

UNIT 4 MODALS

A. Ability

1. What are the ten different ways in which you can use a ruler other than its regular use? List your answer below.

e.g. You can use it to dig holes.

2. Do you see any difference in the following sentences?

- a. You can use a ruler to dig holes.
- b. You can use my ruler to dig holes.
- c. You can find a ruler in the study room.

Can is used to express **permission**, **ability**, and **possibility** in these sentences.

In sentence (a) **can** is used to express _____ .

In sentence (b) **can** is used to express _____ and,

in sentence (c) **can** is used to express _____ .

Can, could, may, might, will, would, must, ought to, shall, should are called **Modal verbs**.

3. **Work in pairs. Tell your partner what you are not able to do now because of the fast-paced life.**

e.g. I could play in the open ground but now I can't.

I could visit my aunt on weekends but.....

4. **Write a paragraph about a newly devised robot that can be of great help to home-makers.**

Zoomo, the robot can make tea when guests arrive.....



B. Necessity, Obligation and Permission

5. The table below provides you with a list of modals that are used to express necessity and permission.

Necessity/ obligation	Permission
Positive must obeying have to authority need to right thing ought to to do should	Positive can (less formal) may (more formal)
Negative must not cannot ought not to	Negative need not do not have to

Did you know?

* Negatives are formed by putting a negative word such as 'not' immediately after the modal.

You must not leave now.

You cannot go home now.

6. Write the contracted forms. Practise saying these words.

e.g. ought not to - oughtn't to.

cannot _____

must not _____

need not _____

do not _____

should not _____

did not _____

7. The following note has been taken from an army booklet, "Advice to New Recruits." Complete the instructions by filling in the blanks with suitable modals.

Welcome to Ranor Barracks!

Follow the rules, accept the advice and you will find your life in the army interesting and fulfilling.

You _____ have your hair cut very short in the first month. After that you _____ grow it longer but it _____ never touch your collar. Your uniform _____ be kept clean and tidy. Boots and buttons _____ be polished daily. You _____ use cell phones on the campus but you _____ switch them off during the training sessions. Before joining the army you _____ have a medical check-up. You _____ undergo medical examinations once a year during service.

8. Write what each symbol means using **can, can't, must, mustn't**.



C : Duties and Privileges

9. In some schools the Student - Council members are assigned duties at the beginning of every academic year.

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Write a job description to be given to the newly elected Environment Monitor of your school.

You may do this individually. Later your class as a whole can come out with a common duty list to be displayed on the notice-board. You may use the words given in the box below.

can, may, can't, mustn't, must, should, have to.

9.1 Duties and privileges of an Environment Monitor.

e.g. You must ensure that the campus is clean.

Did you know?

should and ought to have similar meanings. They show obligation or duty. However, there is a slight difference in their meanings.

ought to has an objective meaning, whereas *should* is more subjective.

We *ought to* / *should* save water.

We ***ought to*** save money but we are unable to. (In this sentence *should* will not be appropriate.).

D : Probability

10. The following statements express varying degrees of certainty. Look at the underlined modals in each of the statements. Then number the sentences in order of certainty. Mark the sentence No. 1 if it is most likely certain and the least likely as no. 5.

- a) The lady in the formal attire may be Mr. Chawla's secretary. (a) _____
- b) The foreigners accompanying him could be the newly appointed interpreters. (b) _____
- c) The man in the safari talking to someone on the cell phone must be Mr. Chawla. (c) _____
- d) Mr. Chawla will be the chief guest. (d) _____
- e) The people following him might be from the media. (e) _____

Did you know?

will be	expresses	certainty
could be	expresses	probability (more likely)
may be	expresses	possibility (less likely)
might be	expresses	probability (least likely)

11. On a cold winter night you hear a loud shrieking noise at repeated intervals. What might have caused this?

Write down your ideas using the pattern below.

<i>It</i>	<i>might</i> <i>could</i> <i>must</i>	<i>have been</i>	<i>the owl hooting</i> <i>a ghost</i>
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E : Intention & Prediction

12. Make five promises to your friend expressing your willingness to do something.

Use shall/will

e.g. I shall never be late to school.

Promises to Keep!

Did you Know?

One of the most puzzling things in English is to know when to use **shall** and when to use **will**.

Whenever we desire to express some command, promise, threat or determination **shall** is used in the second and third person and **will** is used in the first person.

You shall receive your prize tomorrow. (promise)

He shall not enter the lab again. (determination)

I will reward her for her diligence. (promise)

I will report to the Principal if you don't submit your homework. (threat)

I will never use abusive language. (determination)

13. The Environment is in Danger

What do you think will happen to the following?

Choose four, and write one sentence about each using the modals below and/or expressions from 10.

- a) The ozone layer
- b) The Taj Mahal
- c) The Maldives
- d) The Rainforests
- e) Weather patterns
- f) Fossil fuels
- g) The Ganges delta

e.g. In my opinion, the hole in the ozone layer will grow bigger and more people will suffer from skin cancer.

