

Before you start

1 Review these intermediate grammar points and check you know them.

Modal forms

1 The modal verbs are *can, could, may, might, must, should, will, shall* and *would*. They differ from main verbs in several ways.

- They have the same form for all subjects: *I can, he can, they can*.
- The negative is just *not*; we do not use *do/does not*: *You **shouldn't** say that*.
- The modal verb goes before the subject in questions: ***Could** you come here?*
- They do not have infinitive forms (*to ...*), so to make an infinitive, we use a different verb: *I want to **be able to** sing perfectly*.
- They do not have participle forms (*-ed, -ing*), so to make continuous or perfect tenses, we change the main verb: *I **must be going** soon. She **might have had** the results by now*.
- They are followed by the infinitive without *to*: *They **would visit** you if you asked them*.

2 The verbs *need (to)* and *dare (to)* are occasionally used in two forms:

MAIN VERB FORM	MODAL VERB FORM
<i>You don't need to turn the computer off.</i>	<i>You needn't turn the computer off.</i>
<i>I don't know if I dare to tell her what's happened. We don't dare (to) go there after dark.</i>	<i>I don't know if I dare tell her what's happened. We daren't go there after dark.</i>

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Basic uses of modal verbs

USE	MODAL VERB	EXAMPLES
ability/ lack of ability/ possibility	<i>can/can't could/couldn't</i>	<i>She can speak Spanish but she can't speak Italian. Mozart could play the piano at the age of five. Only amateur athletes could compete.</i>
possibility (present or future)	<i>may/might</i>	<i>Mr Andrews may be in his office. I'll just check. The shops might be busy tomorrow as it's a public holiday.</i>
obligation	<i>must (strong) should/ought to</i>	<i>The governing bodies of individual sports must decide who is eligible. We should/ought to change some currency soon.</i>
prohibition	<i>mustn't/can't (strong) shouldn't</i>	<i>You mustn't/can't cross the road here; it's dangerous. We mustn't/can't use the pool after 7.00 p.m. You shouldn't eat while you're driving.</i>
speculation	<i>can't/could/ must/may/might</i>	<i>Sandra must be in the school; her bag's in the staff room. Brian can't have been driving the car; he doesn't drive.</i>
predictions/ decisions made at time of speaking	<i>will/won't</i>	<i>He's been found guilty of murder. He'll be in prison for a long time. You must work hard for this exam. It won't be easy. I can't concentrate right now. I'll finish this essay later.</i>

Has to (obligation) is not a modal verb: it is grammatically the same as a main verb:
*You **don't have to do** that.*