

Modal Auxiliaries

Los verbos modales son verbos auxiliares que no pueden funcionar como un verbo principal, a diferencia de los verbos auxiliares “be”, “do” y “have” que sí pueden funcionar como un verbo principal.

Los verbos modales expresan modalidad, habilidad, posibilidad, necesidad u otra condición. Los utilizamos para el futuro y el condicional.

Modal verbs are a kind of auxiliary verb. They facilitate the main verb for suggesting potential, expectation, permission, ability, possibility, and obligation.

When used with the main verb, modal verbs do not end with -s for the third-person singular. Modal auxiliary verbs never change form, but they have a different form for past tense.

- I. Complete the following sentences with correct modal (or semi-modal) auxiliaries taken from the list given below. Notice that in some cases more than one modal may be used.
- Can
 - Would
 - May
 - Could
 - Should
 - had better
 - must
 - have to
 - can't
 - couldn't
 - mustn't
 - don't have to
1. I forgot to close the door. Would you mind closing it for me?
 2. I wrote this paper for my literature class last night. Could you please read it over for spelling errors?
 3. I need a wheelbarrow. May I borrow yours?
 4. I want to buy a computer. Could you give me some advice about buying a computer?
 5. It's cold in here. Would you mind if I closed the window?
 6. Soldiers mustn't disobey a superior officer.
 7. To stay alive, people must breathe oxygen.
 8. If you have an aquarium, you don't have to give your tropical fish too much food or they'll die.
 9. Thank goodness we don't have to eat fish again tonight. Dad didn't catch any today.

10. A: (you) Do you have to leave so early? B: I'm afraid I do. I have some work I must finish before I go to bed tonight.
11. Last night, Jack couldn't go to a meeting. Couldn't you go to the meeting last night, too?
12. A: Ann would like to make some friends. B: I think she should join some clubs to meet people with similar interests.
13. Ellen is having a lot of trouble in her chemistry class. She's failed the last two tests. I think she should hire a tutor.
14. Bruce has lost a lot of weight lately. He should go see a doctor.
15. Fish can't talk.
16. I used to be a good swimmer. I could swim long distances when I was a teenager.
17. Why can't all the nations of the world just get along in peace? Why are there always wars somewhere on the earth?
18. I couldn't get to sleep last night because it was too hot in my room.
19. My uncle was a wonderful craftsman. He made beautiful things out of wood. But he couldn't read or write because he never went to school.
20. My father never liked to talk on the phone. Whenever it rang, he would always yell , "I'm not here!" Usually, he was only joking and would come to the phone when it was for him.
21. I'll always remember Miss Emerson, my fifth grade teacher. Sometimes a student would fall asleep in her class. Whenever that happened, Miss Emerson would throw a piece of chalk at the student!
22. I have fond childhood memories of my Uncle Joe. Whenever he came to visit, he would always leave me a little present.

II. Complete the sentences with the appropriate form of the words in parentheses. Add NOT if necessary for a sentence to make sense.

1. A: Where's Ann? B: I don't know. She (could + visit) could be visiting her aunt and uncle right now. She usually visits them every Friday evening.
2. You (should + watch) should watch the movie on TV tonight. I highly recommend it. It's a classic.
3. I heard a loud crash in the next room. When I walked in, I found a brick on the floor, and the window was broken. Someone (must + throw) must have thrown the brick through the window.
4. Jack is in the employee lounge drinking coffee. He (should + work) should be working on his report right now. It's due at 3:00 this afternoon. He (should + waste) shouldn't waste his time in the employee lounge.
5. Do you hear the guitar music? Carla (must + play) must be playing her guitar.
6. A: I need to see Tom. Where is he? B: In his room. Knock on his door softly. He (might + take) might be taking a nap.
7. Michael wanted to go to the opera, but he put off buying a ticket, and now they're all sold. He (should + buy) should have bought his ticket weeks ago. He (should + wait) shouldn't have waited until now to try to get a ticket.
8. Bob was stopped by a police officer last night. He (must + drive) must have been driving too fast when she clocked him on her radar. She gave him a speeding ticket.

9. The staff (must + plan) mustn't have planned very well for the luncheon. There are still about ten people waiting to eat, and there's not enough food left.
10. A: Where's your bicycle? B: I don't know. One of my friends (may + borrow) may have borrowed it. Gee, I hope it wasn't stolen. Maybe Sally borrowed it. A: Sally? She (could + borrow) couldn't have borrowed it. She has a broken leg. Why would she want to borrow your bicycle?
11. George didn't do very well on the test because he didn't understand what he was supposed to do. He (could + listen) couldn't listen very carefully when the teacher gave the directions.
12. A: Joan was really upset when she found out that someone had told Alan about the surprise birthday party she gave him last night. She thinks Joe told him. B: Joe (could + tell) couldn't have told him about it. He was out of town until just before the party. He barely got there in time from the airport.
13. A: Art has two full-time jobs this summer to make some money for school in the fall. He (must + have) mustn't have very much time to rest and do other things. B: That might explain why no one answered the door when I stopped by his house a little while ago. He (must + sleep) must have been sleeping.
14. A: Kathy just bought a new car, and now she's looking for a new apartment. B: She (must + make) must be making a lot of money in her new job.

