



facultad de
estudios generales

Deciphering Modals

Important notice:



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. You must score an 80% or higher to pass the quiz.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

Objectives

- Learn how to appropriately use modals
- Identify the usages of modals



Spanish Overview



Una oración **requiere** un verbo conjugado.

El verbo se conjuga o transforma para expresar **persona, número, tiempo y modo**.

Estos cuatro elementos se conocen como los **accidentes gramaticales**.

Ella comió (comer) en El Grifo el viernes pasado.

Si me das pon, iría (ir) al cine.

Ambos verbos difieren en el **modo**. El primero expresa **certeza**, mientras que el segundo, **potencialidad**.

Spanish Overview



El **modo** expresa la **certidumbre** de la acción.

Una situación puede ser **concreta** o **posible**.

acciones o situaciones hipotéticas	Puede que camine hasta el Viejo San Juan.
preguntas en tono de cortesía	¿Me acompañarías a la presentación del libro?
deseos	Me gustaría ir al río.

Spanish Overview



La potencialidad de una situación se expresa con las siguientes terminaciones:

hablar			
yo	hablar ía	nosotros	hablar íamos
tú	hablar ías	ustedes	hablar ían
él/ella	hablar ía	ellos/ellas	hablar ían

También se introducen con expresiones como:

- Puede que
- Debería (de)
- Que
- Quizás

In **English**, however, it is expressed through **modals**.

Me **gustaría** ir al río.

I **would like** to go to the river.

What are modals?



Modals are used with the main verb of a sentence to express ability, possibility, permission or obligation.

The main verb—which is in the base form—expresses the action.

To obtain the base of a verb, eliminate **to** in the infinitive form. Ex.: to go → go

Each modal alters the base verb.

I **can** go to the workshop on English grammar.

Puedo ir.

I **might** go to the workshop on English grammar.

Podría ir/Puede que vaya/Quizás vaya.

I **should** go to the workshop on English grammar.

Debería ir.

Modals in Sentences



Affirmative Sentence: Subject + **Modal** + Main Verb (+ Predicate).

You **should** go if you have the time.

I **might** be busy tomorrow night.

Negative Sentence: Subject + **Modal** + **Not** + Main Verb (+ Predicate).

You **must not** be late to class. You **mustn't** be late to class.

They **would not** do that. They **wouldn't** do that.

Remember: All negative modal contractions can be used except the modals *might* and *may*.

Modals in Questions



Affirmative Question: **Modal** + Subject + Main Verb (+ Predicate).

Can you help me?

Could they come tomorrow?

Negative Question: **Modal** + Subject + **Not** + Main Verb (+ Predicate).

Can you **not** disturb while I work?

Would you **not** sit so close, please?

Remember: All negative modal contractions can be used except the modals *might* and *may*.

Modals in Short Answers

Affirmative Answer: Yes, Subject + **Modal**.

Yes, I **can**.

Yes, I **may**.

Negative Answer: No, Subject + **Modal** + Not.

No, you **should not**. No, you **shouldn't**.

No, you **may not**.

Remember: All negative modal contractions can be used except the modals *might* and *may*.

Use can to:



1. Express skills or what someone knows how to do in the present.

> Taylor **can** climb trees.

> Taylor **puede** trepar árboles.

2. Ask, give, and refuse permission.

> **Can** I go out tonight?

> ¿**Puedo** salir esta noche?

> Yes, you **can** go out tonight.

> Sí, **puedes** salir esta noche.

> No, you **cannot** go out tonight.

> No, **no puedes** salir esta noche.

Use can to:



3. Request (informally).

- > **Can** you pick me up at 8 o'clock?
- > ¿**Puedes** buscarme a las 8?

4. Make an offer.

- > **Can** I bring something to the party?
- > ¿**Puedo** llevar algo a la fiesta?

Use **could** to:



1. Ask, give, and refuse permission.

> **Could** I go out tonight?

> ¿**Podría** salir esta noche?

> Yes, you **could** go out tonight.

> Sí, **podrías** salir esta noche.

> No, you **could not** go out tonight.

> No, no **puedes** salir esta noche.

