

MODAL VERBS AND MODAL AUXILIARIES

First of all, welcome to our website! I recommend that you to take notes so that you can play an active role while learning.

This is actually the beginning of the **modal verbs** or **modal auxiliaries** series.

At the end of this first lesson, you will be able to understand what **modal verbs** are in general.

You will also be able to recognise most of them if you encounter them elsewhere.

REMEMBER: The other names for **modal verbs** are...

- modals
- modal auxiliaries
- modal auxiliary verbs
- helping verbs (because of the word '[auxiliary](#)'.)


In the singular form, these become: a **modal**, a **modal auxiliary** and a **modal auxiliary verb**.

As a matter of fact, there are 9 **modal verbs** in English. These are:

- Must
- Can
- Could (Can +ed)
- May
- Might (Past form of MAY)
- Will
- Would (Will +ed)
- Shall
- Should (Shall +ed)

Examples

GRAMMAR: MODAL VERBS (MODAL AUXILIARIES)

MODAL VERB	MUST (You must drive slowly.)	SHALL (I shall go there one day.)	WILL (I will tell him.)	CAN (I can speak Swahili.)	MAY (You may go.)
MODAL + ED	/	SHOULD (I should go there.)	WOULD (I would tell him.)	COULD (I could speak Swahili.)	MIGHT (You might go.)
FULL NEGATIVE FORMS	MUST NOT (You must not drive fast.)	SHALL NOT (I shall not go there.)	WILL NOT (I will not tell him.)	CANNOT (I cannot speak Swahili.)	MAY NOT (You may not go.)
	/	SHOULD NOT (I should not go there.)	WOULD NOT (I would not tell him.)	COULD NOT (I could not speak Swahili.)	MIGHT NOT (You might not go.)
SHORT NEGATIVE FORMS 	MUSTN'T (You mustn't drive fast.)	SHAN'T (I shan't go there.)	WON'T (I won't tell him.)	CAN'T (I can't speak Swahili.)	/
	/	SHOULDN'T (I shouldn't go there.)	WOULDN'T (I wouldn't tell him.)	COULDN'T (I couldn't speak Swahili.)	MIGHTN'T (You mightn't go.)

When do We Use Modal Verbs or Modal Auxiliaries?

We use **modal verbs** to express judgement or a particular point of view towards a certain situation, event or action.

For example, **modal verbs** can show us if an event is ...

- likely to happen or not.
- possible or impossible.
- certain or uncertain.
- compulsory or not.
- necessary or not.
- advisable or not.
- recommended or not.
- forbidden or not.
- allowed or not.

Additionally, we use **modal verbs** or **modal auxiliaries** to express the notions of....

- possibility
- obligation
- prohibition
- necessity
- ability
- permission
- willingness

Moreover, we also use **modals** to make...

- requests
- offers
- decisions
- suggestions

(We will look at specific cases in the forthcoming lessons because of the complexity of the subject.

However, below is a grammar chart that gives you a glimpse of what is in store for you. 😊)

GRAMMAR: MODAL VERBS (MODAL AUXILIARIES)

SUBJECT	MODAL	PREDICATE	EXPRESSING	EXPLANATION
			necessity, permission obligation, advice, etc	
You	must	be quiet.	Obligation 	You have to. There is no choice.
He	mustn't (must not)	come.	Prohibition 	He is not allowed to come.
She	can/could/may/might	go.	Permission 	She has the green light.
He	can't (cannot)/ may not	go.	No permission 	He is forbidden to go.
We	will	do it.	Decision 	We have decided to do it.
You	won't (will not)	do it.	Refusal 	You don't want to do it. Period.
They	should	stay at home.	Advice 	It is good for them.
I	shouldn't/should not	be lazy.	Necessity 	I have to work.
May/ Might/Can/Could	I	go there?	Request 	I am asking for permission. 

Despite their many different values, it is fairly easy to find some general rules and characteristics that can help you to identify and classify them.

Characteristics of Modal Verbs or Modal Auxiliaries

- They do not take an 'S' in the third-person singular form. (E.g. *She can~~s~~ play football.*)
- We cannot conjugate them. (E.g. *We ~~are~~ must~~ing~~ go.*)
- They always remain the same no matter the subject. (*I/You/He/She/It/We/You/They can...*)
- When they are next to another verb, there is never a 'TO' in the middle. (*I will come tomorrow.*

You cannot say: *I ~~will to come~~ tomorrow.*)

- We can use them to form questions and negative sentences just like other auxiliary verbs. (E.g. *Can you come with me?/ I can't come with you.* You cannot say: *Can ~~de~~ you come tomorrow. You should either use 'CAN' or 'DO'.*)

Your Turn: What else can you say about **modal verbs** or **modal auxiliaries**? Do you often use them?



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