**Modal Verbs. General Characteristic**

Modals are auxiliary verbs used to give a judgment or interpretation about an action or state. The following verbs are classified as ‘full’ modal verbs with the features below:

can could may might must will

would shall should

🟇 the negative is formed by adding *not / n’t* to the verb;

🟇 the question is formed by inverting the modal and the pronoun or noun;

🟇 the are followed by the infinitive form without *to*.

The following are often referred to as ‘semi-modals’. They follow some, but not all, of the above rules.

Need dare have to ought to

The two verbs ‘**need**’ and ‘**dare**’ present special problems: ‘**dare**’ can follow *the grammatical patterns of either modal auxiliaries or lexical, ‘regular’ verbs*, while ‘**need**’ contrasts grammatically with the regular verb ‘**to need**’.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| regular | modal |
| He dares / needs to go.  He doesn’t dare / need to go.  Does he dare / need to go? | -----  He dare / need not go.  Dare / Need he go? |

The **modal verbs** (including ‘dare’ and ‘need’ as modals) *have no infinitive form, and no participle forms*. Hence the need on occasion for a number of more or less synonymous expressions having a fuller range of forms – ‘be able to’, or ‘have to’, for example. It would not be possible to use can or must in the following:

I’d like to be able to speak English fluently. (infinitive)

No one has been able to solve the problem. (present perfect)

I’m having to read this very carefully. (present progressive)

You will have to pay extra for a single room. (infinitive without ‘to’)

Many modal verbs have more than one meaning or use, and in some cases two different modal verbs have some meanings or uses in common, but are not fully interchangeable.

Adverbs such as ‘**well**’, ‘**easily**’, ‘**obviously**’, ‘**really**’, ‘**just**’ are often used *to emphasise modal expressions*: You could easily have been killed. I might well decide to come. She obviously must have left.

*The same modal can express different meanings or perform different functions*: You must phone me as soon as you get back. (= giving orders) He’s not here – he must have left. (= expressing certainty)

*Different modals can express similar meanings*: Shall I carry that for you? (= willingness) Would you like me to carry that for you? (= willingness)

*The exact meaning can change according to context or intonation*: Would you open the window for me, please? (= polite request) Would you stop making that noise immediately! (= order)

*Modals can affect the level of formality and politeness*: ‘May I leave early today?’ ‘Of course you can’. Could I possibly use your phone? I wonder if I might have your attention for a moment.

**Related non-modal expressions**

*Had better* – this is a recommendation, refers only to the present or future: You’d better not phone her again.

*Be bound to* – this is used for making future predictions of certainty: It’s bound to rain tomorrow.

*Be supposed to* + infinitive means ‘should’ but it expresses the idea that someone else expects something to be done. You’re supposed to wear a suit to work. (Your employer expects you to.) You should wear a suit. (It is a good idea because it makes a better impression.)

*Be likely to* means ‘may’ (possibility). To express possibility in questions we don’t use ‘may’, we use: Is he likely to ...?, Is it likely that he ...?, Can he ...?, Could he ...?, Might he ...? Is he likely to understand my feelings? Is it likely that he will understand my feelings? Could he understand my feelings?

*Would you mind* is used to express polite, formal requests. Would you mind holding this for a moment?

*Let’s... / How about...? / Why don’t we...? / What about...?* are used to make suggestions. Let’s stay in tonight. How about staying in tonight? Why don’t we stay in tonight? What about staying in tonight?

*Would you like to / Would you like me to...?* (= Shall I...?) are used when we offer to do something. Would you like me to read you a story? (Shall I read you a story?)

*Be allowed to* is used to express permission, to say what the rule is. He was allowed to visit the prisoner. Was he allowed to visit the prisoner?

**Can**

The modal verb ‘**can’** has the following forms: ‘**can**’ – *for the present tense* and ‘**could**’ – *for the past tense and for the subjunctive mood*: I can’t dance but I could when I was young. I wish I could go with you.

The form ‘**could**’ is used in two ways:

1) *in past-time contexts as a form of the Indicative mood*: He could speak English when he was a child.

2) *in present-time contexts to express unreality, or as a milder and more polite form of ‘can’, or as a form implying more uncertainty than ‘can’*: Could I help you? Could it be true? He could speak English if necessary.

‘**Can**’ has the following meanings:

1) **physical and mental ability or capacity:** I can imagine how angry he is. Mary can speak English quite well. I couldn’t understand him when he spoke very fast. This meaning may also be expressed by ‘**to be able to**’. The phrase can be used in all tense-forms if necessary.

2) **possibility**

a) **possibility due to circumstances**: Anybody can make a mistake. You can hardly blame him for that.

In this meaning ‘can’ is found in all kinds of sentences. *It is followed by the simple infinitive and refers the action to the present or future*.

b) **possibility due to the existing rules of laws**: In old days a man could be sentenced to death for a small crime. The Lower House alone can initiate financial measures.

c) **theoretical possibility**: The railways can be improved. (It is possible for the railways to be improved, as they are not perfect yet.)

3) **permission**: ‘can’ in this meaning is found in affirmative sentences, interrogative sentences in which a *request* is expressed and in negative sentences where can expresses *prohibition*.

You can use my car. (permission)

He can go now. (permission)

Can I use your car? (request)

Can you hold on a minute, please? (request)

You can’t use my car today. (prohibition)

You can’t cross the street here. (prohibition) In this meaning can is combined with the simple infinitive.

4) **uncertainty, surprise**: in this meaning ‘can’ is found in interrogative sentences (in general questions). It corresponds to the Russian ‘*неужели*’ and sentences of this kind are often emotionally coloured. Depending on the time reference, can in this meaning is used in combination with different forms of the infinitive.

If reference is made *to the present*, the **continuous infinitive** is used with the verbs that can have the continuous form and the **simple infinitive** with the verbs that cannot have the continuous form: Can she be telling lies? Can he really be ill?

‘Can’ in combination with the **perfect infinitive** refers the action *to the past*: e.g. Can she have said that?

The verb ‘**can**’ *expressing surprise* **is not used in the negative form**. Therefore the Russian negative questions of the type – ‘неужели он не’ … is translated into English in different ways:

a) *by complex sentences*: Can / could it be that you haven’t seen him? Can / could it be that she hasn’t read this book?

b) *by different lexical means*: Can / could you have failed to see him? Can / could she have never read this book? Can / could you dislike this film? Can / could nobody have seen her do it? Can / could you disapprove of her decision? Can / could they fail to realize the full significance of the event?

5) **improbability, strong doubt:** in this meaning ‘can’ is found only in *negative sentences* and they are often emotionally coloured. In Russian it is usually rendered by ‘**не может быть (невероятно), чтобы …**’. In this meaning ‘can’ is used *with different forms of the infinitive depending on the time reference*. ‘Could’ is also used in this way making the statement less categorical. The time reference is indicated not by the form of the modal verb but by that of the infinitive.

It can’t (couldn’t) be true. He can’t (couldn’t) be so old. She can’t (couldn’t) be telling the truth. He can’t (couldn’t) have said it.

The Russian ‘**не может быть, чтобы он не …**’ / ‘**он не может не …**’ may be translated in the following way: He can’t (couldn’t) be unaware of her arrival. He can’t (couldn’t) have failed to notice you. Nobody can (could) have seen him do it.

