

MODAL VERBS

EX: CAN, COULD, MAY, MIGHT, MUST,
SHOULD, OUGHT TO

Main differences from other verbs:

1. No auxiliaries

Affirmative:
I MUST

affirmative: Interrogative:

YOU CAN

CAN YOU?

negative:
I MUST
NOT

2. No changes in conjugation:

I can

You can

He can

She can

It can

We can

They can

I must

You must

He must

She must

It must

We must

They must

I should

You should

He should

She should

It should

We should

They should

3. No preposition **TO** in the infinitive:

BEFORE

- **TO GO**
- **TO PLAY**
- **TO STUDY**
- **CAN**
- **MAY**
- **MUST**

AFTER

I DON'T WANT T O STAY

I CAN'T STAY

WE HAVE T O GO

WE MUST GO

4. No continuous tense:

Port: “Não estou podendo”

~~I'm not canning~~

I CAN'T

CAN/COULD

ABILITY

PRESENT:
I **CAN** SWIM
CAN YOU DANCE?

PAST:
HE **COULD** PLAY CHESS
WHEN HE WAS 3.

PERMISSION

VERY INFORMAL:
CAN I SIT HERE?

INFORMAL:
COULD I SMOKE
IN HERE?

REQUEST

Can you do me a favor?

Could you please sit at another table?

MAY/MIGHT

PERMISSION

Formal:

May I go home now?

Very formal:

I wonder if I **might**
take off my coat.

POSSIBILITY

Reasonable:

He **may** be
somewhere in the
school

Remote:

Computers **might**
think and talk in
the future

MUST

OBLIGATION

Military School
Students **must** wear a
uniform

DEDUCTION OR CONCLUSION

He **must** be crazy

SUGGESTION

You **must** see that
movie!

PROHIBITION

You **mustn't** go out
for a week!

SHOULD/UGHT TO

ADVICE

I think you **should**
see a doctor
immediately

He **ought to** look for a
new job

NEED

As a modal verb, **NEED** indicates **NECESSITY** (usually Int/Neg)


We **NEEDN'T** get up early today. It's Sunday.

NEED THEY TALK SO LOUD?

FUTURE FORMS

CAN  BE ABLE TO

In a year or two, I'll **be able to** buy a house

MUST  HAVE TO

I'm sorry, but **you'll have to** leave now.

MAY  BE ALLOWED TO

The patient **will be allowed to** go home
in three days

Permission/obligation/ability/possibility/request/suggestion/deduction/prohibition

The weather is dry, but it **may** rain on the weekend.

Do you think you **can** fix this computer?

He has a strong accent. He **must** be a foreigner.

We **mustn't** talk on the phone when driving.

Could you pass the salt, please?

You **must** listen to Avril's new cd. It's fantastic!

Fill in the blanks with
CAN/COULD/MUST/MAY/MIGHT/SHOULD/UGHT TO

- You MAY keep the book for a week. After that, bring it back to the library.
- She COULD play tennis very well before the accident
- Candidates for the job MUST be at the company tomorrow at 7 a.m.
- Your son SHOULD do more exercise and watch less tv.
- Hey, Billy, CAN I use your cell phone?

- He MAY be a little weird, but he's a good friend.
- Arabs and Jews MIGHT live in peace someday.
- Anna is talking and laughing too much. She MUST be drunk.
- I just CAN'T solve this Math problem. It's too complicated!
- COULD you come for an interview tomorrow morning ?
- Boy, you MUST try these new Nike sneakers. They're really comfortable.
- We're exhausted. MAY we take off our combat boots now, Sargeant?