

## Modal Verbs

Also known as:

- Auxiliary Verbs.
- Helping Verbs.

## Modal Verb Functions

Ability

- He can play football.

Possibility

- I might/may/could eat spaghetti.
- You shall go to the party. Shall we take a break? (Very formal)
  - (I shall not go / I shan't go)

Obligation

- We have to/need to/must finish our homework.
- She has to/needs to/must finish her homework.
- 'Must' = Internal Obligation.
- 'Have to/Need to' = External Obligation.

Non-obligation

- He doesn't have to / He doesn't need to / He needn't eat more vegetables.
- You don't have to / You don't need to / You needn't eat more vegetables.

Prohibition

- They mustn't accept the contract.

Advice

- She should do more exercise.
- If I were her, I would swim more often.

Permission

- You can/may go to the party.

Requests

- Can/could you give me a hotdog?
- May I have a burger?

Offering

- Would you like some potatoes?

## Modal Verb Structure

### Structure

Subject + Modal Verb + Bare Infinitive

- Example - I can climb trees.
- I = Subject.
- Can = Modal Verb.
- Climb = Bare Infinitive.

### To ask a question

Modal Verb + Subject + Bare Infinitive

- Example - Should they drink less beer?
- Should = Modal Verb.
- They = Subject.
- Drink = Bare Infinitive.

### To make it negative

Subject + Modal Verb + Not + Bare Infinitive.

- Example - We could go to Spain.
- We = Subject.
- Could = Modal Verb.
- Go = Bare Infinitive.