

UNIVERSITÀ DI CAGLIARI



**CORSO DI LAUREA IN ECONOMIA E GESTIONE  
AZIENDALE**

CORSO DI LAUREA IN ECONOMIA E FINANZA  
**LINGUA INGLESE**

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# MODALS

- **THEY CAN EXPRESS:** **OBLIGATION** / **PROHIBITION** / **ABILITY** / **PERMISSION** / **POSSIBILITY**
- **What are modal verbs?**
  - Modal verbs are special verbs which behave very differently from normal verbs. They give additional information about the function of the main verb that follows it. Here are some important differences:
- 1. **Modal verbs do not take "-s" in the third person / -ed for the past / -ing for the gerund.**
  - He can speak Chinese.
  - She should be here by 9:00.
- 2. **You use "not" to make modal verbs negative, even in simple present and simple past.**
  - He should not be late.
  - They might not come to the party.
- 3. **Many modal verbs cannot be used in the past tenses or the future tenses. Other forms should be used.**
  - He will can go with us. → *Not correct*
  - She musted study very hard. → *Not correct*

# MODALS

- CAN
- COULD
- MAY
- MIGHT
- MUST
- OUGHT TO
- SHALL
- SHOULD
- WILL
- WOULD

• **HAVE TO:** THIS EXPRESSION IS NOT A MODAL BUT IS CLOSELY RELATED TO MODALS IN MEANING AND IS OFTEN INTERCHANGED WITH THEM

Modal Verb	Expressing	Example
<b>must</b>	<b>STRONG OBLIGATION</b>	<i>He must study for the exam.</i>
	logical conclusion / Certainty	<i>He must be very tired. He's been working all day long.</i>
<b>must not</b>	<b>PROHIBITION</b>	<i>You must not smoke in the hospital.</i>
	<b>ABILITY</b>	<i>I can swim.</i>
	<b>PERMISSION</b>	<i>Can I use your phone please?</i>
<b>can</b>	<b>POSSIBILITY</b>	<i>Smoking can cause cancer.</i>
	<b>ABILITY IN THE PAST</b>	<i>When I was younger I could run fast.</i>
<b>could</b>	<b>POLITE PERMISSION</b>	<i>Excuse me, could I just say something?</i>
	<b>POSSIBILITY</b>	<i>It could rain tomorrow!</i>
	<b>PERMISSION</b>	<i>May I use your phone please?</i>
<b>may</b>	<b>POSSIBILITY, PROBABILITY</b>	<i>It may rain tomorrow!</i>
	<b>POLITE PERMISSION</b>	<i>Might I suggest an idea?</i>
<b>might</b>	<b>POSSIBILITY, PROBABILITY</b>	<i>I might go on holiday to Australia next year.</i>
	<b>50 % OBLIGATION</b>	<i>I should / ought to see a doctor. I have a terrible headache.</i>
<b>should/ought to</b>	advice	<i>You should / ought to revise your lessons</i>
	logical conclusion	<i>He should / ought to be very tired. He's been working all day long.</i>

# MODALS - MUST

- We can use **must** to show that we are certain something is true.  
We are making **a logical deduction** based upon some clear evidence or reason.
- *There's no heating on. You must be freezing.*
- *It must be nice to live in Florida.*
- *You must be thirsty after all that running.*
- *It must be John. He said he would come at three o'clock*

# MODALS - MUST

• We also use **must** to express a **STRONG OBLIGATION**. This usually means that some personal circumstance makes the **obligation necessary** (and the speaker almost certainly agrees with the obligation or the obligation comes from the speaker himself/herself or from the authority that wrote the sentence).

○ *I must go to bed earlier.*

○ *I must stop smoking.*

○ *(Teacher to student) You must hand in your homework on Tuesday or you will 10% of your mark.*

○ *(Sign on a plane) Seat belts must be worn by all passengers.*

○ *(Sign in a park) You must have a permit to enter the park.*

# MODALS - MUST

Must is used to express a **strong recommendation**.

