

**Namaste English
Mastery Course on Modal Verbs
By Santosh Sir**

Modal Verbs Day 8

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.

Daily Life usage of Modal of Most Common modal verbs

CAN and COULD

Possibility and impossibility

We use **could** to show that something is **possible**, but not certain:

*They **could come** by car. (= Maybe they will come by car.)*

*They **could be** at home. (= Maybe they are at home.)*

We use **can** to make **general statements** about what is possible:

*It **can be** very cold here in winter. (= It is sometimes very cold here in winter.)*

*You **can** easily **get** lost in this town. (= People often get lost in this town.)*

We use **can't** or **cannot** to say that something is **impossible**:

*That **can't** be true.*

*You **cannot be** serious.*

Level: intermediate

We use **could have** to **make guesses about the past**:

*It's ten o'clock. They **could have arrived** by now.*

*Where are they? They **could have got** lost.*

We use **could** to make **general statements about the past**:

*It **could be** very cold there in winter. (= It was sometimes very cold there in winter.)*

*You **could** easily **get** lost in that town. (= People often got lost in that town.)*

We use **can't have** or **couldn't have** to say that a **past event** was **impossible**:

*They know the way here. They **can't have got** lost!*

*If Jones was at work until six, he **couldn't have done** the murder.*

Ability

Level: beginner

We use **can** and **can't** to talk about someone's skill or general abilities:

*She **can speak** several languages.*

*He **can swim** like a fish.*

*They **can't dance** very well.*

We use **can** and **can't** to talk about the ability to do something at a specific time in the present or future:

*I **can see** you.*

*Help! I **can't breathe**.*

We use **could** and **couldn't** to talk about the past:

*She **could speak** several languages.*

*They **couldn't dance** very well.*

Level: intermediate

We use **could have** to say that someone had the ability or opportunity to do something, but **did not do it**:

*She **could have learned** Swahili, but she didn't want to.*

*I **could have danced** all night. [but I didn't]*

Permission

Level: beginner

We use **can** to ask for permission to do something:

***Can I ask** a question, please?*

***Can we go** home now?*

could is **more formal and polite** than **can**:

***Could I ask** a question please?*

***Could we go** home now?*

We use **can** to **give permission**:

*You **can go** home now.*

*You **can borrow** my pen if you like.*

We use **can** to say that **someone has permission** to do something:

*We **can go out** whenever we want.*

*Students **can travel** for free.*

We use **can't** to **refuse permission** or say that **someone does not have permission**:

You can't go home yet.
Students **can't travel** for free.

Requests

We use **could you ...** as a polite way of **telling or asking someone to do something**:

Could you take a message, please?
Could I have my bill, please?

can is **less polite**:

Can you take a message, please?

Offers

We use **can I ...** to **make offers**:

Can I help you?
Can I do that for you?

We sometimes say **I can ...** or **I could ...** to **make an offer**:

I can do that for you if you like.
I could give you a lift to the station.

Suggestions

We use **could** to **make suggestions**:

We **could meet** at the weekend.
You **could eat out** tonight.

Questions and negatives

We make questions by putting the subject after *can/could*:

Can I ...?
Could I ...?
etc.

Can you ...?
Could you ...?

The **negative** form is **can't** in spoken English and **cannot** in written English.

We sometimes say **cannot**, but it is very **emphatic**.

The negative form of **could** is **couldn't** in spoken English and **could not** in written English.

'may' and 'might'

Level: beginner

We use **may**:

- when we are **not sure** about something in the **present** or **future**:

*Jack **may be** coming to see us tomorrow.*

(= Perhaps Jack will come to see us tomorrow.)

*Oh dear! It's half past ten. We **may be** late for the meeting.*

(= Perhaps we will be late for the meeting.)

*She's had no sleep. She **may be** tired.*

(= Perhaps she is tired.)

