

MODAL VERBS

Meaning	Modal Verb	Example
1. Possibility (impossibility) of the action due to circumstances.	can (could) be able to may	I can come any time. Will you be able to help them? I may do it just as well!
2. Doubt, distrust, discredit.	can (could)	She can't (couldn't) be still sleeping. He can't (couldn't) have done it!
3. Polite request.	could will	Could you please call later? Will you please call later?
4. Prohibition.	cannot must not may not (be +not + allowed to)	You can't smoke here. You must not skip classes. You may not (are not allowed to) go there.
5. Permission.	may be allowed to	You may bring your parents with you.
6. Reproach.	might + perfect infinitive	You might have asked for permission.
7. Uncertain supposition.	may perhaps maybe	She may be still sleeping. Perhaps she is still sleeping. Maybe she is still sleeping.
8. Certain supposition.	must probably obviously evidently be (un)likely	They must have forgotten about it. Probably he didn't notice us. He is unlikely to come today.
9. Certainty.	will be sure be certain	He will pass the exam. He is sure to pass the exam. He is certain to pass the exam.
10. Duty, necessity, obligation.	must be obliged need to	We must (are obliged to/need to) help them by all means
11. Absence of necessity.	needn't not have to	You needn't come. You didn't have to come.
12. Necessity due to circumstances.	have to	You will have to wait. I'm glad you didn't have to wait.
13. Arrangement according to plan, schedule.	be to	The train is to arrive at platform 5. She is to take part in a conference.
14. What is destined.	be to	They were to live a long life.
15. Recommendation, advice.	should ought to	You shouldn't have told them about it. You ought to have called before coming.
16. What should be expected.	should	Inflation should result in price rise.
17. Threat.	shall	They shall remember me!
18. Declaration of will, intent.	will would	The door won't open! He wouldn't admit his fault!