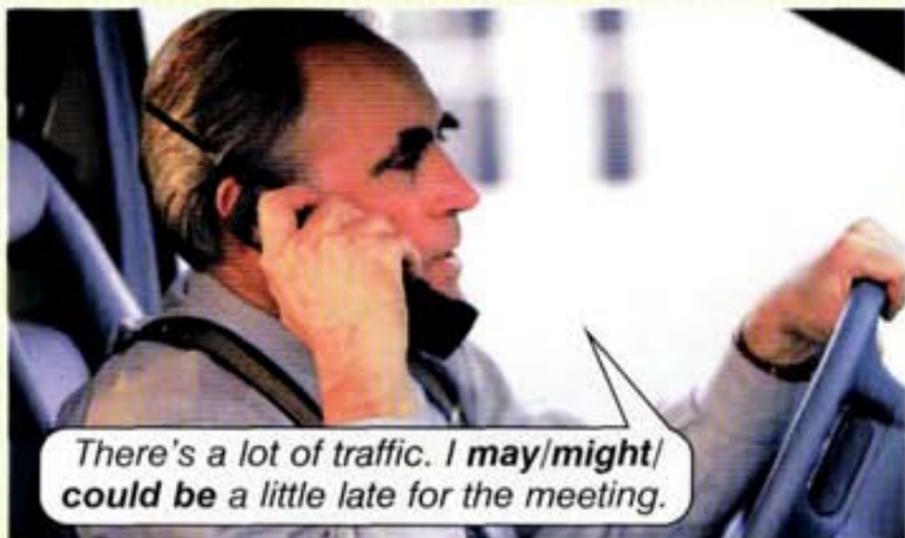


### May - Might - Could (possibility - asking for permission)



- ◆ We use **may/might/could** to express possibility.  
e.g. 'Where's Paul?' 'He **may/might/could be** at the cinema.' (Perhaps he is at the cinema.)
- ◆ We use **May I...?/Could I...?/Can I...?** to ask for permission. Note the difference in the following questions.  
*May I use your telephone?* (Formal – we do not know the other person very well.)  
*Can I use your phone?* (Informal – we know the other person very well.)  
*Could I use your phone?* (more polite than 'can'.)
- ◆ When someone asks for our permission, we can reply in the following ways: **Yes, of course./Of course./Certainly**. When we know the other person very well, we can reply with **Sure.** or **No problem.**

**maybe** (adv) = perhaps  
e.g. Jack isn't here. **Maybe** he's at home.  
**may be** (modal + bare infinitive)  
e.g. Sheila **may be** in the office.

### 1 Fill in the gaps with *may* or *may not* and one of the verbs from the list.

*leave, buy, come, be, enjoy, cut, go, visit, cook*

- 1 I ...*may not go*... to school tomorrow. I don't feel very well.
- 2 Father ..... the grass today. It looks as if it is going to rain.
- 3 Dan isn't at home. He ..... at the football field.
- 4 I ..... a new dress. I haven't really got enough money.
- 5 We ..... the Smiths. There is a film on TV we want to watch.
- 6 Let's take Molly to the funfair. She ..... it.
- 7 Mother ..... something special tonight. It's my birthday.
- 8 I ..... work early today. I have almost finished everything I have to do.
- 9 Sally ..... home late tonight. She's got a lot of work at the office.

