

# English Guide

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CETIS 33

## MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs are verbs that are used with another verb to express ideas like **possibility, ability, permission** or **necessity**.

Modal verbs are usually followed by the base form of a verb and do not change form to indicate tense or take an “-s” ending.

Some modal verbs: may, might, should, shall, ought, would.

### MAY, MAY NOT

### MIGHT, MIGHT NOT

They have similar meanings but they are used in different contexts in contemporary English.

#### MAY.

It suggests a high degree of probability. If you say you **may** do something, you have implied it is quite likely to happen. Think about the difference between these two sentences:

*I will pick up dinner on my way home.* **Will** implies certainty.

*I may pick up dinner on my way home.* **May** implies there's a possibility but no guarantee.

Use **may** to describe things that are likely to happen. For example: *It may rain all day but I'm still playing golf.*

It is appropriate for the present tense. If there is a chance of something happening in the immediate term, **may** tends to be the better word choice (between may and might).

Use **may** to describe present-tense hypotheticals. For example: *You may be in line for a promotion.*

It can express permission when making polite requests or when one is granting permission to someone else.

Use **may** to express permission. For example: *You may go to the movies tonight.*

Use **may** to express confident negative hypotheticals. For example: *You may not go to the movies under any circumstances.*

## **MIGHT.**

It suggests a lower probability. It implies that there is a decent chance an action will not take place.

**Might** is appropriate for past tense. Although **might** is not the past tense of *may*, it is still the best word to describe something that happened in the past.

It is the correct word to describe past hypotheticals. For example: *I might have messed up my diet last night when I ate those donuts.*

We use **might** to describe hypotheticals with lower degrees of uncertainty. For example: *I might know Japanese grammar better than her.*

Use **might** to express negative hypotheticals that don't come with absolute certainty. For example: *I might not make every shot, but I'll keep trying.*

**Might** will help clarify that permission is not a factor. Use **might** instead of *may* when you want to make clear that expressing permission is not the goal of your sentence. When using **might** we clarify a statement of possibility rather than permission. For example: *My mom said I may not see my friend tonight and I just might cry.*

## **MUST, MUST NOT**

## **HAVE TO, DON'T HAVE TO**

**Must** and **have to** are both used for obligation and are often quite similar. They are both followed by the infinitive form of the verb.

*I must go now.*

*I have to go now.*

**Must** and **have to**. The meaning of their positive forms are very similar, but the negative forms are completely different.

*You mustn't forget to buy tickets before the show. (It means you have no choice, in order to enter the show the tickets have to be bought before.)*

*If you don't like him, you don't have to see him again. (There is no obligation to see him again, but you have a choice.)*

*In a non-smoking area you mustn't smoke, but in a smoking area you don't have to smoke but you can if you want to.*

## **MUST.**

**Must** is a modal verb used to express obligation or duty. It also refers to laws and regulations.

We often use **must** for more personal opinions about what is necessary to do. **Must** is used more in formal writing, for example, in written notices.

### **HAVE TO.**

We often use **have to** for what somebody in authority has said it is necessary to do.

**Have to** is more frequent in conversation.

**Have to** changes in the third person singular: he, she, it **has to**.

### **Solve the following exercise by choosing the correct modal verb.**

An important part of being responsible is taking personal responsibility. This means that you (might/must) accept the consequences of your actions. All human beings make mistakes at some point in their life, this is something you (have to/must) understand too. You may make poor choices, but the way in which you deal with the consequences is what (doesn't have to/must) matter to you the most.

Some things you can do to start taking responsibility for your life are:

- You (must/may) apologize when you do something wrong. If you do not want to apologize, you (might/have) to need to acknowledge why someone wants an apology.
- You (have to/might) accept that your actions may have led you to the situation you are in right now. You (have to/might) want to identify the lessons this situation may teach you.
- You also (have to/must) try to be proud of yourself when you do something good or when you succeed at something. (You must/may) understand that your hard work also has consequences. When you accept that your actions have consequences, you will be able to make better choices that (must/may) lead you to a better future.

