

# Esercitazioni di lingua inglese

Corso di Laurea in Economia e Finanza  
a.a. 2019/2020

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# MODALS

- **What are modal verbs?**

Modal verbs are special verbs which behave differently from normal verbs. Here are some important differences:

- 1. Modal verbs do not take "-s" in the third person singular.**

- He **can** speak Chinese.
- She **should** be here by 9:00.

- 2. You use "not" to make modal verbs negative (exception: have to)**

- He **should not** be late.
- They **might not** come to the party.

- 3. Many modal verbs cannot be used in the past tenses or the future tenses. Other forms should be used.**

- He will can go with us. → *Not correct*
- She musted study very hard. → *Not correct*

# MODALS

4. They are always followed by the infinitive of the verb (the only exception: ought to):

## MODAL VERB + BARE INFINITIVE

- I **can swim**.
- You **must be** here by 9 o'clock.

They can express:

Possibility and Probability / **Obligation** / **Prohibition** / **Ability** / **Permission**

# MODALS

**Find the mistake in each sentence:**

- YOU MUST TO FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK.
- I DON'T CAN DRIVE.
- YOU SHOULD NOT TO SMOKE.
- WE NOT COULD CALL YOU.
- HE MIGHTS GO TO SLEEP.
- THEY CAN TO STAY WITH US.
- WE WOULD NOT TO ARRIVE ON TIME.
- SHE WILL RETURN SOON.

# MODALS

## Possibility / probability:

- It **will** happen → you're sure
- It **should** happen → it's probable, likely to happen
- It **can** happen → it's possible
- It **couldn't** happen → it's unlikely

YOU CAN USE A MODAL VERB TO EXPRESS **HOW CERTAIN** YOU ARE THAT SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN.

Ability / ask permission / offer help/ make requests

# MODALS

- *can*
- *could*
- *may*
- *might*
- *must*
- *ought to*
- *shall*
- *should*
- *will*
- *would*
- *have to*: this expression is not a modal but it is closely related to modals in meaning and is often interchanged with them

## Modals (can, must, have to, should)

<b>POSSIBILITÀ CAPACITÀ NON POSSIBILITÀ INCAPACITÀ</b>	<b>CAN/ CAN'T</b>	<b>to say something is/is not possible to say someone has/hasn't the ability to do something</b>
	<b>COULD/ COULDN'T</b>	<b>to say something was/wasn't possible in the past to say someone had/didn't have the ability in the past</b>
	<b>WILL BE ABLE TO/ WON'T BE ABLE TO</b>	<b>to say something will/won't be possible in the future to say someone will/won't have the ability in the future</b>
<b>NECESSITÀ OBBLIGO SOGGETTIVO, PERSONALE</b>	<b>MUST</b>	<b>to say that obligation is imposed by the speaker it is a personal obligation, something the speaker believes it is necessary</b>
<b>NECESSITÀ OBBLIGO IMPOSTO DALL'ESTERNO NON NECESSITÀ</b>	<b>HAVE TO/ DON'T HAVE TO</b>	<b>to say something is/is not necessary obligation comes from circumstances or external rules something has to be done, whether the speaker likes it or not</b>
<b>DARE CONSIGLI/ SUGGERIMENTI</b>	<b>SHOULD/ SHOULDN'T</b>	<b>to say something is/is not a good idea (opinion) no obligation here, rather a recommendation from the speaker</b>

# MODALS – Must

- We also use **must** to express a **strong obligation**. This usually means that some personal circumstance makes the **obligation necessary** (and the speaker almost certainly agrees with the obligation or the obligation comes from the speaker himself/herself).

A) *I must go to bed earlier.*

B) *You must come and see us some time.*

C) *I must say, I don't think you were very nice to him.*

D) *You must have a permit to enter the park.*

- We can use **must** to show that we are certain something is true. We are making a **logical deduction** based upon some clear evidence or reason.

