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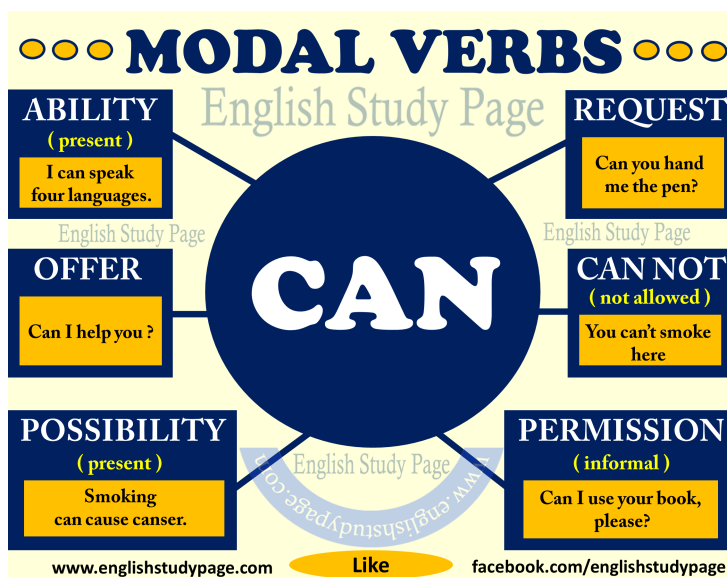
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Modal verbs are very common and useful in English. We use them to talk about *ability, permission, obligation, requests, offers, suggestions* and *more*.



via <http://www.stanag6001.com/modal-verbs/>

Modal verbs can express multiple states and intentions. Some of them have different meanings depending on a situation. For example, we can use the verb 'can' to talk about ability, possibility, to ask for permission, to make a request or to offer help.



via <https://englishstudypage.com/grammar/modal-verbs-can/>

## Meanings of modal verbs

Meaning

Examples

[Ability](#)

*I can play football.*  
*Tom couldn't visit us because he was tired.*

[Permission](#)

*You may have more ice-cream if you like.*  
*Could I leave early today?*

<a href="#">Requests</a>	<i>Can / Could you bring me that book? Would you call John and invite him, please?</i>
<a href="#">Offers</a>	<i>I'll buy the meat for the barbecue. Shall I carry some of your bags?</i>
<a href="#">Suggestions and advice</a>	<i>You should / ought to go to the dentist. We could try that new Italian restaurant.</i>
<a href="#">Obligation</a>	<i>You have to drive on the left in the UK. You mustn't be late for work.</i>
<a href="#">Deductions</a>	<i>There is someone at the door. It could / might / may be Nick, I don't know. It can't be Mary because she is on vacation.</i>

## How to use modal verbs

1. All modal verbs, except for 'ought' and 'have' require no preposition ('to') with the following verb:

- *I **can** dance.*
- *You **should** go.*
- *You **must** be careful.*
- *I **have to read** a lot to become a good student.*
- *You **ought to** observe the rules.*

2. Modal verbs in English don't add an 's' for *he/she/it*. They are always followed by the main verb in the base form:

Subject	Modal verb	Base form of the verb	Rest of the sentence
I (you, he, she, it, we, they)	<i>can</i>	dance	very well.

3. All modal verbs don't require any auxiliary verbs to form questions and negative forms. Negative statements are formed by adding 'not' after the modal verb:

- *You **should not (shouldn't)** eat so much meat - it's bad for you.*
- *Jack **can not (can't)** play tennis, but he likes playing football.*

4. Questions with modal verbs are usually formed by swapping the subject and modal verb:

- *They should visit Egypt.*

- **Why should they** visit *Egypt*?
- *You may come in.*
- **May I come** in?
- *Tiffany can meet her friends tonight.*
- **Can Tiffany meet** her friends tonight?

Here's a good video from mmmEnglish containing some tips and useful information use modal verbs correctly:

Read more on this topic:

[Modal Verbs: Overview](#)

[Modal Verbs for Ability](#)