

Mastering Modal Verbs with Max the Maths-Monkey

Learning objective: To identify, understand, and apply modal verbs to indicate degrees of possibility, certainty, and obligation.

Read each flashcard carefully. Max the monkey loves to solve puzzles, and these cards will help you understand how modal verbs change the meaning of a sentence. Use these for revision or to challenge a partner.

What is a modal verb?	Which modal verbs show high certainty?
A type of auxiliary verb that expresses necessity, possibility, ability, or permission.	Must, will, and shall.
Which modal verbs show possibility?	If Max says 'I could solve this puzzle', what does the word 'could' imply?
Might, could, and may.	It implies that Max has the ability or the possibility to solve it, but he hasn't done it yet.
Rewrite: 'I go to the park' to show obligation using a modal verb.	Explain the difference between 'I may go' and 'I will go'.
I must go to the park.	'May' suggests uncertainty or a low possibility, whereas 'will' suggests total certainty.
Which modal verb would you use to ask for permission?	Identify the modal verb in: 'You should always double-check your calculations.'
May or can (e.g., 'May I borrow your book?').	Should (used here for advice).
Compare and contrast 'might' and 'must'.	Justify your answer: Why is 'might' better than 'will' if you are unsure about the weather?
'Might' expresses a low degree of certainty or possibility, while 'must' expresses a high degree of certainty or a strong obligation.	'Might' is better because it acknowledges the uncertainty of the situation, whereas 'will' is too definite if the outcome is not guaranteed.
What might happen if you replaced 'can' with 'must' in the sentence 'You can eat your lunch'?	Create a sentence using two different modal verbs to describe a future plan.
The meaning changes from giving permission to an instruction or requirement to eat lunch, which significantly changes the tone.	Example: 'I might finish my project, but I must study for my test first.'