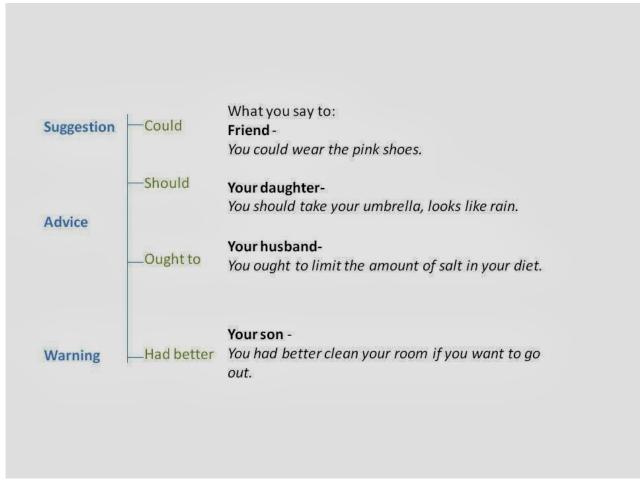


#### Table Of Contents:

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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. To give suggestions and advice we can use the modal verbs 'could', 'should', 'ought to', 'had better'.



via

 $http://learningglobalenglish.blogspot.com/2014/01/giving-advice-with-could-should-ought.ht\ ml$ 



Remember that modal verbs are always followed by a *base form of a verb* – an  $\underline{\text{infinitive}}$  verb without to.

## **Should**

'**Should**' is used when the speaker wants to make a *strong suggestion*:

- The sun is shining bright, so you **should wear** a cap.
- You look pale. I don't think you **should go** to school today.
- The road is wet. You **shouldn't drive** too fast.

### Should + have

We use **should have + past participle** to talk about things we regret, when we feel sorry about something that happened or did not happen in the past.

- I **should have called** you sooner.
- I **shouldn't have shouted** at her.

# **Ought to**

In more formal situations you can use '**ought to**' instead of 'should', but this modal verb is not used in negative statements and questions:

- You **ought to (should) wear** a scarf. It's very cold outside.
- They **ought to hurry**, their train is leaving.
- Jane **ought to visit** that castle, it's great!

Note: Both 'should' and 'ought to' are used to express advice, obligation or duty. BUT: We use 'should' when we want to express our subjective opinion. In other words, 'what I think is best for you to do'.

- You should call your mother more often.

'**Ought to**' is used when we want to express an *objective truth*. In other words, 'what is necessary, and cannot be avoided'. That's why we usually use 'ought to' when we are talking about laws, duties and regulations.



- They ought to follow the school's policy, or they will get expelled.

### Had better

If you want to give an important piece of advice, warning or recommendation (that can have a negative consequence if not followed), use 'had better':

- You had better (You'd better) leave for work, it's 8 o'clock already.
- We'd better go that way, we'll save about 10 minutes.
- He'**d better** park his car correctly or he will get fined.

Note: Had better is a strong expression. We use it if we think there will be *negative results* if someone does not do what is desired or suggested.

Here's how 'had better' relates to other modal verbs with similar meaning:



https://d29morwqizybnm.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Slide0235.jpg

## Could

'**Could**' is not as strong as 'should' and is normally used to give *mild advice* or to suggest a *solution* to some problem:

- - I hate my old jeans!
- - Well, you could buy a new pair.
- If they need more space, they **could look** for a bigger house.
- Jack moves to Canada next month. He **could learn** to play hockey there.

Here's a good video from American English about modal verbs to express advice:

Read more about modal verbs:

Modal Verbs for Possibility

Modal Verbs for Deduction

Modal Verbs for Ability



Modal Verbs: Permission, Requests and Offers

Modal Verbs for Obligations: Statements