6. ‘Can’ and ‘could’ (with reference to the present) are found in **speacial questions where they are used for emotional colouring** (for instance, to express puzzlement, impatience, etc.): What can (could) he mean? Where can (could) he be hiding? How can (could) he have done it? Who can (could) have painted this picture? What can (could) he have been doing there?

7. **reproach**: this meaning is found **only with the form ‘could’**. In this sense *‘could’ is interchangeable with ‘might’*.

You could have helped me.

8. **purpose**: this meaning occurs **only with the form ‘could’** in clauses of purpose: I left the newspaper on the table so that he could see it at once.

9. in some set expressions:

a) **cannot / can’t help doing smth** – не могу не …

When I saw him I couldn’t help laughing. She can’t help crying. I couldn’t help seeing that she was ill.

b) **cannot / can’t but do smth** – ничего не остается как …

I can’t but ask him about it. We cannot but hope he is right. They couldn’t but refuse him.

c) **one cannot but wonder** – нельзя не задуматься

I cannot but wonder what I should do next.

d) **as can be** – an intensifying expression

They are as pleased as can be. It’s as ugly as can be.

e) **can but** – во всяком случае

I can but try. I can but hope.

f) **can’t possibly do** – просто не может (не мог, не мог бы)

He can’t possibly do it. He couldn’t possibly afford a car on his present salary. He can’t possibly have done it.

**Can – Could – Be Able to: talking about ability**

We sometimes use ‘be able to’ instead of ‘can’ and ‘could’ to talk about ability. For example, if the present ability is surprising or involves some difficulty: Despite his handicap he is able to drive a car.

*To emphasize the difficulty* or *to suggest a great effort* (in the present, past or future) we use ‘**managed to**’. In formal English we can also use ‘**succeed in + -ing form**’: Do you think she will manage to get a visa? The army succeeded in defeating the enemy.

We also use ‘**be able to**’ were ‘**can / could**’ *are grammatically impossible*: I haven’t been able to drive since I dislocated a shoulder.

However, we avoid ‘be able to’

🟇 when we talk about something that is happening as we speak: Watch me, Mum; I can stand on one leg.

🟇 before passives: CDs can now be copied easily.

🟇 when the meaning is ‘know how to’: Can you cook?

If we talk about a *single achievement*, rather than a general ability in the past, we usually use ‘*be able to*’ rather than ‘could’. Compare:

Sue could play the flute quite well. (or … was able to …; a general ability)

She swam strongly and was able to cross the river easily, even though it was swollen by the heavy rain. (specific achievement)

We use ‘*will be able*’ to talk about skills that will be acquired in the future: I’ll be able to drive by next summer so we can hire a car.

However, ‘could’ is more natural

🟇 in negative sentences: I tried to get up but I couldn’t move.

🟇 with verbs of *sense perception* (e.g. feel, hear, see, smell, taste) and with *verbs of ‘thinking’* (e.g. believe, decide, remember, understand): I could remember the crash but nothing after that.

🟇 after the phrases **the only thing / place / time**, and after **all** when it means ‘the only thing’: *All* we could see were his feet.

🟇 to suggest that something almost didn’t happen, particularly with **almost, hardly, just, nearly**: I could nearly touch the ceiling.

**Can / could: talking about possibility**

To talk about the *theoretical possibility* of something happening we use ‘**could**’. However, we use ‘**can**’, to say that *something is possible and actually happens*. Compare:

It could be expensive to keep a cat. (if we had one, it could or may not be expensive)

It can be expensive to keep a cat. (it can be, and sometimes is)

We use ‘**can’t**’ to say that *something is theoretically or actually impossible*: There can’t be many people in the world who haven’t watched television.

We use ‘**can**’ to indicate that there is *a very real possibility of a future event happening*. Using ‘**could**’ suggests *something is less likely or that there is some doubt about it*. Compare:

We can stay with Jim in Oslo (= we will be able to stay).

We could stay with Jim in Oslo (= it’s possible; if he’s here).

**Could and be allowed to: talking about permission**

To say that in the past someone had *general permission* to d something, we can use either ‘**could**’ or ‘**was / were allowed to**’. However, to talk about *permission for one particular past action*, we use ‘**was / were allowed to**’. Compare:

Anyone was allowed (could) to fish in the lake when the council owned it.

Although he didn’t have a ticket, Ken was allowed to come in.

In *negative sentences*, we can use either ‘**couldn’t**’ or ‘**wasn’t / weren’t allowed to**’ to say that *permission was not given in general or particular situations*: We couldn’t / weren’t allowed to open the presents until the Christmas morning.

**May**

I. This modal verb has two forms:

‘**may**’ *for the present tense*: It may be true. You may go home.

and ‘**might**’ *for the past and as the subjunctive mood form*. Thus the form might is used in two ways:

a) **in past-time contexts, mainly in reported speech in accordance with the rules of the sequence of tenses**: He told me that it might be true.

b) **in present-time contexts as a milder and more polite form of ‘may’**: Might I come and see you?

**or as a form implying more uncertainty than ‘may’:** It might be true.

**or to express unreality** (only with the perfect infinitive): He might have fallen ill if he hadn’t taken the pills.

**or in some syntactical patterns requiring the subjunctive mood forms**: However hard he might (or may) try, he will never manage to do the same.

II. ‘Mayhas the following meanings:

1) **supposition implying uncertainty**: He may be busy getting ready for his trip. ‘May’ in this sense is synonymous with ‘*perhaps*’ and ‘*maybe*’ and occurs in *affirmative and negative sentences*. In Russian this meaning is usually rendered by means of the modal words ‘**возможно**’ and ‘**может быть**’: He may be at home. Он, возможно, дома.

In this meaning ‘**may**’ *can be followed by different forms of the infinitive depending on the time reference expressed*.

‘**May**’ in combination with *the simple infinitive* (non-perfect infinitive) usually refers the action *to the future*: He may come soon. They may arrive tonight or tomorrow.

‘**May**’ in combination with *the perfect infinitive* refers the action *to the past*: Why hasn’t he come? He may have been hurt. He may have fallen ill.

2) **possibility due to circumstances**: You may order a taxi by telephone. The railways may be improved.

‘**May**’ in this meaning occurs *only in affirmative sentences* and it *is followed only by the simple infinitive*. The form ‘**might**’ *is used in past-time contexts in accordance with the rules of the sequence of tenses*: He said that he might order a taxi by telephone.

3. **permission**: ‘may’ expresses the meaning ‘*to have permission to*’, ‘*to be allowed to*’, ‘*to be permitted to*’: You may smoke in here.

‘**May**’ in this meaning is found in *affirmative sentences*, in *interrogative sentences* which usually express a **request**, and in *negative sentences* where it denotes **prohibition**. But in negative sentences it is not common, as prohibition is generally expressed by other modal verbs (see ‘can’ and ‘must’). In this meaning ‘may’ is combined only with the simple infinitive. ‘**Might**’ is used in *polite requests for permission*: Might I join you? I wonder if I might borrow your car.

