



# Modality

Modality is about a speaker's or a writer's attitude towards the world. A speaker or writer can express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity and ability by using modal words and expressions.

Speakers often have different opinions about the same thing.

# Modal verbs

- Here are the main verbs we use to express modal meanings:
- **Core modal**  
verbs: *can, could, may, might, will, shall, would, should, must*
- **Semi-modals:** *dare, need, ought to, used to*
- **Other verbs with modal meanings:** *have (got) to, be going to and be able to*

# Should

- What is ideal or desired
- We use *should* most commonly to talk about what **is the ideal or best thing to do in a situation:**
- *There **should** be more public hospitals.*
- *They **should** reduce the price of petrol. It's so expensive.*

# SHOULD Advice and suggestions

- We often use *should* **to give advice and make suggestions:**
- *You **should** tell him what you think.*
- *We **should** leave it until tomorrow; it's late now.*

## SHOULD What is likely to happen

- We also use *should* to talk about what is likely to happen:
- *Shall we start? Luke's delayed but he says he **should** be here in ten minutes.*
- *There **should** be a very big crowd at the party. Mary has so many friends.*

# Should and would

- Formal
- *I/We **should** love to meet her again if I/we had a chance*
- *I **should** think that a lot of people will be interested.*
- Neutral
- *I/We **would** love to meet her again if I/we had a chance.*
- *I **would** think that a lot of people will be interested.*

# Should (Collins)

- You use **should** when you are saying what would be the right thing to do or the right state for something to be in.
- *I should exercise more.*
- *The diet should be maintained unchanged for about a year.*
- *He's never going to be able to forget it. And I don't think he should.*
- *Sometimes I am not as brave as I should be.*
- *Should our children be taught to swim at school?*
- *Should* can be used with the main verb after certain set expressions such as, *it is a pity that, it is odd that, I am sorry/surprised that*. This is a more formal use than the same expression without *should*.
- *It's a pity that this should happen.*
- *I was quite surprised that he should be doing a job like that.*

# CAN General truths

- We use *can* to talk about things which we think are usually, but not always, true:
- *Reducing cholesterol through diet **can be difficult.*** (It's not always difficult for everyone, but in general it is difficult.)
- *Fireworks **can frighten pets.***
- *Swans **can be very vicious.***
- We don't normally use *could* to talk about what we believe to be true in the present.



# Compare CAN / COULD

- *Exercise **can** help reduce stress*
- *.Exercise **could** help reduce stress.*
- *Finding a hotel in August **can** be difficult.*
- *Finding a hotel in August **could** be difficult.*
- I believe this is a general truth or fact
- I see this only as a possibility.
- I believe this is a general truth or fact based on my experience or knowledge.
- I see this only as a possibility.

# *Can*: typical errors

- We write *cannot* as one word:
- Not: ~~The children can not be left unsupervised ...~~
- We use *could*, not *can*, to talk about ability in the past.
- *They **could** see a light on in the house as they drove past at 10 pm.*
- Not: ~~They can see a light on in the house ...~~

# *Can, could or may?*

- **Possibility**
- When we talk about possibility, we use *can, could* and *may*, but they are different in meaning.

# Compare

- *It **can** be dangerous to cycle in the city.*
- *It **could/may** be dangerous to cycle in the city.*
- *It's **dangerous** to cycle in the city.*
- This expresses what the speaker believes is a general truth or known fact, or a strong possibility
- This does not express a general truth. The speaker is only expressing a weak possibility.
- This expresses a real fact using the present simple. The speaker is certain and no modality is used.