It can be substituted by **should** to mitigate the strength of the sentence.

- *You simply must see that film.*
- *You must take a day off and have some rest.*
- *You should take a day off.*
- *You should have a rest. = You **ought to** have a rest.*

We use «**you must**» or «**we must**» for a **very polite invitation**.

- *You must come round and see us.*
- *We must meet again soon.*

# MODALS – HAVE TO

**Have to** is used to express a **STRONG OBLIGATION**. Some **external circumstance** makes the **obligation necessary** or comes from outside the speaker.

## **Positive**

- *I have to work very long hours.*
- *We have to wear a uniform when we're working in reception.*
- *(Student to teacher) When do we have to hand in our homework?*

## **Question**

- *Do I have to pay in advance?*
- *Does your father have to travel a lot at his job?*

## MODALS – HAVE TO AND HAVE GOT TO

- In British English, we often use **have got to** to mean the same as **have to**.
- *I've got to take this book back to the library or I'll get a fine.*
- *We've got to finish now as somebody else needs this room.*

**Will have to** is used to talk about strong obligations. Like **must**, this usually means that **some personal circumstance makes the obligation necessary**. (**Will** is often used to show 'willingness'.)

- *I'll have to speak to him.*
- *We'll have to have lunch and catch up on all the gossip.*

## MODALS – DON'T HAVE TO

- We use **don't have to** (or **haven't got to** in British English) to state that there is **NO obligation or necessity**.
  - *We don't have to get there on time. The boss is away today.*
  - *I don't have to listen to this. I'm leaving.*
  - *You don't have to come if you don't want to.*
  - *He doesn't have to sign anything if he doesn't want to at this stage.*
  - *I haven't got to go. Only if I want to.*

# MODALS - DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MUSTN'T AND DON'T HAVE TO

The differences between the affirmative forms of **must** and **have to** are sometimes very small and very subtle. However, there is a huge difference in the **negative forms**.

**Mustn't** means **it's not allowed**, or it's a bad idea.

- *You **mustn't** eat so much chocolate, you'll be sick.*
- *You **mustn't** phone me at work. We aren't allowed personal calls.*

**Don't have to** means you **don't need to do something**, but it's fine if you want to do it. There's no obligation at all, no need to do it.

- *I **don't have to** get up early at the weekend (I can stay in bed as long as I want).*

# MODALS – MUST OR MUSTN'T ?

- 1) She is ill, so she \_\_\_\_\_ see the doctor.
- 2) It is raining. You \_\_\_\_\_ take your umbrella.
- 3) You \_\_\_\_\_ throw litter on the stairs.
- 4) This is a secret. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell anybody.
- 5) You \_\_\_\_\_ make noise in the library.
- 6) We \_\_\_\_\_ hurry or we will miss the bus.
- 7) You \_\_\_\_\_ eat fruit and vegetables.
- 8) The baby is sleeping. You \_\_\_\_\_ shout.
- 9) You \_\_\_\_\_ be friendly to everybody.
- 10) You \_\_\_\_\_ walk on the grass.
- 11) You \_\_\_\_\_ take notes during the lessons.
- 12) You \_\_\_\_\_ speak loudly in hospitals.

# MODALS – MUSTN'T OR DON'T HAVE TO?

- 1) It is forbidden. You \_\_\_\_\_ do that.
- 2) You \_\_\_\_\_ ask my permission. You can do what you want.
- 3) You \_\_\_\_\_ speak to the driver when the bus is moving. It's dangerous.
- 4) Help yourself to anything you want. You \_\_\_\_\_ ask.
- 5) You \_\_\_\_\_ park here. There is a double yellow line.
- 6) Pay me back when you can. You \_\_\_\_\_ do it immediately.
- 7) It's optional. We \_\_\_\_\_ to go if you don't want to.
- 8) I'll tell you a secret. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell any body else. Promise?
- 9. Be on time. You \_\_\_\_\_ be late or we will leave without you.
- 10. He's a millionaire. He \_\_\_\_\_ work but he does because he enjoy sit.

