

# UNIT 9

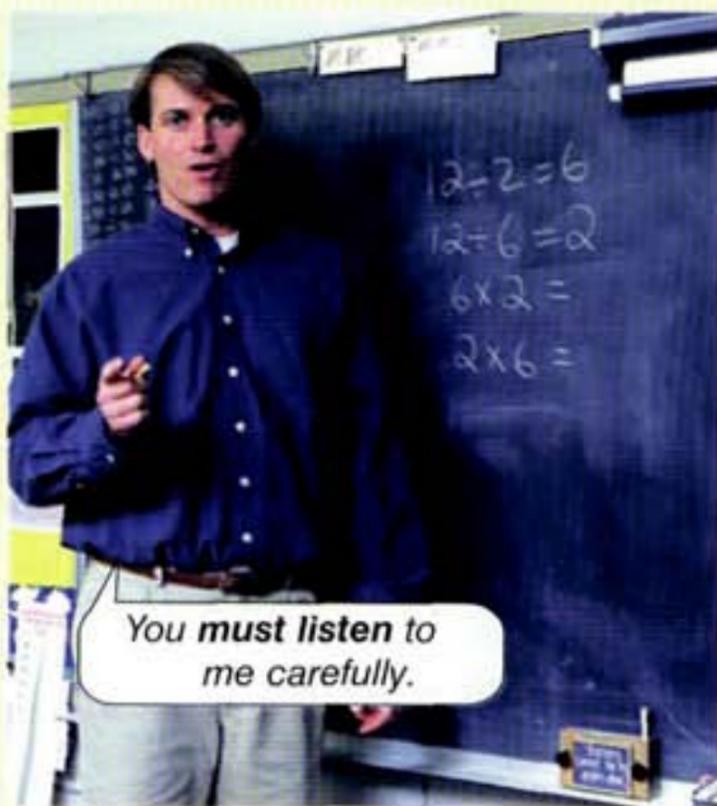
## Modal Verbs I

The verbs **must, can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should** and **ought** are **modal auxiliary verbs**. They express certainty, possibility, obligation, necessity, lack of necessity, etc.

The main characteristics of modal verbs are the following:

- ◆ they do not take an -s, -ing or -ed suffix. e.g. *He can cook.* (NOT: ~~He cans cook.~~)
- ◆ they form questions, negations and short answers without the auxiliary verb 'do'.  
e.g. *May I go now?* (NOT: ~~Do I may go now?~~)  
*They shouldn't make any noise.* (NOT: ~~They don't should make any noise.~~)
- ◆ they are followed by a bare infinitive except for ought which is followed by a to - infinitive.  
e.g. *You must fasten your seat-belt.* (NOT: ~~You must to fasten your seat belt.~~)
- ◆ they do not form all tenses. They usually have present or past tense.  
e.g. *He can play water polo.* (present tense) *He could ski when he was young.* (past tense)

### Must - Have to (obligation - necessity - advice)



- ◆ **Must** and **have to** express obligation and necessity.  
e.g. *You must come home early.*  
*I have to be at the office at nine o'clock.*
- ◆ **Must** can only be used in the present tense. We use **have to** to form all the other tenses.  
e.g. *I'll have to work late tomorrow.*  
*He had to leave early yesterday.* (NOT: ~~He must leave early yesterday.~~)
- ◆ We also use **must** to give advice.  
e.g. *You must talk to your brother about it.*  
*You mustn't be late for school.*

**1** Clare has got a cold. She has gone to the doctor's. Look at the prompts and say what the doctor advises her (not) to do.