# Macmillan

**can** MODAL VERB

used for saying whether the situation makes it possible for you to do something at a particular time

**can** MODAL VERB

used for saying that it is possible to do something

**can** MODAL VERB

to be allowed to do something, or to have the right or power to do it

**could** MODAL VERB

used for saying that something is possible or that it may happen

# Macmillan MAY/ MIGHT

**may** MODAL VERB

used for saying that there is a possibility that something is true or that something will happen

**may** MODAL VERB

FORMAL used for saying that it is possible to do something in a particular way

**might** MODAL VERB

SPOKEN used for saying that someone did something in order to achieve a particular purpose

**might** MODAL VERB

used for talking about the way in which someone remembers or thinks of a situation

**might...but** PHRASE

used for saying that although something is perhaps true, this does not change the main fact that you are stating

# Macmillan SHOULD

**should** MODAL VERB

used for saying or asking about the right or sensible thing to do or the right way to behave

**should** MODAL VERB

used for saying what is correct, especially when the situation is different from this

**should** MODAL VERB

used when you have strong reasons for believing or expecting something

**should** MODAL VERB

used after “if” or instead of “if” for describing a situation that may possibly happen

# Macmillan WILL

**will** MODAL VERB

used for saying what you expect to happen in the future

**will** MODAL VERB

used for saying what is planned or arranged for a future occasion

**will** MODAL VERB

used for showing that you are fairly certain that something is true

**will** MODAL VERB

FORMAL used for ordering that something must be done

**will** MODAL VERB

used for saying what always happens in certain situations



## ***Might*: uses**

- We use *might* most often to refer to weak possibility:
- *I might go to Japan for a month to study Japanese.*
- *The dog might bark when we pass by the gate.*
- *They might not like very hot food.*

# MIGHT Suggestions

- We can use *might* to give advice or make a suggestion sound more polite or less direct, especially when used together with *like*, *prefer* or *want*:
- [A waiter politely suggesting a dessert to a customer.]
- *You **might** like to try one of our wonderful desserts.*

# WILL general truths

- *Will* is used to describe something the speaker thinks is generally true:
- *Do you think they should try and make it easier for people to complain?*
- **B:**
- *No, cos some people **will** always complain. (cos = because in informal speech)*

# WILL habitual events

- We use *will* to refer to events that happen often:
- [talking about a younger sister, Celia, who doesn't eat properly; *she* refers to Celia]
- *Celia **will** start to get upset if she has to eat cabbage or meat like chicken breast. My mum **will** say, 'Just try it'. And **she'll** start shaking her head and going, 'No. I don't want to'. Mum **will** put it near her mouth and **she'll** start to cough.*

## Building a green economy could stop 'nightmare' degradation of Amazon

- The Amazon will be transformed into a “highly degraded nightmare” unless a sustainable biodiversity-based economy develops which properly values ecosystem services and products produced by the rainforest, a leading scientist has warned.
- Prof Thomas Lovejoy, the “godfather of biodiversity”, said if agro-industrial economic developments such as cattle farming, palm oil production and mining continue, the rainforest’s hydrological cycle will be “in tatters”, with global weather systems severely disrupted.
- Turning this around will require an innovative green economy which monetises the food, medicines, aquaculture and climate regulation the forest provides, said Lovejoy, a senior fellow at the United Nations Foundation and president of the Amazon Biodiversity Centre.
- To monetise – to make money from sth (UK specialised finance)

US intelligence chief: we might use the internet of things to spy on you

- The US intelligence chief has acknowledged for the first time that agencies might use a new generation of smart household devices to increase their surveillance capabilities.
- As increasing numbers of devices connect to the internet and to one another, the so-called internet of things promises consumers increased convenience – the remotely operated thermostat from Google-owned Nest is a leading example. But as home computing migrates away from the laptop, the tablet and the smartphone, experts warn that the security features on the coming wave of automobiles, dishwashers and alarm systems lag far behind.
- “In the future, intelligence services might use the [internet of things] for identification, surveillance, monitoring, location tracking, and targeting for recruitment, or to gain access to networks or user credentials,” Clapper said.

## Should Pearson, a giant multinational, be influencing our education policy ?

- **H**ow great an influence over education policymaking can and should a private organisation have? That is the question being asked by some, as a debate growing increasingly acrimonious in the US seems poised to cross the Atlantic.
- Pearson, the giant London-based multinational, is the world's largest education firm as well as running Penguin books and the Financial Times. Attention is now focusing on its seemingly ever-growing influence on English school life.
- "At what point do conflicts of interest arise? Is it acting in the best interests of students, of the nation, or of its own business? These are questions that must be raised and answered."

