and when it is used this way it is a little less strong than **WILL**, but a little stronger than the conditionals, ex., you are expecting a phone call from me any minute now, so when it rings, you can say, “That’ll be Star”; you have a special ringtone on your phone for my cell number, so when my ring tone sounds, you can say, “That must be Star” because you’re almost 100% sure, but it could be someone else using my phone, so it’s not quite as strong as **WILL**. **CLICK** on the pulldown menus, and choose the correct answers.

- a.) The mailman always comes at precisely 3:00 PM. It is 3:00 PM, & I hear someone at the door. It.....
- b.) The mailman always comes at around 3:00 PM. It is 2:50 PM, & I hear someone at the door. It.....
- c.) The mailman always comes mid afternoon. It’s 3:05 PM, & I hear someone at the door. It



8. One more special thing about modals. There are two special uses of the conditional **WOULD**: (1) as the simple past of **WILL** when the action was a recurring one, a habit, and (2) as – are you ready for this one? – a “future in the past.” Huh? Think of it like a shortened version of “at this point in the narrative it hasn’t happened, yet, but at a future point in the narrative the subject one day will....” Got it? **TICK** the correct identification of the use of “would.”



- a.) When we were little, grandma would hug us every day. a past recurring habit - the future in the past
- b.) 10-year old Manzoni would be a great writer, one day. a past recurring habit - the future in the past
- c.) The 1975 movie title, “The Man Who Would Be King” is about a past recurring habit - the future in the past

... ..

To my sweet students,

*SCROLL DOWN to the bottom of the interactive task, where you may now choose to finish the task later (click on **SAVE FOR LATER**, below), or to finish it now (click on **FINISH!!**, below), and immediately get your score (in the upper left hand corner of your interactive worksheet). N.B., clicking on **FINISH!!** also sends your completed task to me, automatically. ☺*

... Thanks! Star

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