

Modal verbs with examples - English grammar

Modal verbs English grammar

MODAL VERBS		
CAN	ability	I can speak English.
	permission	Can I go to the toilet?
	probability (0%)	It can't be Susan. She is in Paris
COULD	past ability	She could speak Chinese when she was 5 years old.
	past permission	She could go to the cinema.
	probability (30%)	It could get much colder in January.
	request, offer or suggestion	Could I go to the toilet? I could lend you my dictionary.
MAY	probability (50%)	It may rain tomorrow.
	permission	May I go to the cinema with you?
MIGHT	probability (30% or less)	It might snow today.
MUST	prohibition	You mustn't play with that. It's dangerous.
	deduction / probability (100%)	The visitor must be Daniel. I've seen his car outside.
SHOULD	advice	You shouldn't smoke. It's bad for your health.
WILL	prediction	I think he will study harder this time.
	spontaneous decision	Oh, it's very cold in here. I' ll close the window.

Modal verb list with examples PDF

MODAL	EXAMPLES	USES
CAN	He can find any street in London. You can take a taxi. Can you take me to Victoria Station?	<i>Ability</i> <i>Suggestion</i> <i>Request</i>
BE ABLE TO	He is able to find any street in London.	<i>Ability</i>
CAN'T	That story can't be true.	<i>Certainty that something is impossible</i>
COULD	I could play tennis when I was younger. Could you take me to Victoria Station? You could take a taxi.	<i>Ability</i> <i>Request</i> <i>Suggestion</i>
MAY	It may be quicker to travel by train. May I come in?	<i>Possibility</i> <i>Formal request/Permission</i>
MIGHT	It might be quicker to travel by train.	<i>Possibility</i>
MUST	You must be back at 10 o'clock. Look at the snow. It must be cold outside.	<i>Obligation</i> <i>Certainty that something is true.</i>
HAVE TO	You have to be back at 10 o'clock.	<i>Obligation</i>
NEED TO	You need to study a lot.	<i>Obligation.</i>
NEEDN'T	You needn't have a university degree.	<i>Lack of obligation.</i>
MUSN'T	You mustn't drive without a license.	<i>Prohibition</i>
DON'T HAVE TO	You don't have to call a taxi.	<i>Lack of obligation</i>
SHOULD	You should drive more carefully.	<i>Opinion/Advice</i>
OUGHT TO	You ought to drive more carefully.	<i>Opinion/Advice</i>

Modal verbs

<p>Can</p>	<p>ability permission probability (0%)</p>	<p>Can I go to the mall? It can't be Robert. He is in London</p>
<p>Could</p>	<p>past ability past permission probability (30%) request, offer or suggestion</p>	<p>He could speak English when he was 2 years old. He could go to the park. It could get much colder in December. Could I go to the toilet? I could lend you my dictionary.</p>
<p>May</p>	<p>probability (50%) permission</p>	<p>It may rain tomorrow. May I go to the cinema with you?</p>
<p>Might</p>	<p>probability (30% or less)</p>	<p>It might snow today.</p>
<p>Must</p>	<p>Prohibition deduction / probability (100%)</p>	<p>You mustn't play with that. It's dangerous The visitor must be Daniel. I've seen his car outside.</p>
<p>Should</p>	<p>advice</p>	<p>You shouldn't smoke. It's bad for your health</p>

<p>Will</p>	<p>prediction spontaneous decision</p>	<p>I think he will study harder this time. Oh, it's very cold in here. I'll close the window.</p>
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