

Grammar: *Topic 9 Modal Verbs*

Modal verbs are special verbs in the English language. They do not behave like most verbs and have only one form for all the Pronouns. Some of them denote the Present, some the Past. They never denote the future. They can be used in the Positive, Negative and Interrogative (Question form).

The Modal Verbs we use in Topic 9 are ‘can’ and ‘may’.

- ‘can’ is used to show ability in the positive and question form
Example: I can skip. You can dance. He can read. We can play football. They can come to you.
Example: Can you read Amharic letters? Can he drive a bus? Can the baby walk alone?
- The negative of ‘can’ is ‘cannot’. We do not ask a question starting with cannot.
Example: I cannot hear you. She cannot see you. We cannot follow you. They cannot touch you.
- ‘may’ is used to ask for permission or to give permission. Usually in question form it is used to ask for permission and in the positive it is used for the reply
Example: May I leave the room please? Yes you may.
- ‘may not’ is the negative of ‘may’. It is used in the reply to the question form. We do not start a question with may not!
Example: No, you may not go out to play.

Exercise 1: *Fill in the blanks using ‘can’ or ‘cannot’*

1. My friend is clever. He _____ study many spellings in a short time.
2. My mother does not like to cook. She _____ find time for it.
3. _____ your aunt knit a scarf?
4. My grandfather _____ tell me many stories about Ethiopia’s history.
5. I _____ do many things at home, but I like going to school.
6. During the Covid pandemic we _____ go to school.
7. _____ you tell me what 2 + 2 make?
8. They _____ find the answers to the Math questions.
9. _____ you help me understand this story?
10. Who _____ tell me the way to freedom?

Exercise 2: *Fill in the blanks using ‘may’ or ‘may not’*

1. He has fever. He _____ go out of his room.
2. _____ we play football this afternoon. No, you _____.

3. You _____ get your way with your mum if you are good.
4. _____ I visit grandmother on Sunday?
5. You _____ not have a party next week. I forbid it.
6. _____ I join you for a cup of coffee?
7. Yes, you _____ go out with your friend.
8. Mother says, we _____ go to the cinema tonight.
9. Nobody _____ smoke in an aeroplane.
10. Children _____ talk when the teacher speaks.

Exercise 3: *Fill in the blanks with can/cannot/may/may not.*

1. Who _____ run around the block in ten minutes?
2. He _____ not be the first in class. Other boys are clever as well.
3. You _____ try to jump that high. It is too difficult.
4. _____ you come with me to the market today?
5. _____ I carry your books, miss?
6. We _____ hold hands during the pandemic.
7. They _____ be on time to say goodbye.
8. I _____ understand Chinese.
9. She _____ go out alone in the dark. It is dangerous.
10. _____ I see what you have written?

Part 2: *Go to your English Reader 3. Read a story you like. Write five sentences about that story.*

1. The story I like best is _____.
2. It is about _____.
3. The main characters are _____.
4. Something is _____.
5. It is very _____.

Part 3: *Vocabulary – look at these letters and unscramble them to make words.*

tirbydha	_____	tersawe	_____
pilctrealra	_____	neyrujo	_____
ngorw	_____	rwoorb	_____

Part 4: *Spoken English: Try reading this tongue twister till you can say it easily!*

Peter Piper, picked a peck of pickled pepper.
 A peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked.
 If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper.
 Where's the peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked?