

Modal verbs

- Have more than one meaning.
- Form the negative adding "not": can – can't.
- Interrogative without auxiliary: May I ?
- Followed by infinitive without "to": I must leave.

MODAL	Meaning	Systems
Can	possibility, capacity, ability Ability/permission	can/could do, can/could be, etc.
Can't	impossibility, incapacity	is not able to, is incapable, difficult
Could	possibility in the past, permission	I could go, could be, could do
Couldn't	impossibility in the past	I can't do it
May	asking permission (formal), permission Probability in the Present	May I ...? Not formal/informal: You may start this job ... It's probable, it's likely, he's expected to, probably, perhaps, appears to
May not	prohibition (formal), improbability	Don't start, impossible
Might	possibility in the past, asking permission	I might do it
Might not	impossibility in the past	I won't do it
Must	obligation, necessity Deduction	be obliged to, must, cannot, completed, "you are always to ...", be expected to, have to, have the duty, I must feel certainly, surely
Mustn't	prohibition	cannot, being forbidden, not allowed, not signed
Should	advice, probability	prediction, feel better, it's advisable, I wish you ... If I were you, ought to
Shouldn't	advice not to do something	it's not advisable, feel better not, ought not to
Will	determination, intention, strong wish	I intend, am determined
Would	politeness, past intention	Do you want?
Used		to be used to do sth / to do sth have the courage, never, gain
Usedn't	not to do sth enough to do sth	
Need		necessity, have to
Needn't	absence of necessity, voluntary	Don't have to