- to **ask for permission** in a **formal** way:

***May I borrow** the car tomorrow?*

***May we come** a bit later?*

- to **give permission** in a **formal** way:

*You **may go** now.*

*You **may come** at eleven if you wish.*

- to say that **someone has permission** in a **formal** way:

*Students **may travel** for free.*

We can use **may not** to **refuse permission** or to say that **someone does not have permission**, but it is **formal** and **emphatic**:

*You **may not** borrow the car until you can be more careful with it!*

*Students **may not** wear jeans.*

We use **might** when we are not sure about something in the **present** or **future**:

*I **might see** you tomorrow.*

*It looks nice, but it **might be** very expensive.*

*It's quite bright. It **might not** rain today.*

Level: intermediate

We use **may have** and **might have** to make guesses about the past:

*I haven't received your letter. It **may have got** lost in the post.*

*It's ten o'clock. They **might have arrived** by now.*

We also use **might**:

- as the **past tense** of requests with **may**:

*He asked if he **might borrow** the car.*

*They wanted to know if they **might come** later.*

- as a very polite way of asking for permission:

***Might we ask** you a question?*

***Might I just interrupt** for a moment?*

'will' and 'would'

Level: beginner

We use **will**:

- to express beliefs about the present or future
- to talk about what people want to do or are willing to do
- to make promises, offers and requests.

would is the past tense form of **will**. Because it is a past tense, it is used:

- to talk about the past
- to talk about hypotheses (when we imagine something)
- for politeness.

Beliefs

We use **will** to express **beliefs about the present or future**:

*John **will be** in his office. (present)*

*We **'ll be** late. (future)*

*We **will have to** take the train. (future)*

We use **would** as the past of **will**, to describe **past beliefs about the future**:

I thought we **would be** late, so we **would have to take** the train.

Willingness

We use *will*:

- to talk about what people **want to do or are willing to do**:

We **'ll see** you tomorrow.

Perhaps Dad **will lend** me the car.

- to talk about **typical behaviour**, things that we often do (because we are willing to do them):

We always spend our holidays at our favourite hotel at the seaside. We **'ll get up** early every morning and have a quick breakfast then we **'ll go** across the road to the beach.

We use **would** as the past tense of *will*:

- to talk about what people **wanted to do or were willing to do in the past**:

We had a terrible night. The baby **wouldn't go** to sleep.

Dad **wouldn't lend** me the car, so we had to take the train.

- to talk about **typical behaviour**, things that we often did (because we were willing to do them) **in the past**:

When they were children they used to spend their holidays at their grandmother's at the seaside. They **'d get up** early every morning and have a quick breakfast. Then they **'d run** across the road to the beach.

Promises, offers and requests

We use **I will** or **We will** to make **promises and offers**:

I'll give you a lift home after the party.

We'll come and see you next week.

We use **Will you ... ?** or **Would you ... ?** to make **requests**:

Will you carry this for me, please?

Would you please **be** quiet?

Level: intermediate

Hypotheses and conditionals

We use **will** in conditionals to say what we think **will happen** in the present or future:

*I'll **give** her a call if I can find her number.
You **won't get in** unless you have a ticket.*

We use **would** to make hypotheses:

- when we imagine a situation:

*It **would be** very expensive to stay in a hotel.
I **would give** you a lift, but my wife has the car today.*

- in conditionals:

*I **would give** her a call if I could find her number.
If I had the money, I'd **buy** a new car.
You **would lose** weight if you took more exercise.
If he got a new job, he **would** probably **make** more money.
What if he lost his job? What **would happen** then?*

We also use conditionals to **give advice** :

*Dan **will help** you if you ask him.*

Past tenses are more polite:

*Dan **would help** you if you **asked** him.*

Level: beginner

Expressions with would

We use:

- **would you..., would you mind (not) -ing** for requests:

***Would you** carry this for me, please?
Would you mind carrying this?
Would you mind not telling him until tomorrow?*

- **would you like ..., would you like to ...** for offers and invitations:

***Would you like** another drink?
Would you like to come round tomorrow?*

- ***I would like ..., I'd like ... (you)(to) ...*** to say **what we want or what we want to do:**

I'd like that one, please.

I'd like to go home now.

- ***I'd rather...*** (= I would rather) to say **what we prefer:**

I'd rather have the new one, not the old one.

I don't want another drink. ***I'd rather*** go home.

- ***I would think, I would imagine, I'd guess*** to **give an opinion when we are not sure or when we want to be polite:**

It's very difficult, ***I would imagine***.

I would think that's the right answer.

About the Instructor

Santosh Sen (B.Ed. in English, University of Delhi)

Santosh Sir has wide teaching experience of more than 5 years in English Language and Literature. He is an ex-faculty of Exam Mitra Institute, Delhi. Students have known him as a teacher who makes English Learning easy by his short methods and tricks.

Online Link: On Namaste English Android App at

<https://namasteenglish.page.link/hp>

After installing app, click on website link:

<https://namaste-english.com/video-courses/mastery-course-in-modal-verb-by-santosh-sir-courses-436cd0d44b9b439f842c78a252ee0124.html>