



Chapter 13.

Modality and Modal Verbs

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What does modality mean?

Web activity 1

1. Determine which scale is used in each of the following activities.
2. Discuss the activities from a teacher's perspective.

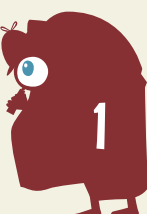
1-1

1. Discuss with a partner: How likely are the following events?
2. Afterwards, discuss how you expressed the nuances of certainty.

- a. *We will land on Mars.*
- b. *We will have long hot summers.*
- c. *Exams will be abolished.*
- d. *Homework will be forbidden.*
- e. *We will get a leftwing government.*
- f. *Prince Christian will be the next King.*
- g. *There will be a World War 3.*
- h. *Resources of petrol will dry out.*
- i. *We will live on the Moon.*

1-2

1. Create short role plays using the situations described below.
2. Afterwards, discuss how you expressed the nuances of obligations and social expectations.
 - a. Persuade your fellow student to lend you something.
 - b. Persuade your headmaster to lend you something.



Web activity 2.

1. Below are some activities on modal verbs. Decide which modal verbs are practised in the activities – which of the two scales?
2. Discuss the activities from a teacher's perspective.
3. Can you think of other ways to teach modal verbs?

2-1

Write the rules you want your class of English students to obey. Which other rules could be relevant to discuss with pupils?

2-2

Rewrite the following conversation to make it more polite:

A: Hey, you! Open the door!

B: It's locked. Do you want me to find the key?

A: Yes. Find it! Quick!

2-3

Where am I now?¹ (Game to be played in groups)

1. Cut out the cards below and put them facing downwards in a pile.
2. Take turns picking up a card and pretend to be in this place. Explain to the others where you are by saying what you are (not) allowed to do there. E.g. *You cannot shout here, you must whisper etc.*
3. The others should guess and may ask questions to find out: *can you run there?*
4. The player who guesses correctly gets the card (1 point) and picks up the next card.
5. The object of the game is to win the most cards.

Play ground	Dentist's	Library	Restaurant
School	Hospital	Cinema	Church
Shop	Chat-room	Prison	Aeroplane
Supermarket	Concert	Court of law	Swimmingpool

2-4

Try the jazz chant in groups/class: "I can play basketball"

1. The teacher leads the chant and the students take turns adding what they can do.
2. It is a good idea to make a pool of activities first (hobbies, sports etc).

Here are the complete lyrics: <http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/listening/jazz-chants/mp3-files-and-recording-scripts/recording-script-4-i-can-play-basketball/149676.article>



Here is a recording of the chant: <http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/listening/jazz-chants/mp3-files-and-recording-scripts/jazz-chants-4-i-can-play-basketball/149675.article>

2-5

In reality shows on TV, such as *Paradise Hotel* or *Survivor*, contestants have to endure all sorts of hardships to win a large sum up money. Identify some of the things you would/wouldn't do in order to win 1 million kr. Consider and discuss the following ideas and add more possible ideas. You might use: *I might... or I would never...*

- Tell a lie
- Lose 10 kilos
- Betray a friend
- Have sex with a stranger even though you were married
- Give a child up for adoption
- Become a citizen of another country
- Leave your family
- Become pregnant
- Move to the USA

2-6

1. Here are some dilemmas. Discuss in groups what you would do in the situations below? You might start: *I would... or I might...*
2. Think of other dilemmas you could meet and discuss how to solve them.

- Your parents don't approve of your new girl/boyfriend.
- Your best friend and you both have spare time jobs in the same shop. You discover that (s) he has stolen 2,000kr.
- You fall in love with the boyfriend or girlfriend of your best friend.
- A classmate cheated in the last English test. Should you tell someone?
- Your friend has bought a new pair of jeans and thinks she looks absolutely fantastic. But you actually think they don't suit her at all and now she wants to wear them on Friday when she hopes to get a date with a boy she has a crush on. Would/should you tell her?

2-7

Make a class survey in relation to hobbies

Firstly, decide on activities to put on the list. You could make the list in class and see who could first find someone for all the activities, or you could make different lists. Here are some of ideas:

Find someone in class who can:

- dance like Michael Jackson
- draw
- sing
- cook
- play a musical instrument
- speak four languages
- swim in two ways
- etc.

2-8

In detective stories, detectives investigate clues in order to solve a crime. If a detective sees the following clues on a victim, what might he conclude?

