

FUMC ESL 10-23-2025 High Intermediate Lesson

Introduce yourself

Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs like can, could, may, might, must, should, will, and would that modify the meaning of a main verb to express possibility, ability, necessity, or permission.

When to use each modal verb

- **Can:** To express ability or permission. (I can go with you if you want.)
- **Could:** To express past ability or make a polite request. (I could have gone with her.)
- **May:** To ask for or give permission. (May I help you?)
- **Might:** To express possibility. (It might rain on Saturday.)
- **Must:** To express strong obligation or necessity. (You must help your mother.)
- **Should:** To give advice or make a recommendation. (You should ask your mother for help.)
- **Will:** To make a promise, prediction, or request about the future. (I will always answer your calls.)
- **Would:** To make a polite request or talk about hypothetical situations. (I would have gone to college if I had more money.)

Make a sentence to describe:

- Things you should do, but probably never will.
- Things you are going to do in the next year.
- Something you should have done before you moved to the U.S., but didn't.
- Something you would do if you had more money.
- Something everyone should try once.

Choose "must be" or "could be" to fit in the blank.

Is John a good student?

He _____ if he tried harder.

He _____ because he got accepted to Harvard.

Do you think the grocery store is still open?

It _____ but I'm not sure what their hours are.

It _____ because lots of people shop at night.

I heard it will rain tomorrow. Do you think the forecast is accurate?

It _____ because the radar showed clouds building north of us.

It _____ because the weatherman never gets a forecast wrong.

Is that Adam's brother standing with him?

It _____ because he looks just like Adam.

It _____ because Adam said his brother was arriving today.

Is Mr. Chu sick?

He _____ because nothing else would stop him from being at this meeting.

He _____ because his wife had Covid last week.

Is that my car alarm going off?

It _____ because no one else is parked in our driveway.

It _____, but it might be Bill's car. His alarm goes off a lot.

Idioms with Modals-Read and explain the sentence and the idiom in bold.

When you consider that it's a stable job with good salary and benefits, **you could do worse** than get a job as a bus driver.

A: If we could get Democrats and Republicans to agree, we could re-open the government.

B: Yeah, and **pigs might fly**.

After our boss went on a rant for five minutes, you **could have heard a pin drop**. No one **could believe what just happened**.

A: If I had saved more money when I was young, I **would be better off** in my old age.

B: That's true, but you **can't turn back time**.

I **could have sworn** I left my keys on the kitchen counter, but they aren't there.

A: Dan graduated in the top of his class from Harvard. He is a really smart guy.

B: You **could have fooled me**. I've never heard him say anything intelligent.

A: The manager said we will give you a refund on your purchase.

B: I **should hope so**. After all, it broke in half the first time I used it.

Tom is the top salesman in our company. He **could sell snow to Eskimos**.

These greedy CEO's don't care about the damage they do to the environment. They **would sell their own mothers** if it made them a big profit.