

# Modals

- Modals are helping verbs
- Used with the base form of the verb, modals create verbal phrases.
- Modals do not change form.
- Modals never end in “s” even in 3rd person singular
- Use “not” to make modal verbs negative.
- Don’t use double modals.
- Modals lack past tense forms, except could and would which serve as the past of can and will.

Can	<p>present ability – I <i>can</i> ride a bike.</p> <p>opportunity – She <i>can</i> help you learn to ride a bike, when she is finished studying.</p> <p>permission – <i>Can</i> I try to ride the bike now?</p> <p>possibility and conditional – Anyone <i>can</i> learn to ride a bike, <i>if</i> they are not afraid to try.</p> <p>request – <i>Can</i> you teach me to ride a bike?</p> <p>willingness – I <i>can</i> teach you.</p>
Could	<p>past ability – I <i>could</i> ride a bike when I was younger.</p> <p>conditional – He <i>could</i> learn to ride a two wheeler, <i>if</i> his father removes the training wheels.</p> <p>possibility – Bill <i>could</i> be the best bike rider with some more practice.</p> <p>suggestion – Mark <i>could</i> ride his bike to campus, instead of driving his car.</p> <p>request – <i>Could</i> I use your bike?</p>
May	<p>polite request or permission – <i>May</i> I borrow your bike?</p> <p>possibility – He <i>may</i> be able to help you assemble the bike tomorrow.</p>
Might	<p>possibility, but not certainty – I <i>might</i> be able to let you borrow the bike, after I put air in the tires.</p> <p>conditional – This bike <i>might</i> be a good choice for cross country riding, <i>if</i> the seat is comfortable.</p> <p>suggestion – You <i>might</i> want to lower the seat, so that your legs reach the pedals.</p> <p>strong obligation – You <i>must</i> return the bike, if you use it.</p>
Must	<p>necessity – I <i>must</i> ride my bike to get my exercise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substitute must with “have to” – You <i>have to</i> return the bike, if you use it.</li> </ul>
Shall	<p>formal invitation and future action. – Shall we go bike riding together tomorrow?</p>
Should	<p>mild obligation, recommendation, advice – You <i>should</i> wear a helmet when you ride a bike.</p> <p>expectation – He <i>should</i> finish the race around noon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Substitute should with “ought to” – You <i>ought to</i> wear a helmet when you ride a bike.</li> </ul>
Will	<p>future intent – I <i>will</i> go riding on Saturday.</p> <p>promise – We <i>will</i> definitely make time to ride together next weekend.</p> <p>prediction – The weatherman, however, reports that the winds <i>will</i> be strong.</p> <p>voluntary action – I <i>will</i> go anyway.</p>
Would	<p>conditional – I <i>would</i> ride the bike at night, <i>if</i> it had a light.</p> <p>past of will – He <i>would</i> ride his bike before he hurt his knee.</p>

Use the base form of the word with the modal. Modals do not change form.

- He could ride for long distances. (correct)      He could rode for long distances. (incorrect)

Modals never end in “s” even in the third person singular.

- She should peddle slower. (correct)      She shoulds peddles slower. (incorrect)

Combine the base form of the verb with the modals – not with the infinitive “to.”

- He should ride with traffic. (correct)      He should to ride with traffic. (incorrect)

Use “not” to make modal verbs negative.

- I *cannot* ride a bike.
- I could *not* ride a bike because I was afraid of falling.
- I may *not* be riding next weekend because I have to work extra hours.
- She might *not* have a new bike, but it gets her where she needs to go.
- Bike riders under 17 years of age must *not* ride without helmets in Pennsylvania.
- Riders *shall not* break the traffic rules that apply to cars.
- When using hand signals to indicate turning, riders *should not* use their right arm.
- He *will not* go riding when it rains.
- The bike club *would not* participate in the race because they objected to the high entrance fee.

To form questions:

- Can I teach you how to ride a bike?
- Should we ask your mother first?
- Might it help if I let her know that you’ll be wearing a helmet?
- Will you let me take the training wheels off?

Do not use double modals.

- He could can fix the flat tire.
- I will might enter the bicycle challenge marathon.

Practice: Circle the best modal.

- He can/ would ride his bike when his car broke down.
- Bob should not/ may not ride down the middle of the busy road.
- Might you/ could you repair my broken wheel?
- My mother always said, “You could/should wear a helmet to protect your head.”
- May/ can I borrow your bike?
- I must/ can return the bike to the rental shop by 5 o’clock this evening.
- Shall/ should we take a tire patch kit with us to make repairs?