- has yellow fingers (*He must be a heavy smoker or he might be a painter.*)
- has a red nose



- has rough, hard hands (a woman)
- is dressed in a designer dress and wears a lot of jewellery
- has soft, white hands (a man)
- has lots of tattoos
- has bowlegs
- wears a mini skirt, a low-cut top, long patent-leather boots and is heavily made up
- carries a bag with 25 note books and a piece of chalk
- has scars on her arms from pinpricks

The subjunctive

Web activity 3.

1. Here are some examples of activities that involve using the subjunctive. Try them and discuss them from a teacher's perspective
2. Sum up: how important is the subjunctive and when would you teach it?

Activity 3-1

In pairs, imagine you were somebody else and discuss what you would do in order to make a difference. Take turns discussing: "If I were...."

- a king or a queen
- a principal
- the prime minister
- a policeman
- the president of a charity
- a famous pop star
- a famous film star
- a millionaire
- the city mayor
- a scientist
- a doctor
- a lawyer
- a writer
- somebody else of your choice

3-2

Agony Aunt

You run a problem page in a magazine. Here is an excerpt from a letter you received:

I work as a teacher and have been trying to quit smoking for 2 years now, using Nicotine gum. I usually succeed in surviving for a few weeks, but when I meet problems at work or when I attend parties, I return to my bad habits. What can I do to quit smoking for good?

Discuss the advice you would give the reader by using the present subjunctive in combination with the following verbs and adjectives:

Verbs: *advise, demand, determine, insist, prefer, propose, recommend, request, require, suggest*

Adjectives: *advisable, desirable, essential, imperative, important, mandatory, necessary, requisite, urgent, vital*



3-3

Organise the following four sentences so that you start with the most certain and end with what is most unlikely. Where does the subjunctive belong?

- a. *If I were to become Prime Minister, I would abolish poverty in Denmark*
- b. *If I became Prime Minister, I would abolish poverty in Denmark*
- c. *If I become Prime Minister, I want to abolish poverty in Denmark*
- d. *If I was to become Prime Minister, I would abolish poverty in Denmark*

After reading this chapter

Web activity 4.

Identify, categorize, correct and explain problems regarding modal verbs in the following sentences: is the problem due to FORM, MEANING or USE?

- a. *I must in now because it's cold..*
- b. *As far as I know the book shall be really good.*
- c. *I'd like to can swim.*
- d. *Do you can swim?*
- e. *The teacher said, "You shall hand in your essays tomorrow. Otherwise I will not look at them."*
- f. *He should start his new job as a teacher today.*
- g. *He can German.*
- h. *The letter could had been written by John.*
- i. *He shall always show off in front of his mates.*
- j. *The next day, they had breakfast before they should out in the snow and skiing.*
- k. *The plane we should with was a Boeing 747.*
- l. *There were few people...One of them should with the train.*
- m. *I shall begin in school tomorrow.*
- n. *We shall eat out tomorrow night.*

Web activity 5.

Reflect on what you have learnt about modality and modal verbs.

A. Reflections in relation to didactics

- a. Sum up what is most important to know about modality and modal verbs for an English teacher
 - Explain the two scales of certainty and social expectations
 - Which forms can we use to express modality?
 - Which modal verbs do you know?
 - What do the individual modal verbs express?
 - Sum up the FORM of modal verbs (from 7.2.1.5)
 - Explain the basic MEANING and USE of the three moods: the indicative, the imperative and the subjunctive
 - Explain the FORM, MEANING and USE of the present and the past subjunctives
- b. Sum up what is difficult for Danes
 - Which modal verbs are most difficult for Danes and why?
- c. Discuss how you would handle the progression of modal verbs in your English teaching, if possible compare with what it says in Faghæftet for engelsk.



- o When would you start teaching modality and modal verbs? Why?
 - o Will you teach them the modal verbs in groups to illustrate the nuances?
 - o What is most important for the pupils to learn?
 - o What is easiest?
 - o What needs automatization already for young learners?
- d. Examine how modality and modal verbs are presented in text book systems or grammars for pupils.
- o What is the language view?
 - o What is the acquisition view: inductive ↔ deductive
 - o What is the balance between FORM/MEANING/USE?
 - o Are verbs presented in context?
 - o Do the tasks involve interaction?
 - o Is speaking as well as writing included?
- e. Think back at your own experience as a pupil: did you change your opinion about how to teach modal verbs?
- B. Reflect on what you have learned:
- Which areas relating to modality and modal verbs do you master now?
 - In which areas do you need to improve?