### 2 Underline the correct answer.



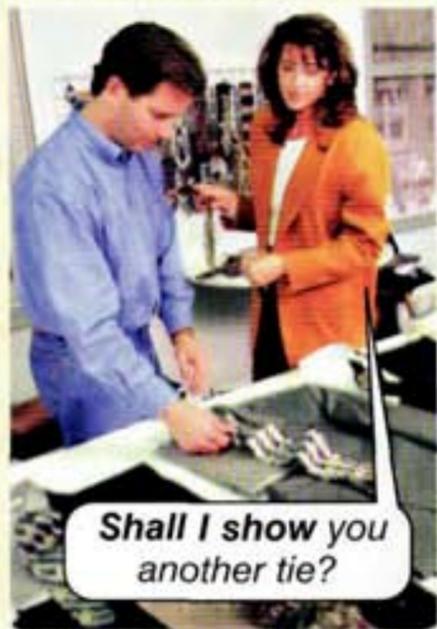
- A: Good morning, madam. 1) May/Must I help you?  
B: You 2) might/mustn't be able to. I need a ball of wool that is the same colour as my jumper.
- A: Just a moment, please. I 3) must/mustn't look in the stock room. We 4) might/might not have some left. I'm not sure.  
B: The wool 5) must/mustn't be exactly the same colour, it 6) must/mustn't be different.
- A: 7) Could/Mustn't I ask you a question, madam?  
B: Yes.  
A: What do you want the wool for?  
B: I 8) could/must finish knitting this jumper. It only has one sleeve at the moment!

**Should - Ought to** (advice)  
**Shall - Will**  
 (offer - suggestion - request)



◆ We use **should/ought to** to give advice.  
 e.g. Young children **should/ought to** go to bed early.

You **should not/shouldn't** } **spend** so much  
**ought not to/oughtn't to** } money on clothes.



◆ We use **shall** in questions a) when we offer to do something, e.g. **Shall I** carry your shopping for you? (Would you like me to carry your shopping for you?), b) when we make suggestions. e.g. **Shall we** visit your cousins tonight? and c) when we ask for suggestions. e.g. 'What time **shall I** call you?' 'Give me a call at six.'

◆ We use **will** in questions when we want to make a request. e.g. **Will you** phone the doctor, please?

**3** Joan doesn't always do the right thing. What does her mother advise her to do? Use the prompts to make sentences, as in the example.

e.g. You **should** do your homework.

- She doesn't do her homework.
- She talks all the time.
- She never washes the dishes.
- She doesn't tidy her room.
- She eats lots of chocolate.
- She argues with her sisters.
- She doesn't put her clothes away.
- She never takes the dog for a walk.

**4** Fill in the gaps with the question words from the list and **shall we**.

when, what, how, how much, who, where

- 1 'Where **shall we** go on Saturday night?'  
'Let's go to a restaurant.'
- 2 '..... spend on a present for Jane?'  
'£10.'
- 3 '..... pay?' 'In cash.'
- 4 '..... invite to the party?' 'Just our friends.'
- 5 '..... decorate the house?' 'This weekend.'
- 6 '..... do on your birthday?'  
'We can have a party.'
- 7 '..... do on Monday?'  
'Why don't we go swimming?'
- 8 '..... take the dog for a walk?'  
'Let's take him to the beach.'

**5** Mrs Patterson asks the nanny to do some things while she's gone. Use the prompts to make requests, as in the example.

e.g. Will you give the baby a bath?

	• give the baby a bath		• take the rubbish out
	• feed the baby		• water the plants
	• put all the toys away		• iron the clothes

## Functions of Modal Verbs

FUNCTION	MODAL VERBS
obligation/ necessity	You <b>must/have to</b> study hard. (You're obliged to ...)
advice	You <b>must/should/ought to</b> see a doctor. (I advise you to ...)
prohibition	You <b>mustn't</b> talk in the library. (You aren't allowed to...)
lack of necessity	They <b>needn't/don't have to</b> call us tonight. (It isn't necessary.)
ability	Tony <b>can</b> run fast. (present) When he was young, he <b>could</b> climb trees. (general ability in the past) She <b>was able to</b> get into the house. (single action in the past)
permission	<b>Can/Could/May</b> I use your phone? (asking for permission) You <b>can</b> take my car tonight. (giving permission) You <b>can't</b> take photographs inside the museum. (refusing permission)
request	<b>Can</b> you lend me your pen, please? <b>Could</b> you open the door, please? <b>Will</b> you post this letter?
suggestion	We <b>can/could</b> watch a film tonight. <b>Shall</b> we eat out tonight? (Why don't we eat/How about eating out tonight?)
possibility	He <b>may/might/could</b> be ill. (Perhaps; it is possible.)
offer	<b>Shall</b> I carry the shopping for you? (Would you like me to carry ...?)
logical assumption	She <b>must be</b> at work. (I'm sure she is ...) She <b>can't be</b> at work. (I'm sure she isn't ...)

