

Modal verbs:

A modal verb is an auxiliary verb (help verb). It must be used with a main verb, except in short answers (for example, "Yes, I can", "No, I can't"). Modal verbs don't describe time, but more how a speaker feels about a situation (for example, possible/impossible, recommended/not recommended).

NB I **can** English = incorrect!

I **can speak** English = correct!

Be careful, there are two different types - modal verbs are always followed by a main verb in the infinitive, but sometimes we drop the "to". Modal verbs with "to" behave like normal verbs.

NB I **can to speak** English = incorrect!

I **can speak** English = correct

Some common examples of modal verbs:

Can	(= possibility, ability)
Could	(= possibility, past ability)
Be able to	(= ability)
Must	(= preference, obligation)
Have to	(= obligation)
Need to	(= necessity)
Should	(= recommendation)
May	(= possibility, permission)
Might	(= possibility)
Will	(= intention, willingness)
Would	(= hypothetical future, past of will)

Negatives: can't (cannot), couldn't, not able to, mustn't, don't have to, don't need to, shouldn't, may not, might not, won't, wouldn't.