

Unit 2 Modales

1 General rules

Los verbos modales (*can, could, must, needn't, may, might, should, ought, will, would y shall*) tienen unas características que los distinguen de los demás. Su significado puede cambiar dependiendo de si se usan en afirmativa, negativa o interrogativa.

- Son iguales en todas las personas.
I should / She should go to the doctor.
He might / They might go to town at the weekend.
- Van seguidos de un infinitivo sin *to*, excepto *ought*.
You should see your teacher.
A jury might find him guilty.
They ought to go home now.
- No necesitan el auxiliar *do* en negativa ni interrogativa.
She shouldn't go out running late at night.
Can you describe what you saw that night?
- Añaden *not* para formar la negativa.
The judge might not send him to prison.
- No tienen infinitivo, forma *-ing* ni participio. Cuando necesitamos usar *can* y *must* en una de estas formas, las sustituimos por *be able to* y *have to*.
They haven't been able to visit him this week.
She had to do jury duty last month.
- *Have to* es un verbo semimodal: se conjuga y cambia dependiendo de la persona y del tiempo en que se produzca la acción.
He has to spend six months in prison.
They didn't have to pay a fine.
- Los modales compuestos se usan para hablar de acciones del pasado.
He might have been at the scene of the crime but I didn't see him.
She must have seen the burglar – she was in the house at the time.

2 Advice, obligation, no obligation, no necessity and prohibition in the present

forma	uso
You ought to eat more fruit. You should visit the park; it's great. They shouldn't eat in that restaurant; the food is terrible. You must watch this film; it's hilarious.	consejo
I must study harder if I want to succeed. She has to help her dad move house.	obligación
We don't have to go to the shops if you don't want to. He needn't wear a tie as the office is quite informal.	ausencia de obligación y necesidad
You can't smoke indoors in Britain. You mustn't take liquids on planes.	prohibición

MUST / HAVE TO / DON'T NEED TO

Must se suele referir a una obligación del hablante, mientras que *have to* se suele usar para hablar de las obligaciones impuestas por otros, como órdenes o normas.
I must paint my bedroom. (Hace mucho que no lo hago.)
We have to wear a uniform at work. (Son las normas.)
Como *must* no tiene pasado, usamos *had to*.
We had to go home early.
En inglés informal y hablado usamos *don't need to* en lugar de *needn't*.
You needn't call me later.
You don't need to call me later.

3 Advice, obligation and no obligation / necessity in the past

forma	uso
He should have asked me first. We shouldn't have left so late. She ought to have told him the truth.	arrepentimiento, crítica o consejo en el pasado
He had to save half his salary every month to pay for his car.	obligación en el pasado
You needn't have rushed , the train is delayed.	no necesidad en el pasado (la acción ocurrió pero era innecesaria)
Emma didn't have to give a statement. He didn't need to go to court.	ausencia de obligación (para decir que una acción era innecesaria pero no sabemos si ocurrió o no)

Possibility, speculation and deduction in the present

forma	uso
<p>It could rain later; look at the sky.</p> <p>It may be his jacket, but I don't know for certain.</p> <p>He might not be interested in football any more.</p>	<p>posibilidad o especulación</p>
<p>This must be her bag – her phone is inside it.</p> <p>She must be on the next train.</p>	<p>deducción afirmativa o certeza de que algo es verdad</p>
<p>Lydia can't be a lawyer; she didn't go to university!</p>	<p>deducción negativa o certeza de que algo no es verdad</p>

Possibility, speculation and deduction in the past

forma	uso
<p>I can't find my wallet, I may have left it on the bus.</p> <p>He might have given a statement, but I'm not sure.</p>	<p>posibilidad o especulación en el pasado</p>
<p>He could have made time to meet her if he had wanted to.</p>	<p>posibilidad de un hecho en el pasado, pero no ocurrió</p>
<p>The jury must have made a decision very easily, they only took half an hour.</p>	<p>deducción, certeza o conclusión lógica sobre una acción pasada</p>
<p>Airiam can't have been a member of the jury, she was only 15 at the time.</p> <p>She couldn't have told her about the trial before she saw him in court.</p>	<p>certeza de que algo era imposible en el pasado</p>

HABILIDAD Y PERMISO

could se usan para expresar habilidad en presente y pasado. Para expresar habilidad en otros tiempos verbales usamos *be able to*.

I can play the piano and I'll soon be able to play guitar.

could, may o can para pedir permiso y hacer peticiones educadas en presente. En pasado usamos *could* y en los demás tiempos verbales, *be allowed to*.

Could you open the window, please?

May I take your food order?

Could you know if I'll be allowed to go to the party?