

Functions of Modal Verbs and Synonymous Expressions

USE	PRESENT/FUTURE	PAST
ABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can can do/should/can't do sth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/couldn't do sth was/were able to
PROBABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can (BPM, certain) could (BPM, certain) may (BPM, certain) might (BPM, certain) is/are likely/unlikely be/is likely to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/may/could could/may/might may/might/could is/are likely/unlikely be/is likely to
PROBABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> will (BPM, certain) should (BPM, certain) ought to (BPM, certain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> would ought to have done ought to have done
CONDITIONAL/ADVICE/CRITICISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could (BPM, certain) can't couldn't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/couldn't couldn't have done
PERMISSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can/can't could/couldn't can/may/might might/mightn't could/couldn't 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/couldn't could/couldn't have done could/couldn't could/couldn't could/couldn't
REQUEST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can may/may may/may not can't might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could could/couldn't/couldn't have done
OFFER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could might/might may/may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could have done might/might have done could/may/might
CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could have done could/could have done could/could have done
CONSEQUENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can may/may might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could
PROBABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can could/could may/may might/might may/may might/might might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could could/could could/could could/could
CRITICISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can can't could/could could/could 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could
ADVICE/CRITICISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could should/should may/may might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could
PROBABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can could/could may/may might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could
CHOICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can could/could may/may might/might 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could/could could/could could/could could/could