

## TITRE DE LA LEÇON : MODAL VERBS

**Discipline : Anglais**

**Sous-discipline : Grammaire**

**Cycle : Lycée**

-

**Niveau : Terminale D**

A modal or defective verb is an auxiliary verb that gives information about ability, permission, possibility, suggestion, advice, obligation or necessity. There are many modal verbs among which we have **can**, **could**, **may**, **might**, **must**, **ought to**, **should** ...

**-Can:** ability or capacity.

Example: Paul **can** speak French.

**-May:** a)- permission.

Example: **May** I go out?

b)- possibility.

Example: It **may** rain today.

**-Might:** possibility

Example: Students **might** leave early.

**-Could:** possibility or permission

Examples: She **could** run 2 kilometres. (possibility)

**Could** I speak to the manager? (permission)

**-Must/Ought to:** duty or obligation/ necessity/advice.

Example: You **must** do your work. (duty/necessity)

She **ought to** respect her parents. (obligation)

You **mustn't** empty your garbage can here! (prohibition/interdiction)

**-Should:** suggestion and advice.

Example: You **should** take your medicine.

That guy **should** put less cologne.

### Characteristics of modal verbs

- Modal verbs do not take an **s** at the third person singular of the simple present tense.

Examples: He **can** lift this bag.

It **may** rain this afternoon.

- They do not take **do/does/did** in the negative and interrogative forms.

Examples: Pupils **cannot** speak Spanish.

**Can** pupils speak Spanish?

- They are always followed by an **infinitive** without **to**.

Examples: You **may** go now.

I **must** get up early tomorrow.

- They are not preceded by **to** in the infinitive:

Examples: can, must, may (not ~~to~~ can, ~~to~~ must, ~~to~~ may).

- We don't use modal verbs in the future. Instead, we use their equivalents if they have one.



**Can** → be able to / be capable of

**May** → be allowed / be permitted to

**Must** → have to

Examples: **May** I go out? (Present tense)

I **can** swim in this river (present tense).

**Will** I be permitted to go out? (Future simple)

I **will be able to** swim in this river (future tense).

Note: **ought to** doesn't have an equivalent (not used in the future tense).

### Exercise

Choose the right modal verb to complete the sentences.

- 1- The government ..... protect the Congolese youth. (**can/ought to**)
- 2- A teacher ..... be a model for his pupils. (**may/must**)
- 3- In democratic countries, political leaders ..... be elected by the people. (**have to/could**)
- 4- You ..... smoke at school. (**should/mustn't**)
- 5- ..... I talk to your boss? (**May/should**)
- 6- They ..... publish the results today. (**can/may**)
- 7- I think that pupils ..... see the principal. (**should/may**)