

## Unit 1 Modals

### 1.1 Modals: Ability, Obligation

There are three modal verbs can show ability in English which are **can**, **could** and **be able to**. ‘Can’, ‘could’ and ‘be able to’ is always followed by a base form of verb. It does not matter what the subject is. We say “I can”, “she can”, “they can”, etc.

We use ‘**can**’ to

- describe ability to do something in present or in future.

*He **can** speak 5 different languages.*

- describe what is allowed.

*You **can** take pictures inside this museum.*

- with a future meaning.

*I **can** come to the party tomorrow.*

We use ‘**could**’ to describe past ability.

*She **could** 10 kilometers in half an hour.*

We use ‘**be able to**’ to describe ability instead of ‘can’ and ‘could’. It is used with many other verb tenses.

- *They **are able to** speak French.*
- *I’ll **be able to** swim within this summer.*
- *He **has been able to** visit many countries.*
- *She used to **be able to** exercise a lot after work.*
- *Mike will have **been able to** finish his project by tomorrow.*

#### Negatives

Negatives are formed by using “not” to describe the lack of ability.

*I **cannot** (can’t) play football.*

*She **could not** (couldn’t) finish her homework last night.*

*They **couldn’t** finish their homework last night.*

*I **will not** (won’t) be able to go attend the class tomorrow.*

*Sam **is not** (isn’t) **able to** go to the party tonight.*

## Note

The contractions: 'can't', 'couldn't', and 'won't be able to' are very common, particularly in speaking.

## **Obligation**

'Have to' and 'has to' are not actually modal verbs. They are expressions which function like modals. They are used in all tenses.

We use '**have to**' and '**has to**' to describe what is necessary, a rule or something you are told to do.

*I **have to** work tomorrow.*

*He **has to** work tomorrow.*

*She **will have to** go to New York next month.*

We use '**must**'

- to describe something we think that it's necessary or important to do.

*We **must** stop at the red light.*

- There is a slightly difference between 'must' and 'have to'. 'Must' expresses the speaker's feelings, whereas 'have to' expresses an impersonal idea

*You **must** join the party.*

(I require that you join the party.)

Personal opinion of the speaker

*You **have to** join the party.*

(There's a rule requiring you to join.)

An outside opinion or rule

- for simple present. It usually shows general obligations.

*Travellers **must** show their passport before boarding a plane.*

- for formal and written.

*All students **must** wear uniforms to university.*

We use '**need to**' with the same meaning as 'have to'. It's not a modal.

*He **needs to** work harder.*

*I **need to** get up early.*

## Negatives

We use 'must not' when we think that an action is against the rule.

*I'm sorry, but you **mustn't** make noise in here.*

We use 'don't have to' / 'doesn't have to' when it's not necessary to do something.

We **don't have to** submit the homework by today. (It's not necessary)

We **must not** submit the homework by today. (It's not allow)

## Questions

- We usually use the question form of 'have to' for 'must'.

*Do you **have to** study history in class?*

*Does he **have to** act in the new play?*

*What **does he have to** do?*

## Past obligation

We used '**had to**' and '**didn't have to**' to describe past obligation.

*I **had to** read for my exam last night.*

*He **didn't have to** pay for the tickets.*

We use '**needed to**' to describe something that was necessary.

*He **needed to** stop to make a phone call while he was driving home.*

We use '**didn't need to**' to describe something that was not necessary.

*He **didn't need to** call the doctor about this physical checkup.*

## Note

'**Have to**' is less formal than '**must**', so it is more common in conversation.

**Exercise 1** Complete each sentence with **can**, **can't**, **could** or **couldn't** + verb in brackets.

Use a form of **be able to** if can /can't is not possible.

