

Modals and related verbs 2

A Necessity (obligation)

- To say that something is necessary we use *have to*, *need to* and *must*.
*I **have to/need to** speak to Jane before she leaves.*
*We **must** finish the meeting by eleven at the latest.*
- All three forms are very similar, particularly in writing where they all express necessity (obligation).
In speech there is a small difference:
Have to and *need to* – the situation makes something necessary.
*You **have to** pay the invoice by the end of the month.* (that's the company rule)
Must – the speaker personally feels something is important.
*You **must** stop working so hard.* (I'm telling you)
*'We **must** recall that the economy is but one dimension of life as a whole, and it is by no means certain that it is the single most important one' said Prime Minister Orbán.* (Central Europe Review website)
- To make a question we normally use *have to* or *need to*. If we use *must* for a question we can sound annoyed, particularly if we stress *must* in speech.
*Unfortunately, I **must/have to/need to** work this evening.*
*Do you **have to/need to** work this evening?*
***Must** you work this evening?*
- Have got to* and *'ll have to* are also used for necessity. They are more informal.
You've got to/You'll have to contact them as soon as possible.

B No necessity, permission, prohibition

- When something is not necessary we use *don't have to* and *don't need to*.
*You **don't have to** pay right now. We can give you credit.* (you are free to choose)
- When something is permitted we use *can* and *be allowed to*.
*You **can** park your car here at the weekends, but not during the week.*
- When something is prohibited we use *can't*, *be not allowed to* and *mustn't*. *Mustn't* is more usual when we are telling someone what not to do.
*You're **not allowed to** park on a double yellow line.* (that's the law)
*You **mustn't** talk about politics if they invite you to dinner.* (I'm telling you)
- Notice that *have to* and *must* have similar meanings in their affirmative forms (section A above), but different meanings in their negative forms (this section).
*I **have to/must** leave now.* (it's necessary for me to leave)
*I **don't have to** leave now.* (it's not necessary, I have a choice whether to leave)
*I **mustn't** leave now.* (it's prohibited, I cannot leave)

C Necessity, no necessity, permission, prohibition in the past

- To talk about necessity in the past, we use *had to* and *needed to*. There is no past form of *must*.
*I **had to/needed to** speak to Emma about something, but I've forgotten what it was about.*
- To talk about no necessity in the past, we use *didn't have to/didn't need to*.
*You **didn't have to/didn't need to** take a taxi. I could have picked you up in my car.*

To talk about permission in the past, we use *could*, *was allowed to*.
*In my last job I **could/was allowed to** use the phone for personal calls.*

To talk about prohibition in the past, we use *couldn't*, *wasn't allowed to*.
*In my last job I **couldn't/wasn't allowed to** use the phone for personal calls.*

D Opinions and advice

- We use *should*, *should not (shouldn't)*, *ought to* and *ought not to (oughtn't to)* to give an opinion or recommendation about what is the best thing to do.
*We **should/ought to** invest more heavily in marketing.*
*By midnight Kennedy had 265 electoral votes, just four short of victory. Nixon wasn't ready to concede, but he thought he **should** make some kind of statement to his supporters in the ballroom downstairs. Kennedy watched this on TV. 'Why **should** he concede?' Kennedy said to his aides. 'I wouldn't.' (Washington Post website)*
- When we use *you* speaking to someone else our opinion becomes advice.
*You **should** speak to your boss.* (it's my advice to you)
- Note that advice is like a weak type of necessity (section A).
*You **should/ought to** go to the doctor.* (advice: it's the best thing to do)
*You **must/have to** go to the doctor.* (strong advice: it's really necessary)
- had better (not)* is used for strong opinions. *Had* is usually contracted.
*I'd **better not** interrupt him while he's on the phone.*
*I think you'd **better** call them straightaway.*

E Past criticism

- When we use the verbs in section D in the past (+ *have* + past participle) we mean that we didn't do the right thing and now we are making a criticism.
*We **should have seen** the dangers a long time ago.*
*We **shouldn't have spent** all the advertising budget on television spots.*
*You **ought to have mentioned** that earlier.*

