

## MODALS

**A. Read the following sentences:**

- (a) *He **will** help us.*
- (b) *We **ought to** obey our parents.*
- (c) *I **must** work hard. .*

The words in bold letters - **will, ought to, must** - are called **Modals** in English. They show **mood or attitude**. There are altogether 13 Modals. They are: **shall, will, should, would, can, could, may, might, must, ought to, used to, dare** and **need**. The different forms of modals can be shown through the following table:

<b>Non-Negative</b>	<b>Uncontracted Negative</b>	<b>Contracted Negative</b>
shall	shall not	shan't
should	should not	shouldn't
can	cannot	can't
could	could not	couldn't
will	will not, 'll not	won't
would	would not, 'd not	wouldn't
may	may not	mayn't
might	might not	mightn't
must	must not	mustn't
ought to	ought not to	oughtn't to
used to	used not to	usedn't to
need	need not	needn't
dare	dare not	daren't

## Uses of Modals

### B. Shall and Will

'Shall' and 'will' and have similar uses; they are used to convey the meanings of willingness, intention and insistence, but there are subtle differences between them. "Will" is often used with the second or third person as a neutral way of expressing future. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) She **will** complete her task soon.
- (b) You **will** be free for most of the summer.
- (c) Sita **will** return soon.
- (d) They **will** come today.

• "Will" is often used to make prediction. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) She **will** come if you invite her.
- (b) Rising early **will** make you a healthy person.
- (c) Drinking milk **will** make you strong.
- (d) Oil **will** float on water.

"Shall" and "will" are, generally, used to express intention on the part of the speaker. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) I **shall** write to you.
- (b) We **shall** overcome.
- (c) I **shall** buy a car.
- (d) We **shall** appear at the examination.
- (e) I **will** help you.
- (f) I **will** lend you my books.

"Shall" can be used, with the first person, to express willingness on the part of the speaker. Look at the following sentences:

- a. We **shall** love to help you
- b. I **shall** be happy to help you.

"Shall" can be used, with the second or third persons, to express insistence or legal and quasi-legal injunction. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) Do it, or you **shall** be fined.
- (b) You **shall** be punished if you cheat me.

- (c) She **shall** be terminated if she does not perform well.
- (d) He **shall** be punished if he does not complete his home work.
- (e) She **shall** have to do it at any cost.

**“Shall” is also used with the second or third person to express an order, command or threat on the part of the speaker. Look at the sentences:**

- (a) You **shall** do it exactly as you wish.
- (b) She **shall** do it.
- (c) I **shall** do it by hook or by crook.

**“Shall” is also used with the second and third person to convey the sense of promise. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) You **shall** get your salary this month.
- (b) She **shall** be given an award for her bravery.

**“Shall” is used to make offers and suggestions or questions with the first person. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) **Shall** I write for you?
- (b) **Shall** we begin the discussion?

### C. Should

**“Should” is used to express the future in the past or as the past equivalent of 'shall'. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) I said that I **should** go home.
- (b) He asked me if I **should** do that.
- (c) She told him that I **should** go to Delhi the following day.

**“Should” is used to express advice and suggestion. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) You **should** consult a doctor at once.
- (b) You **should** work hard to pass the examination.
- (c) We **should** go for a morning walk daily.
- (d) We **should** be honest in our dealings.

**“Should” is used to convey the sense of request. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *We should like to say that she has not committed the crime.*
- (b) *I should like to say that she is innocent.*

**“Should” is used to express duty or moral responsibility, especially when one does it on one's own without any external pressure. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *We should respect our elders.*
- (b) *We should not tell a lie.*
- (c) *We should always speak the truth.*
- (d) *We should love our country.*
- (e) *We should help the poor.*

**“Should” is used to express a surprise. Look at the sentence:**

- (a) *It is really very surprising that India should lose the match in the first round.*

**“Should” is used to convey the sense of possibility. Look at these sentences:**

- (a) *She should be sleeping there.*
- (b) *He should be studying.*
- (c) *We should win the match.*
- (d) *It should rain today.*