- stay in bed  
*You must stay in bed.* 
- go to the office for three days 
- take some medicine 
- drink a lot of water 
- eat any ice-cream 
- take your temperature twice a day 
- call me if you have a high temperature 

**2** Look at the prompts given. In pairs, ask and answer questions, as in the example.

SA: *Why did he go to the supermarket yesterday?*  
SB: *Because he had to do some shopping.*

- 1 he / go to the supermarket / do some shopping
- 2 she / go to the post office / post some letters
- 3 they / call the babysitter / attend a meeting
- 4 he / call a taxi / go to the airport
- 5 she / buy a dictionary / translate a novel
- 6 they / go to a restaurant / entertain some clients

**3 Fill in the gaps with don't/doesn't have to, didn't have to or won't have to.**

- 1 Tomorrow is Saturday, so I ...*won't have to*... go to school.
- 2 I've already finished my project, so I ..... do it in the holidays.
- 3 We bought a takeaway pizza last night, so we ..... cook dinner.
- 4 Tom and Mary have got a washing-machine, so they ..... go to the laundrette.
- 5 Steve passed his driving test, so he ..... take it again.
- 6 Sally is very rich, so she ..... work.
- 7 They bought tickets in advance, so they ..... wait in the queue.
- 8 Jane's mother wakes her up, so she ..... use an alarm clock.
- 9 I have already read the book, so I ..... read it again.
- 10 Sam never makes a mess, so he ..... tidy his room very often.

**4 Fill in the gaps with mustn't or needn't/don't have to.**

- 1 A: You ...*mustn't*... do that again! It was very naughty!  
B: I'm sorry.
- 2 A: Shall I put some petrol in the car?  
B: No, you ..... I did it this morning.
- 3 A: You ..... be late tonight.  
B: I won't. I'll be home early.
- 4 A: Shall I give you a lift?  
B: No, you ..... I'll go by taxi.
- 5 A: You ..... forget to pay the bills today.  
B: I've already done it.
- 6 A: You ..... lose the money I gave you.  
B: I'll put it in a safe place.
- 7 A: You ..... buy a gift for Daisy's birthday.  
B: Alright. I'll just send a card.
- 8 A: Shall we take a picnic with us on Saturday?  
B: No, we ..... We're going to eat at a restaurant.

**IN OTHER WORDS**

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

- 1 Parking your car in this area is forbidden.  
**must** You *must not park your car* in this area.
- 2 It isn't necessary to buy any meat. We've got plenty.  
**needn't** You *needn't buy any* meat. We've got plenty.  
**have** You *don't have to buy* any meat. We've got plenty.
- 3 Is it necessary for you to call him?  
**have** Do *you have to call* him?

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

- 1 It isn't necessary to wait for us.  
**have** You ...*don't have to wait*... for us.
- 2 Taking pictures inside the museum is forbidden.  
**must** You ..... inside the museum.
- 3 Is it necessary for you to leave so early?  
**have** Do ..... so early?
- 4 It isn't necessary to go by taxi. I'll give you a lift.  
**needn't** You ..... by taxi. I'll give you a lift.
- 5 Keeping pets in the building is forbidden.  
**must** You ..... in the building.
- 6 It isn't necessary to water the flowers.  
**have** You ..... the flowers.

**Mustn't - Needn't**  
(prohibition - lack of necessity)



You *mustn't be* late again, Miss Jones.



You *needn't iron* the shirt. I'll do it.

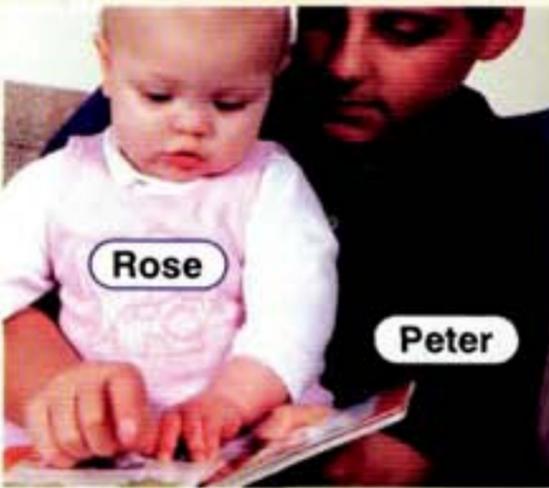
◆ **Must not/Mustn't** (you aren't allowed to/it is against the rules) expresses prohibition.

e.g. You *mustn't park* here. (It is against the rules.)

