

## Overview of Modal Auxiliaries and Similar Expressions

| Modalverb:           | Übersetzung(en):             | Bedeutung(en):  | Beispiele:  | Bemerkungen:   |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>can</b>           | können                       | 1. Fähigkeit<br>2. Höfliche Frage                               | 1. I <i>can</i> sing.<br>2. <i>Can</i> I help you?  | Wir benutzen <b>can (1)</b> weder bei der Zukunftsformen <i>will</i> oder <i>be going to</i> noch im Perfekt. Statt dessen benutzen wir <i>be able to</i> .                                      |
| <b>could</b>         | 1. konnten<br>2. könnten     | 1. Vergangenheitsform von <i>can</i><br>2. Höfliche Frage       | 1. I couldn't come yesterday.<br>2. <i>Could</i> you help me?   | <b>Could (2)</b> ist höflicher als <b>can (2)</b> .  |
| <b>be able to</b>    | in der Lage sein, fähig sein | Fähigkeit   | <i>Are you able to</i> speak French?<br><i>I wasn't able to</i> attend the meeting.<br><i>I haven't been able to</i> reach him. | Man kann <b>be able to</b> in allen Zeitformen verwenden.<br>Man muss das Verb <b>be</b> richtig konjugieren!  |
| <b>be capable of</b> | fähig zu etw. sein           | Fähigkeit   | James <i>is capable of</i> working at the CNC milling machine.  | Man kann <b>be capable of</b> in allen Zeitformen benutzen.<br>Man muss das Verb <b>be</b> richtig konjugieren.<br>Wenn man ein Verb nach <b>of</b> hat, muss man <b>ing</b> an das Verb hängen. |
| <b>want to</b>       | wollen                       | Wunsch  | He <i>wants to</i> leave now.   | Man muss <b>want</b> konjugieren!  |
| <b>would like</b>    | möchten                      | 1. <i>would like</i> :<br>höflicher Wunsch<br>2. höfliche Frage | 1. I'd like some coffee.<br>2. <i>Would</i> you like some coffee?   | <b>Would like (1)</b> ist höflicher als <b>want to</b> .<br>Die Kurzform von <b>would like (1)</b> ist <b>'d like</b> .  |
| <b>must</b>          | müssen                       | Notwendigkeit   | We <i>must</i> pay taxes.<br><br>We <i>mustn't</i> be late.   | Man benutzt <b>must</b> nur im Präsens. Bei allen anderen Zeitformen muss man <b>have to</b> benutzen.<br><br><b>must not = darf nicht!</b>  |

|                   |                                      |   |   |  |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>have to</b>    | müssen                               | Notwendigkeit                           | We'll <i>have to</i> finish this tomorrow.<br>We <i>had to</i> see our boss yesterday.<br><br>We <i>don't have to</i> prepare anything for the meeting.   | Wir benutzen <i>have to</i> in allen Zeitformen.<br><br>Man muss das Verb <i>have</i> konjugieren.<br><br><i>don't have to = muss nicht!</i>                 |
| <b>need to</b>    | brauchen, müssen                     | Notwendigkeit                           | The situation is critical. The managing director <i>needs to</i> act quickly.<br><br>You needn't worry about this problem.  | <i>Need to</i> kann in allen Zeitformen benutzt werden.<br>Man muss <i>need to</i> konjugieren.<br><br><i>needn't</i> oder <i>don't need to = muss nicht</i> |
| <b>should</b>     | sollen                               | Ratsamkeit                              | You look ill. You <i>should</i> see a doctor.   | <i>Should</i> und <i>ought to</i> sind weitgehend austauschbar.  |
| <b>ought to</b>   | sollen                               | Ratsamkeit                              | You look ill. You <i>ought to</i> see a doctor.   | Wir benutzen <i>should</i> häufiger als <i>ought to</i> .  |
| <b>had better</b> | sollen                               | besser wäre es                          | You look ill. You <i>had better</i> see a doctor.   | <i>Had better</i> konjugiert man nicht.<br><br>Die Kurzform von <i>had better</i> ist <i>'d better</i> .   |
| <b>may</b>        | 1. könnten, dürften<br><br>2. dürfen | 1. Möglichkeit<br><br>2. höfliche Frage | 1. It <i>may</i> rain tomorrow.<br>We <i>may</i> be going to the trade fair.<br>They <i>may</i> have left work.<br><br>2. May I help you?<br><br>3. We <i>may</i> be late to the meeting.<br>Maybe we'll be late. | Wir benutzen <i>can (2)</i> und <i>could (2)</i> häufiger als <i>may (2)</i> .<br><br>3. <i>may be = könnte sein</i><br><i>maybe = vielleicht</i>            |
| <b>might</b>      | könnten, dürften                     | Möglichkeit                             | It <i>might</i> rain tomorrow.<br>We <i>might</i> be going to the trade fair.<br>They <i>might</i> have left work.  | <i>May (1)</i> und <i>might</i> sind austauschbar.   |

## Grammar Exercises: Modal Auxiliaries and Similar Expressions

**Exercise 1.** After interviews with three job candidates, two human resources employees are discussing which candidate they would like to hire. Read the dialogue and complete the sentences using the correct forms of **can, could, be able to, be capable of** or **negative forms**.