### 6 Rewrite the sentences using modal verbs, as in the example.

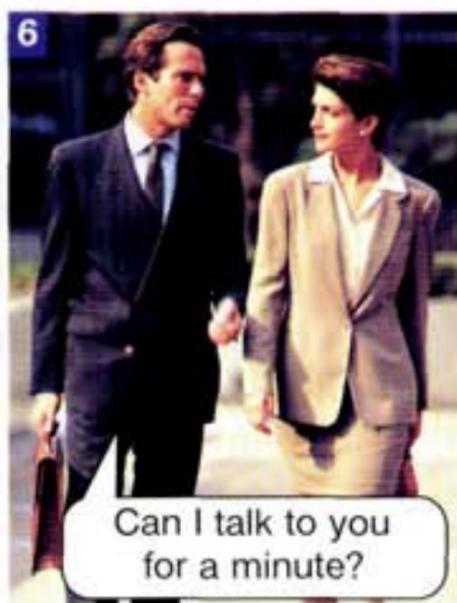
- It isn't necessary for her to wear a suit to the office.  
*She needn't/doesn't have to wear a suit to the office.*
- You aren't allowed to take those books out of the library.  
.....
- It is possible that Mark will be at home this evening.  
.....
- Would you like me to make some sandwiches for you?  
.....
- I advise you to leave early.  
.....
- Emily managed to find a job after looking for six months.  
.....
- I'm sure Paul isn't from Canada.  
.....
- We are obliged to take exams every six months.  
.....
- I'm sure the children aren't happy with your decision.  
.....
- Perhaps we will go to Florida on holiday.  
.....

### 7 Choose the correct answer.

- I ...C... remember to go to the bank. I haven't got any money.  
A don't have to    B needn't    C must
- ..... I take your order, please?  
A Mustn't    B Must    C May
- ..... you ride a bicycle?  
A Can    B Should    C May
- Steven ..... read and write until he was seven years old.  
A must    B could    C couldn't
- ..... you make dinner tonight?  
A Shall    B Will    C May
- Susan, ..... you come outside and play with me?  
A will    B shall    C may
- You ..... go to bed late during the week.  
A couldn't    B shall    C shouldn't
- You ..... visit your grandparents more often.  
A ought to    B were able to    C shall
- ..... we go to the cinema at the weekend?  
A Mustn't    B May    C Shall
- 'Where ..... we meet?' 'At my place.'  
A must    B shall    C ought to

- 11 Peter ..... go to the dentist before his toothache gets worse.  
A ought to      B shall      C can
- 12 You ..... do the ironing. I'll do it instead.  
A needn't      B must      C mustn't
- 13 You ..... cross the road without looking first. It's dangerous.  
A needn't      B mustn't      C must

**8** Read what each person says and rewrite their comments using another modal verb.



- 1 Will you read louder, please?
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

- 4 .....
- 5 .....
- 6 .....

**9** Match the sentences in Column A with the responses in Column B.

Column A

- 1 Do I have to do the shopping today?
- 2 Can I ask you a question?
- 3 Will you buy me some stamps at the post office?
- 4 If you're tired, we could have a short break.
- 5 May I borrow your mobile phone, please?
- 6 Edward can't be in his office.

Column B

- a Certainly.
- b Yes, that would be nice.
- c No, you don't. I did it yesterday.
- d Yes, I agree. He must be at the bank.
- e Sure. How many do you want?
- f Of course. What do you want to know?

- 1 ...c...    2 .....    3 .....    4 .....    5 .....    6 .....

**10** Underline the correct item.

Dear Henry,

I'm writing to you because I need some advice. 1) Can/Shall you help me, please? My boss offered me a job in Italy and I 2) could/must make a decision about it soon. I've been thinking about it since last week but I 3) haven't been able to/wasn't able to decide! I'm a bit worried that I 4) shall/may not enjoy living in another country. I 5) might/ought to find it difficult to learn Italian. However, I 6) won't have to/mustn't stay there if I don't like it. What do you think? 7) Should/Will I move to Italy or 8) could/should I stay here? 9) Could/May you write to me and tell me what you think?