◆ **Needn't** (it isn't necessary) expresses lack of necessity. We can use **don't/doesn't have to** instead of **needn't** with no difference in meaning.

e.g. You *needn't/don't have to buy* me a gift. (It isn't necessary for you to buy me a gift.)

Can - Could - Be able to (ability)



Peter can read but his sister, Rose, can't.



Mrs Turner could play tennis before she had the accident.



Rachel was able to reach the top of the mountain.

- ◆ **Can** expresses ability and **can't** expresses lack of ability in the present.  
e.g. Kate **can** speak a foreign language. Tim **can't** play the piano.
- ◆ **Could** expresses general ability in the past.  
e.g. Alan **could** sing very well when he was young. (But now he can't.)
- ◆ **Was/Were able to** (managed to do) expresses ability that we had in the past in a particular situation. It shows that someone did something, but with effort.  
e.g. It was a very difficult test, but Meryl **was able to** answer all the questions. (She managed to answer all the questions.)
- ◆ **Couldn't** expresses lack of ability in the past, either generally or in a particular situation.  
e.g. My little brother **couldn't** ride a bicycle when he was two. (Generally, not in a particular situation.)  
Helen tried but she **couldn't** open the door. (She didn't manage to open the door – lack of ability in a particular situation)

We use **could** (not ~~was/were able to~~) with the verbs **see, hear, feel, smell, taste, understand, remember, guess**, etc.  
e.g. Marian **could** feel that something was wrong the moment she entered the room. (NOT: ~~Marian was able to feel that...~~)

**Can** has only present and past tenses. We use **be able to** to form all the other tenses (future simple, present perfect, etc.).

e.g. I hope I'll **be able to** take you out to dinner next week.

**6** Look at the prompts given and, in pairs, make sentences, as in the example.

SA: They **can't** enjoy much peace and quiet now.  
SB: When the children grow up, they'll **be able to** enjoy some peace and quiet.



**NOW**

- enjoy much peace and quiet
- go out in the evenings
- do lots of sports
- visit their friends often
- go to the theatre with their friends



**7** Fill in the gaps with **can/can't, could/couldn't** or **was/were able to**.

- 1 When I arrived, I ...**could**... see a few people waiting for the train.
- 2 After saving their money for ten years, they ..... buy a house
- 3 Sam and Beth ..... speak Italian fluently  
can't they?
- 4 ..... you tie your shoelaces when you were four years old?
- 5 It was a very tricky question, but Paul ..... answer it.
- 6 I ..... hear what they were saying because the music was too loud.
- 7 Although it was difficult, the children ..... build a tree house.
- 8 Susan ..... come to the phone. She's busy

**8** Fill in the gaps with *could*, *couldn't* or *was able to*.

I was walking in the woods one evening when something terrible happened. I slipped and fell down a hill into a stream. It was quite dark and I 1) *...couldn't...* see very well. I called for help but no one 2) ..... hear me. I had hurt my ankle and I 3) ..... walk very easily, but I tried. After some time, I 4) ..... start going up the hill again.

It was late and I was cold and wet. I wanted to go home, but it was too far to walk. It took me a long time, but eventually I reached the edge of the woods. There was a house there, so I 5) ..... call my father. He came in the car and took me home. The following day, the doctor came and examined my ankle. I had to stay in bed for two days. It was a week before I 6) ..... walk properly again.