F Need to

- Need to* means the same as *have to* (sections A/B).
*You **have to/need to** sign this form in two places, here and here.*
*If you're going to jump into the UK market and become an important player, you **need to** have wine that retails in the £6–£7 price range.* (New York Times website)
- Notice the two possible negative forms.
*You **don't need to/needn't** wait for me – I'll come along later.*
- In strict grammar the two negative forms have different meanings in the past.
*I **didn't need to arrive** at seven.* (we don't know when I arrived – maybe seven or later)
*I **needn't have arrived** at seven.* (we know when I arrived – seven – but it wasn't necessary)
- But in everyday speech we often use *didn't need to* for both cases.

Exercise 4 B D

Complete the telephone conversation using phrases from the list below.

can you send can I call you can you hear can I help you can't see
~~could I speak to~~ could you hold could you repeat could you speak could you tell me
 I'll need I'll put one I'll be on I'll just go I'll wait I'll put you through I'll get back to you

JON: Good morning, the Tech Store, this is Jon speaking.
 SARA: (1) ~~Could I speak to~~ someone in Customer Services, please?
 JON: Er, Yes, of course, (2)
 ...
 MARK: Customer Services, Mark speaking, how (3) ?
 SARA: I'm calling about your new Samsung DVD players. (4) if you have any in stock?
 MARK: (5) and see. (6) the line please?
 SARA: Yes, no problem, (7)
 ...
 MARK: Hello? I (8) any on the shelves. (9) to check the order status on the computer. (10) back?
 SARA: Certainly. My name is Sara Hall and my telephone number is 0582 1067.
 MARK: Sorry, (11) up? It's a terrible line.
 SARA: Is that better? (12) me now?
 MARK: Yes, that's much better. (13) the number please?
 SARA: Of course. It's 0582 1067. (14) this number all morning.
 MARK: Sorry, I can't tell you if we've got any DVDs in stock right now, but (15) as soon as I have the information. Was there anything else?
 SARA: Er, yes, (16) me a copy of your latest catalogue?
 MARK: Of course, (17) in the post to you today. What's your address?
 SARA: It's 25 Ridley Lane, Lower ...

Exercise 4 A B D

19 Look at these notes that a Personnel Manager wrote to explain company rules. Then use the notes to complete a briefing he gave to some new employees on their first day at work. Choose from *have to*, *don't have to*, *can*, *can't*, *should* or *shouldn't*.

Necessary: sign letter about working hours, leave building during fire drill
 Not necessary: send holiday form to personnel immediately
 Permitted: volunteer to work extra hours, take 3 weeks holiday, smoke outside building
 Prohibited: make staff work long hours, take all holiday time together
 Good idea: speak to head of department about excessive hours, give notice to head of dept. about holidays, read fire notices
 Bad idea: block fire exit

'Um, Excuse me. Good morning. Er, good morning. I've called you to this meeting to explain to you all some of the basic health and safety rules that we have here. Um, first of all, working hours: it's not our company policy to make staff work excessive hours – it makes people unproductive and can endanger health. Um, managers (1) ~~can't~~ make any of their staff work more than an average of 48 hours per week, although anyone (2) volunteer to work more than these hours, but they (3) sign a letter from the company to say that they want to do this. Any member of staff who is worried that they are working too many hours (4) speak to their head of department about it. Um, all employees (5) take a minimum of three weeks' paid holiday per year, but you (6) take all this holiday off in one block. Staff (7) give their head of department as much notice as possible about their holidays, although they (8) send their holiday form off to personnel until a few weeks before they go. Next, er, fire drills. We have a fire drill about once a month – don't ignore it. You (9) leave the building immediately that you hear the bell, and of course you (10) block the fire exits. Fire notices are posted throughout the building. Employees (11) read these notices regularly. In the case of a real fire, don't panic and follow the fire procedures. And lastly, for you smokers, I'm afraid that smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the building, although you (12) smoke just outside the front door. I think that covers everything. Does anyone have any questions? No ... Yes ...'