- III. Taking into account the scenarios given below, complete the following sentences with the appropriate form of modal (or semi-modal) auxiliaries and the verbs given in parentheses (if any is given).
1. A: Look at all the children waiting for the bus. What time is it? B: It must be after 3:00. That's when school is out.
 2. A: George says that we're going to have a very high inflation rate next year. B: He might be right. I think his view is as good as anybody's. I've heard strong opinions on all sides of that issue.
 3. A: Have you heard anything from Ed? Is he still in Africa? B: He might be, or he might already be on his way home. I'm just not sure.
 4. A: Is that a famous person over there in the middle of that crowd? B: It might be. Everyone's trying to get her autograph.
 5. A: Isn't Peter Reeves a banker? B: Yes. Why don't you talk to him? He might be able to help you with your loan.
 6. A: The speedometer on my car is broken. B: Do you think you're driving over the speed limit? A: I don't know. I might be.
 7. A: The Adams' house is dark and quiet. Their car isn't in the driveway. B: They might not be at home.
 8. A: We had a test in class yesterday. Charles, who rarely studies and usually fails the tests, got 18 on it. B: He must have studied (study) a lot for the test.
 9. A: That man sitting behind us has been talking throughout the movie. He knows what's going to happen before it happens. B: He must already have seen (already, see) the movie.
 10. A: Anita is in bed. The lights are out, and I can hear someone snoring. B: She must have fallen asleep (fall asleep)

11. A: Four people had dinner together. Two of them ate wild mushrooms, and two of them didn't. The two who ate the mushrooms are critically ill. B: The mushrooms might have been (be) poisonous.

IV. Rewrite the following sentences using appropriate modal auxiliary verbs. Follow the example.

Examples:

(a) The sky is getting overcast. It is quite likely that it rains tonight.

It **MAY** rain tonight.

(b) John is still little. I don't think he's able to lift that rock.

John **CAN'T** lift that rock

1. No one is allowed to enter that room without an authorization from the boss.
 - No one may enter that room without an authorization from the boss.
2. No one is permitted to smoke in class.
 - No one can smoke in class.
3. The plane is expected to arrive in Mérida at 3 p.m.
 - The plane should arrive in Mérida at 3 p.m.
4. John is supposed to report to the office in an hour.
 - John should report to the office in an hour.
5. When I was a child, I visited my grandparents every Sunday.
 - When I was a child, I would visit my grandparents every Sunday
6. I promise to take you to the movies tomorrow night.
 - I will take you to the movies tomorrow night.
7. The phone is ringing. It surely is John; he always calls at this time.
 - The phone is ringing. It will surely be John; he always calls at this time.
8. Don't bother to borrow money from Mr. Miser. He is most likely broke now because he hasn't gotten his pay yet.
 - Don't bother to borrow money from Mr. Miser. He must be broke now because he hasn't gotten his pay yet.
9. If you study hard for this course, you're surely going to pass it with a high grade.
 - If you study hard for this course, you will surely pass it with a high grade.
10. Last night I got locked out. After many attempts, I managed to open the door with a hairpin.
 - Last night I got locked out. After many attempts, I could open the door with a hairpin.
11. Boy, I'm getting stronger! Yesterday, I was able to lift 200 pounds at the gym.
 - Boy, I'm getting stronger! Yesterday, I could lift 200 pounds at the gym.
12. If you don't do your homework now, you're not going to the park tomorrow.
 - If you don't do your homework now, you won't go to the park tomorrow.
13. I've tried to convince John to work part time, but he refuses to work fewer than eight hours a day.

- [I've tried to convince John to work part time, but he won't work fewer than eight hours a day](#)
14. You already have 100 million dollars in your account. You don't need to work so hard.
- [You already have 100 million dollars in your account, you needn't work so hard.](#)
15. As a secretary, Mary didn't earn enough to maintain her family; that's why she had to take a part time job in a restaurant in the evening.
- [As a secretary, Mary didn't earn enough to maintain her family; that's why she must have taken a part time job in a restaurant in the evening.](#)
16. Prof. Bratt always comes to class on time, but today she hasn't arrived yet. It's likely she had a flat tire this morning.
- [Prof. Bratt always comes to class on time, but today she hasn't arrived yet. She must have had a flat tire.](#)