

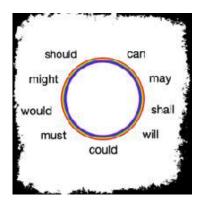
# **MODAL VERBS**

#### **Introduction to Modal Verbs**

Modal verbs are special helping verbs that give more meaning to the main verb in a sentence. They are used to express **ability**, **possibility**, **permission**, **advice**, **necessity**, and more. The

most common modal verbs are:

- can
- could
- may
- might
- must
- shall
- should
- will
- would



# **Why Modal Verbs Are Important**

Modal verbs help us express different attitudes about actions. They are used to talk about:

- Ability: What we can or cannot do.
- Possibility: What might or might not happen.
- Necessity: What we must or must not do.
- Permission: Asking for or giving permission.
- Advice: Giving recommendations with words like should and ought to.
- Politeness: Using modals to sound more polite or formal, such as could or would when asking for something.

# **Key Features of Modal Verbs**

- No "s" for third-person singular: Unlike regular verbs, modal verbs don't change in the third person (he, she, it). For example, we say, "He can swim," not "He cans swim."
- Followed by the base form of the verb: Modal verbs are always followed by the base form of the main verb. For example, "You should study," not "You should studying."
- No past form: Most modal verbs don't have past forms. However, some like could or would can refer to the past.

#### **Modal Verbs and Politeness**

Modal verbs are also very important for making polite requests or offers. For example:

- Can you help me? (informal)
- Could you help me? (polite)
- Would you mind helping me? (very polite)

The use of **could** and **would** soften the request and make it sound friendlier or more formal.

## **Expressing Uncertainty or Possibility**

Modal verbs are great for talking about things we are **not sure** about or things that are **possible**, but not certain. For example:

- Might: "It might rain tomorrow." (Possibility, but not sure)
- Could: "That could be the answer." (A chance, but not certain)

# **Giving Advice or Recommendations**

Modal verbs like **should** and **ought to** are used to give advice or make recommendations. For example:

- Should: "You should go to the doctor." (Good advice)
- Ought to: "You ought to apologize." (Strong recommendation)

# **Common Modal Verbs and Their Uses**

- Can: Expresses ability or possibility: "I can play the guitar."
- Could: Shows past ability or polite requests: "She could swim when she was young."
- May: Gives permission or expresses possibility: "You may leave early today."
- Might: Expresses possibility: "He might join us later."
- Must: Indicates necessity or strong advice: "You must wear a helmet."
- Should: Gives advice: "You should rest if you're sick."
- Would: Used in polite requests or imaginary situations: "I would help you if I had time."

We use modal verbs to show if we believe something is *certain*, *possible*, or *impossible*:

I will not be here next week.

The keys must be on the table.

You cannot be serious.

They are also used to talk about ability, ask permission, and make requests and offers:

I can't cook.

May I use your cookbook?

Could I have a cup of coffee, please?

Would you like some sugar?