# Earth 'will expire by 2050'

- Earth's population will be forced to colonise two planets within 50 years if natural resources continue to be exploited at the current rate, according to a report out this week.
- Using the image of the need for mankind to colonise space as a stark illustration of the problems facing Earth, the report warns that either consumption rates are dramatically and rapidly lowered or the planet will no longer be able to sustain its growing population.
- Experts say that seas will become emptied of fish while forests - which absorb carbon dioxide emissions - are completely destroyed and freshwater supplies become scarce and polluted.



## Earth Day 2020 could mark the year we stop taking the planet for granted

- Fifty years ago today, the first Earth Day was marked in the United States as a peaceful call for environmental reform, following a massive oil spill off the coast of California. Half a century later, this annual day unites millions across the globe, drawing attention to the huge challenges facing our planet.
- We are in an age of extinction and at the point where irreversible environmental damage could be wrought. Despite changed plans, we cannot afford to lose pace nor focus. The challenge of the biodiversity and climate crises will still be there when the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted; the ambition of COP15 and COP26 must be carried forward and built upon in 2021.

Right now, it may be hard not to feel despondent but there are shoots of optimism. After the lockdowns, we may see greater appreciation for nature in many countries around the world. From China to Spain, people of all ages are missing what they did not know they would miss until they could not have it: craving open spaces; realising the wellbeing and health benefits of accessing nature; and, in many countries, missing the blossoming of spring.

## **The scientist's dilemma: can you be a parent, a partner, a friend and a Scientist?**

- There's a popular perception that some careers just don't dovetail well with family life. We expect our politicians, doctors and police officers to be on call 24/7.
- But what about research scientists? Does the pursuit of a eureka moment have to mean pulling all-nighters in the laboratory and prioritising work above all other commitments?

# Gendered toys could deter girls from career in engineering

- One of the world's largest engineering institutions is warning against gender stereotyping of toys in the run-up to Christmas amid concern it could be discouraging girls from pursuing a career in engineering and technology.
- Mamta Singhal, a toy engineer and IET spokeswoman, said she had traditional "girls' toys" as a child but also loved playing with cars, building blocks and creative kits. "The research shows girls clearly do have an interest in science, technology and engineering subjects at school so we need to find ways to help this to translate into a higher number of women entering the industry.
- "The toy industry is changing slowly and over the years more gender-neutral toys such as science kits have started appearing. Toys can really influence what a child does in later years, therefore Stem toys are a natural move for the industry."

## Shepard Smith leaves Fox News with hope that 'facts will win the day'

- A Fox News spokesperson denied such claims, saying they were “entirely false and wildly inaccurate”.
- Smith said he would not be reporting elsewhere for the time being.
- “Even in our currently polarized nation,” he concluded, “it is my hope that the facts will win the day, that the truth will always matter, that journalism and journalists will thrive.”
- Carl Cameron, a longtime former reporter at Fox, pointed to other news anchors seen as more independent of the pro-Trump line when he told the Associated Press: “The news department has just taken a huge hit with the loss of Shep. For journalists like Chris Wallace and Bret Baier, it’s going to get even harder.”
- Neil Cavuto, who anchors the broadcast following Smith’s, looked shocked after his colleague made the announcement.
- “Whoa,” Cavuto said. “Like you, I’m a little stunned.”

# Cancelling exams in England will hit poorer children hardest

- The closure of schools and cancellation of GCSEs and A-levels as a result of England's third national lockdown risks tilting this playing field even further towards advantaged students. Let's be clear: lockdown will deepen education inequalities. [Research that](#) I've been involved with has shown how poorer pupils have suffered the largest learning losses from school absences during the pandemic. Outside the school gates there lies a stark home-learning divide. Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to benefit from quiet study space, home computers and internet connectivity, let alone the luxury of extra teaching from private tutors.
- Without exams going ahead this summer, we face a huge decision: how to create a fair system for awarding grades that will shape the life prospects of more than a million teenagers, many of whom will have missed out on large chunks of education this year. The exam regulator for England, Ofqual, has been tasked with coming up with "alternative arrangements". It seems likely that teacher-assessed grades will replace GCSE and A-level exams.