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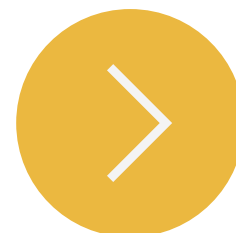
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VERBS L 5.1 – MODAL VERBS

WHAT ARE MODAL VERBS?

There are six modal verbs: "können", "wollen", "möchten", "sollen", "müssen", "dürfen". **modal verbs change the meaning of the sentence.** There is a difference between whether someone "must" do something or someone "can" do something.

Modal verbs are usually combined with a second verb ("main verb") and conjugated.

EXAMPLES

- „Ich **kann** kein Englisch sprechen.“
- „Ich **muss** heute nicht lernen.“
- „Ich **will** heute lernen.“
- „Wir **sollen** in die Schule gehen.“



WORD ORDER

Modal Verbs are usually combined with a second verb ("main verb") and must be conjugated.

The modal verbs are in position 1 (question/imperative) or position 2 (in regular main clauses). The main verb moves to the very end of the clause.

Position 1	Position 2		Main Verb - End
Er	kann	kein Englisch	sprechen.
Kann	er	kein Englisch	sprechen?

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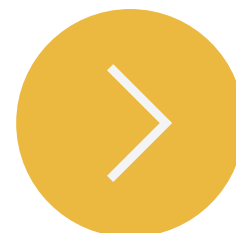
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VERBS L 5.2 – THE DIFFERENT MODAL VERBS

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Video Lesson:

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MODAL VERB "MÜSSEN"

Conjugation

	Present Tense	Simple Past (Präteritum)
ich	muss	musste
du	mus st	musstest
er/sie/es	muss	musste
wir	müs sen	mussten
ihr	müs st	musstet
sie/Sie	müs sen	mussten

Use of "müssen"

1. We can use "müssen" as necessity:

- „Julia **muss** in die Schule **gehen**."
- „Der Fußballspieler **muss** hart **trainieren**."
- „Ich **muss** für meine Arbeit Deutsch **lernen**."
(There are no other possibilities.)

2. We can use "müssen" as a command or duty:

- „Du **musst** jetzt dein Zimmer **aufräumen**!"
- „Ihr **müsst** die Pizza **essen**!"
- „Sie **müssen** den Vertrag **unterschreiben**!"

3. We can use "müssen" as an assumption:

Very high probability that you are right.

- „Der Schal **müsste** Maria **gehören**."
(As an answer to: "Wem gehört dieser Schal?" → I am 99% sure that it belongs to Maria.)
- „Das Haus **muss** 30m hoch **sein**."
(As an answer to: "Wie hoch ist dieses Haus?" → I am almost 100% sure that it is 30 meters tall.)

MODAL VERB "KÖNNEN"

Conjugation

	Present Tense	Simple Past (Präteritum)
ich	kann	konnte
du	kannst	konntest
er/sie/es	kann	konnte
wir	können	konnten
ihr	könnt	konntet
sie/Sie	können	konnten

Use of "können"

1. We can use "können" as a permission or prohibition:

- „Du **kannst** hier nicht **parken**."
(It is forbidden.)
- „Unser Sohn **kann** heute Computer **spielen**."
(I allow him to do it.)

2. We can use "können" as a capability or inability

- „Du **kannst** schnell **rennen**."
- „Sie **kann** nicht gut **kochen**."
- „Ich **kann** Klavier **spielen**."
→ I do something well or not so well.

3. We can use "können" as a possibility or impossibility:

- „Du **kannst** nicht immer **gewinnen**."
- „Menschen **können** nicht **fliegen**."
- „Max **kann** mit meinem Auto **fahren**."
→ Something is possible or impossible

4. We can use “können” as a recommendation (often with the Konjunktiv 2):

- „Wir **könnten** heute ins Kino **gehen**!”
- „Ich **kann** dir **helfen**!”
- „Du **könntest** ihr ein Geschenk **kaufen**!”

5. We can use “können” as a polite request (with the Konjunktiv 2):

- „**Könntest** du mir bitte **helfen**?”
- „**Könnte** ich noch ein Bier **haben**?”
- „**Könnten** Sie mir einen Gefallen **tun**?”

6. We can use “können” as a guess (with the Konjunktiv 2):

There is a relatively small possibility that you are right.

A: „Wo ist deine Freundin?”

B: „Ich weiß es nicht. sie **könnte** bei einer Freundin **sein**.”

MODAL VERB “WOLLEN/MÖCHTEN”

Conjugation

	Present Tense		Simple Past (Präteritum)	
ich	will	möchte e	wollte	wollte
du	willst	möcht est	wolltest	wolltest
er/sie/es	will	möchte e	wollte	wollte
wir	wollen	möcht en	wollten	wollten
ihr	wollt	möcht et	wolltet	wolltet
sie/Sie	wollen	möcht en	wollten	wollten

* Actually "möchten" is the Konjunktiv 2 form of "mögen". But "mögen" isn't used as a modal verb anymore. Only the Konjunktiv 2 form is still used, namely as the polite version of "wollen". The real Konjunktiv 2 form of "wollen" is "wöllte". But usually, we replace it with the “würden” – version of the Konjunktiv 2.

