Modals & Similar Expressions

Student Name:

Instructor

Date:

Course

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (3) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcomes

Through computer and other independent work, this activity will familiarize you with modals and help you create sentences with accurate modals.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# Understanding Modals

A modal is an auxiliary (helping) verb that expresses ideas related to degrees of certainty, obligations, social functions, or ability. They do not have meaning by themselves. Rather, they give a main verb a different meaning. Simple modals are generally used to talk about the present or future (exceptions: *could* for past ability and *had to* for past necessity), while perfect modals are used to talk about the past.

## Simple Modals and Their Meanings

| Modal | Meaning | ****Example**** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| may | polite request | May I borrow your pencil? |
|  | formal permission | You may leave the room. |
|  | assumption (less than 50% certainty) | John may be at the library right now. |
|  | future possibility | It may rain tomorrow. |
| might | assumption (less than 50% certainty) | John might not be home right now. |
|  | future possibility | We might have a quiz next week. |
| should | advice | You should ask the teacher for help. |
|  | expectation | This program should work. |
| ought to | advice | The students ought to attend this workshop. |
| ought to | expectation | If you studied, you ought to do well on the test. |
| had better | advice with threat of bad result | You had better get tutoring, or you will fail the class and have to repeat it. |
| must | strong necessity | You must display your parking permit. |
|  | prohibition (negative only) | Students must not talk during the test. |
|  | assumption (95%+ certainty) | She drives a Porsche. She must be rich. |
| have (got) to | necessity | You have (got) to turn in your work on time. |
|  | past necessity (*had to*) | I had to leave early yesterday because of work. |
|  | assumption (90% certainty) | This has (got) to be the right way. I remember it. |
|  | not necessary (negative only) | You don’t have to bring your books on Monday. |
| can | ability/possibility | I can drive manual transmission. |
|  | informal polite request | Can I borrow your pencil? |
|  | informal permission | You can use my book if you want. |
|  | impossibility (negative only) | This can’t be the right way! I think we’re lost. |
|  | informal prohibition (negative only) | Students can’t talk during the test. |
|  | inability (negative only) | I can’t reach the top shelf because I’m too short. |
| could | past ability | I could run fast when I was a child. |
|  | polite request | Could I borrow your pencil? |
|  | assumption (less than 50% certainty) | The teacher’s absent. He could be sick. |
|  | future possibility | It could rain tomorrow. |
|  | impossibility (negative only) | This couldn’t be the right way. I think we’re lost. |
| would | polite request | Would you please pass the salt? |
|  | past habit | We would go to the park every week as children. |
| would | desire/intent (unreal conditionals) | If had money, I would travel around the world. |
| shall | polite suggestion | Shall we dance? |
|  | future | I shall arrive soon. |
| will | predictions | Someday, robots will rule the world. |
|  | voluntary actions | \**phone rings*\* I’ll get it! |
|  | promises | I’ll pay you back. |
|  | invitations/requests | Will you come to my party? |
| be able to | ability (can be used in any tense) | I’m sorry that I wasn’t able to come to your party, but I had to work. |

## How to Form Verbs with Simple Modals: modal + BASE form of the verb

Modal verbs are special verbs which behave very differently from normal verbs. Here are some rules to remember:

1. 1. Modals do not take -*s* in the third person. \*Exception: *have (got) to* She *has* *to* **go**.

* Tom *must***take** a break.
* Elise *should***see** the counselor.

1. Several modal verbs cannot be used in the past tenses or the future tenses.

* She *~~will can~~* **give** us a ride to the airport tomorrow.
* He *~~must~~* **leave** early yesterday.

1. Most modals are followed by **only the base form** of the verb and are **not used alone** unless there is a clear connection to a main verb. Example🡪*Will* you **take** me? Yes, I *will*.

* Bill *could* ~~saw~~ **see** the fireworks from his bedroom window.
* Hillary *should* [**save**] her money.

1. Do not use *to* unnecessarily: \*Exceptions: *ought to, have (got) to, be able to*

* We *had better* ~~to~~ **leave** now.

1. 5. Do not use double modals: \*Exceptions: *be able to* You *won’t be able* *to* **register**.

* She *might ~~can~~* **help** me.

## Perfect Modals and their Meanings

| **Modal** | **Meaning** | **Example** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **may have** | -past possibility (not certain) | John **may have been** at the library yesterday. He wasn’t home when I called him. |
| **might have** | -past possibility (not certain) | John **might** **have** **been** at the library yesterday. He wasn’t home when I called him. |
|  | -blame/complaint | The event was cancelled. You **might have called** me. |
|  | -possible result of unreal situation | If they had invited me, I **might have gone**. |
| **should have** | -regret | You **should have asked** the teacher for help. |
|  | -past expectation | I studied, so I **should have passed** the test. |
| **ought to have** | -regret | You **ought to have** **studied** for the test. |
|  | -past expectation | I studied, so I **ought to have passed** the test. |
| **must have** | -assumption about the past (certain) | Heidi **must not have felt** very good yesterday. She didn’t show up to work. |
| **had to have** | -assumption about the past (certain) | Heidi **had to have been** sick yesterday. She didn’t show up to work. |
| **could have** | -past suggestion | You **could have talked** to your professor. |
|  | -past possibility (not certain) | John **could have been** at the library yesterday. |
|  | -past impossibility (negative only) | He **couldn’t have eaten** the whole pizza by himself. |
|  | -possible result of past unreal situation | If you had called me earlier, I **could’ve given** you a ride to the airport. |
| **would have** | -certain result of past unreal situation | I **would have made** you a sandwich if I had known you were hungry. |

## How to Form Verbs with Perfect Modals: modal + HAVE + past participle

Example 🡪I **should have taken** that class earlier.