- I \_\_\_\_\_ (go) with you tomorrow, I have an appointment.
- You are lucky to have the talent to \_\_\_\_\_ (sing) well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (play) the piano?
- I \_\_\_\_\_ (stay) out later than 9 p.m. when I was in high school.
- They \_\_\_\_\_ (sell) their house for more than what they paid for it.
- You will \_\_\_\_\_ (read) it again after this.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ (spend) another moment in that restaurant. It's too dirty.

8. Do you think you \_\_\_\_\_ (finish) the project by Tuesday? I know you're very busy.
9. He \_\_\_\_\_ (dance) very beautifully because he's been a professional dancer for many years.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ (play) professional golf, you must be extremely fit.

**Exercise 2** Complete each sentence with *must*, *mustn't*, *don't have to* or *doesn't have to* + verb in brackets.

1. We \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) home very early. We have to catch the flight.
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ (clean) the kitchen. My brother will do it for me.
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ (cook) his own lunch. His girlfriend will bring him a lunchbox.
4. You \_\_\_\_\_ (wear) a helmet while driving.
5. We \_\_\_\_\_ (forget) to bring the presents with us before we leave.
6. She \_\_\_\_\_ (see) a doctor. She has had a fever for a week. It's unusual.
7. He \_\_\_\_\_ (sleep) in every class. He needs to study.
8. You \_\_\_\_\_ (step) on the line. It's against the rules.
9. In our country, kids \_\_\_\_\_ (study) on weekends.
10. You \_\_\_\_\_ (take) an umbrella with you. I'm sure it's going to rain.

**Exercise 3** Complete the text with the verbs in brackets and a form of *can* or *have to*.

Rapid population growth (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (cause) problems. The government (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (provide) more hospitals, schools and jobs, farmers (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (produce) more food and all the extra people (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (have) homes. In a less economically developed country, the economy (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (grow) fast enough to deal with the problems. Many countries realize that they (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (control) population growth. Some countries believe they can encourage family planning through education and publicity. Other countries believe that they have such a serious problem that they (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (take) special measures to control the number of people. In China, for example, there is a 'one child' policy. Couples (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) permission from the government to marry, and women (9) \_\_\_\_\_ (be) at least 25 years old. The couple then (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) permission to have child, and are allowed only one.

*Note.* From Macmillan English Grammar in Context (p.88), by V. Micheal, 2008, Oxford: Macmillan.

**Exercise 4** Use the words in brackets to write each sentence, with **can, can't, could, couldn't, have (has) to, mustn't and, had to.**

1. Alex called Jane yesterday. (They / not / talk / for a long time because Jane / go out.

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2. Grandpa needs his glasses. (He / not / see anything without glasses.

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3. Mike won his competition. (He was so exhausted after the competition that he / not / stand up.)

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4. Lisa and David have a great view from their hotel room. (They / see / the whole city of New York.)

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5. Last year, Rob / beat / his friend at their favorite computer games.) But he can't beat him again now.

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6. They need to finish their report. They / present / it in the meeting tomorrow.

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7. He's getting tired. He / get to bed early.

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8. You / smoke / in here. It's not allowed.

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9. You / be / late for tomorrow morning. It's very important meeting the our new CEO.

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10. He / work many hours a day in order to save this extra money for the next trip.

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## 1.2 Modals: Possibility

### Present and Future

- We use '*may*', '*might*' and '*could*' + infinitive to express present or future possibility.

May expresses a greater degree of certainty

*The storm **may** / **might** / **could** happen tomorrow.*

- '*Could*' can be used instead of '*may*' and '*might*' with the verb *be*

*He **could** still **be** waiting for us.*

*This **could be** right.*

- '*Can*' may express general possibility but not with future time reference.

*During the flood, people **can** suffer from starvation, especially from clean water.*

• '*Will*' + bare infinitive can be used when we are certain about something that will happen in the future.

*There **will be** a lot of people coming to the graduation ceremony this year.*

- '*Must*' + bare infinitive can be used when we are certain about something that is true, or is supposed to be like

*You have been working for several hours. You **must be** exhausted.*

• Use '*may not*' and '*might not*' + bare infinitive to describe things that will possibly not happen in the future.

