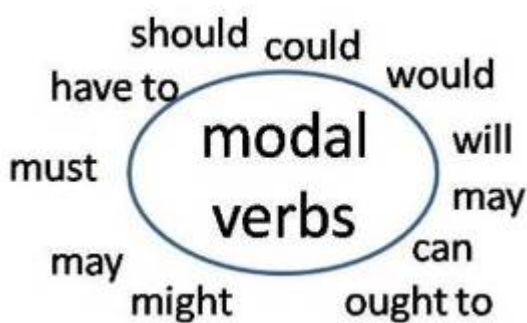


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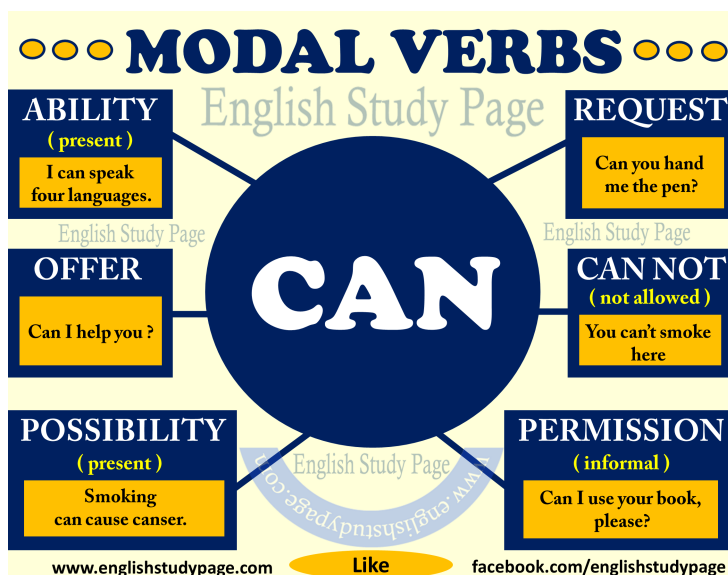
- [Meanings of modal verbs](#)
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Modal verbs are very common and useful in English. We use them to talk about *ability, permission, obligation, requests, offers, suggestions* and *more*.



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>I can play football. Tom couldn't visit us because he was tired.</i> |
| Permission | <i>You may have more ice-cream if you like. Could I leave early today?</i> |
| Requests | <i>Can / Could you bring me that book? Would you call John and invite him, please?</i> |
| Offers | <i>I'll buy the meat for the barbecue. Shall I carry some of your bags?</i> |
| Suggestions and advice | <i>You should / ought to go to the dentist. We could try that new Italian restaurant.</i> |
| Obligation | <i>You have to drive on the left in the UK. You mustn't be late for work.</i> |
| Deductions | <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](#)