

MODALS

FACT, HYPOTHESIS, OR OPINION?

MODALS – PRESENT MEANING (1)

- CAN – PRESENT “BE ABLE TO,” “BE ALLOWED TO”

Fact • SHE CAN SWIM. (= IS ABLE TO)

- CAN SHE GO TO THE BIRTHDAY PARTY? YES, SHE CAN. **Fact (Others)** or **Opinion (Authority)**

- MAY – PRESENT “BE ALLOWED TO,” PRESENT POSSIBILITY

• MAY I GO TO THE BIRTHDAY PARTY? YES, YOU MAY. (= CAN) **Fact (others)** or **Opinion (Authority)**

Hypothesis • SHE MAY BE LOST; SHE IS NOT USUALLY LATE. (= **MAYBE** SHE IS...)

- COULD, MIGHT – PRESENT POSSIBILITY OR GUESS (MORE DOUBT THAN **MAY**)

Hypothesis • HE COULD BE AT THE PARK ALREADY.

Hypothesis • HE MIGHT BE WORRIED ABOUT HER.

MODALS – PRESENT MEANING (2)

- MIGHT, COULD – PRESENT POLITE REQUEST (SEE **CAN, MAY**)

(Requests,
not
Statements)

- MIGHT/COULD I HAVE SOME TEA?
- COULD YOU HELP ME WITH THIS PROJECT?
- I COULD USE SOME HELP IF ANYONE IS AVAILABLE.

- WOULD, COULD – PRESENT HYPOTHETICAL OR UNREAL

Hypothesis/
Opinion

- HE COULD PASS THAT TEST RIGHT NOW IF HE TOOK IT.

Opinion

- I WOULDN'T CLIMB THAT TREE IF I WERE YOU; IT IS SMALL.

MODALS – PRESENT MEANING (3)

- SHOULD, OUGHT TO – PRESENT ADVICE OR GUIDELINE

Opinions

- YOU SHOULD FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK EARLY.
- PEOPLE OUGHT TO EXERCISE EVERY DAY.

- MUST – PRESENT REQUIREMENT OR ASSUMPTION

Fact

- YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR BUS TICKET.

Hypothesis

- YOU MUST BE SO TIRED AFTER YOUR TRIP!

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST

- PRESENT: CAN

- MEANING “BE ABLE TO” – CAN → COULD, WAS/WERE ABLE TO

- GENERAL STATEMENT: SHE COULD SWIM AS A KID.

- SPECIFIC TIME: I WASN'T ABLE TO SWIM 200 M THAT DAY.

Facts

- MEANING “BE ALLOWED TO” – CAN → COULD, WAS/WERE ALLOWED TO

- CAN SHE GO? → WAS SHE ALLOWED TO GO? **MAIN CLAUSE: ~~COULD~~**

- MOM SAYS I CAN GO. → MOM SAID I COULD GO.

Facts or
Opinions

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST

- PRESENT: MAY

- MEANING “BE ALLOWED TO” – MAY → WAS ALLOWED TO

Past: Fact

- SHE MAY GO NOW → SHE WAS ALLOWED TO GO THEN.

- MEANING *POSSIBILITY* – MAY → MAY HAVE

Hypothesis

- SHE MAY BE LOST NOW. → SHE MAY HAVE BEEN LOST THEN.

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST

- PRESENT: WOULD, COULD
 - MEANING: HYPOTHETICAL OR UNREAL → **UNREAL** WOULD HAVE, COULD HAVE

- HIS ENGLISH WAS SO GOOD, HE COULD HAVE PASSED THAT TEST!

Opinion

- BASED ON OPINION: WHAT IS “GOOD” ENGLISH?

- SHE WOULD HAVE DIED IF SHE HAD FALLEN OFF THAT BRIDGE.

Hypothesis

- LOGICAL PREDICTION. EVIDENCE?

- HE IS A NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKER; HE WOULD HAVE PASSED THAT TEST.

