**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**.

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| **Can** | present ability – I *can* ride a bike.  opportunity – She *can* help you learn to ride a bike, when she is finished studying.  permission – *Can* I try to ride the bike now?  possibility and conditional – Anyone *can* learn to ride a bike, *if* they are not afraid to try.  request – *Can* you teach me to ride a bike?  willingness – I *can* teach you. |
| **Could** | past ability – I *could* ride a bike when I was younger.  conditional – He *could* learn to ride a two wheeler, *if* his father removes the training wheels.  possibility – Bill *could* be the best bike rider with some more practice.  suggestion – Mark *could* ride his bike to campus, instead of driving his car.  request – *Could* I use your bike? |
| **May** | polite request or permission – *May* I borrow your bike?  possibility – He *may* be able to help you assemble the bike tomorrow. |
| **Might** | possibility, but not certainty – I *might* be able to let you borrow the bike, after I put air in the tires.  conditional – This bike *might* be a good choice for cross country riding, *if* the seat is comfortable.  suggestion – You *might* want to lower the seat, so that your legs reach the pedals. |
| **Must** | strong obligation – You *must* return the bike, if you use it.  necessity – I *must* ride my bike to get my exercise.   * Substitute must with “have to” – You *have to* return the bike, if you use it. |
| **Shall** | formal invitation and future action. – Shall we go bike riding together tomorrow? |
| **Should** | mild obligation, recommendation, advice – You *should* wear a helmet when you ride a bike.  expectation – He *should* finish the race around noon.   * Substitute should with “ought to” – You *ought to* wear a helmet when you ride a bike. |
| **Will** | future intent – I *will* go riding on Saturday.  promise – We *will* definitely make time to ride together next weekend.  prediction – The weatherman, however, reports that the winds *will* be strong.  voluntary action – I *will* go anyway. |
| **Would** | conditional – I *would* ride the bike at night, *if* it had a light.  past of will – He *would* ride his bike before he hurt his knee. |

**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 **can*not***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?