4. **reproach or disapproval**: in this meaning ‘**might**’ is used in *affirmative sentences and is followed by the simple or perfect infinitive*. In the latter case it renders irritation (annoyance) that the action was not carried out: You might at least offer to help. You might carry the parcel for me.

5. ‘may’ / ‘might’ is used in certain sentence patterns:

a) **in clauses of purpose**: Sit here so that I may see your face more clearly.

b) **in clauses of concession**: Try as he may he will never be top of his class. However hard he might try, he never mananged it.

c) **in subordinate clauses after verbs or nouns expressing hope, wish, fear**: The doctor has fears that she may not live much longer. The prisoner had hopes that he might be set free.

6. ‘may’ is used in **formal expressions of wishes and hopes**. ‘May’ often comes at the beginning of the sentence.

May you both be happy! Счастья вам обоим!

May the New Year bring you all your heart desires. Пусть новый год принесет вам все то, что ваше сердце (душа) желает.

May God be with you. Да поможет тебе бог.

May she rest in peace. Пусть она покоится с миром.

7. notice the following set phrases with ‘may’ and ‘might’:

a) **may as well (might as well) + infinitive** – is a very mild and unemphatic way of expressing an intention. It is used tо suggest or recommend an action: I may as well take the child with me. Я, пожалуй, возьму ребенка с собой.

b) ‘**may / might just as well’** means ‘it would be equally good to’ and is used to suggest alternative actions (just makes the sentence more emphatic): ‘I’ll go at six’. ‘That’s far too late; you might just as well not go at all’. … с таким же успехом можно не ходить туда совсем.

c) ‘**It might have been worse’** means: things are not so bad after all. In Russian it is rendered as: ‘Могло бы быть и хуже’ or в ‘конце концов дела обстоят не так уж плохо’.

Charles came out of the examinaton room. ‘How did you get on?” I asked. ‘It might have been worse, I suppose’, he said.

d) ‘**He might have been a …**’ means ‘He might have been taken for a …’ , ‘He looked like a …’: From afar the house might have been a small inn. Из далека дом можно было принять за небольшую гостиницу.

e) ‘**If I may say so …**’ has become a stereotyped phrase in which the meaning of permisson is considerably weakened: If I may say so, I think you have treated him very badly. Если позволите (мне сказать), по-моему, вы с ним очень плохо обращались.

**May – might to denote possibility**

‘**May**’ and ‘**might**’ often have a similar meaning when we talk about possibility. We prefer ‘**may**’ in *academic or formal language to talk about the characteristics or behaviour of something*: The seeds from the plant may grow up to 20 centimetres in length. In speech we prefer ‘**might**’ to say *what we will possibly do in the future*: I might paint the kitchen purple.

We **don’t** use ‘**may**’ *to ask questions about the possibility of something happening*. Instead we use ‘**could(n’t)**’ or the phrase ‘**be likely**’: Could it be that you don’t want to leave? Are you likely to be in Spain this summer?

Note that we can use ‘**may**’ in formally *asking for permission and offering help*: May I leave now? May I help you?

‘**Might + bare infinitive**’ is used to talk about *what was typically the case on the past*. This is a formal or a literary use: During the war, the police might arrest you for criticizing the king.

We can also use ‘**could + bare infinitive**’ in examples like this to talk about *past ability*: During the war, the police could arrest you …’ (= the police were legally able to arrest you).

When we say that a person or thing *compensates to some extent for a limitation or weakness by having another characteristic*, we can use a pattern with ‘**may / might not + bare infinitive … but …**’ or ‘**may / might not have + past participle … but …**’: The painting may not be a masterpiece, but the colours are striking. She might not have danced very gracefully, but she had a lot of energy.

We can use ‘**may / might have been + -ing**’ to talk about *possible situations or activities that went on over a period of past time*: David didn’t know where the ball was, but he thought his sister might have been playing with it before she left for school.

**Might as well / may as well**

Study this example:

Helen and Clare have just missed the bus. The buses run every hour.

H: What shall we do? Shall we walk? – C: We *might as well*. It’s a nice day and I don’t want to wait here for an hour.

We might as well do something. = We should do something because there is nothing better to do and there is no reason not to do it.

**‘Can’ and ‘May’ Compared**

The use of ‘**can**’ and ‘**may**’ is parallel only in two meanings: *possibility due to circumstances and permission*. In these meanings, however, they are not always interchangeable for a number of various reasons.

1) Thus in the meaning of *possibility due to circumstances* the use of the modal verb ‘**may**’ is restricted **only to affirmative sentences**, whereas ‘**can**’ is used in **all kinds of sentences**.

He may find this book at the library. He can (can’t) find this book at the library. Can he find this book at the library?

Their time reference is different as well. ‘May’ refers only to the present or future; the form ‘might’ is used in past-time contexts only in reported speech. ‘Can’ (‘could’) may refer to the present, past or future.

He may find this book at the library. He can find this book at the library. He could find this book at the library yesterday. He can find this book at the library tomorrow.

Both ‘could’ and ‘might’ combined with the perfect infinitive indicate that the action was not carried out in the past: He might have found the book at the library. He could have found the book at the library.

It follows from the above that **the sphere of application of ‘can’ is much wider than that of ‘may’**.

2) When ‘**can**’ and ‘**may**’ express *permission* the difference between them is rather that of style than of meaning – **‘may’ is more formal than ‘can’ which is characteristic of colloquial English**.

Compare: May (might) I speak to you for a moment, professor? Can (could) I have a cup of tea, Mother?

Besides, **‘may’ in negative sentences expressing prohibition is uncommon**.

**Must**

I. The modal verb ‘must’ has only one form. It is used in present-time contexts with reference to the present or future and in combination with the perfect infinitive it refers to the past.

In past-time contexts this form is used only in the reported speech, i.e. **the rules of the sequence of tenses are not observed with ‘must’**: I knew I must go there too.

II. ‘Must’ has the following meanings:

1) **obligation or compulsion (from the speaker’s point of view)**. In this meaning ‘must’ is found *in affirmative and interrogative sentences and is followed only by the simple (non-perfect) infinitive:* He must move the furniture himself. I can’t help him. Must you really go so soon?

In different contexts ‘must’ may acquire additional shades of meaning, such as:

a) *duty or necessity*: We must begin before five, or we shan’t finish in time for our supper.

b) *instructions, orders or notices*: Passengers must cross the lines by the footbridge.

c) *with a 2nd person subject ‘must’ expresses an obligation which has the same effect as a command*: You must do as you are told.

Obligations expressed by ‘must’ refer to the present or future, in reported speech they may refer to the past: She had already decided that she must show the letter to Robert.

**Future obligations can be made precise with the future simple of the verb ‘have to’**: I’ll have to read it again.

2) **prohibition**: this meaning is expressed in negative sentences and ‘must’ is also followed by the simple infinitive and is rendered into Russian as ‘*нельзя*’, ‘*не разрешается*’.

The girl mustn’t go home alone. It’s very late.

3) **invitations or emphatic advice**: this meaning is found in affirmative and negative sentences and it is closely connected with the two above mentioned meanings: You must come and see me some time. You must come and have dinner with us.

