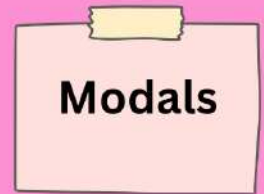


Grammar Guide to Modal Verbs

Modal verbs are a special type of verb used to indicate modality - that is, they convey the speaker's attitude towards the action or event described by the main verb. English has several modal verbs, including "can," "could," "may," "might," "must," "shall," "should," "will," "have to" and "would."

Here are some examples with translations in French:

- I can swim. -> Je sais nager.
- Could you pass me the salt? -> Pouvez-vous me passer le sel ?
- May I use the restroom? -> Puis-je utiliser les toilettes ?
- I have to leave now. -> Je dois partir maintenant.
- Might it rain today? -> Est-ce qu'il pourrait pleuvoir aujourd'hui ?
- You must finish your homework before you go out. -> Tu dois finir tes devoirs avant de sortir.
- Shall we go to the park? -> Allons-nous au parc ?
- Should I call him back? -> Devrais-je le rappeler ?
- Will you come to the party? -> Viendras-tu à la fête ?
- Would you like some tea? -> Voudriez-vous un peu de thé ?
- I have to get to work early for a meeting. -> Je dois aller au travail tôt pour une réunion.
- I must call my grandmother, I haven't spoken to her for ages. -> Je dois appeler ma grand-mère, ça fait des siècles que je ne lui ai pas parlé.



Advice for learning modal verbs:

- Memorise the meaning and usage of each modal verb.
- Practice using modal verbs in sentences and conversations.
- Pay attention to the different contexts in which modal verbs are used.
- Read and listen to examples of modal verbs used in everyday English.

Uses of modal verbs:

- "Can" and "could" are used to express ability or permission.
- "May" and "might" are used to express permission or possibility.
- "Must" is used to express obligation or necessity.
- "Shall" is used to make suggestions or offer invitations.
- "Should" is used to express advice or recommendation.
- "Will" is used to express future certainty or willingness.
- "Would" is used to express conditional situations or politeness.
- "Have to" is used to express obligation.



Examples with translations in French:

- Can I help you? (Puis-je vous aider ?)
- Could you please repeat that? (Pouvez-vous répéter cela, s'il vous plaît ?)
- May I ask a question? (Puis-je poser une question ?)
- Might I suggest an alternative? (Puis-je suggérer une alternative ?)
- You must be tired. (Vous devez être fatigué(e).)
- Shall we dance? (Voulez-vous danser ?)
- Should I bring a gift? (Devrais-je apporter un cadeau ?)
- Will you marry me? (Voulez-vous m'épouser ?)
- Would you mind closing the window? (Pourriez-vous fermer la fenêtre, s'il vous plaît ?)
- I have to go to the dentist tomorrow. (Je dois aller chez le dentiste demain.)
- You should study more for the exam. (Tu devrais étudier davantage pour l'examen.)
- She could speak four languages when she was younger. (Elle pouvait parler quatre langues quand elle était plus jeune.)
- We would like to order some appetisers, please. (Nous voudrions commander des hors-d'œuvre, s'il vous plaît.)
- They should have arrived by now. (Ils devraient être arrivés maintenant.)
- He could have gone to the party, but he decided not to. (Il aurait pu aller à la fête, mais il a décidé de ne pas y aller.)
- We would have helped you if you had asked. (Nous vous aurions aidé si vous aviez demandé.)
- You could have called me if you needed help. (Tu aurais pu m'appeler si tu avais besoin d'aide.)



Please note -

"Have to" and "must" are both modal verbs that express obligation or necessity, but there are some subtle differences between them.

Examples of "have to":

- I have to go to work early tomorrow.
 - You have to wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle.
 - We have to submit our project by Friday.
 - They have to take their medicine three times a day.
- In these examples, "have to" is used to indicate a requirement or obligation that comes from an external source, such as an authority figure, a rule, or a deadline.



Please Note - "I don't have to" is a phrase that is used to indicate the absence of obligation or necessity. In other words, it means that there is no requirement or compulsion to do something.

"I don't have to work on Saturdays." This means that the speaker is not obligated to work on Saturdays, but they may choose to do so if they wish.

"You don't have to come to the party if you don't want to." This means that the listener is not obligated to attend the party, and it's okay if they choose not to go.

"They don't have to pay for the service if they're not satisfied." This means that there is no obligation for the customers to pay if they are not happy with the service provided.

In all of these examples, "don't have to" indicates that there is no requirement or obligation to do something, and it is optional.

Examples of "must":

I must study hard to pass the exam.

