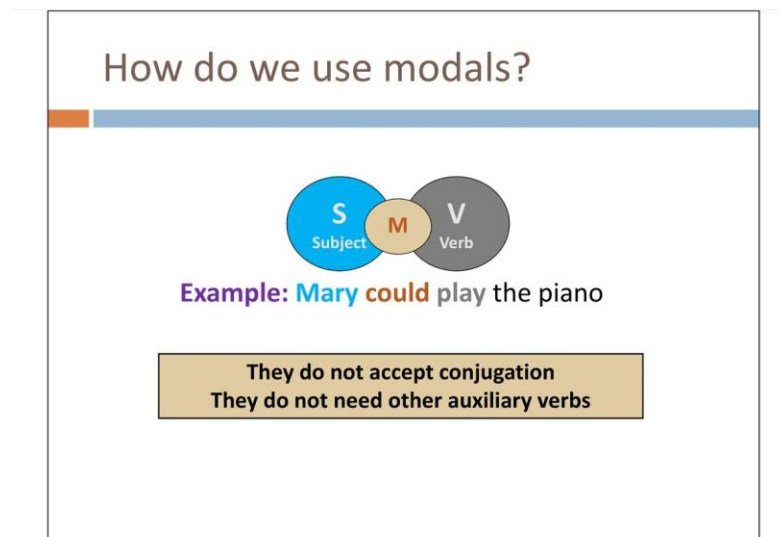




## Modal Verbs for Obligation and Permission.

### What is a modal verb?

The modal verbs in English grammar are can, could, may, might, must, need not, shall/will, should/ought to. They express things like ability, permission, possibility, obligation etc.



Modal verbs are essential for expressing various shades of meaning in English, particularly for obligation and permission. Here are some key points and examples:

### Obligation

#### 1. Must

Must is used to express strong obligation, necessity, or a rule that the speaker imposes. It often conveys the idea that there is no alternative.

You must wear a helmet when riding a bike.

The obligation to wear a helmet is strong and non-negotiable.

#### 2. Have to

Have to is used to indicate an obligation or necessity that comes from an external source, such as rules, laws, or other people. It is commonly used in both spoken and written English.

I have to finish this report by Monday.



The speaker is obliged to complete the report by a specific deadline, likely imposed by someone else.

### 3. Need to

Need to is used to express necessity or something that is required. It is often used when the necessity is more personal or less formal than "must" or "have to."

You need to see a doctor.

The necessity to see a doctor is implied as important for the person's health.

### 4. Should/Ought to

Should and ought to are used to give advice or suggest a weaker obligation. They imply that something is a good idea or the right thing to do but is not as strong as must or have to.

You should save some money for emergencies.

The speaker is advising that saving money is a good practice, but it is not a strict obligation.

## Permission

### 1. Can

Can is used to ask for and give permission in informal contexts. It is widely used in everyday conversations.

Can I open the window?

The speaker is asking for permission to open the window in a casual manner.

### 2. May

May is more formal than can and is often used in polite requests or when granting permission in more official or formal contexts.

May I leave the table?

The speaker is politely asking for permission to leave the table.



### 3. Might

Might is used to ask for permission in a very tentative or polite manner. It often suggests that the speaker is unsure or hesitant.

Might I borrow your book?

The speaker is asking for permission very politely and tentatively.

### 4. Could

Could is a polite way to ask for permission. It can also be used in past tense or conditional forms to talk about permission in a more hypothetical or polite way.

Could I please use your phone?"

The speaker is politely asking for permission to use the phone.

**Past Tense/Conditional:**

She said I could leave early if I finished my work.

The speaker is referring to permission that was granted in a conditional or past context.



## Summary of Usage

**Must:** Strong obligation from the speaker.

"You must follow the rules."

**Have to:** External obligation.

"I have to wear a uniform at work."

**Need to:** Personal necessity.

"You need to get more sleep."

**Should/Ought to:** Advice or weaker obligation.

"You should apologize for your mistake."

**Can:** Informal permission.

"Can I go out with my friends?"

**May:** Formal permission.

"May I be excused?"

**Might:** Tentative or polite permission.

"Might I ask a question?"

**Could:** Polite permission, past or conditional.

"Could I have a moment of your time?"



**Here's a conversation between two students, Alice and Bob, using modal verbs for obligation and permission:**

Alice : Hi Bob! Are you ready for the class trip next week?

Bob : Almost. I still need to get my parents' permission. They said I must finish all my homework before they allow me to go.

Alice : That makes sense. I had to get permission too. My parents said I have to call them every day while we're on the trip.

Bob : That's a good idea. By the way, do we have to bring any special equipment for the trip?

Alice : Yes, we need to bring a sleeping bag and a flashlight. Mr. Smith said we must have these items because we'll be camping outdoors.

Bob : Got it. Can I borrow your flashlight? Mine is broken.

Alice : Sure, you can. Just remind me to bring it tomorrow.

Bob : Thanks, Alice. Do you know if we need to submit any forms before the trip?

Alice : Yes, we should hand in the permission slips by Friday. The school says we ought to have them signed by our parents as soon as possible.

Bob : I'll make sure to get mine signed tonight. Also, can we choose our own groups for the trip activities?

Alice : Yes, we can, but we have to inform our teacher by the end of the week. She said we may choose our groups, but she needs to approve them.

Bob : Great! We should form a group with Sarah and John. They're fun to be around.

Alice : Agreed. Let's ask them tomorrow. Oh, and remember, we must wear comfortable shoes. We'll be doing a lot of hiking.

Bob : Definitely. I'll pack my hiking boots. Thanks for all the information, Alice.

Alice : No problem! Let me know if you need anything else. See you tomorrow!

Bob : See you!