4) **supposition implying strong probability**: in English this meaning may also be expressed by means of the modal word ‘*probably*’. In Russian this meaning is usually rendered by means of the modal words ‘*вероятно*’, ‘*должно быть*’. In this meaning must is found only in affirmative sentences.

He must be ill. He looks pale. It must be late as the streets are deserted.

In this meaning ‘must’ may be followed by different forms of the infinitive. If reference is made to the present, the continuous infinitive is used with dynamic verbs.

‘**Must**’ expressing *supposition implying strong probability* **is not used**:

a) *with reference to the future*. In this case modal words ‘**probably**’ and ‘**evidently**’ are used: He will probably feel lonely. He will probably come tomorrow.

b) *in negative and interrogative forms*. There are several ways of expressing the negative meaning of probability in such sentences: by negative affixes, or negative pronouns, or lexically.

He must have **failed** to get in touch with her. You must have **misunderstood** me. They must have been **inattentive**. He must have had **no** chance to warn you. The letter must **never** have reached her. He must be quite **unaware** of the circumstances. **No one** must have seen him there. The letter must have been left **unanswered.**

Besides the above mentioned shades of meaning, sometimes accompanied by emphasis, the modal verb ‘**must**’ may be used solely for the sake of **emphasis**. In this case must is not translated into Russian, it merely emphasises some action or idea.

Just when we were ready to go away for the holidays, the baby must catch measles. … ребенок возьми и заболей корью.

Of course after I gave her my advice she must go and do the opposites. … она вдруг пойди и сделай наоборот.

In spoken English we often use ‘**must**’ and ‘**mustn’t**’ *to propose a future arrangement*, such as a meeting or social event, without making detailed plans: We must get together once more.

To draw a conclusion about

🟇 *something that happened in the past* we use ‘**must + have + past participle**’ That’s not Kate’s car. She must have borrowed it from her parents.

🟇 *something happening at or around the time of speaking* we use ‘**must be + -ing**’: I can’t hear anyone moving around upstairs. You must be imagining things.

🟇 *something that is likely to happen in the future* we use ‘**must be going to**’ or ‘**must be + -ing**’: ‘What are all those workmen doing?’ ‘I think the must be going to dig up the road’.

We can use ‘**must have to**’ to say that *we conclude something based on what we know about a present situation* and ‘**must have had to**’ *to conclude something about a past situation*: I can’ start a computer. You must have to know a password.

Notice the following set phrases with ‘must’:

a) ‘**Must needs**’ denotes obligation: He must needs go there. Он непременно должен пойти туда.

b) ‘**I must be going**’ or ‘**I must be off**’ both mean ‘it is time for me to go’.

**Must and May Compared**

‘Must’ and ‘may’ can be compared in two meanings.

1) both ‘must’ and ‘may’ are used to express supposition but their use is not parallel. **‘May’ denotes supposition implying uncertainty whereas supposition expressed by ‘must’ implies strong probability**.

For all I know, he may be an actor. His face seems so familiar.

He must be an actor. His voice carries so well.

2) ‘must’ and ‘may’ are used to express prohibition in negative sentences. But ‘may’ is seldom in this meaning. **In negative answers to questions with ‘may’ asking for permission we generally find ‘must not’ or ‘cannot’**.

‘May I smoke here?’ ‘No, you mustn’t / you can’t’.

**Have to – have got to**

I. ‘To have to’ as a modal verb *is not a defective verb and can have the category of person and number and all the necessary tense-aspect forms as well as verbals*. It is followed by a to-infinitive and combined only with the simple (non-perfect) infinitive.

As there is no through train to our town we have to change in Moscow. We had to look all over town before we found what we wanted. She won’t have to walk the whole way, will she?

The interrogative and negative forms of the modal verb ‘to have to’ are built up by means of the auxiliary verb ‘to do’: Do you have to work? He doesn’t have to be here before Sunday.

II. The modal verb ‘to have to’ serves to **express obligation or necessity imposed by circumstances**. It is rendered into Russian as ‘*приходится*’, ‘*вынужден*’.

She is usually short of time, so she has to go by air. My sister has a lot of friends in different parts of the country, so she has to write lots of letters.

In the past tense have to indicates a fulfilled obligation: We had to do a lot of things during the week we stayed

**The past form of the modal verb ‘to have to’ replaces ‘must’ where ‘must’ cannot be used**:

a) *to express past necessity or obligation*: We had to do it again.

b) *to express absence of necessity* (in the sense of needn’t), since ‘must not’ means prohibition: You don’t have to make another copy of the document, Miss Black; this copy will be quite satisfactory.

c) *to express a future obligation*, since the future tense of the verb ‘to have to’ makes the obligation more precise: You will have to take a taxi if you mean to catch the train.

The modal verb ‘to have to’ can be used together with the modal verb ‘may’: We may have to wait long here.

Sometimes we can use either ‘**have to**’ or ‘**have got to**’. However

🟇 we use ‘**have to**’ with frequency adverbs such as ‘*always, never, normally, rarely, sometimes*’: I often have to work at the weekend.

🟇 with *the past simple* we use ‘**had to**’ *especially in negative sentences*: When did you have to give it back? We didn’t have to wait too long.

🟇 if ‘**have**’ is *contracted we must include ‘got’*: The experiment has failed twice before, so it’s got to work this time.

🟇 we don’t use ‘**have got to**’ with *other modal verbs*: Employees will have to accept the new conditions.

**Must and have to**

*In questions that hope for or expect a negative answer* we prefer ‘**have (got) to**’, although *in formal contexts* ‘**must**’ is sometimes used: Do we have to answer all the questions? (Have we got to …? Must we …? is also possible but rather formal)

We use ‘**have to**’ in *questions that imply a criticism*. ‘Must’ can also be used, although some people think this is rather old-fashioned: Do you have to play your trumpet here? It’s deafening me! (Must you …?)

**Mustn’t and don’t have to**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| You mustn’t do something = it is necessary  that you do not do it (so, don’t do it because it is prohibited):  You must keep it a secret. You *mustn’t tell* anyone. | You don’t have to do something = you don’t  need to do it (but you can if you want):  You can tell me if you want but you *don’t have to tell* me. (= you don’t need to tell me) |

**Be to**

I. The modal verb ‘to be to is used in the present and past tenses.

We are to meet at Peter’s. – We were to meet at Peter’s.

II. The modal verb ‘to be to’ has the following meanings:

1) **an obligation resulting from the arrangement or a previously arranged plan**. It is found in statements and questions. ‘To be to’ is followed by the simple infinitive.

We are to complete this work by tomorrow. (Somebody expects it.) When is the wedding to be?

The past tense of the verb ‘to be to’ in combination with the perfect infinitive indicates *an unfulfilled plan*: She was to have graduated in June, but unfortunately fell ill.

2) The non-perfect indefinite may refer **an arrangement (especially official)** to the future or to no particular time: The German Chancellor is to visit France.

3) **a strict order or an instruction, often official** (frequently in reported speech): You are to stay here until I return. You are to do it exactly the way you are told. *Passive forms are used to make orders and instructions more impersonal*.

3) **something that is destined to happen or is unavoidable**. It corresponds to the Russian ‘*суждено*’, ‘*предстоит*’. It is mainly found in the past tense and its application is limited to narration. It occurs in affirmative and negative sentences and is followed by the non-perfect infinitive.

