# Modality and conditionals

## Reflect:

1 How should modals be taught? Which ones should be taught at the same time? Why?

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2 Do you think it's important to focus more on form or on meaning when teaching or learning about conditional clauses? Why?

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3 What difficulties do students have with modals and conditional clauses?

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4 Do you like the way your coursebook teaches modals and conditional clauses? Why (not)?

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.....

## Discuss:

If you have someone to discuss with, compare your answers. If any are different, think about why.

## Explore:

1 How many functions can you think of for each of the modals below? Think of examples for each one.

can .....

will .....

shall .....

may .....

must .....

could .....

would .....

should .....

might .....

**2** What are the differences in the ways modals are used in each of these pairs of sentences?

a. You must be at work before nine.
You have to work to get by.

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b. We needn't have booked so early; the hotel was empty.
We didn't need to book so early, but we wanted to be on the safe side.

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c. What time will we get there?
What time shall we get there?

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d. You mustn't work on Sunday; it's a day of rest.
You don't have to work on Sunday; it's a day of rest.

.....

**3** Change this sentence using as many variations as you can. You can change the tense, the modal, the conjunction (*if*), etc.

If you go faster, you'll finish earlier.

.....

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**4** To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Why (not)?

'There is too much focus on form when teaching modals and conditional clauses.'

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'Each modal should be taught separately.'

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'There's no point teaching four types of conditional clause as there are so many acceptable variations.'

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**Answers:**
**'Explore', Ex 1 (suggested answers):**
can/could: ability, possibility, permission, requests
will/would: predictions, offers, requests
shall: offers
should: advice, possibility
may: permission, possibility
might: possibility
must: permission, certainty
**Ex 2:**
a: The first expresses an obligation, the second expresses a fact.
b: In the first, the lack of necessity became apparent at the time of speaking, in the second, the speaker was always aware of it.
c: The first describes an inevitable situation; the second is a request for information/an offer.
d: The first expresses a negative obligation; the second expresses a lack of obligation.
**Ex 3 (suggested answers):**
Unless you go faster, you'll finish late.
If you went faster, you'd finish earlier.
You might finish earlier if you went faster.