**9** Choose the correct answer.

- I ...*A*... understand what he was saying because he was speaking Spanish.  
A couldn't      B can't      C can
- Steven ..... walk when he was one year old.  
A can't      B can      C could
- The door was locked so I ..... go inside.  
A will be able to    B wasn't able to    C can
- We ..... go out for a meal since we bought the car.  
A has been able to    B haven't been able to  
C can
- When I am older, I ..... live by myself.  
A can't      B have been able to  
C will be able to
- I ..... run faster than my brother now.  
A will be able to    B could      C can
- Jenny ..... type since she went to college.  
A has been able to    B can      C can't
- I ..... hear you very well. Please speak louder.  
A am able to    B can      C can't
- We arrived at the shop just as it was closing, so we ..... do our shopping.  
A are able to    B can      C couldn't
- My brother ..... drive yet. He's too young.  
A can      B can't      C couldn't

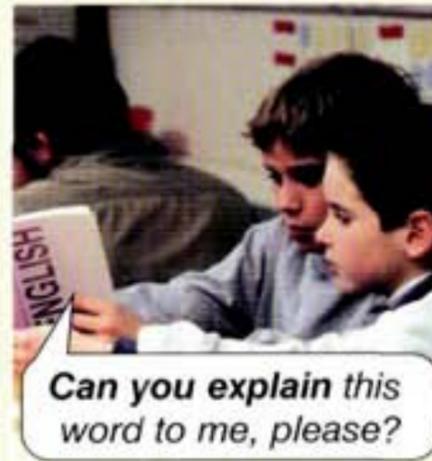
**Can - Could**  
(permission - request - suggestion)

We also use **can** and **could** to:

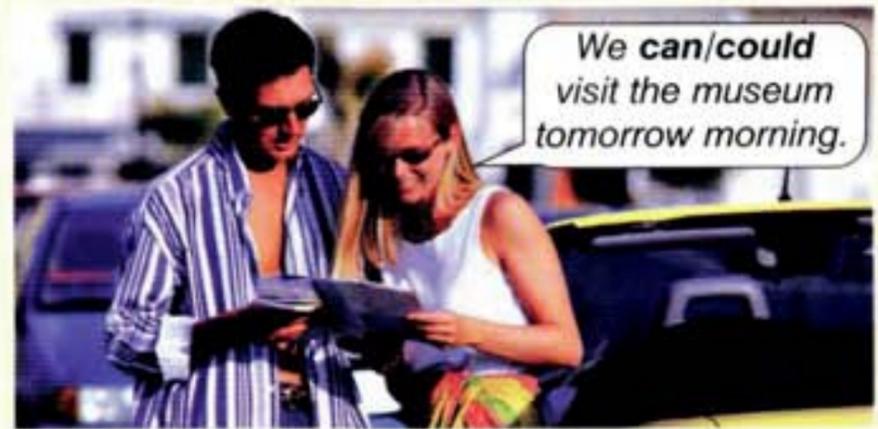
- ask for permission. **Could** is more formal and polite than **can**.



- make a request. **Could** is more polite than **can**.



- make a suggestion.



**10** What do **can** and **could** express in each sentence?

- We **can** watch the new show on TV. (*suggestion*)
- It was cold last Saturday so we **couldn't** go on a picnic.
- Can** I go camping with my friends at the weekend?
- If you are not feeling well, you **could** stay at home.
- Could** you shut the window, please?
- Could** I speak to you for a moment, please?
- Can** you call Greg and tell him I'll be late?

## Can - Can't (giving/refusing permission)

- ◆ We use **can** to give permission.  
e.g. You **can** sit here.
- ◆ We use **can't** to refuse permission.  
e.g. You **can't** use this computer.

### 11 Look at the pictures and make sentences using can or can't.

e.g. You **can't** take photographs here.