I didn’t know at the time that she was to be my wife. As a young man he didn’t know that he was to become a famous scientist.

4) **strict prohibition** (*only in negative sentences*): You are not to do that.

5) **possibility**. In this meaning to be to is equivalent to can or may. It is used in all kinds of sentences in the Present and Past tenses and is followed by the passive infinitive.

They are not to be trusted. Where is he to be found?

6) Notice some set expressions:

**What am I to do**? – Что мне делать? Как мне быть?

**What is to become of me**? – Что со мной станется (будет)?

**Where am I to go**? – Куда же мне деваться?

Notice that we only use ‘be to’ to talk about future events that can be controlled by people. Compare:

In the next few years, thousands of speed cameras **are to appear** on major roads. – Scientists say they can’t predict when or where the disease **will appear** again.

**Must, to Have to and to Be to Compared**

I. The verbs ‘must’, ‘to have to’ and ‘to be to’ have one meaning in common, that of **obligation**.

a) In the present tense verbs come very close to each other in their use though they preserve their specific shades of meaning.

Thus ‘**must**’ indicates *obligation or necessity from the speaker’s point of view*, i.e. it expresses obligation imposed by the speaker: I must do it. (I want to do it.)

‘**To have to**’ expresses *obligation or necessity imposed by circumstances:* What a pity you have to go now. (It’s time for you to catch your train.)

‘**To be to**’ expresses *obligation or necessity resulting from an arrangement*: We are to wait for them at the entrance. (We have arranged to meet there.)

b) In the past tense, however, the difference in the use of the three verbs is quite considerable. *‘Must’ has no past tense*. It is used in past-time contexts only in reported speech: He said he must do it himself.

‘*Had + infinitive*’ is generally used to denote an action which was realized in the past as a result of obligation or necessity imposed by circumstances: I had to sell my car. (It was necessary for me to do it because I needed money.)

‘*Was / were + infinitive*’ is used to denote an action planned for the future which is viewed from the past. The action is not realized in the past and the question remains open as to whether it is going to take place or not: We were to meet him at the station. (It is not clear from the sentence if the action will take place or not.)

If the speaker wishes to make it clear at once that the plan was not fulfilled, *the perfect infinitive* is used to show that: We were to have met him at the station. (That means that we failed to meet him.)

**Need**

We can use ‘**need**’ as an ordinary verb or as a modal verb (followed by a bare infinitive). *As a modal verb it doesn’t change its tense and doesn’t add ‘-s’ for the third person singular*. Compare: I needed to leave early. You needn’t speak so loudly. She’s thirsty. She needs a drink.

When it is a modal verb ‘**need**’ is most commonly used in *negative sentences*, often with verbs like ‘**bother**’, ‘**concern**’, ‘**fear**’, ‘**panic**’, ‘**worry**’: I’ve already cleaned the car so you needn’t bother to do it. Judges in England need not retire until they are 75.

It is sometimes used *in questions*, but we prefer to use ‘**need**’ *as an ordinary verb* or ‘**have to**’: Need you go so soon? Do you need to go so soon? Do you have to go so soon?

In *formal written English* ‘**need**’ *as a modal verb is used with negative words* such as ‘**hardly**’, ‘**never**’, ‘**nobody**’, ‘**no one**’, and ‘**only**’: The changes need only be small to make the proposals acceptable. (less formally The changes only need to be … )

*To give permission not to do something* we can use either ‘**needn’t**’ or ‘**don’t need to**’: You needn’t cut the grass, I’ll do it later. (You don’t need to cut the grass …)

*To talk about a general necessity*, we prefer ‘**don’t need to**’: You don’t need to be over 18 to get into a disco.

We can use either ‘**needn’t**’ or **don’t have to**’ with little difference in meaning to say that *it is necessary to do something*: You needn’t whisper. Nobody can hear us. You don’t have to whisper …

Some people prefer ‘**needn’t**’ when *it is the speaker who decides the lack of necessity*, and ‘**don’t have to**’ when *external rules or somebody else’s actions make something unnecessary*. Compare: As you worked late yesterday you needn’t come in until 10.00 tomorrow morning (speaker’s decision). We’ve been told that we don’t have to be at work until 10.00 tomorrow (someone else’s decision).

We can use ‘**needn’t**’ (or ‘**don’t have to**’) to say that *something is not necessarily true*. We don’t use ‘**mustn’t**’ in this way: Volcanoes needn’t erupt constantly to be classified as ‘active’. Volcanoes don’t have to erupt …

**Needn’t have (done)**

Study this example situation:



George had to go out. He thought it was going to rain, so he decided to take the umbrella. But it didn’t rain, so the umbrella was not necessary. So he **needn’t have taken** the umbrella.

‘He needn’t have taken the umbrella’ = He took the umbrella but this was not necessary. Of course, he didn’t know this when he went out.

**Didn’t need to (do) and needn’t have (done)**

‘*I didn’t need to*...’ = it was not necessary for me to... (and I knew this at the time): I didn’t need to get up early, so I didn’t.

‘*I needn’t have (done) something*’ = I did something but now I know that it was not necessary: I got up very early because I had to get ready to go away. But in fact it didn’t take me long to get ready. So, I needn’t have got up so early. I could have stayed in bed longer.

**Should**

In modern English the modal verb ‘should’ is used with reference to the present or future and it remains unchanged in reported speech. ‘Should’ is nearly always interchangeable with ‘ought to’, as their meanings coincide.

‘Should’ has the following meanings:

a) **obligation** which in different contexts may acquire additional shades of meaning, such as **advisability or desirability**: Private firearms should be banned. He should phone his father, but he probably won’t have time.

When used in *negative sentences* ‘should’ denotes a weakened prohibition, more like **negative advice**: He shouldn’t be so impatient.

In an **affirmative sentence** ‘*should + perfect infinitive*’ denotes **criticism, faultfinding**; the statement indicates that **a desirable action was not carried out**.

Your shoes are wet. You should have stayed at home. He should have told me about it himself.

In a **negative sentence** ‘*should + perfect infinitive*’ serves to show that an **undesireable action was carried out, something wrong was done**.

You shouldn’t have done that. It was stupid. They should never have married. They are so unhappy.

b) **supposition implying strong probability**, something naturally expected (only with reference to the present or future).

This film should be very good as it is starring first-class actors.

*The use of ‘should’ in this case does not seem to be very common as this meaning is normally rendered by ‘must’*.

c) ‘Should’ may have a peculiar function – it may be used for **emotional colouring**. In this function it may be called ‘the emotional should’. The use of ‘the emotional should’ is also structurally dependent. It is found in the following cases:

1) in special emphatic constructions, where a simple predicate isn’t used:

a) *in rhetorical questions beginning with ‘why’*: Why should I do it? С какой стати я буду делать это? Why shouldn’t you invite him? Почему бы вам его не пригласить?

b) *in object clauses beginning with ‘why’*: I don’t know why he should want to see George. Я не знаю, зачем только ему нужен Джордж.

c) *in attributive clauses beginning with ‘why’*: There is no reason why they shouldn’t get on very well together. Нет причины, почему бы им не ладить друг с другом.

d) *in constructions of the following kind*: The door opened and who should come in but Tom. Дверь открылась, и кто бы вы думали вошел? Никто иной, как Том. As I was crossing the street whom should I meet but Aunt Ann. Когда я переходил улицу, кого вы думаете я встретил? Тетю Анну.

e) in the set phrase ‘*How should I know?*’ – Почем я знаю?

d) **constructions of the in following kind**:

That it should come to this! И до чего дошло дело!