Craig: Alright, there are three candidates. Now who do we want to hire?

Sue: I think Wendy Jones would \_\_\_\_\_ (1) doing a good job.

Craig: Yes, she has a lot of experience abroad and \_\_\_\_\_ (2) speak several languages. But she \_\_\_\_\_ (3) only work in the morning, and we need a full-time employee.

Sue: That's right. Hmm, how about Frank Young? He \_\_\_\_\_ (4) working hard, and he has a lot of experience as a manager.

Craig: Yes, but unfortunately, he \_\_\_\_\_ (5) speak any foreign languages, and we need somebody who \_\_\_\_\_ (6) speak German if nothing else.

Sue: Yes, I agree. Plus, Frank Young did poorly at his interview. I don't think hiring him is an option. I \_\_\_\_\_ (7) understand anything he said during the interview.

Craig: I \_\_\_\_\_ (8) understand him either. Okay. The third candidate was Tina Sandowski. She \_\_\_\_\_ (9) speak German pretty well. She \_\_\_\_\_ (10) work full-time, and she has already worked abroad. In my opinion she will \_\_\_\_\_ (11) doing a nice job.

Sue: I think so, too. We should definitely offer her the job.

**Exercise 2.** The following dialogue takes place at a trade fair. A representative from a firm which manufactures power drills is talking to a potential customer. Read the dialogue and fill in the blanks with **can, could, may, or would**.

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ (1) I help you?

Customer: Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ (2) you give me some information about your power drills?

Representative: Yes. We have different kinds of power drills. How powerful does the drill need to be?

Customer: Oh, I'd say the torque ought to be about 400 inches per pound.

Representative: Alright. Our 18V ½ inch drill should suit your needs. \_\_\_\_\_ (3) you like to try it out?

Customer: Yes, I \_\_\_\_\_ (4). (*tests the drill*) Nice drill! \_\_\_\_\_ (5) you give me the other specifications?

Representative: Of course. (*gives him all the specifications*) ...

Customer: Wow, that's some drill! Do you suppose you \_\_\_\_\_ (6) send me this information to me in an e-mail?

Representative: I \_\_\_\_\_(7) be glad to. \_\_\_\_\_ (8) I have your name and e-mail address?

Customer: Of course. \_\_\_\_\_ (9) you like to have my business card? The information is right there.

Representative: Okay. \_\_\_\_\_ (10) I show you any of our other drills?

Customer: No, thank you. I appreciate your help and look forward to your e-mail.

Representative: Good. I'll send it off as soon as possible. Let me know if I \_\_\_\_\_ (11) do anything else for you.

**Exercise 3.** Find alternatives for the following sentences using either **will** or **want to**.

**Don't forget:**

will = *werden*

want to = *wollen*

1. I'd like to work more hours. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Tomorrow I'm probably going to finish writing this program. \_\_\_\_\_

3. We hope to increase production. \_\_\_\_\_

4. I'd love to attend to the trade fair in London. \_\_\_\_\_

5. I'm going to attend a meeting on Tuesday. \_\_\_\_\_

6. When would you like to meet for lunch? \_\_\_\_\_

7. The company is probably going to launch a new product next month. \_\_\_\_\_

8. In all likelihood, he's taking a business trip to Wales next summer. \_\_\_\_\_

9. We'd like to improve our brake hoses for Audi. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Where is the next conference? \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 4.** In the break room some employees discuss where their colleague might be. Rewrite these sentences using **may** or **might**.

Tom: Where is Sue?  
Mark: Perhaps she is in her cube. 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill: Perhaps she is sick. 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Hank: Perhaps she is with Kim. 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fred: Perhaps she has left work early. 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Meg: Perhaps she is driving to headquarters. 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Chris: Perhaps she is eating a snack. 6. \_\_\_\_\_  
Sam: Perhaps she is on holiday. 7. \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom: You're certainly not much help.

**Exercise 5.** In the following dialogue, Lynn and Joe discuss some weekend possibilities. Fill in the blanks with **maybe** or **may be**.

