

Modal Verbs

We use **must**:

- **To express obligation, necessity and duty.**

You must wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle. (You have to wear a helmet.)

- **To express that it is necessary to do sth.**

I must water the plants. (It's necessary.)

- **For positive logical assumptions. She must be an actress. I've seen her on TV. (I'm sure she's an actress.)**

We use **can't** for negative logical assumptions.

*Jack and Paul **can't be** strangers. They've been next door neighbours for years.*
(I'm sure they aren't strangers.)

We use **mustn't /can't** for prohibitions.

*You **mustn't /can't** park your car near a bus stop.*

(it is forbidden to park there.)

We use **have to** to express that
it is necessary to do sth
(especially when somebody
else other than the speaker has
made the decision.)

*I have to stay late at work
tomorrow.* (My boss told me to
stay.)

We use **don't have to/ needn't**
to express lack of necessity.

*I don't have to / needn't do the
shopping. I've already done it.*
(It isn't necessary for you to do
it.)

We use **can/ could /may/ might** to ask for permission.

Could /May /Might are more formal than can.

Can I go to the park?

Could /may/Might I take next Monday off?

(Is it permitted for me to...?)

We use **can / may** to give permission. **May** is more formal than **can**.

*Of course you **can** use the phone.*

*You **may** leave your luggage here, sir.*

(You are allowed to...)

We use **can't/ mustn't /may not** to refuse permission. **May not** is formal.

f.E. *I'm afraid you **can't stay** late tonight.*

*You **mustn't watch** TV after 9pm.*

*You **may not write** in ink during the test.*

(You aren't allowed to...)

We use **could /may /might** to show that something is possible or likely.

f.E *Tom **could/ may /might** still be at school.*

(It is possible that he is still at school.)

**WE use would /could/ can to
make a request.**

***f.E Could you open the door for
me, please?***