



Teaching Tricky Grammar: Modal verbs

Takeaways from the video:

- A detailed explanation of modal verbs to improve teachers' understanding
- Teaching and learning examples that can be easily replicated for use with pupils
- Exemplification of how modal verbs can be applied in authentic texts

Press Pause Questions:

Slide 4

The verbs 'to be' and 'to have' can take several forms. Can you identify which of the following are forms of 'to be' and 'to have'?

- Am, have, be, has, been, was
- Had, are, were, being, having, is

Slide 11

could, would, should, may, can, ought (to), must, shall, will, might

Insert different modal verbs into this sentence. Consider how the different modal verbs subtly change the meaning of the sentence.

Uncle Gary bring me a present for my birthday.

Think about how the different modal verbs imply obligations, assertiveness or degrees of certainty.

Slide 14

Modal verbs can be combined with other auxiliary verbs to create different meanings.

- James closed the car door.
- James should have closed the car door.

- James might have been closing the car door.
- James must close the car door.

What do you notice about the order of auxiliary and main verbs in these sentences?

Putting it into Practice

Provide children with a selection of verbs on cards or sticky notes. Ask them to sort the verbs into categories, e.g. modal verbs, being verbs, doing verbs, having verbs.

Display a sentence with a space for a modal verb. Ask children to experiment with adding different modal verbs in the space and to note how the meaning of the sentence changes.

Ask children to sort pairs of sentences to show which has the greatest certainty, e.g.

- Paige and Duncan might go swimming on Saturday.
- Paige and Duncan will go swimming on Saturday.

Review Question

Ask pupils to write persuasive texts about issues they care about. Encourage them to use a range of modal verb phrases, e.g. animals should be kept... We could have a completely different world if... after reading this, I am sure you will want to... you may have doubts but after reading this you will be convinced...