MODAL VERBS

- **Auxiliary verbs** are function words. They are added to a main verb to help build verb phrases.

- **Modal** auxiliaries express modality - possibility, necessity, prediction and volition (will, can, shall, may, must, would, could, should, might).

MAY (present tense) and MIGHT (present conditional)

- 1. Permission (You may borrow my car if you like.)
- 2. Possibility (The road may be blocked. We might go to the concert.)
- 3. To express wishes (May he live long!)

CAN/COULD

- 1. Ability (He can speak English. I never could play the piano.)
- 2. Permission (Can I try it?)
- 3. Possibility (Anybody can make mistakes. We could go to the concert.)

We use *can* or *could* to describe general possibilities or characteristic occurrences. However, we use *could* (not *can*) to describe a specific possibility. **NOT** ~~It can be my Amazon delivery.~~ We can also use *may* / *might* in this context, but it is more formal.

We use *could* (not *can*) to make a positive prediction about a possible future event. **NOT** ~~It can rain tomorrow.~~ For negative predictions, we use *might* / *may not*. We also normally use *could* rather than *can* for suggestions.

We use *can't* / *couldn't have* + past participle when we want to express certainty (based on evidence) that something is or was untrue. We use *could have* + past participle to say that something was possibly true.

We use a form of *can / could / be able / unable to* to describe ability, possibility, and permission. *be able / unable to* are more formal than *can / could*.

We use *was / were able to* (= managed to) **NOT** *could* in a positive sentence to describe something that was possible on a specific occasion in the past. In a negative sentence, we normally use *couldn't*. *wasn't / weren't able to* or *was / were unable to* are also possible, but more formal.

WILL

- 1. Willingness (He'll help you if you ask him.)
- 2. Polite requests (Will you open the window?)
- 3. Future tenses (I will write as soon as I can.)

WOULD

- 1. Polite requests (Would you excuse me?)
- 2. Characteristic activity in the past (Every morning he would go for a long walk.)
- 3. The second conditional (He would smoke too much if I didn't stop him.)
- 4. Probability (That would be his mother. = patrně bude)

SHOULD

- 1. Advice, suggestion (You should do as he says.)
- 2. Distant possibility (If you should change your mind, please let us know.)
- 3. 1st person Conditional in BrE (We should love to go abroad if we had the chance.)
- 4. After certain expressions (It is odd that you should say this to me.)

SHALL

- 1. Intention of the speaker (I shan't be long. We shall overcome.)
- 2. Insistence (You shall do as I say. He shall be punished. You shall not kill.)

MUST

- 1. Obligation (You must be back by 10 o'clock. (In the past: He had to be back by 10 o'clock.)

- 2. Prohibition (You mustn't come late.)

- 3. Logical necessity (There must be a mistake.)

?MUST x HAVE TO?

- Note! I must go. = I am obliged to go and I want to go. / I have to go. = I'd rather stay here but the outer circumstances force me to go.

OUGH TO

- 1. Strong advice, almost obligation (You ought to start at once.) In AmE ought has occasionally the bare infinitive in negative sentences and questions (You oughtn't smoke so much.)

- **NEED**

- **1. As a lexical verb it means "potřebovat"** (*I don't need a new one.*)

- **2. As modal auxiliaries they are used with bare infinitive** *(She needn't rewrite it, need she? Need she rewrite it?)*

The probability of the modals

- High probability (It must be raining over there. It must have rained over there.)

- Low probability (It may be raining over there. It may have rained over there.)

- Very low probability (It might be raining over there. It might have rained over there.)

- High improbability (It can't be raining over there. It can't have rained over there.)