

8-Modal verbs

Verb used with other verbs to express ability, possibility, obligation, permission, necessity and so on. They are known as modal auxiliary verbs because they help other verbs.

The Modal verbs are *can, could, may, might, must, Will, would, shall, should and ought to.*

Pattern:

S+modal verbs+infinitive(except *ought to*).

Example:

(a)-It may rain.

-May it rain?

-It may not rain.

Note: We neither use the auxiliaries *do, does* and *did* in questions nor in answers.

Let explain each modal verb one by one.

8-1- Modal verbs of ability *Can-could*

The two are used for expressing general ability, whereas the expression ***able to*** is one specific occasion. used to speak about ability on

Examples:

(a)-I could speak English when I was six(general ability).

(b)-The prisoner was able to escape by climbing on the roof of the prison(ability of a particular occasion).

8-2-Modal verbs of permission *May-might*

They convey the meaning of permission and possibility according to their usage.

Examples:

(a)-May I go home now?(permission).

(b)-Where is Ann? I am not sure. She may be at work
(possibility)

8-3-Modal verbs of obligation *Should, ought to and must*

Should and ***Ought to*** are used to express mild obligation, suggestions or advice. They are used with the phrases :***I think***.They express what in the speaker's opinion is right.

Examples:

(a)-You are always asking for me for money.I think you should spend less.

(b)-You ought to be more careful with money.

Must expresses strong obligation. It involves the speaker's opinion.

Example:

You must visit your grandmother(the mother is talking to her son).

Must not is a negative of ***must*** rather than ***do not have to*** which expresses the absence of obligation.

Examples:

(a)-Some people iron their socks ,but you do not have to (you can but it isn't necessary) (it is waste of time: absence of obligation).

(b)-You must not steal people's things.It is wrong .

Difference:

Have to-have got to are not modal verbs but they express obligation.

Have to expresses strong obligation, a general obligation based on a law or rule and an authority of another person, whereas ***have got to*** explains specific order, i.e. order of Mum to her son.

Examples:

(a)-Children have to go to school until they are 16(law).

(b)-Mum says you have got to clean your room before you go out(Mother's order).

8-4-Modal verbs of offer *Will,shall,should*

Both of them express offers.

Examples:

(a)-Shall I carry your bag for you?(offer).

(b)-Come over after work. I'll cook he supper(offer).

(c)-Give him your suitcase. He will carry it for you.

(though ***will*** is used to express intention, it is used to explain ***offer*** at the moment of speaking).

(d)-What should we have for dinner?(offer)

Can –be allowed to be

They convey the meaning of permission.

Examples:

(a)-You can borrow my bike(permission :informal).

(b)-you are allowed to borrow my bike(permission formal).

Exercise 15

Choose the correct answer:

1-Peter looked tired. I think he-----go to bed(a-will,b-would,c-shall,d-should).

2-The instructor tells you-----write the lesson(a-have to,b-have got to,c-have had,d-have got).

3-Why are you wearing old clothes?Because-----the car(a-I shall wash,b-I will wash,c-I am going to wash,d-I am washing).

4-----I go to the zoo?Yes, you may(a-May,b-Shall,c-will,d-Must).

5-Must I clean the clothes ?You-----clean clothes(a-Must not,b-Have not ,c-Had not,d-has not).