

Namaste English
Mastery Course on Modal Verbs
By Santosh Sir

Modal Verbs Day 4

Introduction to the course

- ❖ It's important that we have the knowledge of modal verbs along with the knowledge of tenses. So, this time we have brought a mastery course for you on Modal Verbs.
- ❖ In this course you will get mastery on Modal Verbs.
- ❖ You will get to know that which modal verb to be used appropriately.
- ❖ Your spoken part will improve.
- ❖ Your written part will be rhetoric, after you have attended all the sessions of this course.

Modal Verbs for 'Permission'

can

We often use *can* to ask for and give permission.

Can I sit here?

You can use my car if you like.

Can I make a suggestion?

could

We also use *could* to ask for permission (but not to give it). *Could* is more formal and polite than *can*.

Could I ask you something?

Could I interrupt?

Could I borrow your pen for a moment, please?

may

May is the most formal way to ask for and give permission.

May I see your passport, please?

Customers may request a refund within a period of 30 days.

These pages may be photocopied for classroom use.

Will/Shall

Will you do this for me?

Shall I forgive her?

Modal verbs: asking for, giving, refusing permission

present or future

We use **can** when we give someone **permission** to do something:

*You **can** bring a friend to the party if you want.*

*You **can** borrow my phone if your battery is dead.*

We also use **may** for permission.

May is **more formal** and is used less often than *can*:

past tense

We use **could** to say that something **was permitted in the past**:

*Many years ago you **could** smoke in cinemas, but now it's banned.*

We also use **was / were allowed** in the past:

*We had to wear a tie at school, but we **were allowed** to take it off in hot weather.*



Passengers **may** take one small bag on board the plane.

Refusing permission

We use **can't** to say that something isn't permitted:

*You **can't** park here – it's private property.
He **can't** drive my car – he doesn't have insurance.*

Refusing permission

We use **couldn't / wasn't allowed to** to say that something was **not** permitted **in the past**:

*We **couldn't** cross the border without our passports.*

Must not / mustn't is also used for permission, but is more formal. It is often used on signs and in announcements:

*Passengers **must not** speak to the driver while the bus is in motion.*

Asking for permission:

We use **Can I? / Could I? / May I?** to ask for permission.

1. Can is informal: ***Can** I speak to John Wilson, please?*

2. Could is more formal and polite: ***Could** I speak to John Wilson, please?*

3. May is the most formal: ***May** I speak to John Wilson, please?*

Asking about the past:

We use **was allowed to? Could you?** to ask if something was permitted in the past.

***Were you allowed to stay up** late when you were a child?*

***Could you stay up** late when you were a child?*

***Could people travel** between East and West Berlin during the Cold War?*

About the Instructor

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