To think that it should come to this! Только подумать, до чего дошло дело!

To think that it should have happened to me! Только подумать, что это произошло со мной!

You can use ‘**should**’ after a number of verbs, especially: suggest propose recommend insist demand

• They *insisted* that we *should have dinner* with them.

• I *demanded* that he *should apologise*.

• What do you *suggest I should do*?

In the same way, you can use ‘**should**’ after the nouns ‘suggestion’ / ‘proposal’ / ‘recommendation’ etc.: What do you think of Jane’s *suggestion* that I *should buy* a car?

and also after ‘it’s important / vital / necessary / essential that...’: It’s essential that you should be here on time.

***NB***

You can also leave out ‘should’ in all the examples above:

• It’s essential that you **be** here on time. (= that you should be here)

• I demanded that he **apologise**.

• What do you suggest I **do**?

*The forms (you be / he apologise etc.) are the forms of the subjunctive mood*.

**Be careful** with ‘suggest’. ***You cannot use particle ‘to’*** after ‘suggest’: What do you suggest we should do? or What do you suggest we do?

**If ... should ...**

You can say ‘*If something should happen* ...’. For example:

• If Tom should phone while I’m out, tell him I’ll phone him back later.

‘If Tom should phone’ is similar to ‘If Tom phones’. With ‘should’, the speaker feels that the possibility is smaller. Another example:

• I’ve left the washing outside. If it should rain, can you bring it in?

You can also put should at the beginning of these sentences (‘*Should something happen* ...’):

• Should Tom phone, can you tell him I’ll phone him back later?

**Ought to**

I. The modal verb ‘ought to’ has only one form which is used with refernce to the present or future. In reported speech it remains unchanged.

II. The modal verb ‘ought to’ has the following meanings:

1. **moral duty, moral obligation which in different contexts may acquire additional shades of meaning, such as advisability and desirability**. In this meaning ‘ought to’ is used in all kinds of sentences. Generally it refers an action to the future and is followed by the simple infinitive.

You ought to say a word or two about yourself. Ought she to warn him?

*In combination with the perfect infinitive ‘ought to in the affirmative shows that a desirable action was not fulfilled:* He ought to have been more careful.

*In the negative form ought to in combination with the perfect infinitive shows that an undesirable action was fulfilled*: You oughtn’t to have laughed at his mistakes.

2) **supposition implying strong probability**, something that can be naturally expected. It corresponds to Russian ‘*должно быть*’, ‘*наверное*’: You ought to be hungry by now.

In this sense ‘ought to’ is a weaker equivalent of ‘must’ when the latter denotes supposition implying strong probability.

3) ‘ought to + infinitive’ is used when **describing something exciting, funny or beautiful in the meaning of ‘I wish you could’:** You ought to hear the way he plays the piano! Ты бы слышал, как он играет на пианино.

4) Notice the set phrase:

**He (you) ought to know it** (= he (you) is (are) supposed to know it).

**Should, ought to and had better compared**

We can often use either ‘**should**’ or ‘**ought to**’ to talk about *obligations and recommendations*: You should / ought to finish your homework before you go out. Although in general ‘should’ is used more frequently. ‘**Ought to**’ is used *particularly in speech and most often to talk about obligation rather than probability*.

Notice the following details:

🟇 we prefer ‘**should**’ when we say what *an outside authority recommends*: The manual says that the computer should be disconnected from the power supply before the cover is removed.

🟇 we use ‘**should**’ (or ‘**would**’), not ‘ought to’, when we *give advice with I …* : I should leave early tomorrow, if I were you.

🟇 we prefer ‘**should**’ in *questions, particularly wh-questions*: What should I do if I have any problems?

🟇 as a *polite expression of thanks on receiving a gift or a favour*: I’ve done the washing up for you. – Oh, you really shouldn’t have!

Note that *when we conclude, on the basis of some evidence we have, that something is certain or very likely* we can use ‘**must**’ but not ‘should / ought to’: It’s the third time she’s been skating this wee. She must really enjoy it.

We use ‘**should / ought to + have + past participle**’ to talk about *something that didn’t happen in the past and we are sorry that it didn’t*: We should / ought to have waited for the rain to stop. We use this pattern to indicate some *regret or criticism* and the negative forms ‘**shouldn’t / oughtn’t to have**’ are almost always used in this way.

We also use ‘**should / ought to + have + past participle**’ to talk about *an expectation that something happened, has happened, or will happen*: The builders should / ought to have finished by the end of the week.

We can use ‘**should**’ in questions that are *offers* or that *request confirmation or advice*: Should I phone for a taxi for you? Note that in the sentences like those we can also use ‘**shall**’ with a very similar meaning.

We can use ‘**had better**’ instead of ‘should / ought to’, especially in spoken English, *to say that we think it is a good idea to do something*: If you’re not well, you’d better ask Ann to go instead. Although we **don’t use** it *to talk about the past or to make general comments*: You should / ought to have caught a later train.

We prefer ‘**had better**’ if we want *to express particular urgency and it demands and threats*: We’d better call the police, quickly.

Notice that the negative form is ‘had better not’. Many people avoid questions with ‘had better’.

**Must, Should and Ought to** **Compared**

All the three verbs serve to express *obligation*. **‘Must’, however, sounds more forceful, peremptory**.

You must do it immediately. Вы должны (обязаны) сделать это немедленно.

Both ‘should’ and ‘ought to’ express **obligation, advisability, desirability** and are used when ‘must’ would sound too peremtory.

You should do it immediately. Вам следует сделать это немедленно.

‘Should’ and ‘ought to’ are very much alike in meaning are often interchangeable. In using **‘ought to’**, however, we lay more stress on the meaning of *moral obligation*, whereas ‘**should**’ is common in *instructions and corrections*.

You ought to help him; he is in trouble. You should use the definite article in this sentence.

It is noteworthy that ‘ought to’ cannot be used instead of the emotional should.

‘Must’, ‘should’ and ‘ought to’ serve to express **supposition implying strong probability**. ‘Must’ seems to be in more frequent use than the other two verbs: He must be working in the garden now.

‘*Should + perfect infinitive*’ and ‘*ought to + perfect infinitive*’ show that **the action has not been carried out though it was desirable**; ‘*was / were to + perfect infinitive*’ indicates **an action that has not been carried out though it was planned**.

You ought to have warned him. (Now he is in trouble.)

He was to have arrived last week. (But his plans were upset by some cause or other.)