*Flood **will not** happen this year because we have well prepared to handle the big amount of rainfalls.*

• Use '*can't*' + bare infinitive when we are certain that something is not true or impossible (usually with *be*)

*You **can't** know the result. That's impossible!*

*This **can't be** the right answer.*

### Past

• We use '*may*', '*might*' and '*could*' + have + past participle to express uncertainty with reference to past actions.

*We haven't heard from him for ten years. He **may/might/could have died**. (Perhaps he has died, but we don't know.)*

- But we use '*might*' and '*could*' + have + past participle when we want to express

what was possible in the past and what actually happened.

*They were very careless when crossing the road. They **might/could have died**. (He didn't die.)*

*I **could have caught** the bus if I had hurried. (I didn't hurry, so I didn't catch the bus.)*

- We use 'can't' + have + past participle to express certainty about something that was not true.

*She hasn't called me back; she **can't have received** my message.*

- We use 'must' + have + past participle to express certainty about something that was true.

*It **must have been** love, but it's over now.*

**Exercise 1** Complete the sentence with *may, may not, can't*.

1. Take an umbrella with you. It \_\_\_\_\_ rain.
2. We \_\_\_\_\_ go to the cinema this evening. I'm not quite sure yet but we still have other things to do.
3. If you buy a lottery, you \_\_\_\_\_ have a chance to win.
4. Sam \_\_\_\_\_ be abroad because I just saw him this morning.
5. They're coming this week but I don't know which day. This means they \_\_\_\_\_ be coming tomorrow.
6. I'm not sure I'll pass the exam. I couldn't do well. I think I \_\_\_\_\_ pass it.
7. I'm going shopping with friends but I think I \_\_\_\_\_ buy anything because I'm nearly broke.
8. Emma isn't in her room. She \_\_\_\_\_ be in the kitchen. I hear someone talking there.
9. Sue \_\_\_\_\_ come to the party because she is busy checking homework for her lesson.
10. I have a bad cold today. I \_\_\_\_\_ go to school tomorrow. I'll call you if I can go.

**Exercise 2** Somebody is asking you about your plans for the summer. You have some ideas but you are not sure. Choose from the list and write sentences.

take a cab

have a conference with colleagues

see her soon

go to Italy

have something spicy

1. Where are you going this summer?

- I'm not sure. I may \_\_\_\_\_
2. What are you doing this Monday?  
I don't know. I could \_\_\_\_\_
3. When will you see your best friend again?  
I don't know. I may not \_\_\_\_\_
4. What are you going to have for dinner?  
I don't know. I might \_\_\_\_\_
5. How are you going to get home this evening?  
I'm not sure. I might \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 3** Complete the sentence using the word in capitals.

1. Be careful. Steep stairs are ahead. You'll fall. **COULD**  
If you \_\_\_\_\_
2. You saved my life. I didn't drown. **MIGHT**  
If you \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nobody saw me come in late and I didn't get into trouble. **COULD**  
If somebody \_\_\_\_\_
4. What Maria explained wasn't detailed. We then didn't believe her. **MIGHT**  
If what Maria \_\_\_\_\_
5. It was lucky you didn't drop and break the plate. **COULD**  
If you \_\_\_\_\_
6. They soon realized they were lost in the jungle. **MUST**  
They \_\_\_\_\_
7. My friend promised to pick me up at 9:00. It's now 9:45 and I don't see him. **MUST**  
He couldn't remember our appointment.  
He \_\_\_\_\_
8. Our daughter promised to clean her room, but it still looks messy. **COULDN'T**  
She \_\_\_\_\_
9. The two sisters have guilty expressions on their faces. **MIGHT**  
They \_\_\_\_\_ something naughty.
10. My plants in the pots on the balcony are dead. **CAN'T**  
I guess I gave them enough water.  
I \_\_\_\_\_



