

## VERBOS MODALES - MODAL VERBS

## INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

1. FIVE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MODAL VERBS.
2. VERBOS MODALES BÁSICOS.
3. CERTAINTY AND PROBABILITY: MUST, MAY, MIGHT, CAN'T
4. SUMMARY

Los verbos modales se usan para:

- Expresar nuestras intenciones.
- Hablar sobre habilidad, probabilidad, obligación y prohibición.
- Hacer ofrecimientos, peticiones y sugerencias.

Los verbos modales siempre acompañan a otro verbo y funcionan como un tipo especial de verbo auxiliar.

### 1. FIVE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MODAL VERBS

a) **AFIRMATIVA:** Los verbos modales siempre van seguidos por la **FORMA BASE** de otro verbo (sin "to")

SUBJECT + MODAL VERB + BASE FORM + COMPLEMENTS

I **must go** now.  
You **should go** to the doctor.  
They **can speak** English very well.

b) **NEGATIVA:** en negativa sólo se añade **NOT** o **N'T** al verbo modal.

SUBJECT + MODAL VERB + NOT + BASE FORM + COMPL.

He **can't speak** English.  
She **shouldn't go** to the party.  
You **mustn't smoke** here.

c) **INTERROGATIVA:** Las preguntas se forman colocando el verbo modal delante del sujeto.

[ WH word ] + MODAL VERB + SUBJECT + BASE FORM + COMPL.?

**Can you speak** English? Yes, I **can** / No, I **can't**  
**Should I go** to the doctor? Yes, you **should** / No, you **shouldn't**  
Where **must we go**?

\* En las respuestas cortas se usa un pronombre sujeto y el verbo modal en afirmativa o negativa.

d) A los verbos modales **NUNCA** se les añade **-S** en la **3ª** persona del singular (**he-she-it**) de Presente Simple.

Mary **must go** now / Peter **can't drive** a car.

He **should visit** a doctor. / She **can speak** English very well.

e) Dos verbos modales **NUNCA** pueden ir juntos. Para evitarlo tendremos que usar otros verbos como **BE ABLE TO** o **HAVE TO**.

He ~~will can~~ go to the party. → He **will be able to come** to the party.  
You ~~will must~~ finish your homework. → You **will have to finish** your homework.

### 2. BASIC MODAL VERBS.

MODAL VERBS	SIMILAR VERBS	
1 - <b>CAN</b> (poder, saber)	<b>BE ABLE TO</b> (poder, ser capaz de)	
2- <b>COULD</b> (podía/ podría)		
3 - <b>SHOULD</b> (debería)		<b>HAVE TO</b> (tener que)
4 - <b>MUST</b> (deber)		

1. **CAN** = SABER , PODER / 2. **COULD** = SABÍA, PODÍA , PODRÍA. (past form)

USOS:

1.1 Para expresar **HABILIDAD (ABILITY)** o capacidad para hacer algo ("saber")

I **can swim** very well / My brother **can't drive** yet.

I **could speak** English when I was eight years old.

He **couldn't ride** a bike when he was four. (ABILITY in the past)

1.2 Para expresar **POSIBILIDAD (POSSIBILITY)**

What **can I do**? You **can finish** your studies and **go** to the university.

You **can work** to earn money.

You **can lose** your time watching tv.

\* **BE ABLE TO** = poder, ser capaz de.

sustituye a CAN en futuro, gerundio y participio pasado.

También podemos verlo en formas de presente y pasado.

I **will be able to drive** a car.

**Will you be able to come** to the party tonight?

I haven't **been able** to finish the project.  
**Being able to speak English** is useful.  
 Mary **was able to pass** (= could pass) the driving test.

1.3 Para pedir y dar **PERMISO (PERMISSION)** y hacer **PETICIONES (REQUESTS)**. Usamos **COULD** en situaciones más formales ( **Podría...?** )

\***Can I go to the toilet?** Yes, you **can**. / No, you **can't**.  
**Can you help me?** / **Can I have** some water, please?/  
**Can you close** the door, please?

\***Could I use** my mobile phone?  
**Could you help me?** / **Could I have** some water, please?/  
**Could you close** the door, please?

## 2. SHOULD / OUGHT TO = DEBERÍA

USOS:

2.1 Para dar **CONSEJOS (to give ADVICE)** y hacer recomendaciones.

I **should eat** more vegetables/ You **should study** more.  
 He **shouldn't smoke**/ They **shouldn't tell** lies.