### **PAST TENSE**

There are four past tense forms in English:

past simple	<i>I worked.</i>
past continuous	<i>I was working</i>
past perfect	<i>I had worked</i>

past perfect continuous      *I had been working*

We use these forms:

to talk about the past:

*He worked at McDonald's. He had worked there since July.*

*He was working at McDonald's. He had been working there since July.*

to refer to the present or future in hypotheses:

*It might be dangerous. Suppose they got lost.*

to refer to wishes:

*I wish it wasn't so cold.*

to refer to conditions with "if":

*He could get a new job if he really tried.*

*If Jack was playing, they would probably win.*

For hypotheses, wishes and conditions in the past we use the past perfect:

*It was very dangerous. What if you had got lost?*

*I wish I hadn't spent so much money last month.*

*I would have helped him if he had asked.*

and also to talk about the present in a few polite expressions:

*Excuse me, I was wondering if this was the train for York.*

*I just hoped you would be able to help me.*

## **SIMPLE PAST TENSE**

We use this tense to

talk about activities that happened and finished at a specific time:

*I met my wife in 1983.*

*We went to Spain for our holidays.*

*They got home very late last night.*

talk about something that happened several times in the past:

*When I was a boy, I walked a mile to school everyday.*

*We swam a lot while we were on holiday.*

*They always enjoyed visiting their friends.*

talk about something that was true for some time in the past:

*I lived abroad for ten years.  
He enjoyed being a student.  
She played a lot of tennis when she was younger.*

### **What is a conditional sentence?**

A conditional sentence is based on the word “if”. There are always two parts to a conditional sentence -one part beginning with “if” to describe a possible situation, and the second part which describes the consequence. For example:  
*If it rains, we'll get wet.*

We can also invert the two parts of a conditional sentence so that the “if” part comes second, and this is especially common in questions. For example:

*What will you do if you miss the train?  
How can you finish the project if you don't have a computer?  
What happens if the students don't pass an exam?*

Conditional sentences are useful when talking about different scenarios, either real or imaginary. Because of this, conditional sentences are related to plans, wishes, dreams or goals.

There are different types of conditional sentences. They differ from one another according to the possibility they express or imply and according to the tenses they use. Conditional sentences consist in two parts: the first one is the condition (if clause) and the second one is the result (main clause).

### **The Zero Conditional.**

We use the zero conditional to talk about permanent truths (such as scientific facts or arguments) or actual facts, and general habits.

The structure is as it follows:

If + present simple (condition)	present simple (result/consequence)
50% possibility	100% certainty

Here are some examples:

*If you heat water to 100°, it boils.  
If you eat a lot, you put on weight.  
If it doesn't rain for a long time, the earth gets very dry.  
If we go out with friends, we normally go to a restaurant.  
If I'm tired, I go to bed early.*

*If you mix red and blue, you get purple.  
An ice cube melts if you put it in the sun.*

### **The First Conditional.**

We use the first conditional to talk about a realistic situation in the present or future. The structure of the first conditional is as follows:

If + present simple (condition)	will+verb (result/consequence)
50% possibility	100% certainty
If + present simple (condition)	can+verb (result/consequence)
50% possibility	100% certainty
If + present simple (condition)	must+verb (result/consequence)
50% possibility	100% certainty
If + present simple (condition)	imperative+verb (result/consequence)
50% possibility	100% certainty

Here are some examples:

*If you're free later, we can go for a walk.  
If they're hungry, I'll make some sandwiches.  
If you're not back by 5pm, give me a ring.  
If he studies hard, he'll do well in the exam.  
If we arrive late, we must get a taxi.  
He'll call if he needs help.  
Take a break if you're tired.  
If it rains tomorrow, we will stay at home.  
If you study hard, you will pass the exam.  
If she finishes her project, she will submit it on time.  
You must study if you want to pass the exam.  
If you finish your homework, you can watch TV.  
If it rains tomorrow, we will cancel the picnic.  
She will pass the test if she studies hard tonight.  
If they arrive on time, we will start the meeting at 9 a.m.  
If you finish your homework, you can watch TV.  
She can go to the party if she cleans her room first.  
If we get there early, we can choose the best seats.*

*You must study if you want to pass the exam.*

*If they want to join the team, they must practice regularly.*

Another way to make first conditional sentences is to use 'unless' which means 'only if' or 'except'. As with 'if', the word 'unless' can never be followed by 'will' but only by the present simple. For example:

*Unless you hurry up, you won't catch the bus.*

*I'll carry on doing this work, unless my boss tells me to do something else.*

*We'll stay at home unless the weather improves.*

### **The Second Conditional.**

We use the second conditional to talk about improbable or impossible situations in the present or future. Here is the structure:

If + past simple	(condition)	would+verb (result/consequence)
0-5% possibility		100% certainty
If + past simple	(condition)	could+verb (result/consequence)
0-5% possibility		100% certainty

For example:

*If I had more time, I'd exercise more. (But I don't have more time so I don't.)*

*If I were rich, I'd spend all my time traveling. (But I'm not rich so I can't.)*