**“Should” is used to express supposition. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *Should they be honest, they will be respected everywhere.*
- (b) *Should she work hard, she will pass the examination.*

**“Should” is used with 'lest' to express a purpose. Look at these sentences:**

- (a) *We run fast lest we should miss the train.*
- (b) *I work hard lest I should fail.*

**“Should” is also used to make a sentence conditional. Look at the sentences:**

- (a) *Should she speak the truth, I shall pardon her.*
- (b) *Should I prepare well, I shall pass the examination.*
- (c) *Should it rain, we shall not go out.*
- (d) *Should he reach the station in time, she will catch the train.*

#### **D. Would**

**‘Would’ is used to express the future in the past or it is the past equivalent of ‘will’. Look at the sentences:**

- (a) *He said that he would do the work.*
- (b) *He said that he would not take tea.*

**‘Would’ is used to express determination. Look at these sentences:**

- (a) *I would never surrender before you.*
- (b) *I would stand by you in any circumstances.*
- (c) *She would do it whether you like it or not.*

**‘Would’ is used to express a habit in the past. Look at the sentences;**

- (a) *She would go out for a walk daily.*
- (b) *After lunch, he would always take a short nap.*
- (c) *She would sit all day with books in her hand.*
- (d) *Gandhiji would spin every morning.*

**‘Would’ is used to express suggestion. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *Would you take care of your study?*
- (b) *Would you take care of your health?*

**‘Would’ is used to express a polite request or polite question, especially in spoken English. Look at the sentences:**

- (a) *Would you please listen to me?*
- (b) *Would you please lend me your bike?*
- (c) *Would you return my bike by tomorrow?*

**‘Would’ is used to express willingness, choice and preference, especially in spoken English. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *She said that she would help me.*

- (b) *I would like to see her.*
- (c) *We would rather go than stay.*
- (d) *I would prefer death to dishonour.*

**'Would' is used to express a wish or desire.** Look at the sentences:

- (a) *Would that I were a child again!*
- (b) *Would that I were rich!*
- (c) *Would that I were a bird!*
- (d) *I wish you would go away!*
- (e) *I wish I would see her again!*

**'Would' is used to express a probability.** Look at the sentences:

- (a) *He would be a doctor.*
- (b) *She would be her mother.*

**'Would' is used to express unreal condition.** Look at the sentences:

- (a) *If I were a bird, I would fly to you.*
- (b) *If I were rich, I would buy a car.*
- (c) *If you had worked hard, you would have passed the examination.*
- (d) *If you had come here, I would have gone there.*

## E. Can

**'Can' is used to express ability, be it physical, mental, monetary or of any sort.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *I can run for a long time.*
- (b) *I can solve this problem.*
- (c) *She can swim across the river.*
- (d) *She can speak English.*

**'Can' is used to express possibility.** Look at the following sentence:

- (a) *He can lose his job.*

**'Can' is used to express permission.** 'Can' is less formal than 'may' in this sense. Look at the following sentence:

- (a) *You can go now.*
- (b) *You can take books from the college library.*
- (c) *She can sit down now.*

**'Can' is used to express 'habit' or 'nature'.** Look at the following sentence:

- (a) Anyone **can** do this.
- (b) Anyone **can** make mistakes.
- (c) Students **can** be spoiled.
- (d) Electricity **can** be dangerous..

**'Can' is used to express disposition.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) He **can** tell a lie at any moment.
- (b) You **can't** believe him because he **can** cheat anyone.
- (c) Students **can** be spoiled.
- (d) Electricity **can** be dangerous.

## F. Could

'Could' is used to express a variety of actions and conditions, especially in spoken English.

**'Could' is used to express ability in the past.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) She asked me if I **could** help her.
- (b) I asked him if he **could** play cricket.
- (c) I **could** solve the problem.
- (d) I **could** pass the examination.
- (e) She **could** climb the tree.
- (f) You **could** not solve the problem in one hour.
- (g) He **could** not drive a car in his minor age.