## 3. MUST= DEBER

USOS:

3.1 **Forma afirmativa:** para expresar la **OBLIGACIÓN (OBLIGATION)** o necesidad fuerte de hacer algo: **must**

You **must brush** your teeth. / You **must do** your homework.

3.2 **Forma negativa:** para expresar la **PROHIBICIÓN (PROHIBITION)** de hacer algo: **mustn't**

You **mustn't cheat** in an exam. / You **mustn't eat** in the library.

## 4. HAVE TO = TENER QUE

(¡¡¡Cuidado con la estructura de este verbo da problemas!!! )

ESTRUCTURA:

**AFF:** SUBJECT + **HAVE /HAS TO** + BASE FORM + COMPL.

**NEG:** SUBJECT + **DON'T / DOESN'T HAVE TO** + BASE FORM + COMPL.

**INT:** [ WH word ] + **DO /DOES** + SUBJECT + **HAVE TO** + BASE FORM + COMPL.

USOS:

4.1 **Forma afirmativa:** para expresar la **OBLIGACIÓN** de hacer algo (como MUST). Sobre todo se utiliza con normas externas ya establecidas.

You **have to wear** a helmet / You **have to fasten** your seatbelt in the car.  
 She **has to wear** uniform/ He **has to be** at home at 23:00.

4.2 **Forma negativa:** para expresar **que no es necesario o no hace falta hacer algo**.

I **don't have to get up** early tomorrow.  
 She **doesn't have to wear** uniform in her school  
 He **doesn't have to be** at home at 23:00.

\* Transforma estas oraciones a negativa e interrogativa:  
 I **must go** to the dentist. She **must study** harder.  
 I **have to go** to the dentist. She **has to study** harder.

## 3. CERTAINTY AND PROBABILITY: MUST, MAY, MIGHT, CAN'T

Estos verbos modales se usan para expresar el grado de certeza o la probabilidad que hay de que algo ocurra.

DEGREE OF CERTAINTY	MODAL VERB	EXAMPLE	SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS
Yes (100 %)	<b>MUST</b>	He <b>must be</b> there. His car is outside. <i>Él debe de estar allí.</i>	It's certain I'm sure
Yes ( 50%)	<b>MAY</b>	He <b>may be</b> there. I'm not sure. <i>Puede que él esté allí.</i>	It's possible/probable Perhaps / maybe
Yes (25 %)	<b>MIGHT</b>	He <b>might be</b> there. <i>Él podría estar allí.</i>	It's possible but unlikely
No (100%)	<b>CAN'T</b>	He <b>can't be</b> there. It's too late. <i>Él no puede estar allí.</i>	It isn't possible

\* **MUST** = deber de ( **CERTAINTY** or **DEDUCTION** ) Negative form CAN'T.

Look at their house. They **must be** rich.

You **must be** tired after the journey.

\* **MAY / MIGHT / COULD** = puede que ( **PROBABILITY** )

- MAY = "puede que"

- MIGHT = "podría ser que" (indica una posibilidad más remota)

- COULD = "puede que" , "podría" (It is not used in the negative form in this context)

*It **may** rain. / It **may not** rain.*

*I **might go out** tonight, I don't know..*

*It **could be** difficult to pass the Chinese exam.*

*I think Mary **may/might be** pregnant.*

\* **CAN'T** = no puede ( **NEGATIVE DEDUCTION** based on evidence).

*That girl **can't be** Sally. She is abroad.*

*He **can't be** an architect. He has never studied at university.*

#### 4.1 SUMMARY OF MODAL VERBS AND THEIR USES:

ABILITY	OBLIGATION	PROHIBITION	ABSENCE OF NECESSITY	CERTAINTY AND PROBABILITY
CAN	MUST	MUSTN'T	DON'T HAVE TO DOESN'T HAVE TO	MUST
COULD	HAVE / HAS TO	CAN'T		MAY/MIGHT COULD
BE ABLE TO	SHOULD			CAN'T

#### SUMMARY OF MODAL VERBS

ABILITY	ABILITY	I <b>can</b> speak English. Edmund Hilary <b>could</b> climb very well.
	to talk about a specific achievement	In 1953, they <b>managed to</b> get to the top of Mount Everest He <b>was able to</b> achieve that thanks to Sherpa Norgay. From the top they <b>could see</b> thousands of miles away.