# MODALS – HAVE TO, HAS TO, DON'T HAVE TO, OR DOESN'T HAVE TO?

- 3. You \_\_\_\_\_ have peppers on your pizza, but you can if you want to.
- 4. A good pizza \_\_\_\_\_ taste good.
- 5. So, you \_\_\_\_\_ choose the pizza toppings that you like best.
- 6. Personally, I love tomatoes, so I always \_\_\_\_\_ have tomatoes on my pizza!
- 7. You \_\_\_\_\_ make your own pizza, you can buy a pizza from a pizza shop if you want to.
- 8. Pizza tastes best when it's hot, but you \_\_\_\_\_ eat hot pizza. You can eat it cold too.
- 9. The secretary \_\_\_\_\_ know how to type.
- 10. A secretary \_\_\_\_\_ be a woman. The secretary can be a man.
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_ the secretary \_\_\_\_\_ work Saturdays?
- 12. No, he/she \_\_\_\_\_ go to work on Saturdays.

# MODALS OF OBLIGATION AND PROHIBITION - PRESENT

Present	Positive	Negative
have to / don't have to	<b>strong obligation (possibly from outside); rule</b> Children have to go to school. I have to be home by ten. She has to wear a uniform at work.	<b>no obligation</b> I don't have to work on Sundays. You don't have to eat what you don't like.
must / mustn't	<b>strong obligation (possibly based on the speaker's opinion); necessity; advice</b> I must study today. We must say good-bye now. You must start looking after yourself.	<b>negative obligation; prohibition</b> You mustn't smoke here. You mustn't park here. You mustn't eat in the classroom.
should / shouldn't	<b>mild obligation or advice; recommending action</b> You should save some money. You should take a few days off. I think we should check everything again.	<b>mild negative obligation or advice;</b> • You shouldn't smoke so much. • You shouldn't talk to him.

# MODALS OF OBLIGATION AND PROHIBITION - PAST

Present	Positive	Negative
had to / didn't have to	<b>obligation/necessity in the past</b> I had to wear a school uniform when I was a child. I had to do all my homework before dinner. Everyone had to bring something to eat.	<b>no obligation in the past</b> We didn't have to go to school on Saturdays.
must	changes to 'had to'	
should have + past participle / shouldn't have + past participle	<b>a past action which didn't happen: the advice / regret is too late</b> You should have gone to bed earlier, now you have missed the train. I should have apologized earlier.	<b>a past action which didn't happen: the advice / regret is too late</b> You shouldn't have taken that job, it was a bad idea. I shouldn't have spoken to him like that.

## Modals (can, must, have to, should)

<b>POSSIBILITÀ CAPACITÀ NON POSSIBILITÀ INCAPACITÀ</b>	<b>CAN/ CAN'T</b>	<p>to say something is/is not possible</p> <p>to say someone has/hasn't the ability to do something</p>
	<b>COULD/ COULDN'T</b>	<p>to say something was/wasn't possible in the past</p> <p>to say someone had/didn't have the ability in the past</p>
<b>NECESSITÀ OBBLIGO SOGGETTIVO, PERSONALE</b>	<b>WILL BE ABLE TO/ WON'T BE ABLE TO</b>	<p>to say something will/won't be possible in the future</p> <p>to say someone will/won't have the ability in the future</p>
	<b>MUST</b>	<p>to say that obligation is imposed by the speaker</p> <p>it is a personal obligation, something the speaker believes it is necessary</p>
<b>NECESSITÀ OBBLIGO IMPOSTO DALL'ESTERNO NON NECESSITÀ</b>	<b>HAVE TO/ DON'T HAVE TO</b>	<p>to say something is/is not necessary</p> <p>obligation comes from circumstances or external rules</p> <p>something has to be done, whether the speaker likes it or not</p>
	<b>SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T</b>	<p>to say something is/is not a good idea (opinion)</p> <p>no obligation here, rather a recommendation from the speaker</p>
<b>DARE CONSIGLI/ SUGGERIMENTI</b>	<b>SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T</b>	<p>to say something is/is not a good idea (opinion)</p> <p>no obligation here, rather a recommendation from the speaker</p>