2. Request (formally).

> **Could** you lend me a dollar?

> ¿**Podrías** prestarme un dólar?

Use **could** to:



3. Make an offer.

- > **Could** I bring something to the party?
- > ¿**Podría** llevar algo a la fiesta?

4. Show the speaker is sure that something is not possible.

- > He **couldn't** be home; he was at the park a minute ago.
- > Él no **podría** estar en su casa; estaba en el parque hace un momento.

Use may to:



1. Express possibility. You can also use **might** to express possibility.

> He **may not** come tonight. He **might** have other plans.

> **Puede que** él no venga esta noche. **Quizás** tenga otros planes.

2. Ask, give, and refuse permission.

> **May** I go out tonight?

> Yes, you **may** go out tonight.

> Sí, **podrías** salir esta noche.

> ¿**Podría** salir esta noche?

> No, you **may not** go out tonight.

> No, no **puedes** salir esta noche.

Use may to:



3. Make an offer.

- > **May** I bring something to the party?
- > ¿**Podría** llevar algo a la fiesta?

Use **should** to:



1. Give optional advice.

- > You **should** study daily if you want to pass the class.
- > **Deberías** estudiar a diario si quieres pasar la clase.
- > You **should not** go out every night.
- > No **deberías** salir todas las noches.

2. State opinions about what is and is not right.

- > People **should** eat more fruits and vegetables.
- > La gente **debería** comer más frutas y vegetales.
- > People **should not** smoke.
- > La gente no **debería** fumar.

Use **should** to:



3. Speculate about a probable situation you are not certain of.

> He **should** be home by now. He's always home before 7.

> **Debería de** estar en su casa ya. Siempre llega antes de las 7.

Use **must** to:



1. State a rule.

- > All travelers **must** show their passports.
- > Todos los viajantes **deben** mostrar su pasaporte.

2. Express present necessity.

- > You **must** have a permit to park at the university.
- > **Debes** tener un permiso para estacionarte en la universidad.

Use must to:



3. Express necessity.

- > We **must** pack for our trip next weekend.
- > **Debemos** empacar para nuestro viaje el próximo fin de semana.

4. Speculate about a probable situation you are certain of.

- > He **must** be home by now. He's always home before 7.
- > **Tiene** que estar en su casa ya. Siempre llega antes de las 7.

Use **would** to:



1. Express hypothetical situations.

- > I **would** do it if I had the chance.
- > Lo **haría** si tuviera la oportunidad.

2. Express skills or repeated actions that someone did in the past, and no longer do today.

- > Taylor **would** climb trees.
- > Taylor **solía** trepar árboles.

Use **would** to:



3. Express desire or inclination.

- > I **would** like to drink some tea.
- > **Quisiera** beber té.

4. Request politely.

- > **Would** you open the door, please?
- > ¿**Podrías** abrir la puerta, por favor?

Use **will** to:



1. Talk about future actions or events.
 - > Who do you think **will** win on Saturday?
 - > ¿Quién crees que **ganará** este sábado?
2. Show you are certain that something is true.
 - > There's the doorbell. That **will** be Janet.
 - > Ahí está el timbre. **Es** Janet.

Use will to:



3. Express you are willing to do something or intend to do it.

- > If you don't tell them the truth, I **will**.
- > Si no les dices la verdad, lo **haré** yo.

4. Ask someone to do something.

- > **Will** someone tell me what is going on?
- > ¿Alguien **podría** decirme qué está pasando?

Common errors



- Do not conjugate the modal.

My grandmother **woulded** sing to me as child.

My grandmother **would** sing to me as child.

- Do not use the verb *to do* in conjunction with the modals for questions and negation.

Do you **would** go to the store with me?

Would you go to the store with me?

I **do not would** go to the store with you.

I **would not** go to the store with you.

References



Butler, Linda, and Janet Podnecky. *Grammar Links*. Heinle, 2005.

Spunky English, http://www.spunkyenglish.com/Grammar/Modals/modal_beg_lessonp2.html

Test English, 2018, <https://www.testenglish.com/explanation/b2/speculation-deduction-modal-verbs-expressions/>

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/ZnmnVkEDXc>

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