*If she saw a snake, she'd be terrified.*

*If he didn't have to work late, he could go out with his girlfriend.*

*What would you do if you were offered a job in Canada?*

*You wouldn't have to walk everywhere if you bought a bike.*

*If I won the lottery, I would buy a new house.*

*She would travel around the world if she had more money.*

*If they studied harder, they would get better grades.*

*He would help you if he knew how to fix it.*

*If we lived closer, we would visit you more often.*

*If I had more free time, I could learn a new language.*

*She could move to a bigger apartment if she earned more money.*

*If we lived near the beach, we could go swimming every day.*

*They could travel more often if they didn't have such busy jobs.*

*If he were taller, he could play basketball professionally.*

A common expression used to give advice has the second conditional structure. The expression is 'If I were you, I'd..', meaning 'in your situation, this is what I would do'. For example:

A: *I've got a headache.*

B: *If I were you, I'd take an aspirin.*

A: *I don't understand this.*

B: *If I were you, I'd ask your teacher for help.*

A: *This order won't be delivered on time.*

B: *If I were you, I'd phone the customer to let them know.*

### **The Third Conditional.**

We use the third conditional to talk about impossible situations, as in the second conditional, in the past. We often use the third conditional to describe regrets. The structure is:

If + past perfect (condition)	would have + past participle (result)
0% possibility	100% certainty
If + past perfect (condition)	could have + past participle (result)
0% possibility	100% certainty

Here are some examples:

*If we had left earlier, we would have arrived on time.*

*If you hadn't forgotten her birthday, she wouldn't have been upset.*

*If they had booked earlier, they could have found better seats.*

*If I hadn't learnt English, I wouldn't have got this job.*

*What would you have studied if you hadn't done engineering?*

*They wouldn't have hired you if you hadn't had some experience abroad.*

*You could have helped me if you'd stayed later.*

*If they had arrived earlier, they could have met the guest speaker.*

*She could have won the race if she had trained harder.*

*If we had known about the sale, we could have saved some money.*

*He could have gotten the job if he had prepared better for the interview.*

*If I had seen the message, I could have responded in time.*

*If she had studied more, she would have passed the test.*



*They would have enjoyed the trip if the weather had been better.*

*If he had known about the meeting, he would have attended it.*

*We would have visited you if we had had enough time.*

*If I had seen the sign, I would have stopped the car.*

### **Mixed Conditionals**

It's possible to combine the second and third conditional in one sentence when we want to make a hypothesis about the past that has a consequence in the present. In this case, the structure is:

If + past perfect (condition)	would + verb (result)
0% possibility	100% certainty
If + past perfect (condition)	could + verb (result)
0% possibility	100% certainty

Here are some examples:

*If you'd studied harder, you'd be at a higher level now.*

*We'd be lying on a beach now if we hadn't missed the plane.*

*They'd have much more confidence if they hadn't lost so many matches.*

*What would you be doing now if you hadn't decided to study?*

### **Present perfect tense**

The present perfect is formed from the present tense of the verb *have* and the past participle of a verb.

We use the present perfect:

- for something that started in the past and continues in the present:

*They've been married for nearly fifty years.*

*She has lived in Liverpool all her life.*

- when we are talking about our experience up to the present:

*I've seen that film before.*  
*I've played the guitar ever since I was a teenager.*  
*He has written three books and he is working on another one.*

We often use the adverb *ever* to talk about experience up to the present:

*My last birthday was the worst day I have ever had.*

and we use *never* for the negative form:

*Have you ever met George?*  
*Yes, but I've never met his wife.*

- for something that happened in the past but is important in the present:

*I can't get in the house. I've lost my keys.*  
*Teresa isn't at home. I think she has gone shopping.*

We use *have/has been* when someone has *gone* to a place and *returned*:

*A: Where have you been?*  
*B: I've just been out to the supermarket.*

*A: Have you ever been to San Francisco?*  
*B: No, but I've been to Los Angeles.*

But when someone has not returned, we use *have/has gone*:

*A: Where's Maria? I haven't seen her for weeks.*  
*B: She's gone to Paris for a week. She'll be back tomorrow.*

## **Present perfect continuous**

We use this tense to say the same as the present perfect tense: to talk about past actions or states which are still connected to the present.

The structure is the following:

present perfect continuous (have or has + been + -ing form)

The present perfect simple usually focuses on the result of the activity in some way, and the present perfect continuous usually focuses on the activity itself in some way.