A) *There's no heating on. You must be freezing.*

B) *It must be nice to live in Florida.*

C) *You must be thirsty after all that running.*

D) *It must be John. He said he would come at three o'clock.*

# MODALS – Must

Must is used to express a **strong recommendation**.

It can be substituted by **should** to mitigate the strength of the sentence.

- *You must see that film.*
- *You must take a day off and have some rest.*
- *You should take a day off.*
- *You should have a rest. = You **ought to** have a rest.*

We use «**you must**» or «**we must**» for a **very polite invitation**.

- *You must come round and see us.*
- *We must meet again soon.*

# MODALS – Have to

**Have to** is used to express obligation (when something is **necessary**). We can also express a **strong obligation**. Some **external circumstance makes the obligation necessary**.

- *Positive*

a) I **have to** work very unsociable hours.

b) She **has to** wear a uniform.

- *Negative*

c) I **don't have to** work at weekends.

d) John **doesn't have to** do any work at home.

- *Question*

e) **Do I have to** pay in advance?

f) **Does your father have to** travel a lot at his job?

# MODALS – Must and Have to

- In British English, we often use **have got to** that means the same as **have to**:
  - A) *I've got to take this book back to the library or I'll get a fine.*
  - B) *We've got to finish now as somebody else needs this room.*
- The differences between the affirmative forms of **must** and **have to** are sometimes very small and subtle. However, there is a huge difference in the **negative forms**. We use **mustn't** to express **strong obligations NOT to do something – PROHIBITION**:
  - A) *We mustn't talk about it. It's confidential.*
  - B) *You mustn't phone me at work. We aren't allowed personal calls.*
  - C) *Cars must not be parked in front of the bank.*

# MODALS – Don't have to

- We use **don't have to** (or **haven't got to** in British English) to state that there is **NO obligation or necessity**:

*A) We don't have to get there on time. The boss is away today.*

*B) You don't have to come if you don't want to.*

*C) He doesn't have to sign anything if he doesn't want to at this stage.*

# MODALS

## Difference between *mustn't* and *don't have to*

**Mustn't** means **it's not allowed**, or it's a **bad idea**.

- A) You mustn't eat so much chocolate, you'll be sick.
- B) You mustn't smoke here.

**Don't have to** means you **don't need to do something**, but it's fine if you want to do it. There's **no obligation** at all, no need to do it.

- A) I don't have to get up early at weekends (I can stay in bed as long as I want).
- B) You don't have to turn on the central heating. It's automatic.

# MODALS of obligation and prohibition - present

Present	Positive	Negative
have to / don't have to	<b>strong obligation (possibly from outside); rule</b> Children have to go to school. I have to be home by ten. She has to wear a uniform at work.	<b>no obligation</b> I don't have to work on Sundays. You don't have to eat anything you don't like.
must/ mustn't	<b>strong obligation (possibly based on the speaker's opinion); necessity; advice</b> I must study today. We must say good-bye now. You must start looking after yourself.	<b>negative obligation; prohibition</b> You mustn't smoke here. You mustn't park here. You mustn't eat in the classroom.
should / shouldn't	<b>mild obligation or advice; recommending action; predictions</b> You should save some money. You should take a few days off. I think we should check everything again.	<b>mild negative obligation or advice;</b> •You shouldn't smoke so much. •You shouldn't talk to him.

