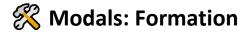
# MODALS: Theory, Analysis, Formation & Uses

# What Are Modals?

**Modals** (also called **modal verbs**) are **auxiliary verbs** used with the base form of the main verb to express **ability**, **possibility**, **necessity**, **obligation**, **permission**, and more.

They **do not change form** (no -s, -ed, or -ing) and are always followed by the **bare infinitive** (base form of the verb without "to").



**Structure:** 

Subject + modal + base verb + (rest of sentence)

- **Examples**:
  - She can swim.
  - They must study more.
  - You should call her.
- Number of the canton in the second in the se

# Characteristics of Modal Verbs

**✓** Feature **✓** Description

No -s in 3rd person He **can**, not *cans*No infinitive form No *to must*, *to can* 

No past participle No have canned, musted

Followed by base verb Must go, can eat, should help

# Types of Modals and Their Uses

#### 1. Ability – can / could / be able to

Modal Use Example

can present/future ability She can play the violin.

could past ability He **could** swim when he was 5. be able to all tenses I'll **be able to** help tomorrow.

#### 2. Permission – can / could / may / might

Modal Use Example

can informal permission Can I borrow your pen? could polite permission Could I use your phone?

may formal permission May I leave early?

might very formal/polite Might I suggest something?

#### 3. Possibility / Probability – may / might / could / can / must / can't

Modal Use Example

could general possibility The road could be closed.

must strong logical conclusion He **must** be tired.
can't negative certainty She **can't** be serious!

### 4. Obligation & Necessity – must / have to / should / ought to

Modal Use Example

must personal/internal obligation I **must** call my parents.

have to external obligation We **have to** wear uniforms.

should/ought to advice or mild obligation You **should** eat more vegetables.

"Must" and "have to" are often interchangeable but have subtle differences in tone.

#### 5. Prohibition – must not / can't / may not

ModalUseExamplemust not strong prohibitionYou must not smoke here.can'tinformal prohibitionYou can't enter this room.may notformal prohibitionVisitors may not park here.

#### 6. Advice / Suggestion - should / ought to / had better

Modal Use Example
should general advice You should see a doctor.
ought to strong advice He ought to apologize.
had better warning/advice You had better leave now.

#### 7. Deduction / Assumption – must / can't / could / might

Modal Use Example

Must logical certainty (positive) She must be home by now.

can't logical certainty (negative) He can't be serious.

Might possibility (less certain) They **might** be on vacation.

#### 8. Habits (past) - would / used to

Modal Use Example

would repeated past actions We **would** go fishing every summer. used to past states/habits I **used to** live in Paris.

# Modal Verbs in Questions and Negatives

- Can you help me?
- Should we go now?
- You mustn't be late.
- They can't speak French.



When modals cannot be used in all tenses, we use semi-modals or equivalents:

#### **Modal Alternative / Tense Substitute**

be able to (future/past) can

must have to / had to be allowed to may be going to / will shall



# Summary Table of Modals

Function	Modals
Ability	can, could, be able to
Permission	can, could, may, might
Possibility	may, might, could, can
Advice	should, ought to, had better

Obligation must, have to, should Prohibition must not, can't, may not Deduction must, can't, might, could

Habit (past) would, used to

Future Prediction will, shall



- X He musts do it.
- He must do it.
- X She can to sing.
- She can sing.
- X They should to leave.
- They should leave.