I hope to hear from you soon.

Best wishes,  
Ronnie

**11** Fill in the gaps with an appropriate modal verb. Sometimes more than one answer is correct.

- 1 A: I ...*could*... roller-skate when I was young.  
B: So could I. Those were the days.
- 2 A: Dad's car broke down yesterday.  
B: ..... he ..... repair it?  
A: No, he took it to the garage.
- 3 A: Those men look alike. They .....  
be brothers.  
B: Yes, they are.
- 4 A: You ..... leave your toys on the floor.  
B: Why?  
A: You'll cause an accident.
- 5 A: Shall I do Grandma's shopping for her?  
B: No, you..... . She wants to do it herself.
- 6 A: You ..... tidy your bedroom today.  
B: Oh, do I ..... ?
- 7 A: Where is Colin?  
B: I'm not sure. He ..... be in his office.
- 8 A: What ..... we do at the weekend?  
B: We ..... go swimming.
- 9 A: My brother ..... ride a motorbike.  
B: Really? ..... he drive a car, too?
- 10 A: I'm really tired.  
B: You ..... go to bed early tonight.
- 11 A: ..... I help you, sir?  
B: No thank you. I'm just looking around.

**IN OTHER WORDS**

Study these examples. The second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- 1 I advise you to look for another job.  
**should** You **should look for** another job.  
**ought** You **ought to look for** another job.
- 2 Perhaps Mary is at the library.  
**may** Mary **may be at the** library.
- 3 Let's leave the party now.  
**shall** **Shall we leave** the party now?
- 4 I'm sure Jack isn't married.  
**can't** Jack **can't be** married.
- 5 I'm sure Peter has a lot of money.  
**must** Peter **must have a lot of** money.

**12** Complete each sentence with two to five words including the word in bold.

- 1 Perhaps Nick is at the office.  
**may** Nick ...*may be at the*... office.
- 2 I don't think Mary is very happy at the moment.  
**can't** Mary ..... very happy at the moment.

- 3 I'm bored. Let's watch TV.  
**shall** I'm bored. .... TV?
- 4 I'm sure those are Paula's sunglasses.  
**must** Those ..... Paula's sunglasses.
- 5 I advise you to stop eating fatty foods.  
**ought** You ..... fatty foods.
- 6 Perhaps the children are in the playground.  
**may** The children ..... playground.
- 7 I'm sure they come from Spain. They've got a Spanish accent.  
**must** They .....  
They've got a Spanish accent.

**13** Read the situations and complete the sentences with an appropriate modal verb.

- 1 You are at school. Your teacher tells you to bring your homework with you tomorrow.  
*You must* bring your homework with you tomorrow.
- 2 You have fallen over. Your arm hurts. Your friend thinks it might be broken. She advises you to go to hospital.  
..... go to hospital.
- 3 Your friend is having a birthday party on Saturday. You want to go. Ask your parents for permission.  
..... go to my friend's party on Saturday?
- 4 You are eating lunch with your family. You can't reach the salt. Make a request.  
..... pass the salt, please?
- 5 Your mother asks you where your brother is. You think he is at the cinema with his friends.  
..... be at the cinema with his friends.
- 6 Your parents are planning to go on holiday this summer. They can't decide where to go. You suggest going to America.  
..... go to America.
- 7 You are at the beach with your mother. She is going to buy a drink. She asks you if you want anything. Ask for an ice-cream.  
..... buy me an ice-cream, please?

**14** Correct the mistakes.

- 1 Might we visit Mary and Tony tonight?
- 2 I'm not sure where Ed is. He **mustn't** be at work.
- 3 Will I help you wash the dishes?
- 4 You **mustn't** get up early tomorrow. It's a holiday.
- 5 Martha had a bad cold but she **could** do all her work at the office.
- 6 You **shouldn't** go to the dentist if you have toothache.
- 7 Shall I borrow your pen, please?
- 8 I **might** climb trees when I was young.