

UNIT 4

Introduction to modal verbs

The modal verbs are *can, could, may, might, must, will, would, should, ought to*. They are known as modal auxiliary verbs because they 'help' another verb. (See also Units 1, 5, 8, and 9.)

I can swim.
Do you think I should go?

Form

- There is no *-s* in the third person singular.
She can sing. He must be tired. It might rain.
- There is no *do/does/don't/doesn't* in the question or negative.
What should I do? Can I help you? You mustn't steal!
He can't swim. I won't be a minute.
- Modal auxiliary verbs are followed by the infinitive without *to*. The exception is *ought to*.
You must go. I'll help you. You ought to see a doctor.
- They have no infinitives and no *-ing* forms. Other expressions are used instead.
I'd love to be able to sing.
I hate having to get up on cold, winter mornings.
- They don't usually have past forms. Instead, we can use them with perfect infinitives:
You should have told me that you can't swim. You might have drowned!
or we use other expressions:
I had to work hard in school.

Note

Could is used with a past meaning to talk about a general ability.
I could swim when I was six. (= general ability)

To talk about ability on one specific occasion, we use *was able to/managed to*.

The prisoner was able to/managed to escape by climbing on to the roof of the prison. NOT could-escape

Use

- Modal verbs express our attitudes, opinions, and judgements of events. Compare:
'Who's that knocking on the door?'
'It's John.' (This is a fact.)
'Who's that knocking on the door?'
'It could/may/might/must/should/can't/ll be John.' (These all express our attitude or opinion.)
- Each modal verb has at least two meanings. One use of all of them is to express possibility or probability. (See Unit 9 p147.)
I must post this letter! (= obligation)
You must be tired! (= deduction, probability)
Could you help me? (= request)
We could go to Spain for our holiday. (= possibility)
You may go home now. (= permission)
'Where's Anna?' 'I'm not sure. She may be at work.' (= possibility)

Modal verbs of obligation and permission

4.1 have (got) to

Form

Positive and negative

I/You/ We/They	have to don't have to	work hard.
He/She	has to doesn't have to	

Question

Do	I you (etc.)	have to work hard?
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Use

Have to is not a modal verb.

- Have to* expresses strong obligation. It expresses a general obligation based on a law or rule, or based on the authority of another person. It is impersonal.
Children have to go to school until they are 16. (a law)
Mum says you have to clean your room before you go out. (mother's order)
- Have got to* is common in British English but it is more informal than *have to*.
I've got to go now. See you!
Don't go to bed late. We've got to get up early tomorrow.
'Go and tidy your room.' 'Have I got to?' 'Yes, you have.'
- Have to* expresses a general repeated obligation.
I always have to tell my parents where I'm going.
Have got to expresses an obligation on one particular occasion.
I've got to get up early tomorrow to catch a train.

4.2 can and be allowed to

Form

Affirmative and negative

I/You/ We/They	can/can't are allowed to aren't allowed to	park here.
He/She	can/can't is allowed to isn't allowed to	

Question

Can	I/you/we etc.	allowed to	park here?
Am	I		
Are	you		
Is	he		

Use

Can is a modal verb.

Can and be allowed to express permission. Can is more informal and usually spoken.
You can borrow my bike, but you can't have the car. I need it.
They can't come in here with those muddy shoes!
You're allowed to get a driving licence when you're 17.
Are we allowed to use a dictionary for this test?
He isn't allowed to park here.

4.2 should, ought to, and must

Form

Should, ought to, and must are modal verbs.

I/You/We/They He/She/ It	should/shouldn't ought to / ought not to must	work hard.
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Use

- Should and ought to express mild obligation, suggestions, or advice. They express what, in the speaker's opinion, is the right or best thing to do. We often use them with *I think/don't think ...*
You're always asking me for money. I think you should spend less.
You shouldn't sit so close to the television! It's bad for your eyes.
You ought to be more careful with your money.
- Should I/she/we ... ? is possible. We often use *Do you think ... ?*
Should I try to eat less?
Do you think I should see a doctor?
- Must, like have to, expresses strong obligation. Must expresses an obligation that involves the speaker's opinion. It is personal.
I must get my hair cut. (This is me talking to me.)
You must go and visit your grandmother. (A parent talking to a child.)
- Must is also associated with a formal, written style.
All visitors must show proper ID. (Sign in the lobby of an office building)
Books must be returned on or before the due date. (Instructions in a library)