**NB: 'Could' is used to show merely ability in the past; it does not show the completion of an action.**

- (a) She **could** pass the examination.

(She had the ability to pass the examination, but whether she passed or not is not clear at all.)

**'Could' is used to show probability in the past or unreal condition.**

Look at the following sentences:

- (a) If she had money, she **could** buy a new car.
- (b) You **could** have got the train if you had run fast.
- (c) If I had taken medicine in time, I **could** have recovered earlier.

'Could' is used to express polite request or permission. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *Could you lend me your book for a day?*
- (b) *Could I go from here now?*
- (c) *Could you please lend me some money?*
- (d) *Could she spare some time for her study?*

'Could' is also used to show the feeling of impatience. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *What could you do now?*
- (b) *How could this accident take place?*

### G. May

If you do any work on your own, you use **will**, **should** and **can**, but **shall**, **must** and **may** are used when external pressure is given: one is volition another compulsion. Look at the following sentences:

*S<sub>1</sub>: May I come in, Sir?*

*S<sub>2</sub>: Yes, You may.*

*S<sub>1</sub>: May I use your pen?*

*S<sub>2</sub>: Yes, You may.*

'May' is used to convey the sense of permission, especially in formal spoken English. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *You may do your work.*
- (b) *You may have my help.*
- (c) *You may start your work.*
- (d) *She may appear at the examination.*

Here 'may' is used to mean 'be allowed to'. 'May' is more formal than 'can' in giving permission

'May' is used to convey the sense of possibility which is uncertain.

Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *It may rain today.*
- (b) *She may win the race.*
- (c) *He may get a prize.*
- (d) *The traffic may be congested.*
- (e) *She may be at home.*



**'May' is used to convey the sense of wish and prayer.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *May you live long!*
- (b) *May God bless you with happiness!*
- (c) *May God rest our soul in peace!*
- (d) *May our parents live long!*

**'May' is used to convey the sense of uncertainty and surprise.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *Who may call me a fool?*
- (b) *Who may be my enemy?*

**'May' is also used to convey the sense of purpose.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *He works hard so that he may pass.*
- (b) *I do not miss my classes so that I may perform well in the examination.*
- (c) *He walks in the morning so that he may be healthy.*
- (d) *We eat so that we may live.*

### **G. Might**

**'Might' is used to express a variety of actions, states and conditions. It is used as the past form of 'may' in the indirect speech.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *Naghaz said that she might go for study.*
- (b) *The teacher said that she might do this.*
- (c) *Ratan said that he might change his bad habits.*

**'Might' is used to convey the sense of probability.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *It might rain today.*
- (b) *The patient might recover soon.*
- (c) *He might come here any time.*
- (d) *The teacher said that I might win a scholarship.*

**'Might' is used to convey the sense of doubtful possibility, especially in spoken English.** Look at the sentences:

- a *She has not prepared well for the examination, but she **might** pass the examination.*
- b *He is working hard, he **might** compete the competition.*

- NB.** (i) for permission or request, **can**, **could**, **may** and **might** are used.  
 (ii) '**Could**' and '**might**' express the sense of more politeness than that of '**can**' and '**may**'.  
 (iii) '**May**' expresses the sense of more politeness than that of '**can**'.

'**Might**' is used to convey Good wishes in the past. Look at the sentences:

- (a) *Father wished that I **might** live long.*
- (b) *The teacher wished that we **might** get success in the examination.*
- (c) *We wished that India **might** win the match.*

"**Might**" is also used to convey future condition. Look at these sentences:

- (a) *If she gets an opportunity, she **might** go to England for higher education.*
- (b) *If India play well, they **might** win the match.*
- (c) *If he works hard, he **might** get first position in the class.*

#### H. Must

'**Must**' is used to convey a variety of actions, states and conditions. 'It is used to convey the sense of **strong determination**. Look at the sentences:

