

MODALS

Modals are special verbs which accompany the main verb to add certain meaning, such as obligation, advice, etc.

-Characteristics:

- They are followed by an infinitive without "to", except "ought to"
- They don't add third person singular "s".
- They don't accept conjugations, infinitives or gerunds.
- They don't use the auxiliary "do" in negatives or questions
- They change form depending on the tense (can-could)

*Plenty of modals vary their meaning depending on the context.

• ABILITY: CAN, COULD, BE ABLE TO

- CAN:** It expresses ability in the present. Ex. Tom **can** play the piano.
- COULD:** It expresses ability in the past. Ex. I **could** jump when I was two.
- BE ABLE TO:** It is used to express ability in other tenses than the present or the `past. Ex. Next year I will **be able to** drive a car.

• ADVICE: SHOULD, SHOULDN'T, OUGHT TO

- SHOULD:** It expresses advice or recommendation. Ex. You don't look well. You **should** go to the doctor.
- SHOULDN'T:** It expresses advice or recommendation in the negative. Ex. You **shouldn't** worry so much about him.
- OUGHT TO:** It expresses advice or recommendation. Ex. Students ought to be hard working.

• NECESSITY: NEED TO, NEEDN'T

-NEED TO (NOT A MODAL VERB): It expresses necessity. Ex. You need to work harder to pass your exams.

-NEEDN'T: It expresses lack of obligation (it is not necessary to do something). Ex. You needn't come before 12.

• OBLIGATION: MUST, HAVE TO, DON 'T HAVE TO

-MUST: It expresses general obligation. Ex. You must follow the rules.

-HAVE TO (NOT A MODAL VERB): It expresses a more individual obligation. Ex. I have to do my homework before tomorrow.

-DON'T HAVE TO (NOT A MODAL VERB): It expresses lack of obligation. Ex. You don't have to go if you don't want to.

• PROHIBITION: MUSTN'T

-MUSTN'T: It expresses prohibition. Ex. You mustn't stand up in class.

• POSSIBILITY: MAY (NOT), MIGHT (NOT), COULD

-MAY: It expresses possibility. Ex. We may visit New York next summer. In other contexts it can express permission. Ex. May I go to the toilet, please?

-MIGHT: It expresses small probability. It is usually more formal. Ex. You might be rich one day.

-COULD: It expresses possibility. Ex. They could be at the bus stop.

• LOGICAL DEDUCTIONS/CERTAINTY: MUST, CAN'T

-MUST: we use it when we are sure that something is true. Ex. It must be late because it is getting dark.

-CAN'T: we use it when we are sure that something is impossible. Ex. That can't be true!, it is incredible.

SUMMARISING...

	PROBABILITY/ POSSIBILITY	ABILITY	PERMISSION	OBLIGATION/ ADVICE	OFFERS
CAN		I can play the piano	Can I go out tonight?		
CAN'T	She can't be his mum. She's too young	I can't speak German	Can I borrow the car? No, I can't.		
MIGHT	It might rain tomorrow				
COULD	It could rain tomorrow	I could already read when I was two	Could I see your passport please, sir?		
MAY	It may rain tomorrow		May I leave the table?		
MUST	She must be his sister because they look alike.			You must leave before the clock strikes twelve.	
HAVE TO				I have to study tonight.	
SHALL				You shall pay on Tuesday	Shall I help you?
SHOULD / OUGHT TO				You should see it. It's excellent.	
HAD BETTER				You had better sleep more.	
WOULD					Would you like a drink?

MODALS + PERFECT INFINITIVES

*Some modal verbs are used with "have+past participle" to talk about past events.

• **MUST HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE** ("debe de"): It expresses a logical conclusion or a certainty about a past event. Ex. Peggy must have been very sad after her grandma's death.

• **CAN'T HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE**: It refers to a past event which seems nearly impossible. Ex. John can't have passed his exam. He didn't study at all!

• **MAY/MIGHT/ COULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE**: they all express possibility in the past. Ex. They may/might/could have gone to the museum.

• **COULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE**: It expresses the idea that something could have happened in the past, but now it is impossible. Ex. The government could have acted more quickly. Now it is too late.

• **SHOULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE**: It expresses the idea that something should have happened in the past, but it didn't. Ex. We should have visited her before.

• **SHOULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE**: It expresses regret about the past. Ex. I shouldn't have drunk so much, now I have a terrible headache.

SUMMARISING...

MODAL PERFECT	USES	EXAMPLES
MUST HAVE + P.P.	Conclusión lógica sobre un hecho del pasado	Peter has arrived late. He <u>must have been</u> in a traffic jam
MAY / MIGHT HAVE + P.P.	Una suposición sobre algo pasado	Joe <u>may / might have taken</u> the wrong train.
COULD HAVE + P.P.	Habilidad de haber hecho algo pero finalmente no lo hizo	You <u>could have played</u> better
COULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Certeza de que algo no pudo haber sucedido	He <u>couldn't have passed</u> because you hadn't studied enough
WOULD HAVE + P.P.	Quiso haber hecho algo, pero no pudo hacerlo por causas externas	I <u>would have visited</u> you, but I forgot your address
SHOULD / OUGHT TO HAVE + P.P.	Queja de que algo haya ocurrido en el pasado o lamento de que no se haya cumplido lo que esperábamos	You <u>should / ought to have warned</u> me earlier
SHOULDN'T HAVE + P.P.	Crítica sobre un acontecimiento pasado que no debería haber ocurrido	He <u>shouldn't have told</u> them
NEEDN'T HAVE + P.P.	No había necesidad de hacer lo que se hizo en el pasado	You <u>needn't have bought</u> it .