have to and must, don't have to and mustn't

- Have to and must are sometimes interchangeable.
I must be home by midnight. I have to be home by midnight.
 But have to is used more often than must. If you are unsure which to use, it is probably safer to use have to.
- Must I ... ? is possible, but question forms with have to are more common.
Do I have to do what you say, or can I do what I want?
- Have to has all forms; must does not.
I had to work until midnight last night. (Past)
You'll have to study hard when you go to college. (Future)
She's a millionaire. She's never had to do any work. (Present Perfect)
I hate having to get up on cold, winter mornings. (-ing form)
If you were a nurse, you would have to wear a uniform. (Infinitive)
- Don't have to and mustn't are completely different.
Don't have to expresses absence of obligation – you can but it isn't necessary.
Some people iron their socks, but you don't have to. I think it's a waste of time.
When you go into a shop, you don't have to buy anything. You can just look.
Mustn't expresses negative obligation – it is very important not to do something.
You mustn't steal other people's things. It's wrong.
You mustn't drive if you're tired. You could kill someone!

Workbook p28 Further practice of must and have to

4.3 Making requests: can, could, will, and would

1 There are many ways of making requests in English.

Can	you	help me, please?
Could		pass the salt, please?
Will		
Would		

Would you mind helping me, please?

Can	I	Speak to you, please?
Could		ask you a question?

Do you mind if I open the window?

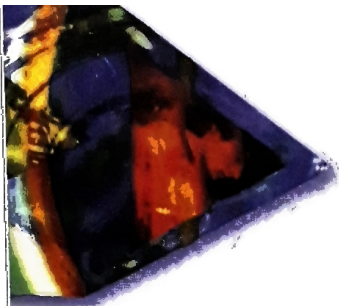
Would you mind if I opened the window?

Can, could, will, and would are all modal verbs.

- Could is a little more formal; can is a little more familiar. *Could I ... ?* and *Could you ... ?* are very useful because they can be used in many different situations.
- Here are some ways of responding to requests:
 A *Excuse me! Could you help me?*
 B *Sure.*
Of course.
Well, I'm afraid I'm a little busy right now.
 A *Would you mind if I opened the window?*
 B *No, not at all.*
No, that's fine.
Well, I'm a little cold, actually.

4.4 Making offers: will and shall/should

- Will and shall/should are used to express offers. They are both modal verbs.
- The contracted form of will is used to express an intention, decision, or offer made at the moment of speaking.
Come over after work. I'll cook dinner for you.
'It's Jane's birthday today.' 'Is it? I'll buy her some flowers.'
Give him your suitcase. He'll carry it for you.
Don't worry about catching the bus. Dave'll give you a lift.
Give it back or we'll call the police!
 In many languages, this idea is often expressed by a present tense, but in English this is wrong.
I'll give you my number. NOT I-give-you-my-number.
I'll carry your suitcase. NOT I-carry-your-suitcase.
 Other uses of will are dealt with in Unit 5.
- Shall/Should ... ? is used in questions with the first person, I and we. It expresses an offer, a suggestion, or a request for advice.
'Shall I carry your bag for you?' 'That's very kind. Thank you.'
'Shall we go out for a meal tonight?' 'Mmm. I'd love to.'
'What shall we do? We haven't got any money.' 'We could ask Dad.'
 We use should to make an informal suggestion.
What should we have for dinner?
What should we do tonight?



4 Doing the right thing

Modal verbs 1 – obligation and permission • Nationality words • Requests and offers

TEST YOUR GRAMMAR

Look at the sentences.

I	can should must have to	go.
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- 1 Write the negatives.
- 2 Write the questions.
- 3 Write the third person singular.
- 4 Which verb is different?

I'm sorry, but I have to go now.



SPOT -

GRAMMAR SPOT

1 Which two sentences mean the same?

I	am allowed to	stay at my sister's house tonight.
	can	
	have to	

Which sentence expresses obligation? Which sentences express permission?

2 Complete the sentences with *have to* or *don't have to*.

Children have to go to school.

Millionaires don't have to

work.

