

MODAL VERBS

Ability: **can / can't** **could / couldn't**

I can drive a car. (*I know how to drive it*)

I could type 300 words in a minute, but now I lack the practise. (*I was able to do that, now I can't*)

I can't swim. (*I don't know how to do to float in the water*)

Permission: **can / can't** **could / couldn't**

I can drive a car. (*I have a driving license, I am permitted to drive*)

You can't see this film, you're under age. (*You are not permitted to see it*)

Asking for permission:	informal	Can you open the door, please?	Can you ... (verb)?
	formal	Could you open the door, please?	Could you ... (verb)?

Possibility: **can / could / couldn't: when the possibility is neutral, possible or not possible**

You can lose all your money gambling in lotteries.

If you work for it, you could be anything you want in life.

must: when we are certain or sure that something is possible

You must study really hard, your marks are just great!

They must be dating, they spent so much time together.

can't: when we are certain or sure that something is impossible

She can't be your little sister, she's older than you.

Darren can't be british, he's got a strong foreign accent.

Obligation: **must have to or has to**

We must do a lot of exams every term.

We must go to school from Mondays to Fridays.

I have to tidy my room every weekend.

Paul has to help his mother with the housework.

Lack of obligation: **don't or doesn't have to**

We don't have to study Unit 9 for the exam.

Sheila doesn't have to go to school on Sundays.

Prohibition: **mustn't**

We mustn't cheat in exams.

You mustn't use your mobile phones in class.

You musn't open that door under any circumstances.

Give advice: **should / shouldn't**

You should study more in all subjects.

She should be more ambitious.

They should tell their children to behave.

You shouldn't spend hours on the computer.

Answer these questions about modal verbs:

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| a) What verb do we use when we are sure that something is true? | must - can - could - can't |
| b) What do we use when we are sure that something is impossible? | must - can - could - can't |
| c) What two verbs do we use when we are not very sure about it? | must - can - could - can't |
| d) Which three verbs tell us about people's abilities? | must - can - could - can't |
| e) Which verbs do we use to talk about rules or duties? | and |
| f) Which verb do we use to tell people what is forbidden? | |
| g) What form of the verb follows modal verbs? | Participle Gerund Infinitive |
| h) You must put an 's' in the third person singular. | TRUE FALSE |
| i) You can use modal verbs only with the verb 'to be'. | TRUE FALSE |
| j) Modal verbs don't need to use <i>don't</i> or <i>doesn't</i> . | TRUE FALSE |
| k) Modal verbs don't have <i>-ing form</i> . | TRUE FALSE |
| l) You can't write 'to' before a modal verb. | TRUE FALSE |
| m) This verb does not really work as a modal verb: | |
| n) Exceptionally, the verb 'have to' changes to in the third person singular, and for the negative and interrogative you must use or | |

1. Possibility: must – could – can – can't. Match the sentences: 1..... 2 3 4 5

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|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 That car is travelling too fast. | A) It could be poisonous. |
| 2 I'm not sure where I put the book. | B) It can be in the living room. |
| 3 I don't think you should touch that plant. | C) It must be very expensive. |
| 4 I can't turn on the hair-dryer. | D) It can't be safe. |
| 5 It's made of silver and gold. | E) It must be broken. |

2. Possibility. How do you feel about these sentences. Complete them with a modal verb.

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|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Antonio Banderas | win an Oscar, because ... | I | agree with you, because ... |
| Spain | win the World Cup, because ... | Aliens | be real, because ... |
| There | be life on Mars, because ... | God | exist, because ... |

3. Possibility. Now complete these sentences with the right modal verb.

- 1 Susie has a new computer. Her parents have given it to her.
- 2 The afternoon is very cloudy. It rain very soon.
- 3 There be a ghost in that house, because such things don't exist.
- 4 I haven't seen that pupil till now, she be new at school.
- 5 There are strange sounds in that house. People think it be a spirit.
- 6 She know your brother, because they go to the same university.
- 7 Alicia speaks English with great difficulty, so she come from Oxford.
- 8 Jenny predicted the result of the match, so she have special powers.
- 9 The weather forecast predicted clear skies, so it rain tomorrow!
- 10 I think I pass the English exams if I study enough.
- 11 Chris didn't pass her Science exam, she be very disappointed.
- 12 I don't like him for the job, but I admit that he do it well if he tries hard.

4. Complete the sentences. Use the correct form of have to.

- 1 I do any homework today. I've finished.
- 2 Sally failed her exam. She take it again at the end of the term.
- 3 Sam and Mary go to school today because it's a bank Monday.
- 4 Andrew walk to school –his mother drives him.
- 5 You answer all the questions. They're compulsory.
- 6 She wear a uniform at school –she can dress as she likes.

6. Make statements (+), questions (?) or negative sentences(⊖) with have to.

(+) Jenny failed her English exam. (study harder next time)

(⊖) Philip must work on Saturdays. (work on Sundays)

(?) Look – I've got the concert tickets. (I / pay any money)

(⊖) This soup is really disgusting. (you / eat it)

(+) This cake is really delicious. (you / tell me the secret)

(⊖) We'll get too tired too soon. (run so fast)

6. Translate

No tengo que esperar en la entrada, ya he comprado las entradas.

No encuentro mis gafas, debo de haberlas perdido.

Muchos alumnos han aprobado este examen, debe de haber sido muy fácil.

No puede haber vida en la Luna porque allí no hay agua.

María no debería gastar tanto dinero, podría necesitarlo más adelante.

A Jenny debe de gustarle el helado, ya se ha comido tres.

Juan debe de tener mucho dinero. Ha comprado diez cedés esta tarde.

¡Tonterías! Los extraterrestres no existen. No puedes creer eso.

Henry tiene que estudiar todos los días, pero no tiene que trabajar demasiado en casa.

¡Mira esa luz! ¿Podría ser una nave espacial? Sí, pero podría ser sólo una estrella.