Facts

- SOLID EVIDENCE

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST

- PRESENT: MUST

- MEANING REQUIREMENT, OBLIGATION – MUST → HAD TO

Facts

- HE HAD TO PAY FOR HIS BUS TICKET.
- I HAD TO FILE MY TAXES LAST YEAR.

- MEANING LOGICAL PREDICTION – MUST → MUST HAVE

Hypothesis

- HE'S NOT HERE YET; HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN LOST.

- PRESENT: SHOULD, OUGHT TO

- MEANING: ADVICE, CRITICISM → SHOULD HAVE, OUGHT TO HAVE

Opinions

- SHE SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME EARLIER!
- THIS PROJECT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST

- PRESENT: COULD, MIGHT **Hypotheses**

MEANING: POSSIBILITY OR GUESS → COULD HAVE, MIGHT HAVE (= **MAYBE** WAS)

- HE COULD BE AT THE PARK NOW. → HE COULD HAVE BEEN AT THE PARK WHEN SHE CALLED.
- HE MIGHT BE WORRIED NOW. → HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT HER AT THE TIME.

- ****FUTURE: WILL**

MEANING: PAST REPORTED SPEECH – WILL → WOULD

- THIS TICKET WILL EXPIRE TOMORROW. → THEY SAID THIS TICKET WOULD EXPIRE TOMORROW. **Fact**
- CHILD: "I WILL NOT GET COLD." → THE CHILD SAID SHE WOULD NOT GET COLD. **Hypothesis**
- "I WILL HATE THIS MOVIE." → SHE SAID SHE WOULD HATE THE MOVIE. **Opinion**

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO PAST – SUMMARY

MODAL → MODAL + HAVE

- MAY → MAY HAVE
 - POSSIBILITY ONLY
- COULD → COULD HAVE
 - POSSIBILITY ONLY
- MIGHT → MIGHT HAVE
 - POSSIBILITY ONLY
- WOULD → WOULD HAVE
 - UNREAL/COUNTERFACTUAL ONLY
- SHOULD → SHOULD HAVE
- OUGHT TO → OUGHT TO HAVE
- MUST → MUST HAVE
 - LOGICAL **MUST** ONLY

MODAL → OTHER VERB

- CAN → BE ABLE TO
 - ABILITY ONLY
- MAY, CAN → BE ALLOWED TO
 - PERMISSION ONLY
- MUST → HAVE TO
 - REQUIREMENT ONLY

MODAL → OTHER MODAL

- CAN → COULD
 - ABILITY **IF** DESCRIPTION, NOT COMPLETED ACTION
 - PERMISSION **IF** IN REPORTED SPEECH
- WILL → WOULD
 - PENDING ACTION IN REPORTED SPEECH

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO FUTURE

- **WILL** IS THE MODAL VERB THAT ALWAYS REFERS TO THE FUTURE. **ANY**
 - OCCASIONALLY, **SHALL** IS USED INSTEAD.
- POSSIBILITY MODALS CAN BE USED FOR FUTURE PREDICTIONS. **HYPOTHESES**
 - IT MAY/MIGHT/COULD RAIN TOMORROW.
- ADVICE (**SHOULD, OUGHT TO**) AND ORDERS (**MUST**) AUTOMATICALLY REFER TO THE FUTURE. **OPINIONS**
 - YOU SHOULD WASH THE DISHES (SOON, LATER, ETC).
 - YOU MUST NOT LOSE THIS KEY NEXT SEMESTER.

MODALS – CHANGING FROM PRESENT TO FUTURE

- THESE MODAL EXPRESSIONS CHANGE TO **WILL** EXPRESSIONS IN THE FUTURE: **FACTS**
 - CAN* → WILL BE ABLE TO, WILL BE ALLOWED TO
 - MAY (PERMISSION) → WILL BE ALLOWED TO

*CAN IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE FUTURE, INFORMALLY

(EXAMPLE: *YOU CAN COME WITH US TOMORROW*) **ABILITY: FACT, PERMISSION: OPINION**