## **should, can, have to: obligation and permission**

**3** Make sentences with the same meaning. Use the words in brackets. Write 2–3 words.

- 1 It's a good idea to buy our tickets early.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ our tickets early. (should)
- 2 It isn't necessary to pay for children.  
You \_\_\_\_\_ pay for children. (have)
- 3 She needs to do her exam again.  
She \_\_\_\_\_ her exam again. (has)
- 4 Is it possible for me to go home now?  
\_\_\_\_\_ home now? (Can)
- 5 It's not a good idea to arrive late.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ late. (shouldn't)
- 6 She doesn't know how to drive.  
She \_\_\_\_\_. (can't)
- 7 Is it necessary to read this book?  
Do we \_\_\_\_\_ this book? (have)
- 8 It's healthy to eat more vegetables.  
You \_\_\_\_\_ more vegetables. (should)
- 9 Is it necessary for me to leave?  
Do \_\_\_\_\_ leave? (have)
- 10 I know how to fly an aeroplane.  
I \_\_\_\_\_ an aeroplane. (can)

1. We **SHOULD** buy our tickets early
2. You **DON'T HAVE TO** pay for children
3. She **HAS TO** do her exam again
4. **CAN** I go home now?
5. We **SHOULDN'T** arrive late
6. She **CAN'T** drive
7. Do we **HAVE TO** read this book?
8. You **SHOULD** eat more vegetables
9. Do I **HAVE TO** leave?
10. I **CAN** fly an aeroplane.

# MODALS OF ABILITY

- Ability can mean two things:

1) **General ability:** this is something that once you have learned you can do any time you want, like being able to read or swim or speak your language, for example.

2) **Specific ability:** this mean something that you can or can't do in one particular situation. For example, being able to lift something heavy, or find somewhere you are looking for.

- There are three modal verbs used to show ability:
- **CAN**
- **COULD**
- **BE ABLE TO**

# MODALS OF ABILITY

- **Present**

**Can / can't (for both general and specific ability)**

- a) *I can play the piano.*
- b) *She can speak English.*
- c) *He can't drive, he's too tired.*
- d) *We can't come now.*

# MODALS OF ABILITY

## • Past (1)

- **Could / couldn't (for general ability)**

A) *I could read when I was four.*

B) *She could speak French when she was a child, but now she has forgotten it.*

- **Was able to / couldn't (for specific ability) - when someone actually succeeded in doing something.**

A) *When the computer crashed yesterday, I was able to fix it. (Not 'I could fix it')*

B) *She was able to pass the exam, even though she hadn't studied much. (Not 'she could pass')*

C) *He called us because he couldn't find the house.*

D) *I couldn't open the window.*

# MODALS OF ABILITY

## • PAST (2)

There is an exception with **the verbs of sense perception** (see, hear, smell, taste, feel) and some **verbs of thinking** (understand, remember, decide, believe, guess). When we form sentences that express **ability in particular past situations**, we must always use the modals could or couldn't. Was/were able to or wasn't/weren't able to are never used with these verbs.