**Exercise 4** Underline the correct modals.

1. Akiko always does really well on exams. She *must* / *can't* study a lot.
2. When I got home, I found the ice cream had melted. It *must be* / *must have been* too hot in the car.
3. You *must have been* / *must be* hungry because you haven't eaten all day,
4. Jeremy couldn't find his bag. He thought he *could leave* / *could have left* them somewhere.
5. Adina woke up so late! She *can miss* / *might have missed* the train!
6. That woman does a lot of shopping. She *can't have* / *could have* a lot of money.
7. He *must not* / *may be able to* help you.
8. She *must have had* / *will have to* sell all of her belongings to pay her debts.
9. The exam *can't* / *must not* be as easy as you think.
10. He said that he *may* / *must have* go to Italy in June or July.

## 1.3 Modals: Advice, Suggestion

### Giving Advice

Giving advice is to say what we think is right or wrong, or is a good idea in your opinion.

- We use **'should'** and **'shouldn't'** for giving advice in the present.  
*You **should** exercise at least 3 times a week to keep being healthy.*  
*I think you **should** stop talking in class and pay more attention to the lesson.*  
*You **shouldn't** skip classes otherwise you won't be able to pass the exams.*
- We can also use **'should'** and **'shouldn't'** for giving advice in the past. That is **'should + have + past participle'**  
*You **should have studied** harder.*  
*You **should have come** with us, the trip was unforgettable.*  
*He **shouldn't have bought** this new house. It's too far from his office.*

Note We can use **'ought to'** and **'ought not to'** in the same way as **'should'** and **'shouldn't'**.

*We **ought to** eat healthy food.*

*We **ought not to** drink too much coffee.*

- Use **'had better'** and **'had better not'** when giving advice that people should follow the same way as **'should'** does but **'had better'** is a bit stronger. It includes the idea of a warning. It sometimes expresses the idea that something bad will happen if you do not follow the advice.

*You **had better** go to bed early. You are having a driving test tomorrow!*

*You **had better not** drive too fast.*

Note We usually contract **'had better'** and **'had better not'** as **'d better** and **'d better not**

- In questions we use **'should'** to form a question asking for advice.  
*I have a problem. **Should** I call my friends now?*

### Suggestion

- A suggestion is an idea about what we or other people could do.  
***Let's** go to Japan this fall.*  
*We **could** go to Japan this fall.*  
***How about** going to Japan this fall?*  
***How about** Japan?*  
***Shall** we go to Japan this fall?*

*Why don't we go to Japan this fall?*

*Why doesn't she go to Japan this fall?*

- When we want to accept the idea, we say:

*Good idea*

*That's great.*

*That sounds great!*

- When we don't agree with the idea, we usually apologize and give reasons and then make another suggestion.

*I'm sorry, but I went to Japan last year. How about Korea?*

*No, I don't think so.*

*I'm not sure about that.*

**Exercise 1** Complete the sentences, using *should* or *shouldn't*.

1. You \_\_\_\_\_ work too hard. You need to relax. Have a holiday.
2. I enjoyed taking the trip with you. We \_\_\_\_\_ travel together more often.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ he pay for this meal?
4. What \_\_\_\_\_ I cook for the family party this Friday?
5. You \_\_\_\_\_ eat too much chocolate. It's not good for your health.

**Exercise 2** Complete the sentences, using *ought to* or *ought not to*.

1. You \_\_\_\_\_ smoke. It's terrible for your own health as well as others'.
2. Traveller \_\_\_\_\_ arrive at the airport at least two hours earlier.
3. This restaurant is terrible. We \_\_\_\_\_ complain.
4. You \_\_\_\_\_ park here. It's not allowed.
5. We \_\_\_\_\_ sit in the sun for too long.