**Requests, offers, permission and invitations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| requests | asking for things | asking for and giving permission | offering to do things | offering and inviting |
| *Can* you wait a moment, please?  *Could* you wait a moment, please?  Excuse me, *could you tell* me how to get  to the station?  *I wonder if* you *could* help me.  *Do you think* you *could* lend me some  money until next week?  **We also use ‘will’ and ‘would’ to ask people to do things (but ‘can’ / ‘could’ are more usual)**:  Liz, *will* you do me a favour?  *Would* you please be quiet? I’m trying to concentrate. | *Can I have* these postcards, please?  *Could I have* the salt, please?  *May I have* these postcards, please? | *Can I speak* to Tom, please?  *Could I use* your phone?  *Do you think I could* borrow your bike?  *May I* come in?  To give permission, we use ‘can’ or ‘may’.  You *can use* the phone.  You *may use* the phone.  **‘May’ is formal and less usual than ‘can’ or ‘could’.** | ‘*Can I get you* a cup of coffee?’ – ‘Yes, that would be very nice’.  ‘*Can I help you*?’ – ‘No, it’s all right. I can manage’.  **You can also use I’ll ... to offer to do things**:  You look tired. *I’ll get you* a cup of coffee. | ‘*Would you like* a cup of coffee?’ – ‘Yes, please’.  ‘*Would you like to come* to dinner tomorrow evening?’ ‘Yes, *I’d love to’*.  **I’d like... is a polite way of saying what you want**:  (at a tourist information office) *I’d like* some information about hotels, please.  (in a shop) *I’d like* to try on this jacket, please. |

**Shall**

In present-day English ‘shall’ is not a purely modal verb. It always combines its moral meaning of obligation with the function of an auxiliary verb in the future tense. As a modal verb ‘shall’ is not translated into Russian, usually its meaning is rendered by emphatic intonation.

‘**Shall**’ combined with *the simple infinitive* expresses:

1) **promise, oath, or strong intention**. In this meaning shall is used with the 2nd or 3rd person with a weak stress.

It shall be done as you wish. – Будет сделано, как пожелаешь.

He shall get this money. – Он получит-таки эти деньги.

2. **threat or warning**. In this meaning ‘shall’ is found only in the 2nd and 3rd person: That day shall come. She shall pay for it, she shall.

Notice that it is not ‘shall’ itself that denotes promise, threat or warning, but the sentence as a whole.

3. **a suggestion or offer**. It is used in questions (and offers) in the 1st person. Such sentences are translated into Russian by the infinitive.

“Shall I get you a chair?” – “Yes, please.” Принести тебе стул?

**Will**

The verb ‘will’ has the following forms: ‘**will**’ *for the present time contexts* and ‘**would**’ *for the past time contexts*. The latter is used in two ways:

a) in past time contexts to express an actual fact;

b) in present time contexts to express unreality or as a milder and politer form of ‘will’.

‘Will’ combined with the simple infinitive expresses:

1) **volition, i.e. willingness, readiness, consent, intention and determination**. This meaning is found in affirmative and negative sentences. It is often rendered into Russian by ‘*непременно*’, ‘*обязательно*’, ‘*охотно*’. ‘Would’ in this meaning shows reference to the past.

I will write as soon as I can. Я непременно напишу, как только смогу.

This meaning is often found in conditional sentences: If you will help me we can finish by six.

When used in *the negative* it denotes a **refusal** to do something: I won’t accept your offer. (I refuse to…)

2) **a polite request or an offer**. This meaning occurs only in questions. The form ‘**would**’ renders *a greater degree of politeness*.

Will you pass me the salt? Would you please lend me your pencil?

It is still politer to use the combinations: ‘**Would you mind + - ing form**’, ‘**Would you be so kind as to** …’: Would you be so kind as to lend me your book?

3) **a command** (in military contexts it is a strict command): Officers will report for duty at 06.00. Офицерам выйти на дежурство в 06.00.

An *impatient command*, expressing irritation can begin with ‘*will you*’.

Will you be quiet! Да замолчишь ли ты, наконец?

4) **insistence, resistence**. ‘Will’ and ‘would’ are stressed in this sense.

He `will try to mend it himself. (he insists on mending it himself).

**With reference to inanimate objects ‘will’ and ‘would’ show that a thing fails to perform its function**. It occurs in negative sentences and corresponds to the Russian ‘никак не’.

The door will not open. Дверь никак не открывается.

The orange will not peel. Апельсин никак не чистится.

5) **habitual or recurrent actions**: She will (would) sit for hours under the old oak tree looking at the beautiful country around her.

6) **inevitability, characteristic behaviour, quality, or something naturally expected**.

What will be will be. Чему быть, того не миновать.

Accidents will happen. Несчастные случаи неизбежны.

Boys will be boys. Мальчишки всегда остаются мальчишками.

Truth will out. Истины не утаишь.

7) **supposition**. ‘Will’ may be used in this meaning to express supposition with reference to the present or to the future in combination with the simple infinitive, or to the past in combination with the perfect infinitive. This meaning is found with the second and third persons.

This will be the school, I believe. Это, по-видимому, и есть школа.

It should be noted that *the use of ‘will’ in this meaning is not common*.

8) **disapproval of something expected**. In this meaning only ‘would’ is used. It is used sarcastically, mainly in responses, to express that something was to be expected. It corresponds to the Russian ‘*этого следовало ожидать*’, ‘*на него похоже*’.

‘I know she attended the place’. – ‘Oh, yes, she would’. А как же!

‘He refused to interfere’. – ‘He would’. Это на него похоже.

9) ‘will / would’ combined with different forms of the infinitive can express **prediction**, **a certainty about the present or the future** (in a similar way as must): This will be just what she wants. This will be our train.

10) Notice the set phrases with ‘will’ and ‘would’:

a) ‘**will not / won’t have + an object + an infinitive without to**’ means ‘I will see to it that it doesn’t happen’.

I will not (won’t) have you speak to me like that. Я не допущу, чтобы вы со мной так разговаривали.

b) ‘**would rather (‘d rather) / would sooner (‘d sooner) + an infinitive without to**’ mean ‘to prefer’. I’d rather do it myself.

c) ‘**would … mind**’ in interrogative and negative sentences means ‘to object’.

Would you mind my staying here for a while? Вы не против, если …

‘Would … mind’ in interrogative sentences may also express **a polite request**.

Would you mind getting me a cup of tea? Вы не дадите мне чашечку чая?

d) **You would, would you**? – Ах, ты так!

**Will, would and used to**

We can use ‘**will**’ (for the present) and ‘**would**’ (for the past) to talk about *characteristic behaviour, habits or things that are or were always true*: Every day Dan will come home from work and turn on the TV. At school she would sit quietly and pay attention. Cold winter will kill some plants.

We don’t use ‘**will**’ or ‘**would**’ in this way to talk about *a particular occasion*. Compare: Each time I gave him a problem he would solve it for me. Last night I gave him a problem and he solved it for me.

In speech, we can use ‘**will**’ or ‘**would**’ *to criticize people’s characteristic behaviour or habits*. It often suggests that *criticism has been made before but ignored*: She won’t do the washing up when I ask her. He would talk about people behind their backs.

We can also *criticize* a person directly or *express disapproval of something they have done or do regularly* using ‘**will**’: ‘I feel sick’. – ‘If you will eat so much, I’m not surprised’. (indicating disapproval)

We can use ‘**will**’ *to draw conclusions or state assumptions about things that are the case now*: Jack will be at home by now. Let’s go and see him. You will know that John and Sandra are engaged (= I believe you already know).