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The first will be never to wipe
the shoe behind my pant;
The second will be, to say without hesitation, "I can't",
The third is to always keep the toothpaste cap on,
It's something, which I never did since I was born.

The fourth, never to look at your neighbour's hedge
It's that what has brought the envy and the wedge,
The fifth is easy and you can have a ball
Never take from Peter, what you have to pay Paul.

The sixth is to hold my head high, even under water
Learn simple things of life, from the arty potter,
He moulds wonders out of his two hands,
Leaving lasting impressions forever on the sands.

Try and compose a poem conveying your resolutions. You may let the first stanza be the same.

e.g.

*The first will be never to yawn
in public be it noon, dusk or dawn.
The second.....*

F: Mixed Modals

16. Match the sentences in column A with their meanings in column B.

A	B
You <i>should have</i> taken your keys.	It is possible that you left your keys.
You <i>could/might have</i> lost your keys at the cinema.	You are to blame for leaving your keys.
You <i>must have</i> left your keys at home.	I think that you probably left your keys.

17. While you were away on a holiday, your home was burgled. Write a letter to your friend, telling him or her about it.

Use the underlined expressions in Column A above to help you. Include...

1. how the burglar could have got in,
2. how he knew you had gone away, and
3. what you could have done to prevent the burglary.

18. Look at the following pair of sentences. Underline the modals and discuss why each one is used in that sentence.

e.g.

I must not take those pills. (I'm not allowed)

I need not take those pills. (It is not compulsory but I may if I wish.)

1. a) I can't go to the meeting because I'm not a member.
b) I needn't go to the meeting if I don't wish to.
2. a) I can swim a length of the pool.
b) I can swim in the pool on Saturdays.
3. a) You ought to get a nice present for her.
b) You have to get a nice present for her.
4. a) Can I go to the toilet?
b) May I be excused?
5. a) I may come tomorrow if I have the time.
b) I might come tomorrow but it's going to be difficult.

Did you know?

Modals are a small group of verbs that are used to express **possibility, probability, capability, capacity, ability, obligation and predictions**.

Some of the modals you learnt in this unit are

can	could	will	would
may	might	must	
shall	should	ought to	

Need, dare, had better are also modals.

Understanding Modals :

Modal Auxiliaries

A modal verb or auxiliary verb is a verb, which modifies another verb, so that the modified verb has more intention in its expression. In essence, the modal verb expresses modality, the way, in which something is being said.

The main modals are

Can: could; may: might; shall: should; will: would: must; ought to; need to; have to.

The negative modals are

Couldn't; wouldn't; shouldn't; mustn't; needn't; oughtn't/ ought not to

Modal	Examples	Uses
Can/ can't	She can read and write It can rain today Can I borrow your pen? Can you lend me your notes? Can I carry your books?	ability possibility/probability seeking permission request offer
Could/couldn't	Could I borrow your book? Could you please help me with this sum? We could go for a picnic on Sunday. I think you could come first this time. There was a time when I could work round the clock.	seeking permission request suggestion possibility/probability past ability

May	May I have some water? May I help you? May I shut the door? India may become a super power by 2020. May God bless you	request offer permission possibility/probability wish/ desire
Might	They might sell their house as they need the money.	future possibility/ probability
Will /Won't	It is very cold so I will stay at home. I will help you if you wish. Will you look after my dog for a day? It will rain tonight. I will get you a shawl from Srinagar.	intention offer request prediction promise
Would/Wouldn't	Would you mind if I come over tonight? Would five o' clock suit you? Yes it would. Would you pass the salt? Would you come to my party? Would you prefer tea or coffee?	permission making arrangements request invitation preference
Shall	Shall I help you? Shall we meet at 3.00 pm outside Bakshi Stadium?	offer making arrangements

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Should	We should check the timings of the train.	recommended action
	You should listen to the advice of your elders.	advice
Ought to	You ought to do your duty.	advice
	The bus ought to be here any minute.	probability
Must/mustn't	We must make a move now.	obligation
	You mustn't tell lies.	necessity
Need	He need not go to the market.	necessity
	You need to lose weight.	compulsion
	I need to get the groceries.	insistence

- Modals do not inflect. They do not change according to the subject of a sentence.

e.g. I can

You can

They can

It can

- Only one modal is used in a verbal group.
- **Would** is used to express offer.

e.g. **Would** you like to have coffee?

- **Could** and **might** are used to seek permission (polite) but **may** is used to grant permission.

Could I use your pen?

Yes, you **may**.

Empty use of can and could.

The modals **can** and **could** are both used with verbs of perception like see, hear, smell, feel etc. where they don't have any special meaning. Since these verbs cannot take the continuous tense the modals are used to indicate an action.

e.g. I can smell a fire

I can hear a weird noise.

She could feel her hair standing up.