Do not use the past form of the verb. You need to use the past participle, which sometimes looks like the past form, but other times it does not. Here are some verbs and their past participles:

| **Simple Form** | **Past Participle** | **Simple Form** | **Past Participle** | **Simple Form** | **Past Participle** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| awake | awoken | get | gotten | see | seen |
| be | been | give | given | sell | sold |
| become | become | go | gone | send | sent |
| begin | begun | grow | grown | sing | sung |
| blow | blown | have | had | sit | sat |
| break | broken | hear | heard | sleep | slept |
| buy | bought | keep | kept | speak | spoken |
| catch | caught | know | known | stand | stood |
| choose | chosen | lay | laid | steal | stolen |
| come | come | leave | left | sweep | swept |
| do | done | lie | lain | swim | swum |
| draw | drawn | lose | lost | take | taken |
| drink | drunk | make | made | teach | taught |
| drive | driven | mean | meant | tell | told |
| eat | eaten | meet | met | think | thought |
| fall | fallen | pay | paid | throw | thrown |
| feel | felt | ride | ridden | understand | understood |
| find | found | rise | risen | wear | worn |
| fly | flown | run | run | win | won |
| forget | forgotten | say | said | write | written |

## How to Make Questions and Negative Statements

**Negative statements**: Start with the subject , then the modal, followed by**not**, and then the rest of the verb.

I will pay you back.

I will **not** pay you back.

We should go.

We should **not** go.

She must have seen me.

She must **not** have seen me.

**Questions**: Start with the modal, then the subject , and then the rest of the verb. You can add a **wh**- word at the beginning if you need it.

She must finish the project.

Must she finish the project?

**Why** must she finish it? I should attend

Should I attend?

**Which** should I attend? They could have returned the key.

Could they have returned the key?

**How** could they have returned it?

\* *Have (got) to* agrees with the subject and needs a helper for questions and negative statements.

I have (got) to go.

I **do not** have (got) to go.

**Do** I have to go?

Where **do** I have to go?

He has to go.

He **does not** have to go.

**Does** he have to go?

Why **does** he have to go?

We have to go.

We **do not** have to go.

**Do** we have to go?

When **do** we have to go?

## Other Modals

Modal verbs can be used in a variety of different forms. There are progressive modals (*You should be studying right now.*), perfect progressive modals (*You should have been studying instead of watching TV*.), and even passive modals (*Precaution should be taken*.), among others.

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Modals Review

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| What are modals? |
|  |
| List three rules about modals. |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

## 2. Online Quiz

Go to http://tinyurl.com/ModalsExpressionsDLAQuiz and take the [Modals DLA Quiz](http://tinyurl.com/ModalsExpressionsDLAQuiz). You must score at least 80% on the exercises before seeing a tutor. After you complete the task, **PLEASE ASK A LAB TUTOR OR FRONT DESK ATTENDANT TO PRINT THE PAGE THAT HAS YOUR SCORE. DO NOT EXIT THE PROGRAM UNTIL THIS PAGE HAS BEEN PRINTED (FREE OF CHARGE).** If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to ask a lab tutor.

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

## 3a. Correct Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work. Find FIVE different sentences that have modal errors. Write them down below, and then write the corrected sentence with the appropriate adjective below the original sentence.

**Example**

* Original sentence: John must left early yesterday.
* Corrected sentence: John had to leave early yesterday.

| Write the answer. |
| --- |
| 1a. Original Sentence |
|  |
| 1b. Corrected Sentence |
|  |
| 2a. Original Sentence |
|  |
| 2b. Corrected Sentence |
|  |
| 3a. Original Sentence |
|  |
| 3b. Corrected Sentence |
|  |
| 4a. Original Sentence |
|  |
| 4b. Corrected Sentence |
|  |
| 5a. Original Sentence |
|  |
| 5b. Corrected Sentence |
|  |

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).**

## 3b. Write Your Own Sentences

Make sentences using the following modals correctly.

| Write your own sentences |
| --- |
| 1. must have (assumption about the past): |
| 1. have got to (necessity): |
|  |
| 1. ought to (advice): |
|  |
| 1. could have (past suggestion): |
|  |
| 1. may (future possibility): |
|  |
| 1. might (assumption): |
|  |
| 1. should (expectation): |
|  |
| 1. should have (regret): |
|  |
| 1. may have (past possibility): |
|  |
| 1. ought to have (past expectation): |
|  |

## Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your work to demonstrate your understanding of modals and similar expressions. Refer to your own graded writing (or the completed activity) and explain to the tutor strategies that you used to create sentences with accurate modals and similar expressions.

Student’s Signature:

Tutor’s Signature

Date:

Date:

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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