



# Module 2 – Modal Verbs (Present and Past)

Title: "Certainty, Advice, and Possibility – Mastering Modals"

Hi there, and welcome back!

## [Section 1 – Present Modals]

Modal verbs aren't just about rules and advice — they also reflect tone, attitude, and how confident or polite we are.

Let's consider the difference between:

- **You must call her.** (strong command or urgency)
- **You should call her.** (gentle advice)
- **You could call her.** (a polite suggestion, less pressure)

🗣️ Mini-dialogue:

**A:** I think Mia's upset with me.

**B:** You should talk to her.

**A:** Maybe... I could send a message first.

Now, notice how **"don't have to"** and **"mustn't"** express two very different things.

- **You don't have to come** = It's not necessary; it's your choice.
- **You mustn't come** = It's forbidden!

🗣️ Example:

**You don't have to bring anything to the party.**

→ Optional — your presence is enough.

**You mustn't bring your dog into the restaurant.**

→ Strict rule — it's not allowed.


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## [Section 2 – Deduction and Probability]


Deduction modals reflect how sure we are about a present situation.

Let's compare levels of certainty:

- **He must be at home.** (almost 100% certain)
- **He might be at home.** (maybe)
- **He can't be at home.** (we're sure it's not possible)

 Think of it like a scale of certainty:

[certainty] must > might / could / may > can't [impossibility]

 Example:

**The lights are off and there's no car outside.**

→ He **can't** be home.

**His coat's still here.**

→ He **must** be somewhere nearby.

**There's some noise upstairs.**

→ He **might** be back already.

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## [Section 3 – Modals in the Past]

Expression	Meaning
He <b>must</b> be tired.	Present deduction
He <b>must</b> have been tired.	Past deduction
You <b>should</b> call her.	Advice (present/future)
You <b>should</b> have called her.	Missed advice (past)

Modal verbs + **have + past participle** allow us to reflect on **what could have happened**, **what should have happened**, and **what likely did happen**.



🧑 Example Scenario:

“I was waiting at the café, but she didn’t come.”

Now let’s express different thoughts about that:

- **She must have forgotten.** (logical conclusion)
- **She might have misunderstood the time.** (possibility)
- **She could have told me she wasn’t coming.** (criticism or missed opportunity)
- **She should have called.** (mild reproach)

💡 Note: This structure is useful in storytelling, expressing regret, or drawing conclusions.

## [Mini-section – Needn’t Have & Didn’t Need To]

⚠️ Let’s explore the difference more deeply.

1. **Needn’t have** = the action happened, but it wasn’t necessary.
2. **Didn’t need to** = we don’t know if the action happened; we just know it wasn’t necessary.

🧑 Examples:

- **I brought an umbrella, but it didn’t rain.**  
→ I **needn’t have** brought it.
- **We didn’t need to buy tickets — the event was free.**  
→ Maybe we bought them, maybe we didn’t.

Compare:

**You didn’t need to call me.**

(You may or may not have called — it just wasn’t required.)

**You needn’t have called me.**

(You did call — but it wasn’t necessary.)

### Mini-Dialogue for Realistic Use

**At the Office:**



A: I missed the meeting this morning!

B: Oh no! You should have set an alarm.

A: I know. I might have turned it off by accident.

B: You must have been really tired.

A: Yes... I stayed up too late. I needn't have watched three episodes of that series...

## [Recap & Outro] 🎯 Final Reflection Prompt (for Student Engagement)

Ask yourself:

- What's something you **must** do tomorrow?
- What's something you **should have done** last week?
- Is there anything you **might have forgotten** today?

Try answering using the correct modal structures!

### Reading - Lesson 2: Detective Thompson's Mystery

*(Rich in present and past modal verbs for deductions and hypotheses)*

#### Story Summary

This engaging mystery story centers around Detective Thompson's investigation of a stolen painting from an elegant art gallery. The narrative unfolds as a classic detective story, where the protagonist must use logical deduction, probability assessment, and careful analysis to solve the crime. The story presents various suspects and scenarios, including the gallery owner Mrs. Chen, a mysteriously absent security guard, and potential insurance fraud.

Through the detective's investigation process, we explore how people express certainty and uncertainty, make deductions based on evidence, and discuss what should have happened versus what actually occurred. The story illustrates how modal verbs are naturally employed in professional contexts where individuals need to convey varying degrees of certainty, obligation, and possibility. Detective Thompson's methodical approach to solving the case provides an excellent framework for understanding how we use modal verbs to speculate about past events, present situations, and future possibilities. The mystery format makes the story engaging while providing authentic contexts for the use of modal verbs in everyday professional communication.

#### "The Mystery of the Missing Painting"



Detective Thompson stands in the elegant gallery, examining the empty frame where a valuable painting once hung. The gallery owner, Mrs. Chen, looks worried as she explains what happened.

"The painting **must have been stolen** during the night," Detective Thompson says, studying the security footage. "The thief **can't have entered** through the front door because the alarm was working perfectly. They **might have come** through the back entrance, but that seems unlikely too."

Mrs. Chen shakes her head. "I **should have installed** better security cameras last month when the insurance company recommended it. I **ought to have listened** to their advice, but I thought our current system was sufficient."

The detective examines the scene more carefully. "The thief **must have been** very skilled. Look at how cleanly they removed the painting from the frame. They **must have had** professional tools and experience. An amateur **couldn't have done** this so perfectly."

"**Could it have been** an inside job?" Mrs. Chen asks nervously. "I **don't want to** suspect my employees, but..."

"We **have to consider** all possibilities," Detective Thompson replies. "Your night security guard **should have been** here until 6 AM. Where is he now?"

"He called in sick this morning. He said he **had to go** to the hospital because he wasn't feeling well. But that's strange because he **didn't need to** take time off yesterday when I offered it to him."

Detective Thompson makes notes. "He **should have informed** you earlier about his illness. This timing is suspicious. We **must investigate** his whereabouts last night."

Later, at the police station, Detective Thompson reviews the case with his partner. "The security guard **might have been** involved, but we **can't be** completely sure yet. The gallery owner **needn't have worried** so much about her other employees – they all have solid alibis."

"What about the insurance?" his partner asks.

"That's interesting. Mrs. Chen **didn't need to** pay such high premiums for the painting because its value had decreased recently. She **needn't have** kept such expensive insurance, but she did. That makes me wonder if she **might have known** something would happen."

The next day brings new evidence. A witness **must have seen** something because security footage from across the street shows a van parked outside the gallery. The driver **can't have been** a regular delivery person because businesses **don't usually** operate at 3 AM.



"The thief **should have been** more careful," Detective Thompson says with a smile. "They **must have forgotten** about the street cameras. Now we **might be able to** solve this case much faster than expected."