

MODAL VERBS:

Modal verbs are special verbs which behave differently from normal verbs. Here are some important differences:

1. They express modality (ability, possibility, deduction, permission, requests, obligation, lack of obligation, prohibition)
2. They "help" another verb. The form of these verbs is the infinitive without to. Ex. *It may rain. I must get my hair cut.*
3. Modal verbs do not take "-s" in the 3rd person singular (except have to) Ex. *He can speak Chinese. She should be here by 9.00.*
4. There are no do/does or any auxiliary verb in the questions. (except have to) Ex. *He shouldn't (shouldn't) be late. They might not come to the party.*
5. Most modal verbs refer to the present and future so many of them cannot be used in the past tenses.

May?
Could?
Must?
Might?
Can?

ABILITY:

can, could, be able to

It can be translate into Spanish as "poder" or "saber"

	positive	negative	questions
Present	She CAN play the piano.	She CANT play the piano.	CAN she play the piano?
Past	She COULD ski when she was four.	She COULDN'T ski when she was four.	COULD she ski when she was four?
Future	I WILL BE ABLE TO send you the documents next week.	I WONT BE ABLE TO send you the documents next week.	WILL YOU BE ABLE TO send you the documents next week?

OBLIGATION:

must, have to, mustn't, don't have to

positive	We use MUST to express strong OBLIGATION from the "inside". Ex. <i>I must get my hair cut.</i> We use HAVE TO / HAD TO to talk about an action that is necessary because of rules or laws, or because someone obliges us to do so. Ex. <i>Doctors sometimes have to work on Sunday.</i>
negative	We use MUSTN'T to say that something is against the law, PROHIBITION Ex. <i>You mustn't smoke on buses.</i> (Smoking is against the law) We use DONT / DIDN'T HAVE TO to say that people are not obliged to do something. LACK OF OBLIGATION Ex. <i>In Britain, people don't have to carry a passport with them.</i> (People are not obliged to carry one)
questions	We usually use DO/DOES... HAVE TO to ask if something is obligatory or important. Ex. <i>Does Michael have to get early tomorrow?</i>

PROBABILITY:

must, may, might, could, can't