

# Modals



## Modal

The following are the modal verbs in English grammar:

- |              |              |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| (i) Shall    | (ii) Will    | (iii) Should | (iv) Would   |
| (v) Can      | (vi) Could   | (vii) May    | (viii) Might |
| (ix) Used to | (x) Ought to | (xi) Need to | (xii) Dare   |



## Use of 'shall' / 'will'

Generally shall is used with "I and we" and will is used with the rest. In another words we can say that shall is used with first person and will is used with second and third person.

### Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ We shall take this initiative.
- ❖ They will prosecute him in the court of law.



## But

If a sentence refers to

- (i) Promise
- (ii) Willingness
- (iii) Certainty
- (iv) Determination and
- (v) Threat in that case "shall" is used in the place of "will" and "will is used in the place of "shall".

### Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ I will go to Mumbai tomorrow anyhow. (Certainty)
- ❖ You shall not move out of this house without my permission. (Threat)
- ❖ I shall achieve my goal. (Determination)



## Use of 'Should'

- (i) Should is used for active suggestion  
You should work sincerely  
I don't think you should smoke so much.
- (ii) Should is used for opinion  
What should I wear?  
John should initiate this through proper channel.
- (iii) Should is used for duty or obligation  
You should reach on time.  
Smith should have been more careful.
- (iv) Should is used for probability or expectation  
They should have reached Mumbai.  
Steve should have submitted the report.



## Use of 'Would'

- (i) Would is used for past  
**For Example:** He would go for a walk when he was young.
- (ii) Would is used for polite request  
**For Example:** Would you like to take a cup of coffee or tea?
- (iii) In indirect sentence 'would' is used in place of will  
**Direct:** He said, "He will come".  
**Indirect:** He said that he would come.
- (iv) Would is used to express opinion or hope  
**For Example:** I would like to inform you about it.
- (v) Would is used for wish  
**For Example:** I wish I would be a successful man.



## Use of Can

- (i) Can is used to show power  
The government can allow him to go abroad.
- (ii) Can is used to show ability  
I can tame the wild animal.
- (iii) Can is used to show possibility.  
He can come any moment.
- (iv) Can is used to take/ give permission  
Can I sit here?  
You can go now.
- (v) Can is used for polite request  
Can you do me a favour?  
Can I talk to Steve?
- (vi) Can is used to show nature  
He can speak lies.



## Use of 'Could'

- Could is the past form of can.
- (i) Could is used to show possibility in past  
I could win the race last year  
He could be there.  
While climbing up the hill we could hardly talk to each other.
- (ii) Could is used to show ability in past  
She could speak English when she was young.  
He could speak three languages when he was young.
- (iii) Could is used for polite request  
Could you tell me the way to the nearest post office?  
Could you help me, please?  
Could you lend me some money?



### Use of 'May'

- (i) May is used for formal permission  
May I come in sir?  
May I borrow your pen?
- (ii) May is used to show possibility  
It may rain today.  
Death may come any time.



### Use of 'Might'

- (i) Might is used for weak possibility  
He might come any time.
- (ii) Might is used for past possibility  
She might have attended the meeting.



### Use of 'Must'

- (i) Must is used for necessity and obligation.  
I must attend the class.
- (ii) Must is used for compulsion  
You must obey the rules of your country.
- (iii) Must is used for emphatic advice  
You must not miss the class.  
Use of 'Need To'
- (i) Need to is used to show requirement  
You need to work hard.



### Use of Use To

- (i) Used to is used to show past habit  
I used to go to school when I was young.  
We used to go out for dinner when we were in Delhi.



### Use of 'Ought To'

- (i) Ought to is used for social binding and moral respect  
You ought to follow the norms of society.  
You ought to respect your elders.



### Use of Dare

- (i) Dare is used to show courage  
How did you dare to answer back him?

## PRACTICE EXERCISE



*Fill in the blanks with suitable modals.*



You \_\_\_\_\_ obey your parents.

**Answer:** should



We \_\_\_\_\_ win this match easily.

**Answer:** can



I \_\_\_\_\_ play cricket with my friends when I was young.

**Answer:** used to



You \_\_\_\_\_ have won the prize.

**Answer:** could

## Commonly Asked QUESTIONS

*Fill in the blanks with suitable modals.*



If we had scored well then we \_\_\_\_\_ have won the match.

(A) Should

(B) Can

(C) Would

(D) Will

(E) None of these

**Answer: (c)**

**Explanation:** If we had scored well then we would have won the match.



\_\_\_\_\_ I ask you a question?

(A) Should

(B) May

(C) Could

(D) Must

(E) None of these

**Answer: (b)**

**Explanation:** May I ask you a question?

# Self Evaluation TEST



Duration  
10 Minutes

*Fill in the blanks with suitable modals.*



Karina's engagement ring is enormous! It \_\_\_\_\_ have cost a fortune.

- (A) May
- (B) Might
- (C) Can
- (D) Must
- (E) None of these



I was reading the book last night before I went to bed. I never took it out of this room. It \_\_\_\_\_ be lying around here somewhere.

- (A) Should
- (B) Might
- (C) Ought to
- (D) Must
- (E) None of these



You \_\_\_\_\_ take your umbrella along with you today.

- (A) Should
- (B) Might
- (C) Must
- (D) Could
- (E) None of these



The board of directors \_\_\_\_\_ be responsible for payment to stockholders.

- (A) Need
- (B) Shall
- (C) Will
- (D) All of these
- (E) None of these



If you think that was amazing, you \_\_\_\_\_ have seen it last night.

- (A) Should
- (B) Would
- (C) Could
- (D) Must
- (E) None of these



Death \_\_\_\_\_ come anytime.

- (A) Can
- (B) May
- (C) Could
- (D) Should
- (E) None of these



\_\_\_\_\_ I talk to my friends in the library waiting room?

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (A) May           | (B) Would |
| (C) Can           | (D) Could |
| (E) None of these |           |



If he studied harder, he \_\_\_\_ pass this course.

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (A) Shall         | (B) Could |
| (C) Should        | (D) Would |
| (E) None of these |           |



If I had invited him then he \_\_\_\_\_ have come.

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (A) Will          | (B) Would |
| (C) Should        | (D) Shall |
| (E) None of these |           |



Work hard lest you \_\_\_\_\_ fail.

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| (A) Will          | (B) Would |
| (C) Should        | (D) Shall |
| (E) None of these |           |
-

# Self Evaluation Test

## SOLUTIONS



### *Explanation for selected Questions*

1. Karina's engagement ring is enormous! It must have cost a fortune.
2. I was reading the book last night before I went to bed. I never took it out of this room. It must be lying around here somewhere.
3. You should take your umbrella along with you today.
4. The boards of directors shall be responsible for payment to stockholders.
5. If you think that was amazing, you should have seen it last night.
6. Death may come anytime.
7. Can I talk to my friends in the library waiting room.
8. If he studied harder, he could pass this course.
9. If I had invited him then he would have come.
10. Work hard lest you should fail.

### Answer

1.	D	2.	D	3.	A	4.	B	5.	A	6.	B	7.	C	8.	B	9.	B	10.	C
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