

## 15 Modality

**Practice Run 5** *There are many more forms of modals than we discussed in class. Can you complete the table below?*

<i>modal verb</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>details of m.</i>
I <b>can</b> ski very well She'll <i>be able to</i> type in three months time. Pete <b>could</b> / <b>was able to</b> walk when he was one.	ability / skills	<i>now</i> <i>in the future</i> <i>in the past</i>
Every morning we <b>would</b> catch a bus.	regularity	<i>in the past</i>
He <i>would</i> tell his mum the train had been late.	thinking about sth.	<i>in the future in stories</i>
I <b>will not</b> lie for you.	unwillingness	<i>flat refusal</i>
I <b>can</b> see the Rigi from here. She <b>could</b> smell the booze on Ian's breath.	awareness	<i>now</i> <i>in the past – and repeated</i>
He <b>can</b> a right pain in the neck. Old Murphy <i>could</i> be very stubborn.	capability	<i>now</i> <i>in the past – and repeated</i>
A picnic <b>would</b> be great fun Those who know the book <b>should/would</b> recognise the joke. Oh, you <b>must</b> be Dr Livingstone.	likelihood: • certainty • assumption  • belief	<i>in particular circumstances</i>
He <b>can</b> try to ring again later. This <b>could</b> <i>well</i> be a serious problem. She <b>may/might</b> <i>not</i> be there either. I <b>might</b> <i>just</i> make it tonight.	possibility: • general • strong • negative • vague	<b>now</b>  "fairly sure"
This <i>could have</i> been really nasty. The murderer <b>could/may/might have</b> come in through the bathroom window.	possibility • negative • uncertainty	<b>in the past</b> <i>actually didn't happen</i> <i>why not</i>  — —
They <b>can't have</b> opened the safe in that time.	impossibility	<b>in the past</b>
We <b>could not have</b> been happier.	strong assertion	"not more"
You <b>will</b> spend the rest of your days in prison. You <b>will</b> go to the ball. You <b>can't</b> be serious!	certainty	<i>prophecy</i> <i>promise</i> <i>negative</i>
You <b>should have</b> been there to see it.	expectation	<i>already over</i>
You <b>can</b> go to the ball, Cinderella. You <b>may</b> speak now.	permission • general/informal • formal	<b>now</b>
She <b>was allowed to</b> go into all the rooms except one.	permission	<b>in the past</b>
You <i>cannot</i> get across this bridge. This book <b>must not</b> be reprinted without permission of the publisher People under 18 <i>shall not</i> be allowed to work after 11 p.m. You <b>are to</b> do nothing of the kind.	unacceptability • prohibition	<i>against rules</i> <i>formal</i>  <i>against rule formal</i>  <i>power of speaker</i>

<i>modal verb</i>	<i>meaning</i>	<i>details of m.</i>
You <b>shouldn't</b> come late every morning. You <b>can't</b> come late every morning.	• undesirability	general firm
<b>Would</b> you please clear up afterwards. <b>Could</b> you please tell her I phoned? <b>Can / will</b> you tell me as soon as he arrives?	instructions	direct strong/polite polite (power)
Please, <b>will</b> you help me with these cases?	appeal	direct
<i>Can't</i> we have some music? <i>Can</i> I ask you a question? <b>Could</b> you tell me the way to the station? <b>May</b> I ask who you're waiting for? <b>Would</b> you be so kind as to let us in?	request	persuasive simple/direct simple/polite formal/polite "timid"
<i>Will</i> you have a drink, James? <b>Would</b> you <b>like</b> to have a drink?	invitation	informal polite
<b>Can</b> I help you with the washing-up? <b>May</b> I help you, madam? <b>Shall</b> I carry the bags for you?	offers	general polite/dated "confident"
We <b>could</b> go to London on Saturday. I think we <b>should</b> invite the neighbours. We <b>must</b> do lunch one of these days. You <b>may</b> ( <b>perhaps</b> ) consider our offer again... Well, we <i>may as well</i> invite the neighbours. <b>Shall</b> we go and get them?	suggestion	general "good idea" persuasive very polite what the hell.. I/we x and ...
I <b>will</b> call you when I get home. We <b>may</b> be leaving soon. I <i>really</i> <b>must</b> read this letter.	intention	general formal/dated important
They <b>won't</b> let you get away with it. I know it was crazy but I just <b>could</b> not consider the idea. I <b>can't</b> <i>possibly</i> leave it all to her. I <i>simply</i> <b>can't</b> face them after all this. I <i>just</i> <b>can't/(simply) won't</b> leave my children at home.	unwillingness	<b>now</b> <b>in the past</b>  strong feelings embarrassed morally wrong
They <b>want</b> a room with a view. I <b>should like</b> to see the manager She <b>wished to</b> see the end of it. Long <b>may</b> this organisation thrive.	wishes  .. and hopes	general formal/dated <b>past</b> formal
I'd <b>rather</b> live under a bridge.	preference	
Something <b>has to be/ must</b> be done at once. This <b>must not</b> happen ever again.	importance	positive negative
They <i>need to</i> sort this mess out soon. One day you <b>will have to</b> pay for your sins. We <b>shall have to</b> pay the price.	necessity	general in the future future formal (I/we)
Steel knives <b>should</b> be cleaned in warm water. Perhaps you <b>could</b> send her a card.	advice	general moral

**Practice Run 6** *Here are the final paragraphs of Winston Churchill's "United States of Europe" speech at Zurich University in 1946. All the modals have been removed, but from the context you may be able to figure out which ones go where. Imagine that you "are" Churchill, convinced that what you are saying is right.*

But I **must** give you a warning. Time **may** be short. At present there is a breathing-space. The cannons have ceased firing. The fighting has stopped; but the dangers have not stopped. If we are to form the United States of Europe, or whatever name it **may** take, we **must** begin now.

In these present days we dwell strangely and precariously under the shield, and I **will** even say protection, of the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb is still only in the hands of a state and nation which we know **will** never use it except in the cause of right and freedom. But it **may** well be that in a few years this awful agency of destruction **will** be widespread and the catastrophe following from its use by several warring nations **will** not only bring to an end all that we call civilisation, but **may** possibly disintegrate the globe itself.

I **must** now sum up the propositions which are before you. Our constant aim **must** be to build and fortify the strength of the United Nations Organisation. Under and within that world concept we **must** re-create the European Family in a regional structure called, it **may** be, the United States of Europe. And the first practical step **would** be to form a Council of Europe. If at first all the States of Europe are not willing or able to join the Union, we **must** nevertheless proceed to assemble and combine those who **will** and those who **can**. The salvation of the common people of every race and of every land from war or servitude **must** be established on solid foundations and **must** be guarded by the readiness of all men and women to die rather than submit to tyranny. In all this urgent work, France and Germany **must** take the lead together. Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America and I trust Soviet Russia - for then indeed all **would** be well - **must** be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and **must** champion its right to live and shine.

*When you are done, compare your solution with the original speech  
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