## **should, can, have to:** **obligation and permission**

**3** Make sentences with the same meaning. Use the words in brackets. Write 2–3 words.

- 1 It's a good idea to buy our tickets early.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ our tickets early. (should)
- 2 It isn't necessary to pay for children.  
You \_\_\_\_\_ pay for children. (have)
- 3 She needs to do her exam again.  
She \_\_\_\_\_ her exam again. (has)
- 4 Is it possible for me to go home now?  
\_\_\_\_\_ home now? (Can)
- 5 It's not a good idea to arrive late.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ late. (shouldn't)
- 6 She doesn't know how to drive.  
She \_\_\_\_\_. (can't)
- 7 Is it necessary to read this book?  
Do we \_\_\_\_\_ this book? (have)
- 8 It's healthy to eat more vegetables.  
You \_\_\_\_\_ more vegetables. (should)
- 9 Is it necessary for me to leave?  
Do \_\_\_\_\_ leave? (have)
- 10 I know how to fly an aeroplane.  
I \_\_\_\_\_ an aeroplane. (can)

1. We **SHOULD** buy our tickets early
2. You **DON'T HAVE TO** pay for children
3. She **HAS TO** do her exam again
4. **CAN I** go home now?
5. We **SHOULDN'T** arrive late
6. She **CAN'T** drive
7. Do we **HAVE TO** read this book?
8. You **SHOULD** eat more vegetables
9. Do I **HAVE TO** leave?
10. I **CAN** fly an aeroplane.

# MODALS of obligation and prohibition - past

Present	Positive	Negative
<b>had to / didn't have to</b>	<b>obligation/necessity in the past</b> I had to wear a school uniform when I was a child. I had to do all my homework before dinner. Everyone had to bring something to eat.	<b>no obligation in the past</b> We didn't have to go to school on Saturdays.
<b>should have + past participle / shouldn't have + past participle</b>	<b>a past action which didn't happen: the advice / regret is too late</b> You should have gone to bed earlier, now you have missed the train. I should have apologized earlier.	<b>a past action which didn't happen: the advice / regret is too late</b> You shouldn't have taken that job, it was a bad idea. I shouldn't have spoken to him like that.

# MODALS – must or mustn't ?

- 1) She is ill, so she \_\_\_\_\_ see the doctor.
- 2) It is raining. You \_\_\_\_\_ take your umbrella.
- 3) You \_\_\_\_\_ throw litter on the stairs.
- 4) This is a secret. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell anybody.
- 5) You \_\_\_\_\_ make noise in the library.
- 6) We \_\_\_\_\_ hurry or we will miss the bus.
- 7) You \_\_\_\_\_ eat fruit and vegetables.
- 8) You \_\_\_\_\_ walk on the grass.
- 9) You \_\_\_\_\_ take notes during the lessons.
- 10) You \_\_\_\_\_ speak loudly in hospitals.

# MODALS – mustn't or don't have to?

- 1) It is forbidden. You \_\_\_\_\_ do that.
- 2) You \_\_\_\_\_ ask my permission. You can do what you want.
- 3) You \_\_\_\_\_ speak to the driver when the bus is moving. It's dangerous.
- 4) You \_\_\_\_\_ park here. There is a double yellow line.
- 5) Pay me back when you can. You \_\_\_\_\_ do it immediately.
- 6) It's optional. We \_\_\_\_\_ to go if you don't want to.
- 7) I'll tell you a secret. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell any body else. Promise?
- 8) Emily \_\_\_\_\_ go to work today. It's a holiday.

# MODALS OF ABILITY

Ability can mean two things:

- 1) **General ability:** this is something that once you have learned you can do any time you want, like being able to read or swim or speak a language or ride a bike, for example.
- 2) **Specific ability:** this is something that you can or can't do in one particular situation. For example, being able to lift something heavy, or find what you are looking for.

There are three modal verbs used to show ability:

- **Can**
- **Could**
- **Be Able To**

# MODALS OF ABILITY

- Present

**Can / can't (for both general and specific ability)**

- a) I **can** play the piano.
- b) She **can** speak English.
- c) He **can't** drive, he's too tired.

You can say that somebody **is able to** do something, but **can** is more usual:

- a) We **can see** the lake from our hotel.\*
- b) We **are able to see** the lake from our hotel.\*

\* Notice that in the previous examples **can/be able to** are not used to express an ability.

We also use **can** to say that something is **possible** or **allowed**:

- 'I don't have a pen.' 'You **can use** mine.'