When we talk about repeated events in the past that don’t happen now we can use either ‘**would**’ or ‘**used to + infinitive’**. However, we can use ‘**would**’ *only if the time reference is clear* (to avoid confusion with other uses of ‘would’). Compare: We used to play in the garden (time reference not given). Whenever we went to my uncle’s house, we would / used to play in the garden.

We can use ‘**used to**’ but not ‘**would**’ when we talk about *past states that have changed*: The factory used to be over there.

We *don’t* *use* either ‘**used to**’ or ‘**would**’ when we *say exactly how many times in total something happened, how long something took, or that a single event happened at a given past time*: We visited Switzerland four times during the 1970s. She went to Jamaica last month.

To talk about an *unreal past situation* (an imaginary situation or a situation that might have happened in the past, but didn’t) – we use ‘**would have + past participle**’: I would have been happy to see him, but I didn’t have time.

When we want to indicate that we think *a past situation actually happened*, we prefer ‘**will have + past participle**’: As you will have noticed, he’s got new glasses.

**Note!** ‘**Used to**’ is followed by an infinitive. Notice the spelling in questions and negatives: It used to take me over an hour to get to work. Supermarkets didn’t use to be open on Sundays in Britain. Did you use to get free milk at school?

Don’t confuse ‘**used to + infinitive**’ with ‘**be / get used to (+ verb -ing)**’ which means ‘*be / become accustomed to*’: I used to live alone. (= I lived alone at a time in the past.) He wasn’t used to living on his own. (= He wasn’t accustomed to it.) She’s getting used to the new technology. (= She is becoming accustomed to it.)

**Dare**

We use ‘dare’ as a modal (that is, without ‘to’ after it) mainly in the negative to express lack of courage: I *daren’t tell* him the truth. I *daren’t ask* for more money.

In the affirmative, we use ‘dare’ as a modal:

− in questions: *Dare* you *do* it?

− with ‘negative adverbs’ (e.g. hardly): I *hardly dare tell* him what happened.

We also form questions with do / does / did: *Do* you *dare tell* him? I *don’t dare tell* him.

We can use ‘dare to’ as a notional verb: *Do* you *dare to* tell him? I *don’t dare to tell* him.

And note: I didn’t like the meal ...,

but *I daren’t say so / daren’t have said so / didn’t dare (to) say so / dared not say so*

We use ‘dare’ in four ways to express:

− **courage**: Very few climbers have *dared (to) attempt* Mount Everest without oxygen. Dare (to) is in the affirmative here, and this use is relatively rare.

− **lack of courage**: I *don’t dare (to) tell* the children that our holiday has been cancelled. This use of ‘dare (to)’, in the negative, is the most common.

− **challenge**: I *dare* you *to jump off* that wall. We use ‘dare’ only as a notional verb with ‘to’ for challenging. We use it in the affirmative and negative like any other verb. ‘Challenging’ is common in the language of children.

− **outrage**: How *dare* you *read* my private diary! We use ‘dare’ only as a modal without ‘to’ when expressing outrage.

**Modal verbs in reporting**

When there is a modal verb in the original statement, suggestion, etc., it sometimes changes when we report what was said or thought. The changes are summarized here:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *modal verb in original* | *modal verb in report* |
| could, would, should, might,  needn’t, ought to, used to,  could have, should have, etc. | could, would, should, might,  needn’t, ought to, used to, *(i.e. no change)*  could have, should have, etc. |
| will, can, may | would, could, might  will, can, may (existing *or* future situations and *present* tense verb in reporting clause) will or would, can or could, may or might (existing or future situations and *past* tense verb in reporting clause) |
| shall | would, should (offers, suggestions, etc.) |
| must (= necessity)  must (= conclude)  mustn’t | must or had to  must  mustn’t |

We sometimes use a modal verb in a report when there is no modal verb in the original: ‘You’re not allowed to smoke here’. – She told me that I mustn’t smoke there.

The verbs ‘**could**’, ‘**would**’, ‘**should**’, ‘**might**’, ‘**needn’t**’, ‘**ought to**’, ‘**used to**’, and ‘**could have**’, ‘**should have**’, etc. *don’t change in the report*: ‘I could meet you at the airport’. He said that he could meet us at the airport.

‘**Will**’ usually changes to ‘**would**’, ‘**can**’ to ‘**could**’, and ‘**may**’ to ‘**might**’. However, if the situation we are reporting still exists or is still in the future and the verb in the *reporting clause* has a *present* tense, we use ‘will’, ‘can’, and ‘may’ in the *reported clause*. Compare:

‘I’ll be in Paris at Christmas’. She tells me she’ll be in Paris at Christmas.

‘Careful! You’ll fall through the ice!’ I warned him he would fall through the ice.

*If the situation we are reporting still exists or is still in the future* and the verb in the *reporting clause* has a *past* tense, then we can use **either** ‘**would**’ or ‘**will**’, ‘**can**’ or ‘**could**’, or ‘**may**’ or ‘**might**’ in the *reported clause: ‘*The problem can be solved’. They said the problem can / could be solved.

When ‘**shall**’ is used in the original to talk about the future, we use ‘**would**’ in the report: ‘I shall (I’ll) call you on Monday’. She told me she would call me on Monday.

However, when ‘**shall**’ is used in *offers, requests for advice and confirmation*, etc. then we can use ‘**should**’ in the report, but not ‘shall’ or ‘would’: ‘Where shall I put this box?’ He asked where he should put the box.

When ‘**must**’ is used in the original to say that *it is necessary to do something,* we can usually use either ‘**must**’ or ‘**had to**’ in the report, although ‘had to’ is more natural in speech: ‘You must be home by 9 o’clock’. She said I must / had to be home by 9 o’clock.

However, when ‘**must**’ is used in the original to *conclude that something (has) happened or that something is true*, then we use ‘**must**’, not ‘had to’, in the report: ‘I keep forgetting things. I must be getting old’. Neil said he must be getting old.

If ‘**mustn’t**’ is used in the original, we can use ‘**mustn’t**’ in the report but not ‘didn’t have to’: ‘You mustn’t tell my brother’. He warned me that I mustn’t tell his brother.

**In Other Words**

Perhaps he is working now.

He may be working now.

I’m sure he hasn’t got the letter yet.

He can’t have got the letter yet.

I’m sure she understood.

She must have understood.

Shall I help you do your homework?

Would you like me to help you do your

homework?

Was it necessary for you to help her?

Did you need to help her?

It’s forbidden to smoke in here.

You mustn’t smoke in here.

You aren’t allowed to smoke in here.

He is likely to buy a sports car.

It is likely that he will buy a sports car.

He’ll probably buy a sports car.

It isn’t necessary for him to work today.

He doesn’t have to/doesn’t need to/needn’t work today.

It wasn’t necessary for them to buy so much food.

They needn’t have bought so much food.

It would be a good idea to avoid eating sweets.

You should avoid eating sweets.

Let’s try doing this exercise.

Shall we try doing this exercise?

Would you mind if I used your pen?

May/Might I use your pen?

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