SPECULATING	FUTURE	SURE	They <b>must be</b> at home, their car is outside and they never leave without it.
		PROBABLE	They <b>should be</b> at home, they didn't say they were leaving. They <b>may be</b> at home, they're usually are at this time of the day. They <b>could be</b> at home. Let's go check. They <b>might be</b> at home, but I don't know.
		CAN'T BE SURE	They <b>can't be</b> home, they said they'd be away this week.
	PAST	LOGICAL	I <b>must have</b> left my phone at home. I don't remember taking it. I <b>can't have</b> left my phone at home, I had it with me a moment ago.
		NOT SURE	I think I <b>may have</b> left my phone at home. Let's go check. I guess I <b>could have</b> left my phone at home, but I'm not sure. I suppose I <b>might have</b> left my phone at home before leaving.
		DID NOT HAPPEN	Luckily I found my phone, I thought it <b>could have</b> been stolen. Luckily I found my phone, thought I <b>might have</b> lost it.

OBLIGATION / ADVICE / PROHIBITION	OBLIGATORY	Men <b>must</b> wear a tie to the party. You <b>have to</b> wear a tie to the party. You <b>must</b> wear a tie to the party.	It's a rule. It's obligatory. It's a strong believe.
	ADVISED	You <b>ought to</b> wear a tie to the party. You <b>should</b> wear a tie to the party.	Formal request. Recommendation.
	OPTIONAL	You <b>can</b> wear a tie to the party. You <b>don't have to</b> wear a tie to the party.	It's your choice. It's not an obligation.
	NOT ADVISED	You <b>shouldn't</b> wear a tie to the party.	It's not recommended.
	FORBIDDEN	You <b>can't</b> wear a tie to the party. Men <b>must not / musn't</b> wear a tie to the party.	It's forbidden.

PERMISSIONS AND REQUESTS	INVITATIONS	→ Would you like to come to the party?	
	ASK FOR PERMISSION	Can I borrow your tomorrow? Could I (possibly) borrow your car tomorrow? May I borrow your car tomorrow? Would you mind if I used your car tomorrow?	Casual ↓ Politer
	OFFERS	→ Would you like anything to eat?	
	REQUESTS	Can you help me? Could you help me? Would you help me? Would you mind helping me?	Casual ↓ Politer

## MODAL VERB ACTIVITIES

### 1. Circle the correct modal verb.

- You don't look well. You **can** / **should** see a doctor.
- We **shouldn't** / **have to** leave now or we'll miss the plane.
- You **must** / **could** call me later. I want to talk to you about something.
- Danny wasn't at school yesterday. He **has to** / **can** find out what the homework is.
- My necklace broke yesterday and I **couldn't** / **shouldn't** fix it.
- The phone is ringing. **Could** / **Should** I answer it?
- It isn't far to the park. We **must** / **can** walk there.
- You **shouldn't** / **can't** throw rubbish in the street.
- You **mustn't** / **don't have to** clean the house every day, but I'll be happy if you do.
- When I was on holiday I **could** / **mustn't** sleep late.

### 2. Circle the correct modal verb.

- I ... speak five languages.
  - must
  - should
  - can
- We ... be at the bus station an hour early.
  - have to
  - shouldn't
  - don't have to
- You ... be afraid to express your opinion.
  - shouldn't
  - can't
  - must
- I ... read his writing – it was so messy.
  - don't have to
  - couldn't
  - mustn't
- You ... insult him. He's very sensitive.
  - should
  - can't
  - mustn't

### 3. Look at the table. Complete the sentences with the correct form of HAVE TO and the correct verbs.

	Gina	Andrew	Baby Alice	Eddie	Maria
Get up at 6.30 am	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Make bed	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Cook lunch	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Wash the dishes	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Go to school	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Drive to work	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

- Gina and Andrew \_\_\_\_\_ lunch.
- Eddie and Maria \_\_\_\_\_ lunch.
- Baby Alice \_\_\_\_\_ up early.
- Gina \_\_\_\_\_ to work.

### 4. Write QUESTIONS and SHORT ANSWERS with the correct form of HAVE TO and the verbs from the table in 3.

- Eddie / his bed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Gina and Andrew / at 6:30 am?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Alice / her bed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Andrew / to work?  
\_\_\_\_\_