**Exercise 3** Choose the best option for each sentence

1. Hey Rob, \_\_\_\_\_ go to the cinema with us?
  - a. would you like to
  - b. how about
  - c. shall
  - d. do you like
2. So, we all want Japanese, right? \_\_\_\_\_ that restaurant near the mall?
  - a. Would you like to
  - b. Shall
  - c. Let's
  - d. How about
3. What can we do after class? \_\_\_\_\_ we watch the game in a bar?
  - a. Would you like to
  - b. Shall
  - c. Let's
  - d. How about

4. A: It's getting so hot in here!

B: \_\_\_\_\_ get out of here and go to park by the bay!

- a. Would you like to    b. Shall                      c. Let's              d. How about

5. My best friend, Sabrina, called and said she's going shopping. \_\_\_\_\_

going with her?

- a. Would you like to    b. Shall                      c. Let's              d. How about

6. I'd like to do something different this summer. \_\_\_\_\_ go fishing!

- a. I think we could    b. Shall                      c. Could you    d. How about

7. A: What shall we do?

B: I don't know... It's not very warm and it looks as if it's going to start raining...

\_\_\_\_\_ a standing- comedy? I think there's a new one in the auditorium.

- a. Would you like to    b. Why don't we              c. Let's              d. How about

8) A: Next month we have some days off. Is there anything special you want to do?

B: Yes!! \_\_\_\_\_ go to Madrid!

- a. Would you              b. Shall                      c. Let's              d. How about

9) It's warm and sunny, \_\_\_\_\_ go roller-skating?

- a. Would you like    b. Why don't we              c. Let's              d. How about

10) A: Would you like to go shopping this evening after class?

B: I can't, I 'm broke now. \_\_\_\_\_ go hiking? The

weather is really nice...and it's cheaper!

- a. Would you like    b. Why don't we              c. Let's              d. How about

**Exercise 4** There is only one mistake in each sentence. Find and correct.

1. Why you don't you come exercising with us?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Let's meet us at outside the station.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Shall we do have a tour around Bangkok on Saturday?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why don't we to go to the cinema tonight?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. I'm bored. Let's we go to the park by the river.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. I've got a new board game. Shall we are play it?

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7. We could be visit Paris next week.

---

8. Why don't we going to the gym together tomorrow?

---

9. How about go to the art gallery tonight?

---

10. Let's us have a cup of tea.

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**Exercise 5** Add a comment to each situation, using *had better* or *had better not*.

1. I guess it's going to rain

You \_\_\_\_\_

2. It's a long way to my house.

We \_\_\_\_\_

3. You seem ill.

You \_\_\_\_\_

4. We might be hungry after several hours of walking.

We \_\_\_\_\_

5. It's getting hot today.

We \_\_\_\_\_

6. The first train leaves in ten minutes.

You \_\_\_\_\_

7. He's still sleepy.

He \_\_\_\_\_

8. The meaning of the word doesn't seem correct.

We \_\_\_\_\_

9. Sorry, my train is at 5.00.

I \_\_\_\_\_

10. You should bring some money with you in case you need it.

You \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.4 Modals: Making Request, Offer, Permission and Promise

### Making requests

A request is how we politely ask someone to do something. There are many types of requests depending on where we are and who we are talking to. There are for some forms are considered to be more polite than others.

<b>Polite</b>	<i>Can you help me with this new computer program?</i>
<b>More polite</b>	<i>Could you help me with this new computer program?</i> <i>Would you help me with this new computer program?</i> <i>Do you think you could help me with this new computer program?</i> <i>Could you possibly help me with this new computer program?</i> <i>Do you mind helping me with this new computer program?</i> <i>Would you mind helping me with this new computer program?</i>
<b>Response</b>	<i>Sure. / Of course. / No problem.</i>

### Making Offers

- We make an offer when we want to do something for someone, or say that we will do it.

<i>Can I open the door for you?</i>	<i>Yes, please. / No, thanks.</i>
<i>Shall I open the door for you?</i>	
<i>I'll open the door for you.</i>	

- An offer also means to ask someone if they want something.