Lynn: What should we do this weekend?  
Joe: \_\_\_\_\_ (1) we could go to the movie theater and see the new horror flick.  
Lynn: Yes, but I \_\_\_\_\_ (2) too scared to watch a horror film.  
Joe: All right. How about trying out the new Italian restaurant?  
Lynn: The food \_\_\_\_\_ (3) lousy.  
Joe: We could \_\_\_\_\_ (4) go to our favorite Italian place.  
Lynn: I don't feel like pizza or pasta. \_\_\_\_\_ (5) we should just have a nice home-cooked meal.  
Joe: That \_\_\_\_\_ (6) too boring for me. \_\_\_\_\_ (7) you'll burn the food again.  
Lynn: \_\_\_\_\_ (8) so, \_\_\_\_\_ (9) not. It \_\_\_\_\_ (10) more fun and taste better than you think!

**Exercise 6.** In the following dialogue, Henry and George are moaning and groaning about their work load. Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of **have to**.

George: Gosh, I'm utterly stressed. I \_\_\_\_\_ (1) get a ton of work done. And the boss wants it done, ... like yesterday!  
Henry: Same here. I \_\_\_\_\_ (2) finish preparing for the meeting by 1:00 at the latest.  
George: Yeah, well I \_\_\_\_\_ (3) attend that dull meeting later on today.

Henry: Ha, you only \_\_\_\_\_ (4) sit and listen, but poor Sue \_\_\_\_\_ (5) give a presentation. And I've had just too much to do recently. Two days ago I \_\_\_\_\_ (6) go to York on business, and yesterday I \_\_\_\_\_ (7) meet with some extremely picky clients.

George: Recently, I \_\_\_\_\_ (8) to see unreasonable customers, too.

Henry: Don't you hate that! Before the month ends I \_\_\_\_\_ (9) finish compiling our company's new catalogue.

George: And, I \_\_\_\_\_ (10) finish the top secret project. The boss has been breathing down my neck about it.

Henry: Well, we \_\_\_\_\_ (11) stop complaining. It's back to the old grinding stone!

**Exercise 7.** Complete these sentences with **mustn't** or **don't/doesn't have to**

1. Usually Mark \_\_\_\_\_ work on Sundays. It's his free day.
2. You \_\_\_\_\_ touch bare electrical wires. You could get electrocuted.
3. We \_\_\_\_\_ wear formal clothes to work, but we usually do anyway.
4. We \_\_\_\_\_ arrive late at work. Our boss is keen on punctuality.
5. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell anyone this. It's top secret.
6. Tom makes enough money, so his wife \_\_\_\_\_ work.
7. Sue wants to lose weight, so she \_\_\_\_\_ eat anything fattening or sweet.
8. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> Germans \_\_\_\_\_ work.

**Exercise 8.** Read the dialogue. Fill in the blanks with **must**, **have to**, **mustn't**, or **don't have to**.

Bill: As I see it, we really need to increase production of model X16 right away.

Pam: I couldn't agree more. We \_\_\_\_\_ (1) manufacture more, as soon as possible.

Ron: I'm not sure about that. We have plenty of items in stock to fill the current orders, so production \_\_\_\_\_ (2) be increased quite so soon.

Bill: Yes, but these last few weeks we've had so many new orders.

Jill: True, but we \_\_\_\_\_ (3) produce too much. This sudden increase in orders is probably only for the time being.

Pam: With respect, we \_\_\_\_\_ (4) produce enough so that we can fill the orders we have now and any possible new orders.

Jill: Yes, but we can't possibly know how many new orders will come in. I'd say we \_\_\_\_\_ (5) wait and see.

Bill: Don't you think this would be too risky. It'd be way too expensive to increase production so suddenly and drastically. If we start increasing production now, things will be cheaper and easier.

Pam: Exactly. We \_\_\_\_\_ (6) incur such high costs and production difficulties.

Jill: Hmm. I'm really not convinced that . . .

**Exercise 9.** Respond to A's statements. Begin the sentences with "You **should** ..." or "You **ought to**..." Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1. A: I want to join these wooden parts. B: \_\_\_\_\_
2. A: I need to weld two sheets of sheet metal. B: \_\_\_\_\_
3. A: I want to bond a polypropylene sheet to a metal plate. B: \_\_\_\_\_
4. A: I need to do some welding, but the blue oxygen cylinder is empty. B: \_\_\_\_\_
5. A: I can't find my soldering iron. B: \_\_\_\_\_
6. A: I need to do some welding. What should I wear? B: \_\_\_\_\_
7. A: Help! There's a fire in the workshop! B: \_\_\_\_\_
8. A: I'd like to watch you weld those steel pieces. B: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 10.** Fred and Beth are on break now. Fill in the blanks with **might, may, maybe, should, have to, must, mustn't, can, could, want** or **would**

Fred: Hi Beth. Whatcha up to?

Beth: Nothing much. Work's been slow. \_\_\_\_\_ (1) I should call it a day and go home.