		
1 take photographs	2 smoke	3 park
		
4 cross the road	5 ride a bicycle	6 have coffee

### 12 Fill in the gaps with can, can't or could. Then, say what they express in each sentence.

- A: Mum, ...**can**... I go on holiday with my friends this year? (*asking for permission*)  
B: I'm afraid you ..... . You're too young.
- A: Sir, I need to leave work early tonight, if that's possible.  
B: You ..... leave early if you finish all your work first.
- A: My mum always said that I was a clever child.  
B: What do you mean?  
A: Well, I ..... read and write when I was four years old.
- A: It's raining, so we ..... go out tonight.  
B: Well, we'll stay in then.  
A: But, I want to do something nice. I'm bored.  
B: We ..... play chess.
- A: Excuse me?  
B: Yes.  
A: ..... you tell me the time, please?  
B: Yes, it's almost two o'clock.

- A: What skills do you have?  
B: Well, I ..... use computers and I ..... speak two foreign languages.
- A: What shall we buy Mum for her birthday?  
B: We ..... get a big box of chocolates.
- A: It's hot in here. .... you open the window, please?  
B: Of course.
- A: I'm going to the shops. I won't be long.  
B: Alright.  
A: Do you want anything?  
B: Yes. .... you get me a magazine?

## Must - Can't (logical assumption)



They **must** be lost.



They **can't** be at home.

- ◆ We use **must** for positive logical assumptions.  
e.g. Jason **must** be at work. (*I'm sure Jason is at work.*)
- ◆ We use **can't** for negative logical assumptions.  
e.g. Sam **can't** know about this. (*I'm sure Sam doesn't know about this. NOT: ~~Sam mustn't know about this.~~*)

### 13 Fill in the gaps with must or can't.

- A: Wow! Look at that man in the beautiful car.  
B: Yes, he ...**must**... be very rich.
- A: I passed my exam!  
B: Congratulations. You ..... be very happy.
- A: Aunt Sheila's dog died.  
B: Oh no. She ..... be very sad.
- A: That woman always wears smart clothes and lots of jewellery.  
B: I know. She ..... be poor.
- A: I've been working all day without a break.  
B: Sit down, you ..... be really tired.
- A: I've finished tidying my room. I'm ready to leave now.  
B: You ..... be ready so soon! You only started ten minutes ago!

**14 Correct the mistakes.**

- 1 You can go out until you finish eating.
- 2 Dad, must I borrow the car, please?
- 3 I haven't be able to write the letter yet.
- 4 He can't run long distances when he was a boy.
- 5 You mustn't wake up early tomorrow. It's a holiday.
- 6 He drives a Porsche. He must be poor.

**Revision Box**

**15 Fill in the gaps with the present simple, present continuous, past simple, present perfect, future simple or be going to.**



Charles Maxwell 1) *...works...* (work) in a bank in the centre of London. At the moment he 2) .....  
 ..... (look) for a new house. He 3) .....  
 ..... (live) with his parents all of his life but now he 4) .....  
 ..... (want) to move because he 5) .....  
 ..... (decide) to get married. So far, he 6) .....  
 ..... (look) at ten houses, but he 7) .....  
 ..... (not/like) any of them. He 8) .....  
 ..... (see) another one later today. He thinks he 9) .....  
 ..... (like) it because he 10) .....  
 ..... (already/see) a photograph of it and it 11) .....  
 ..... (be) beautiful. Good luck, Charles!

**ORAL Activity**

Alan Roland has just become the director of the company he works for. Look at the information below and talk about the changes in Alan's life, using the modal verbs in the list.

*has to - will have to - needn't/doesn't have to - can - will be able to - won't be able to*

e.g. Alan has to go to work earlier now.



Alan

Mary (wife)

Rick and Kate (children)

- go to work earlier now
- drive to work (a chauffeur picks him up)
- work overtime sometimes now
- send the children to a better school next year
- Mary not work any more (they have enough money)
- move to a bigger house next month
- take a family holiday this year (Alan has too much work)

**WRITING Activity**

Look at your notes from the Oral Activity and complete the letter that Alan has sent to his friend.

Dear Keith,

I'm writing to tell you that I got a promotion last month. I am the director of the company now, so our life has changed in a number of ways.

To begin with, I have to go to work earlier. ....

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....