*Would you like something to drink?*

### Permission

A permission is asked when someone wants to be allowed to do something. There are for some forms which are considered to be more polite than others.

<b>Polite</b>	<i>Can we go home now?</i>
<b>More polite</b>	<i>Could we go home now?</i> <i>Do you think we could go home now?</i> <i>May we go home now?</i> <i>Do you mind if we go home now?</i>

*Is that all right if we go home now?*

**Response**     *Yes, you can. / That's all right.*

*No, you can't. / Sorry, no.*

### **Making a Promise**

*I'll submit the project by tomorrow.*

*We **won't** do that again, we promise.*

**Exercise 1** Choose the correct forms to complete the sentence.

1. Teacher: Marco, \_\_\_\_\_ help me carry this?

Marco: \_\_\_\_\_, teacher.

- a. Would you please / Yes, of course
- b. you will / Yes, certainly
- c. you can / Of course
- d. Would you / No, thanks.

2. Student: \_\_\_\_\_ help me with my homework, please?

Teacher: Of course!

- a. Could you
- b. Could you please
- c. May you
- d. Might you

3. A: \_\_\_\_\_ you show me how to use this mobile phone?

B: \_\_\_\_\_. How can I help?

- a. Could / I'm happy
- b. Could / I would happy to
- c. Can / I be glad to
- d. Can / I'd be glad to

4. Teacher, \_\_\_\_\_ explain this grammar to me again, please?

- a. you will
- b. could you
- c. you may
- d. you could

5. Bella, \_\_\_\_\_ send me the file by email?

- a. you could
- b. would please you
- c. would you please
- d. you may

6. Sandy, \_\_\_\_\_ send these letters right away?

- a. do you can
- b. may you
- c. can you
- d. you would

7. Good morning. AIC company. \_\_\_\_\_ help you?

- a. You would
- b. May I
- c. Could you
- d. Do you mind

8. I can't talk to you at this moment. \_\_\_\_\_ wait for ten minutes?

- a. Would you mind
- b. Do you mind if
- c. Do you think you could
- d. You could please





6. Is it all right \_\_\_\_\_ he skip this conference?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ ask someone for help.
8. You didn't do well in your exam. I think you \_\_\_\_\_ better not spend too much time on TV.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ you possibly cook me dinner? I'm starving.
10. We \_\_\_\_\_ be right back, I promise.

**Exercise 4** Complete the dialogues. Underline the correct words.

1. A: I sent my résumé in for a job interview two weeks ago, but I haven't had any reply yet.  
B: You *could* / *Why don't you* call the company.
2. A: I have an important appointment and I'm worried about getting there on time. Traffic is so heavy.  
B: You *might* / *Why don't you* change the time of the appointment? The traffic is lighter in the afternoon.
3. A: I can't find a job. I really need some work.  
B: You *why not* / *could* look for temporary work. It's often easier to find.
4. A: I have an interview tomorrow, but I don't know a lot about the company.  
B: You *might want to* / *Why don't you* do some research online. I'll help you.
5. A: I'm worried about my interview next Monday. I don't know what they'll ask me.  
B: Well, we *could* / *how about* practice together. I can ask you questions.
6. A: I'm going to dress casually for my interview tomorrow. It's a very informal company.  
B: You *could not* / *might not* want to dress too casually. It's still a job interview.
7. A: I always get lost when I drive. I have to drive to that company.  
B: You *might want to* / *Why don't you* use a GPS?
8. A: I just had a good interview, and I'm really interested in the job.  
B: *Why don't* / *Why not* you send them a thank-you note?
9. A: I think I'll call and ask for the result of the interview.  
B: *Shall* / *Why don't you* wait for a few days?
10. A: *Would you mind* / *Do you mind if* calling the company asking for the results for me?  
B: No problem.

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