# MODALS OF ABILITY

- **PAST (1)**

- **Could / couldn't (for general ability)**

A) *I could read when I was four.*

B) *She could speak French when she was a child, but now she has forgotten it.*

- **Was able to / couldn't (for specific ability)** when someone actually succeeded in doing something.

A) *When the computer crashed yesterday, I was able to fix it. (Not 'I could fix it')*

B) *She was able to pass the exam, even though she hadn't studied much. (Not 'she could pass')*

C) *He called us because he couldn't find the house.*

D) *I couldn't open the window.*

- **PAST (2):**

there is an exception with **the verbs of sense perception** (*see, hear, smell, taste, feel*) and some **verbs of thinking** (*understand, remember, decide, believe, guess*). When we form sentences that express **ability in particular past situations**, we must always use the modals **could** or **couldn't**. **Was/were able to** or **wasn't/weren't able to** are never used with these verbs.

- A) When I came into the kitchen, I **could smell** something burning.

- B) When I looked out of the window, I **could see** a man walking down the street.

- C) The woman spoke only French, therefore I **couldn't understand** what she said.

- D) I **couldn't decide** whether to ask her out or not.

# MODALS OF ABILITY – could (not), be able to

- When my neighbour slipped down the stairs this morning, I \_\_\_\_\_ help her.

Specific → **was able to**

- She \_\_\_\_\_ speak a little Japanese when she was younger.

General → **could**

- My brother \_\_\_\_\_ not start the car last night.

Followed by not → **could not**

- Our boss' phone was switched off all day today! Finally, we got through at around 5 pm and we \_\_\_\_\_ speak with her.

Specific → **were able to**

# MODALS OF ABILITY

## Future:

- **Will / won't be able to (general ability)**

A) At the end of the course, you **will be able to** make your own website.

B) He **won't be able to** speak Japanese in a week! It will take months.

## **Can / can't (specific ability)**

C) I **can** help you tomorrow.

D) I **can't** come to the party on Saturday.

# MODALS OF ABILITY – future (will be able to, can)

- I \_\_\_\_\_ help you with your homework this afternoon.

Specific → **can**

- If you complete this course, you \_\_\_\_\_ apply for a new job.

General → **will be able to**

# MANAGE TO

- If we want to emphasize that the action is difficult we can use **manage to** in the present or past.

A) I usually **manage to** visit 20 countries every year.

B) I **managed to** finish the book but it was very boring.

- In the negative we can use **couldn't**, **wasn't able to**, and **didn't manage to** for a specific action.

C) I **couldn't book** the tickets.

D) I **wasn't able to book** the tickets.

E) I **didn't manage to book** the tickets.

# MODALS OF permission

- We use **can** to **ask for permission** to do something:

A) Can I ask a question, please?

B) Can we go home now?

- **Could** is **more formal** and **polite** than **can**:

C) Could I ask a question please?

D) Could we go home now?

- **May** is another **more formal** and polite way of asking for permission:

E) May I ask a question please?

F) May we go home now?

- We use **can** to **give** permission:

G) You can go home now if you like.

H) You can borrow my pen if you like.

- **May** is a **more formal** and **polite** way of **giving** permission:

I) You may go home now, if you like.

# MODALS

## Can, can't, could, couldn't, or be able to ?

- 1) John \_\_\_\_\_ play tennis really well. He's champion of his club.
- 2) President Jones \_\_\_\_\_ win the next election. (negative)
- 3) I searched for your house for ages. Luckily I \_\_\_\_\_ find it in the end.
- 4) She's seven years old, but she \_\_\_\_\_ read yet. Her parents are getting her extra lessons.
- 5) They read the book three times, but they \_\_\_\_\_ understand it.
- 6) Sorry, but I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_ finish all the work you gave me.
- 7) If you arrive before 6 o'clock, you \_\_\_\_\_ see the sunset.