Exercise 5 C E

20 A businessman is describing his trip to Lagos. Complete the text with *had to*, *didn't have to*, *couldn't*, *should have* or *shouldn't have*. Each phrase is used twice.

'I (1) ~~should have~~ travelled on the 10 am flight, but when I got to the airport they told me that the flight was overbooked and I (2) catch a later flight. Then at the check-in desk they told me that I (3) take both my bags as hand luggage, so I (4) let one of them go in the hold, which was very annoying as I had my diary in it, and it delayed me by nearly an hour at baggage reclaim at the other end. When I got on the plane I wanted to use my laptop, but of course I (5) until after take off. The flight attendant told me to turn it off and said that I (6) known not to use it. To be honest I'd just forgotten, and he (7) been so rude. Er, it was quite late when I finally left Lagos airport, so it was lucky I (8) go to any meetings that afternoon. And, looking back at what happened, I (9) travelled with that airline – they have a lot of problems with overbooking. And my company was paying for the flight so I (10) choose the cheapest option.'

Modals and related verbs 3

A Degrees of probability

- We can use modals and other phrases to talk about the probability that something will happen in the future. See table and following sections.

100%	certainty	<i>will, be certain to</i>
95–100%	deduction	<i>must, can't</i>
80%	expectation	<i>should, ought to, be likely to, shouldn't, ought not to, be unlikely to</i>
30%–70%	uncertainty	<i>may, might, could, may not, might not</i>
0%	certainty	<i>won't</i>

B Certainty and deduction

- We use *will* and *be certain to* if we are certain that something will happen.
The new Jaguar will be launched at the Paris Motor Show.
- We use *won't* when we are certain something will not happen.
I'm sorry, Christiane is on holiday. She won't be back until the 14th.
- We can use *probably* and *definitely* with *will* and *won't*. Note the word order.
She'll probably be at the meeting. She probably won't be at the meeting.
- We use *must* and *can't* to show that something is very certain because it is logical. This is often called 'deduction'.
There's no answer from her phone. She must be in a meeting.
Both the meeting rooms are empty. She can't be in a meeting.
Note that *can't*, not *mustn't*, is used here.

C Expectation

- When we expect that something will happen we use *should, ought to* or *be likely to*.
They should/ought to arrive at about 4.30.
Our profits are likely to improve next year.
Lisbon should be a turning point in European economic policy. (Economist website)
- When we expect that something will not happen we use *shouldn't, ought not to* or *be unlikely to*.
There shouldn't/ought not to be any problem.
Mr Blair's Lisbon strategy is unlikely to be enough to halt the deterioration in Britain's relationship with Europe. (Economist website)

D Uncertainty

- When we are uncertain we use *may, might* or *could*. The meaning is 'perhaps'.
We may be able to deliver in two weeks.
I might have some more news for you next week.
It could take a long time to arrange the finance.
There is no important difference between these modals in this context.
- The negative forms are *may not* and *might not*.
Friday is not a good day for the meeting. I may/might not be in the office on that day.
Note that *could not* is not used with this meaning.

E Degrees of probability in the past

- For different degrees of probability in the past we use: modal verb + *have* + past participle. See the table below.
- Notice in the table that *will/won't have* + past participle is an assumption (you think something is true although you have no proof). For certainty in the past we just use a normal past tense like the past simple.
assumption *You'll have seen our new model. It's in all the shops.*
deduction *There was no answer from her phone. She must have been in a meeting.*
Both the meeting rooms were empty. She can't have been in a meeting.
expectation *They should/ought to have arrived by now. I hope they haven't got lost.*
uncertainty *Yes, I see what you mean now. I could have been wrong about that.*
We're only five minutes late. The talk might not have started yet.
assumption *You won't have seen our new model. It's not in the shops yet.*
Christmas could have been an unhappy one last year if you ordered presents online. Many customers were still waiting for gifts to arrive long after the holidays had ended. (Industry Week website)

F 'Possibility'