Web activity 6.

1. Analyze the learner's text below regarding modality and modal verbs: identify, correct and explain problems and sum up how the learner is doing regarding this topic.
2. What would you help the learner with and why?

1 *Travel Mail to your Friend*

2 *Hello Matthew!*

3

4 *How are you? I hope you enjoy your summer.*

5 *Now I am in London. I arrived last week, and I already experience a lot of things. London is an amazing city*

6 *to visit.*

7 *I shall spend whole my education over here, that means 4 weeks. In this summer, I thought I would tried*

8 *some new stuff, and be away from home in further time. And because I never have been in England before, I*

9 *chose this country. The trip in the plane was fine, and it just took about an hour. We should flew from*

10 *Kastrup Airport.*

11 *Every week I'll find another hotel to live at, so I experience different parts of the capital. I gues it will be a bit*

12 *more interesting.*

13 *Maybe we can meet each other in next week and stay together for a while? It is so long time since we have*

14 *seen each other. I have so much new stuff I shall tell you. I can't nearly wait to see you.*

15 *I already have seen the most important places like Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, Tower of*

16 *London and famous people at the Wax-museum. I have taken some pictures that you simply may see! I am*

17 *staying right beside Elvis Presley. You can't nearly see that they isn't true.*

18 *Tomorrow I shall to Oxford Street to shop. There are more than 300 different shops, and it is just something*

19 *for me: shoes, clothes, CD's and films. There is a bit for every type, I think. The culture is just so nice here in*

20 *London, and I must have some clothes of the new summer collection. I also heard of Portobello Road, maybe*

21 *you know the place? I shall experience all what I can, when I am here. If you know some other places I just*

22 *may see, then you should just call or write to me.*

23 *I haven't been at the beach yet, even though the weather so hot! But you can believe that I have eaten a lot*

24 *of ice-creams. Well, we just have summer one time in the year...*



25 Yesterday I should met some old friends at Picadilly Circus that I haven't seen for years. It was a bit strange.
 26 It ended up spending the afternoon talking about boyfriends, career and so on. I it was quite enjoyable. We
 27 were at some different cafés and just had it nice together. We planned to see each other again at Friday,
 28 were we shall seeing the musical, Mamma Mia in the theatre.
 29 Some days I am running in the morning, even when I am here. Last day when I ran in a Park, I met a group
 30 of other runners and connected them. They were very kind, and offered me that I could ran by them every
 31 day. It is nice that people are so forthcoming and open for new people, even when we are tourists.
 32 When I am coming home to Denmark in 3 weeks I shall back to school again. I hope and expect that I am bet-
 33 ter to talk the language more fluently. I also expect that I get some friends to visit about some years and re-
 34 versed. As you know, I love to learn new cultures and professions to know. The cultures in London
 35 fascinate me.
 36 As you know I am coming from a small village in Denmark. It is much different to be here in London, because
 37 there always happened something around you. But I like it. You have much more possibilities to be a part of
 38 a community. I don't know I if will live in London, but it is a very lively, fascinated and nice capital or city.
 39 All people have to visit London, I think. You may go to London soon!
 40 I hope you are well, and everything is like it shall be. How does it go by your job?
 41 I look forward to see you!
 42 Love from Ida.

Links for activities and resources

- <http://michel.barbot.pagesperso-orange.fr/hotpot/modaux/anticipe1.htm> (modal verbs in listening activity on Star Wars)
- http://www.letshavefunwithenglish.com/games/highway_code/rules.html (game with road signs)
- http://www.kentschoolofenglish.com/teacher/resources/lesson_bank/questionofsport.pdf (rules in sports)
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1135_gramchallenge39/
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1159_gramchallenge38/
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1756_how_to_discuss/page7.shtml
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/apps/ifl/worldservice/quiznet/quizengine?ContentType=text/html;quiz=1732_past
- <http://a4esl.org/q/h/0101/ig-modals.html>
- http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/cgi-shl/quiz.pl/modal_quiz.htm
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/modals-1>
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/modals-%E2%80%93-deduction-present>
- <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/grammar-exercises/modals-%E2%80%93-deduction-past>

Quotes

1 Based on activity 31 in Jill Hadfield, *Elementary Communication Games*, Longman, 1984