<b><u>Present perfect simple</u></b>	<b><u>Present perfect continuous</u></b>
<b>Focuses on the result</b>	<b>Focuses on the activity</b>
<i>You've cleaned the bathroom! It looks lovely!</i>	<i>I've been gardening. It's so nice out there.</i>
<b>Says 'how many'</b>	<b>Says 'how long'</b>
<i>She's read ten books this summer.</i>	<i>She's been reading that book all day.</i>

<p><b>Describes a completed action</b></p>	<p><b>Describes an activity which may continue</b></p>
<p><i>I've written you an email.</i></p>	<p><i>I've been writing emails.</i></p>
	<p><b>When we can see evidence of recent activity</b></p>
	<p><i>The grass looks wet. Has it been raining?</i></p> <p><i>I know, I'm really red. I've been running!</i></p>

Here are some examples:

*I have been studying English for three years.*

*She has been working on her project all day.*

*They have been living in this city since 2015.*

*We have been waiting for the bus for over an hour.*

*He has been playing video games since this morning.*

*You have been talking on the phone for ages!*

*The children have been watching cartoons all afternoon.*

*It has been raining non stop for two days.*

*I have been thinking about moving to another country.*

*She has been learning how to play the piano recently.*

## **Past Perfect**

We use the past perfect simple (*had* + past participle) to talk about time up to a certain point in the past.

*She'd published her first poem by the time she was eight.*

*We'd finished all the water before we were halfway up the mountain.*

*Had the parcel arrived when you called yesterday?*

We can use the past perfect to show the order of two past events. The past perfect shows the earlier action and the past simple shows the later action.

*When the police arrived, the thief had escaped.*

It doesn't matter in which order we say the two events. The following sentence has the same meaning.

*The thief had escaped when the police arrived.*

Note that if there's only a single event, we don't use the past perfect, even if it happened a long time ago.

*The Romans spoke Latin. (NOT ~~The Romans had spoken Latin.~~)*

## **Active and Passive Voice**

The passive voice is used to show interest in the person or object that experiences an action rather than the person or object that performs the action. In other words, the most important thing or person becomes the subject of the sentence.

Active: *The hunter killed the lion.*

Passive: *The lion was killed by the hunter.*

Active: *Someone has cleaned the windows.*

Passive: *The windows have been cleaned.*

Passive forms are made up of the verb *be* with a past participle:

*English is spoken all over the world.*

*The windows have been cleaned.*

*Lunch was being served.*

*The work will be finished soon.*

If we want to show the person or thing doing the action, we use *by*:

*She was attacked by a dangerous dog.*

*The money was stolen by her husband.*

Examples:

*'Don Quixote' was written by Miguel de Cervantes.*

*The Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.*

*The cake is being baked by my grandmother.*

*This book was written by a famous author.*

*The letters have been sent by the secretary.*

*The car will be repaired by the mechanic tomorrow.*

*A new school is going to be built in the neighborhood. The homework had been completed before the class started. Millions of emails are sent every day.*

*The building was being painted when the fire alarm went off.*

**Talking about the future...Will, Going To and Present Continuous**

We use different verb forms to talk about our plans for the future, depending on what kind of plan it is: a spontaneous plan, a pre-decided plan or an arrangement.

## **Will**

We use *will* to talk about spontaneous plans decided at the moment of speaking.

*Oops, I forgot to phone Mum! I'll do it after dinner.*

*I can't decide what to wear tonight. I know! I'll wear my green shirt.*

*There's no milk. I'll buy some when I go to the shops.*

*I will call you as soon as I get home.*

*She will help you with your homework later.*

*They will travel to Spain next summer.*

*We will finish the project by the end of the week.*

*He will be very happy to see you at the party.*

## **Going To**

We use *going to* to talk about plans decided before the moment of speaking.

*I'm going to phone Mum after dinner. I told her I'd call at 8 o'clock.*

*I'm going to wear my black dress tonight.*

*I'm going to go to the supermarket after work. What do we need?*

*I am going to visit my grandparents this weekend.*

*She is going to buy a new phone next month.*

*They are going to study for the math test tonight.*

*We are going to watch a movie after dinner.*

*It is going to rain later; the clouds are very dark.*

## **Present continuous**

We usually use the present continuous when the plan is an arrangement – already confirmed with at least one other person and we know the time and place.

*I'm meeting Jane at 8 o'clock on Saturday.*

*We're having a party next Saturday. Would you like to come?*

We often use the present continuous to ask about people's future plans.

*Are you doing anything interesting this weekend?*

Here are more examples:

*I am meeting my friends for lunch tomorrow.*

*She is flying to Paris next weekend.*

*We are attending a wedding this Saturday.*

*They are moving to a new house next month.*

*He is starting his new job on Monday.*