MODALS

The same modal verb can be used in different ways, and with different meanings. We only know the meaning from the situation. For example, *could*: I could get to work in 30 minutes in my last job. (ability: past time)

Could you pass the salt, please? (request: present time)

That could be difficult. (uncertainty: future time)

ABILITY

Can - can't/ cannot to be able to
 Can you deliver in two weeks? - No, we can't.

PAST ABILITY

Could describes past ability
 When I was young I could run very fast.

o Was able to describes the ability to successfully complete an action.

Marry was able to help us. (She actually helped us)
Marry could help us. (But perhaps she didn't)

WILL

When will expresses the idea of "willingness" - such as in requests and offerings, it can be used as a modal verb
 Will you hold the lift for me, please?
 Will you have some more coffee?

NECESSITY (OBLIGATION)

- To say that something is necessary we use have to, need to and must.
 We must finish the meting by eleven at the latest.
- o To make a **question**, we avoid using must as we can sound annoyed then. Do you have to! need to work this evening? x Must you work this evening?

PAST NECESSITY

o had to and needed to

NO NECESSITY, PERMISSION, PROHIBITION

- When something is not necessary we use **don't have to** and **don't need to** You **don't have to** pay right now, we can give you credit.
- When something is permitted we use can and be allowed to. When something is prohibited we use can't, be not allowed to and mustn't.
 Mustn't is more usual when telling someone what not to do.

You're not allowed to park on a double yellow line. (that's the law)
You mustn't talk about politics if they invite you to dinner. (I'm telling you)

 Notice that *have to* and *must* have similar meanings in their affirmative forms but different meanings in their negative forms.

I have to/ must leave now. (it is necessary for me to leave)

I don't have to leave. (it is not necessary, I have a choice whether to leave)

I mustn't leave now. (it is prohibited, I cannot leave)

NO NECESSITY, PERMISSION AND PROHIBITION IN THE PAST

- o No necessity didn't have to and didn't need to.
- o Permission could, was allowed
- o Prohibition couldn't, wasn't allowed to

OPINIONS AND ADVICE

o To give an opinion, advice or recommendation about what is the best thing to do we use *should*, *should not*, *ought to* and *ought not*.

You **should** speak to your boss.

- Had better (not) is used for strong options. Had is usually contracted.
 You'd better not interrupt him while he is on the phone.
- When we use these verbs in the past (+ have + past participle) we mean that we didn't do the right thing and now we are making a criticism.
 We shouldn't have spent all the advertising budget on television spots.

CERTAINTY AND UNCERTAINTY

100 %	will, be certain to
95%	must, can't
80%	should, ought to, be likely to, shouldn't, ought not to, be unlikely to
30-70%	might, may, could, may not, might not
0%	won't

PAST CERTAINTY AND UNCERTAINTY

 Must have and can't have - these are used to make deductions about past actions. The have form does not change.

I must have left my wallet in the car.

Jim can't have noticed you.

 May have, might have and could have - these express possibility and uncertainty about past actions. The have form does not change.

He may not have received the letter.

You could have been killed.

REMEMBER:

Must muset Needn't nemuset

May, be allowed to smět

Mustn't nesmět