You don't have to go to England if you want to learn English.

In England, you have to drive on the left.

3 *Have got to* and *have to* both express obligation.

Have got to refers to an obligation now or soon.

It's often reduced to *gotta* /'gɒtə/ when we speak, especially in American English.

I've got to go now. Bye!

PRACTICE

Discussing grammar

- 1 Put these sentences into the negative, the question, and the past.
 - 1 Henry can swim.
Henry can't swim. Can Henry swim? Henry could swim.
 - 2 I have to wear a uniform.
 - 3 She has to work hard.
 - 4 He can do what he likes.
 - 5 We're allowed to wear jeans.

Match a line in **A** with a sentence in **B** to make more suggestions. Use *I think/don't think we should ...*

I think we should buy some guidebooks. They'll give us a lot of information.

- 1 ... buy some guidebooks.
- 2 ... take plenty of suncream.
- 3 ... pack too many clothes.
- 4 ... take anything valuable.
- 5 ... go to Japan first.
- 6 ... go anywhere dangerous.
- 7 ... have some vaccinations.

- 3 Our bags will be too heavy to carry.
- 5 I have some friends there.
- 7 We don't want to get ill.
- 2 It'll be really hot.
- 6 That would be really stupid.
- 1 They'll give us a lot of information.
- 4 We might lose it.

Good Manners

How **not** to behave badly abroad

Travelling to all corners of the world gets easier and easier. We live in a global village, but this doesn't mean that we all behave in the same way.

• Greetings

How should you behave when you meet someone for the first time? An American or Canadian shakes your hand firmly while looking you straight in the eyes. In many parts of Asia, there is no physical contact at all. In Japan, you should bow, and the more respect you want to show, (1) _____. In Thailand, the greeting is made by pressing both hands together at the chest and bowing your head slightly. In both countries, eye contact is avoided as a sign of respect.

• Clothes

Many countries have rules about what you should and shouldn't wear. In Asian and Muslim countries, you shouldn't reveal the body, especially women, who (2) _____.

In Japan, you should take off your shoes when entering a house or a restaurant. Remember to place them neatly together facing the door you came in. This is also true in China, Korea, Thailand, and Iran.

• Food and drink

In Italy, Spain, and Latin America, lunch is often the biggest meal of the day, and can last two or three hours. For this reason many people eat a light breakfast

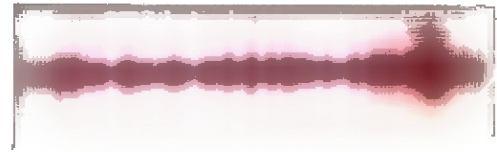
and a late dinner. In Britain, you might have a business lunch and do business as you eat. In Mexico and Japan, (3) _____. Lunch is a time to relax and socialize. In Britain and the United States, it's not unusual to have a business meeting over breakfast, and in China it's common to have business banquets, but you shouldn't discuss business during the meal.

• Doing business

In most countries, an exchange of business cards is essential for all introductions. You should include your company name and your position. If you are going to a country where your language is not widely spoken, you can get the reverse side of your card printed in the local language. In Japan, you must present your card with both hands, with the writing facing the person you are giving it to.

In many countries, business hours are from 9.00 or 10.00 to 5.00 or 6.00. However in some countries, such as Greece, Italy, and Spain, (4) _____ then remain open until the evening.

Japanese business people consider it their professional duty to go out to restaurants after work with colleagues. If you are invited, you shouldn't refuse, even if you don't feel like staying out late.



EVERYDAY ENGLISH

Requests and offers

1 Match a line in A with a line in B. Who is talking? Where do you think the conversations are taking place?

1	Could you bring us the bill, please?	4	White or black?
2	Would you give me your work number, please?	7	No problem. It's stuffy in here.
3	Can I help you?	2	Of course. Oh, shall I give you my mobile number, too?
4	Two large coffees, please.	8	That line's engaged. Would you like to hold?
5	Can you tell me the code for Paris, please?	1	Yes, sir. I'll bring it right away.
6	I'll give you a lift if you like.	5	One moment. I'll look it up.
7	Would you mind opening the window?	3	Just looking, thanks.
8	Could I have extension 238, please?	6	That would be great! Could you drop me off at the library?