Use of "wollen"

1. We can use "wollen" as a wish or an intention:

- „Ich **will** nach Deutschland **umziehen**!“
- „Sie **wollen** ein neues Auto **kaufen**!“

2. We can use "wollen" to refuse (with negation):

- „Ich **will** nicht in die Schule **gehen**!“
- „Jens **will** nicht nach Berlin **fahren**!“

3. We can use "wollen" as a main verb (with a subordinate clause):

- „Max **will**, dass ich das Geschirr abwasche.“
- „Ich **will**, dass du jetzt gehst.“

Difference between "wollen" and "möchten"

"Möchten" is the polite form of "wollen":

- „Papa, ich **will** ein Eis (essen)!“ - Very demanding
- „Papa, ich **möchte** ein Eis (essen).“ – Polite

MODAL VERB "DÜRFEN"

Conjugation

	Present Tense	Simple Past (Präteritum)
ich	darf	durfte
du	darfst	durftest
er/sie/es	darf	durfte
wir	dürfen	durften
ihr	dürft	durftet
sie/Sie	dürfen	durften

Use of "dürfen"

1. We can use "dürfen" as permission:

- „Wir **dürfen** eine Stunde Computer **spielen**."
(Dad allows us to do so.)
- „Er **darf** meinen Computer **benutzen**."
(I allow him to do so.)

2. We can use "dürfen" as a prohibition (with negation):

- „Wir **dürfen** heute nicht Computer **spielen**."
(Dad has not allowed it.)
- „Er **darf** meinen Computer nicht **benutzen**."
(I do not allow it).

3. We can use "dürfen" as a guess (with the Konjunktiv 2):

There is a high possibility that you are right.

- „Der Schal **dürfte** Maria **gehören**."
(As an answer to: To whom does this scarf belong? → I think/believe that it belongs to Maria.)
- „Das Haus **dürfte** 30m hoch **sein**."
(As an answer to: "How tall is this building?" → I think/believe/estimate it to be 30 meters tall!)

3. We can use "dürfen" to politely ask for permission:

- „**Darf** ich Sie etwas **fragen**?"
(Polite.)
- „**Dürfte** ich Sie etwas **fragen**?"
(Very polite!)

MODAL VERB "SOLLEN"

Conjugation

	Present Tense	Simple Past (Präteritum)
ich	soll	soll te
du	soll st	soll test
er/sie/es	soll	soll te
wir	soll en	soll ten
ihr	soll t	soll tet
sie/Sie	soll en	soll ten

Use of "sollen"

1. We can use "sollen" to describe a duty:

- „Ich **soll** das Geschirr **abwaschen**."
(I should wash the dishes. It is my job.)
- „Die Kinder **sollen** Hausaufgaben **machen**."
(The teacher gave the children a homework assignment.)

2. We can use "sollen" as a recommendation or advice (with the Konjunktiv 2):

- „Du **solltest** dein Zimmer besser **aufräumen**!"
(I recommend that you tidy up the room. Otherwise, your parents will be upset.)
- „Sie **sollten** den Vertrag **unterschreiben**!"
(I recommend that you sign the contract.)

3. We can use "sollen" as an assumption (always with the Konjunktiv 2):

There is a high probability that you are right.

- „Der Schal **sollte** Maria **gehören**."
(As an answer to: To whom does this scarf belong? → I am pretty sure that it belongs to Maria.)
- „Thomas **sollte** um 18 Uhr nach Hause **kommen**."
(As an answer to: Thomas should be home at what time? → I think that Thomas is coming home at 6 pm.)

4. We can use “sollen” as an indirect command:

→ Somebody else has given the order/command.

- „Du **sollst** den Müll **rausbringen**.”

(In this case, it is a "reminder" to do something finally. The command was previously issued and usually came from another person.)

In comparison, a direct command: “*Bring den Müll raus!*” (Imperative)

SUMMARY: MODAL VERBS

"Müssen" = must / have to:

- As a necessity
- As a command/duty
- As an assumption with a very high probability that you are right.

"können" = to can:

- As permission or prohibition
- As possibility or impossibility
- As capability or inability
- As an assumption with a very low probability that you are right.

"wollen / möchten" = to want:

- We use "wollen" to express a wish or intention.
- We can refuse things with the negation.
- "Möchten" is the polite form of "wollen".

"dürfen" = can:

- "Dürfen" = "can" and states whether something is allowed or forbidden.
- As an assumption with a very high probability that you are right.

"sollen" = to shall/should:

- "Sollen" is equal to the English word "should" and is used to express duties or indirect commands
- As an assumption with a relatively high probability that you are right.

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