

Modals review

As the *Cambridge Learner Corpus* shows, modal verbs often cause problems, even at Proficiency level. Correct any errors in these sentences. One sentence is correct.

- a Animals could be kept in zoos, but they must to have a comfortable place to live in.
- b I've written a few notes about things that may be changed if the campaign is to succeed.
- c His dog ought to be registered because then they might have been able to trace it.
- d Much more should have been done to bring this epidemic under control.
- e You mustn't have been here last summer – the café only opened a month ago.
- f I needn't have bought these batteries if I had known you were going to buy some too.
- g If only we should live our lives again, knowing what we know now!
- h It can't be possible for you to phone back later?

3 Choose the correct modal form in each of these sentences.

- a I *needn't have / shouldn't have* gone out last night as I had so much work to do.
- b You *might have / needed to have* rung me to say you'd missed the bus – I was worried sick.
- c It *must have / could have* been a full three hours later when the ship finally docked.
- d Legally, people *mustn't / needn't* vote in a general election if they don't want to.
- e I'm sure I *don't have to / mustn't* remind you of the need for confidentiality.
- f You really *shouldn't / needn't* cover up for him every time – you'll get yourself into trouble one day.
- g *Need / Ought* I to have let someone know about this earlier?
- h *Would / Might* you mind if I didn't give you a lift all the way home tonight?

4 For questions 1–6, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

- 1 You didn't spend enough time on this project.

put

You ought
hours on this project.

- 2 Factory farming was surely less humane before these guidelines were established.

prior

Factory farming must
of these guidelines.

- 3 I really admire people who are prepared to risk their job for the sake of their principles.

line

I really admire people who are prepared to
for the sake of their principles.

- 4 You should have spilled the beans about Lisa before now.

let

If only you could
secret before now.

- 5 It's time the organisation told the truth about the misuse of its funds.

straight

The organisation should set
its funds were misused.

- 6 Would you mind if I asked you to sign this petition?

raise

Would you
asking you to sign this petition?

Modals review

Here are examples of the many different functions of modal verbs.

Strong obligation

All passengers must observe the no smoking policy on board.

You'll have to wait in line like everyone else, I'm afraid.

I had to walk to school when I was young.

Weak obligation

I ought to save a bit more money each month.

You really should try to keep on top of your homework.

Unfulfilled obligation (past)

George should have gone to visit his parents more often than he did.

We ought to have done more to this house.

Prohibition

Students must not bring any personal belongings into the examination room.

I don't care what you say, you can't stay out later than midnight.

No necessity

We don't need to buy the cinema tickets in advance.

You needn't have bothered to come and see me off at the station.

Speculation

Could it have been the right answer after all?

There might be some money in it for you.

Deduction

That must be the turning just beyond the garage.

It must have been Mike's girlfriend you met.

Ability

I can get by on my forehand, but I can't play a backhand shot to save my life.

Everyone in the class could understand sign language perfectly.

Impossibility

Andrew can't play squash tonight.

There couldn't have been a power failure – the computer's still on.

Advice

You should cut down on chocolate if you want to lose weight.

Jerry really ought to see a doctor about his back problem.

Permission

You can have a break now.

You may leave if you wish. (formal)