- Be careful with the word 'possibility' because it refers to two different ideas in English: uncertainty and ability. Study these examples:
UNCERTAINTY (there is a chance that something will happen)
It's possible that the share price will recover. (= the share price **might/could** recover)
ABILITY (the mental skill or physical power to do something)
It's possible for our factory to produce 800 cars a month. (= our factory **can** produce ...)
For uncertainty see sections C and D of this unit. For ability see unit 11.
- To talk about a past possibility we use *could* + *have* + past participle.
I could have booked an earlier flight, but it left at 7.30 in the morning.
This is an opportunity that didn't happen.
To talk about a past impossibility we use *couldn't* + *have* + past participle.
I couldn't have booked the earlier flight – it was completely full.

Exercise 1 A B C D

Underline the correct words.

- Look at those clouds. I think it can/might/must rain.
- That's impossible. It can't be/mustn't be/may not be true.
- Well done! You may be/must be/might be very pleased.
- Next Thursday is a possibility. I might be/can't be/must be free in the afternoon.
- I'm not sure. I must not be/may not be/won't be able to get there in time.
- That can't be/mustn't be/may not be David. He's away at a conference.
- Lisa isn't at her office. She can be/must be/mustn't be on her way here.
- Lisa hasn't arrived yet. She should be/can be/can't be here soon.
- There's someone in reception. It can be/could be/mustn't be the engineer.
- Sorry, I can't/may not/might come to your presentation. I'm busy that afternoon.
- I'm not sure where Sue is. She could be/must be/can be at lunch.
- I've looked everywhere for Sue. She could be/must be/can be at lunch.

Exercise 2 A B C D

Exercise 5

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning as the first sentence. Use a phrase from the list below.

~~might have~~ can't have could have should have (x2) must have shouldn't have might not have

- Perhaps David made a mistake.
David might have made a mistake.
- I'm sure that she worked very hard on this project.
She must have worked very hard on this project.
- I'm sure the warranty hasn't expired already.
The warranty can't have expired already.
- It would have been a good idea for you to tell me.
You should have told me.
- Perhaps you didn't see the line we launched at the Munich Fair.
You might not have seen the line we launched at the Munich Fair.
- I was expecting them to call by now.
They should have called by now.
- It was a bad idea for us to drop our prices so much.
We shouldn't have dropped our prices so much.
- It was possible for us to see this problem coming.
We could have seen this problem coming.

Exercise 3 A B D F

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence using *must, might, can or can't*.

- Deliver by the end of the month? Yes, I think it's possible to do that.
Deliver by the end of the month? Yes, I think we can do that.
- It's possible that we will lose this client.
We might lose this client.
- I'm sure this isn't the right road.
This can't be the right road.
- I'm sure you work late most nights.
You must work late most nights.
- It's possible that I'll see you tomorrow, but I'm not sure.
I might see you tomorrow.
- It's possible for the new printer to print 20 sheets per minute.
The new printer can print 20 sheets per minute.
- I'm afraid that I'm unable to go to the Trade Fair this year.
I'm afraid that I can't go to the Trade Fair this year.
- I suppose you are Kate Perry. How do you do?
You must be Kate Perry. How do you do?

Exercise 5 A B C D



Complete the article with the words and phrases from the list below. The graphs and ideas in the text will help you.

definitely won't is almost certain to ~~is likely to~~ is unlikely to might will definitely

Since the beginning of this year unemployment has fallen from 2.5 million to 1.8 million, and (1) is likely to drop below 1.5 million by the end of the year. This (2) is good news for the government as unemployment is a very important issue in the country at the moment. By the time of the next election unemployment (3) will definitely even fall below 1 million – it all depends on the world economy and is impossible to predict with any certainty. Unfortunately inflation is going up steadily. It (4) is almost certain to reach 6% by the end of the year. However, the government (5) might take panic measures as inflation is similar to that of its trading partners and (6) is unlikely to return to levels of the 1980s when rates of 30% or 40% a year were quite common.

Unemployment (millions)



Inflation (%)