- A) *When I came into the kitchen, I could smell something burning.*
- B) *When I looked out of the window, I could see a man walking down the street.*
- C) *The woman spoke only French, therefore I couldn't understand what she said.*
- D) *I couldn't decide whether to ask her out or not.*

## MODALS OF POSSIBILITY

- PAST(3)

**COULD + HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE (AN ABILITY/POSSIBILITY SOMEONE HAD IN THE PAST, but didn't use).** We use *could have* to say that someone had the ability/opportunity to do something, but did **not** do it:

- A) *I could have played the piano well but I didn't practise enough.*
- B) *We could have come earlier.*
- C) *She could have studied law, but she preferred to become a secretary.*

# MODALS OF ABILITY

- **Future**

## **Will / won't be able to (general ability)**

- A) *At the end of the course, you will be able to make your own website.*
- B) *He won't be able to speak Japanese in a week! It will take months.*

## **Can / can't (specific ability)**

- C) *I can help you tomorrow.*
- D) *I can't come to the party.*

# MANAGE TO

- If we want to emphasize that the action is difficult we can use **manage to** in the present or past.
- A) *I usually manage to visit 20 countries every year.*
- B) *I managed to finish the book but it was very boring.*
- In the negative we can use **couldn't, wasn't able to, and didn't manage to** for a specific action.
- C) *I couldn't book the tickets.*
- D) *I wasn't able to book the tickets.*
- E) *I didn't manage to book the tickets.*

# MODALS OF PERMISSION

- We use **can** to **ask for permission** to do something:

A) *Can I ask a question, please?*

B) *Can we go home now?*

- **Could** is more formal and **polite** than **can**:

C) *Could I ask a question please?*

D) *Could we go home now?*

- **May** is another **more formal** and polite way of asking for permission:

E) *May I ask a question please?*

F) *May we go home now?*

# MODALS OF PERMISSION

- We use **can** to **give** permission:

A) You can go home now if you like.

B) You can borrow my pen if you like.

- **May** is a **more formal** and polite way of **giving** permission:

C) You may go home now, if you like.

- We use **can** to say that **someone has permission** to do something:

D) We can go out whenever we want.

E) Students can travel free.

- **May** is a **more formal** and polite way of saying that **someone has permission**:

F) Students may travel free.

# MODALS OF PERMISSION

## Can, could or be able to?

- 1) Last week we \_\_\_\_\_ swimming, this week we can't. (*Can / to go*)
- 2) Maybe the Smiths \_\_\_\_\_ a new house next year. (*Can/ to build*)
- 3) If you try hard, you \_\_\_\_\_ your examinations. (*Can / to pass*)
- 4) Dennis \_\_\_\_\_ the trumpet after four months. (*Can / to play*)
- 5) Luke has passed his driving test, now he \_\_\_\_\_ a car. (*Can / to drive*)
- 6) I \_\_\_\_\_ to him on the phone for three weeks last month. (*Not / can / to speak*)
- 7) Alex \_\_\_\_\_ his home work when his desk is in such a mess. (*Not / can / to do*)
- 8) They were so busy, they \_\_\_\_\_ me a text message. (*Not / can / to write*)
- 9) Lisa \_\_\_\_\_ her dress. She can wear it again. (*Can / to clean*)

# MODALS OF PERMISSION

**can, can't, could, couldn't, or be able to ?**

- 1) Lucy \_\_\_\_\_ make it to our meeting after all. She's stuck in traffic.
- 2) John \_\_\_\_\_ play tennis really well. He's champion of his club.
- 3) Unfortunately, I \_\_\_\_\_ really
- 4) I searched for your house for ages. Luckily I \_\_\_\_\_ find it in the end.
- 5) She's seven years old, but she \_\_\_\_\_ read yet. Her parents are getting her extra lessons.
- 6) I read the book three times, but I \_\_\_\_\_ understand it.
- 7) James \_\_\_\_\_ speak Japanese when he lived in Japan, but he's forgotten most of it now.
- 8) I \_\_\_\_\_ understand the chapter we had to read for homework. It was so difficult.
- 9) I \_\_\_\_\_ lift this box -it's too heavy! Would you help me?
- 10) I \_\_\_\_\_ open this window! I think it's stuck.