Fred: That sounds good. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ (2) go home now. Unfortunately I \_\_\_\_\_ (3) do overtime.

Beth: Oh. What a bummer! I had to do overtime last week. What a drag!

Fred: Tell me about it! Luckily, I'm going on vacation soon, so I \_\_\_\_\_ (4) get some R & R.

Beth: Really? Where are you going?

Fred: I haven't really decided yet. I \_\_\_\_\_ (5) go to Mexico.

Beth: Oh, I went there last year. It was a fantastic trip. You \_\_\_\_\_ (6) definitely go there!

Fred: But I \_\_\_\_\_ (7) not like the food. It's pretty spicy and some people get food poisoning there. I don't \_\_\_\_\_ (8) to get sick.

Beth: What are you worrying about? Just be sure the food is cooked. You \_\_\_\_\_ (9) eat raw vegetables or fruit in Mexico.

Fred: And there's another thing. The plane ride \_\_\_\_\_ (10) be too expensive for me.  
 Beth: Oh, it's definitely worth the money. There is so much you \_\_\_\_\_ (11) see and do in Mexico.  
 Fred: I guess you're right, but I still \_\_\_\_\_ (12) think it through.  
 Beth: If you go to Mexico, \_\_\_\_\_ (13) you bring me back a bottle of Tequila?  
 Fred: No problem, but you \_\_\_\_\_ (14) drink the whole bottle in one sitting. You \_\_\_\_\_ (15) kick the bucket!  
 Beth: Gosh, dying isn't high on my agenda. Well, let's not tempt fate! I'll have a party so I \_\_\_\_\_ (16) share it with friends.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (17) you like to come?  
 Fred: Oh, That would be very nice! \_\_\_\_\_ (18) I'll go to Mexico after all!  
 Beth: Great. Well, I \_\_\_\_\_ (19) be going. Ta! Ta!  
 Fred: Lucky you. I \_\_\_\_\_ (20) to get back to the old grind. See ya later.

**Answer key:**

**Exercise 1.**

1. be capable of
2. can / is able to
3. can
4. is capable of
5. can't / isn't able to
6. can / is able to
7. couldn't / wasn't able to
8. couldn't / wasn't able to
9. can / is able to
10. can / is able to
11. be capable of

**Exercise 2.**

1. Can / May
2. Can / Could / (Would)
3. Would
4. would

5. Could / Can / Would

6. could

7. would

8. Can / Could

9. Would

10. Can / Could

11. can

**Exercise 3.** (Answers may vary)

1. I want to work more hours.
2. Tomorrow I'll probably finish writing this program.
3. We want to increase production.
4. I want to attend to the trade fair in London.
5. I'll attend a meeting on Tuesday.
6. When do you want to meet for lunch?
7. The company will probably launch a new product next month.
8. He'll probably take a business trip to Wales next summer.
9. We want to improve our brake hoses for Audi.
10. When will the next conference be?

**Exercise 4.**

1. She may/might be in her cube.
2. She may/might be sick.
3. She may/might be with Kim.
4. She may/might have left work early.
5. She may/might be driving to headquarters.
6. She may/might be eating a snack.
7. She may/might be on holiday.

**Exercise 5.**

1. Maybe
2. may be
3. may be
4. maybe
5. Maybe
6. may be
7. Maybe
8. Maybe
9. maybe
10. may be

**Exercise 6**

1. have to
2. have to
3. have to
4. have to
5. has to
6. had to
7. had to
8. have had to
9. will have to
10. will have to

11. have to

**Exercise 7.**

1. doesn't have to
2. mustn't
3. don't have to
4. mustn't
5. mustn't
6. doesn't have to
7. mustn't
8. don't have to

**Exercise 8.**

1. have to
2. doesn't have to
3. mustn't
4. have to
5. must (have to)
6. mustn't

**Exercise 9.** (Answers may vary)

1. You should use a hammer and some nails. / You ought to use a hammer and some nails.
2. You should use a welding torch. / You ought to use a welding torch.
3. You should use an adhesive. / You ought to use an adhesive.
4. You should get a new oxygen cylinder. / You ought to get a new oxygen cylinder.
5. You should look in the cabinet. / You ought to look in the cabinet.
6. You should wear a welding hood and a welder's leather jacket. / You ought to wear a welding hood and a welder's leather jacket.

7. You should exit the workshop immediately. / You ought to exit the workshop immediately.

8. You should wear safety goggles with filtered lenses. / You ought to wear safety goggles with filtered lenses.

**Exercise 10.**

1. Maybe

2. could

3. have to

4. can

5. might / may

6. should

7. might / may

8. want

9. mustn't / shouldn't

10. might / may

11. can

12. have to

13. can / could / would

14. mustn't

15. could / might

16. can

17. Would

18. Maybe

19. must

20. have to