You must be careful when driving in bad weather.

We must do something to protect the environment.

In these examples, "must" is used to indicate a personal obligation or responsibility, or to express a strong recommendation or suggestion. So, while both "have to" and "must" express obligation or necessity, "have to" implies that the obligation is imposed from outside, while "must" implies that it is self-imposed or a strong recommendation.



Common mistakes with modals:

Confusing "can" and "could": "Can" is used to talk about ability or possibility in the present, while "could" is used to talk about ability or possibility in the past or as a polite request. For example, "I can speak Spanish" is correct, while "I could speak Spanish" is correct if referring to the past, but not correct if referring to the present.

Using "should" in place of "must": "Should" is used to give advice or make suggestions, while "must" is used to express a strong obligation or necessity. For example, "You should study more" suggests advice, while "You must study more" expresses a stronger obligation.

Using "would" in place of "will": "Would" is often used as a conditional or to make a polite request, while "will" is used to talk about the future or to express a strong intention. For example, "I will go to the store" expresses a future intention, while "Would you please pass the salt?" is a polite request.

Using "may" instead of "might": "May" and "might" are used to talk about possibilities or permission, but "might" is used to express a lower degree of possibility or uncertainty. For example, "I may go to the party" suggests a higher degree of certainty than "I might go to the party."

Negating modals incorrectly: When negating a modal verb, the word "not" should be placed after the modal verb, not before. For example, "I cannot come" is correct, while "I can not come" is incorrect.

Avoid double modals: The article cautions learners against using double modals, which is the use of two modal verbs in the same sentence. This can lead to confusion and is not grammatically correct. For example, "I can might go to the party" is incorrect. Instead, learners should use a single modal verb to express their intended meaning.



Here are some examples of sentences that use modal verbs to give advice, express obligation, express possibility, and express ability or permission in everyday language:

Giving advice: You should try the sushi at that new restaurant.

Expressing obligation: I have to finish my homework before I can go out with my friends.

Expressing possibility: It might rain later, so you should bring an umbrella just in case.

Expressing ability or permission: Can I borrow your car tonight? I need to pick up some groceries.

Giving advice: You ought to get more exercise if you want to lose weight.

Expressing obligation: We must clean the house before our guests arrive.

Expressing possibility: She may be late to the meeting because of traffic.

Expressing ability or permission: You're allowed to bring one carry-on bag and one personal item on the flight.

Giving advice: Why don't you take a break and go for a walk? It'll help clear your mind.

Expressing obligation: You're not allowed to park here without a permit.

Expressing possibility: He could be at the library studying for his exams.

Expressing ability or permission: You can use my computer to finish your report if you need to.

Giving advice: I suggest you take some vitamin C to help with your cold.

Expressing obligation: You have to pay your bills on time to avoid late fees.

Expressing possibility: We might have to cancel the picnic if it keeps raining.

Expressing ability or permission: I'm sorry, but you can't bring your dog into the store.

Let's study some examples of modal verbs being used in every day conversations.



John: Hey, Mike! What are you up to tonight?

Mike: I'm not sure yet. I might go see a movie.

John: Sounds fun. Can I come with you?

Mike: Sure! We could grab some dinner before the movie. Should we meet at 6 pm?

John: Sounds good to me. But I have to finish some work before I can go out. Do you mind waiting for me?

Mike: No problem. I could use the extra time to study for my English test tomorrow. By the way, do you think it might rain tonight?

John: It could. But I checked the weather forecast earlier, and it said that there's only a slight chance of rain.

Mike: Alright, thanks for letting me know. Oh, and can I borrow your umbrella just in case?

John: Sure, you can borrow it. But you must remember to return it to me tomorrow.

Mike: I won't forget. Thanks, John! You're the best.

John: No problem, man. Shall we get going now?

Mike: Yeah, let's go!

Alice: Hey Bob, how are you feeling?



Bob: I don't know, Alice. I might be coming down with something. I should probably go to the doctor.

Alice: You might be right. You should definitely go get it checked out. It could be serious.

Bob: Yeah, I might do that. But I'm not sure if I can afford it. It might be too expensive.

Alice: Don't worry about the cost, Bob. You could use your insurance to cover it. Or you might be able to get a discount if you ask.

Bob: You're right. I might be able to use my insurance. But I'm not sure if they cover everything. And I might not qualify for a discount.

Alice: It's worth a shot, Bob. You might be pleasantly surprised. And even if it's not covered, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Bob: You know what, Alice? You're right. I might as well give it a try. Thanks for the advice.

Alice: No problem, Bob. I'm just glad I could help. You might feel better knowing that you're taking care of yourself.