

USE OF MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs express an ability, permission, probability, obligation, advice, necessity or prohibition.

Look at the following table to see which modal verb use in any case.

Look at the sentences as an example on how to create a sentence.

Check that the subject goes first, then a modal verb, then another verb in infinitive form without "to" and last the "object".

MODAL VERB	SPANISH MEANING	INTENTION	EXAMPLE	QUESTIONS
CAN	PODER	ABILITY OR PERMISSION	He can play the piano	Can you speak German?
CAN'T	NO PODER	ABILITY OR PERMISSION	She can't walk faster.	
CAN'T	NO PODER	PROHIBITION	You can't smoke in a restaurant	
COULD	PODIA O PODRIA	ABILITY, PERMISSION or PROBABILITY	I could run very fast when I was a child.	Could you play guitar when you were 6 years old?
COULDN'T	NO PODIA O NO PODRIA	ABILITY, PERMISSION or PROBABILITY	I couldn't sleep last night.	
MUST	DEBER	OBLIGATION	You must go to the post office to buy stamps	Must you go home now?
MUSTN'T	NO DEBER	PROHIBITION	You mustn't drive if you drink	
SHOULD	DEBERIA	ADVICE	You should study harder.	Should I call the doctor?
SHOULDN'T	NO DEBERIA	ADVICE	I think you shouldn't go to bed so late	
MAY	QUIZAS	PROBABILITY	We may go out tonight	
MAY NOT	QUIZAS NO	PROBABILITY	I may not come today	
MIGHT	QUIZAS	PROBABILITY	I might go to the cinema tonight.	
MIGHT NOT	QUIZAS NO	PROBABILITY	She might not be his wife	

NOTICE THAT, TO MAKE ALL PREVIOUS MODAL VERBS IN NEGATIVE, WE ONLY ADD "NOT" AFTER THE MODAL VERB

NOTICE THAT IN QUESTIONS, MODALVERBS ACT LIKE "AUXILIAR" IN OUR "WASV" FORMULA

MODAL VERB	SPANISH MEANING	INTENTION	EXAMPLE
HAVE TO	TENER QUE	OBLIGATION	You have to pass the exam to get your licence
DON'T HAVE TO	NO ES NECESARIO	NECESSITY	You don't have to go to school tomorrow, it's Sunday!

NOTICE THAT WE NEED AN "AUXILIAR" TO CREATE NEGATIVE SENTENCES AND QUESTIONS

IN QUESTIONS, "HAVE TO" DOESN'T ACT LIKE "AUXILIAR" IN OUR "WASV" FORMULA

EXAMPLE: What time DO you have to go to the doctor?

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