- (a) *We **must** respect our teachers.*
- (b) *I **must** inform the principal.*
- (c) *I **must** try my luck.*
- (d) *We **must** finish our work today.*

'**Must**' is used to convey the sense of compulsion. Look at the sentences:

- (a) *We **must** follow the rules of the road.*
- (b) *You **must** take rest now.*
- (c) *You **must** answer all the questions.*
- (d) *You **must** not hurt others' feelings.*

**“Must” is used to convey the sense of “necessity”.** Look at the following sentences:

- (a) You **must** work hard to get good position in the class.
- (b) You **must** run fast to catch the bus.
- (c) You **must** help your neighbour in the hour of need.

**‘Must’ is used to convey obligation.** Look at the following sentences.

- (a) Doctors **must** take care of their patients.
- (b) Teachers **must** take care of their students.
- (c) Students **must** obey their teachers.
- (d) Parents **must** look after their children.

**‘Must is used to convey the sense of certainty or belief.** Look at the sentences.

- (a) She **must** have broken the glass.
- (b) You **must** have been absent from the class.
- (c) He **must** be intelligent.

**‘Must’ is used to convey the sense of possibility/ conclusion.** Look at the sentences:

- (a) My father **must** be sleeping.
- (b) He **must** be a rogue.
- (c) You **must** have received my letter by now.
- (d) She **must** have finished her work by this time.

**‘Must’ is used to convey prohibition.** Look at the sentences:

- (a) You **must not** take my book.
- (b) You **must not** touch me.
- (c) You **must not** disturb me at the time of study.

**‘Must is used to express expectation.** Look at the sentences.

- (a) There **must** be a thief in the crowd.
- (b) There **must** be a mistake somewhere.

**‘Must’ is used to express necessity or obligation in future.** Look at the sentences.

- (a) You **must** prepare your lesson by tomorrow.
- (b) We **must** save something for the future.

**I. Ought to**

**Two facts about 'ought':**

**(a) In present time, we use present infinitive after 'ought'.**

Ought + Present infinitive

Or

Ought + (to + V<sub>1</sub> )

**(b) In past time, we use Perfect Infinitive after ought.**

Ought + Perfect Infinitive

Or

Ought + (to + have + V<sub>3</sub> )

**"Ought to" is used to express moral obligation or duty. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *We ought to respect our parents.*
- (b) *We ought to obey our teachers.*
- (c) *We ought to help the poor.*
- (d) *People ought not to take bribes.*
- (e) *She ought to serve her country.*

**"Ought to" is also used to express moral obligation or duty in past. Look at the sentences.**

- (a) *You ought to have completed your work.*
- (b) *You ought to have prepared well for the better performance.*
- (c) *You ought to have worked hard.*

**"Ought to" is used to express possibility. Look at the following sentences.**

- (a) *Naghaz ought to win the race.*
- (b) *She ought to be here by now.*
- (c) *You ought to win.*

**"Ought to" is used to convey the sense of advice. Look at the following sentences:**

- (a) *You ought to walk fast as you are getting late.*
- (b) *You ought to read a good book.*
- (c) *You ought to consult a good physician.*

**J. Used to**

“Used to” is used to express a past habit. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) Gandhiji *used to* walk in the morning.
- (b) I *used to* avoid meeting lazy persons.

**K. Need/Dare**

“Need” and “Dare” are Modals if they are used with 'not' or 'n't' in Assertive Sentences. Look at the following sentences:

- (a) I *need not* go there.  
I *needn't* go there.
- (b) She *dare not* challenge you.  
She *daren't* challenge you.

“Need” and “Dare” are used as Modals in Interrogative Sentences.

Look at the following sentences:

- (a) *Need* I talk to him?
- (b) *Dare* you challenge her?

**Exercise-1**

Given below is the list of modals with their different meanings. Construct sentences with each of the modals to bring out their different meanings:

Modals	Meaning	Sentence
Will		
Would		
Shall		
Should		
Can		
Could		
May		
Might		
Must		
Ought		
Need		
Dare		

