

LESSON 21
The Modal Verbs
Can, May, Must

Rules:

1. The modal verbs **can, may** and **must** are non-personal verbs
2. After modal verbs **can, may** and **must** you cannot use a particle **to**
3. After modal verbs **can, may** and **must** the main verb should be in the form of an infinitive
4. The Modal verbs inflect the main verb and therefore, in the sentence, they must stand in front of the main verb

Using Can

Pronouns	Present	Past	Future
I	can can not cannot can't	could could not couldn't	x
He			
She			
It			
You			
we			
they			

Using May

Pronouns	Present	Past	Future
I	may may not mayn't	might might not mightn't	x
He			
She			
It			
You			
we			
they			

Using Must

Pronouns	Present	Past	Future
I	must must not mustn't	x	x
He			
She			
It			
You			
we			
they			

Examples in 1 x 10 • Can

Types of sentences	Present tense	Past tense
Affirmative	I can play chess	I could play chess
Negative	I can't play chess	I couldn't play chess
Interrogative	Can you play chess?	Could you play chess?
Short answers	Yes, I can	Yes, I could
	No, I can't	No, I couldn't

Examples in 1 x 10 • May

Types of sentences	Present tense	Past tense	Semantic using
Affirmative	You may become a boss	You might become a boss	* Probability
Negative	You may not smoke here	You might not smoke here	* Forbiddance
Interrogative	May I come in?	Might I come in?	* Permission
Short answers	Yes, you can	Yes, you could	Transition <i>may</i> into <i>can</i>
	No, you can't	No, you couldn't	

Examples in 1 x 5 • Must

Types of sentences	Present tense
Affirmative	You must be my friend
Negative	You must not be his friend
Interrogative	Must they work there?
Short answers	Yes, they must
	No, they must not