



Modals 1: Can, May, Might

Verbos Modales 1: Poder



piano *piano*



violin *violín*



guitar *guitarra*



trumpet *trompeta*



drums *batería*

can *puedo/pudes/puede/podemos/podéis/pueden*

to play *jugar, tocar*

Normal verbs are actions (*actos*):

They **play** the piano. *Ellos **tocan** el piano.*

Modal verbs say the action is possible, typical (*típico*), obligatory (*obligatorio*), etc.:

They **can/tend to/should** play the piano. *Ellos **puden/suelen/deben** tocar el piano.*

I **can play** piano
you **can play** piano
we **can play** piano
they **can play** piano

he **can play** piano
she **can play** piano
it **can play** piano

Modal verbs are very simple (*simple*). We say the same modal verb after (*despues de*) I, we, she, etc. We don't say **to** before or after (*ni antes ni despues*) can: ~~to can~~, ~~can to~~.

We say **I can play the piano** or just (*solo*) **I can play piano**. They have the same meaning (*sentido*).

I can play _____ the drums.

We _____ guitar.

They _____ the trumpet.

He _____ the guitar and the drums, but not at the same time.

She _____ violin very well.

It _____ the piano.

Negative Statements *Afirmaciones Negativas*

Cannot, can not (*con espacio*), and **can't** are correct. **Cannot** and **can not** are more formal. **Can't** is a little less formal.

Long Form *Forma Larga*

I **cannot play** drums he **cannot play** drums
you **cannot play** drums she **cannot play** drums
we **cannot play** drums it **cannot play** drums
they **cannot play** drums.

Short Form *Forma Corta*

I **can't play** drums He **can't play** drums
You **can't play** drums She **can't play** drums
We **can't play** drums It **can't play** drums
They **can't play** drums

to turn	<i>girar</i>	to turn around	<i>dar la vuelta</i>
too	<i>demasiado, también</i>	to turn over	<i>volcar</i>

I cannot turn left here. It is a one-way street.
 You _____ left on this street. There are too many cars.
 We _____ right here. There is no road on the right.
 They _____ right here now. There is a big accident.
 He _____ the table around. It is too big.
 She _____ the bus around here. The road is too small.
 The dog _____ over the paper. It has no hands.

Questions Preguntas



When we ask a question, we say **can** before (*antes de*) the other words.

Can you play the drums? ¿Puede/Puedes/Podéis/Pueden tocar la batería?

party	<i>fiesta</i>	Sure.	<i>Claro., Seguro.</i>	hurt	<i>herido</i>	the end	<i>el fin</i>
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Can your grandsons help me turn the big table around? Yes, they can. They will be happy to help.	¿Pueden tus nietos ayudarme a girar la mesa grande? Sí, pueden. Estarán encantados de ayudarte.
Can you help me take this box upstairs? Sure! I can help you. It is not too big.	¿Puedes ayudarme a llevar esta caja arriba? ¡Claro! Puedo ayudarte. No es demasiado grande
Can you sing at the end of the party? I can sing at the end if your uncles sing, too.	¿Puedes cantar al final de la fiesta? Puedo cantar al final si tus tios cantan también.
At the end of the party, can your friends take these sixteen chairs back to my aunt's house? Sure, they can take the chairs in their truck.	Al final de la fiesta, ¿podrán tus amigos llevar de vuelta estas dieciséis sillas a la casa de mi tía? Claro, pueden llevar las sillas en su camioneta.
Can you help me take this box downstairs? No, sorry, I can't. My hand is hurt. Oh no! Is it your right hand that's hurt? No, it's my other hand. The back of my left hand is hurt.	¿Puedes ayudarme a bajar esta caja? No, lo siento, no puedo. Me duele la mano. ¡Ay, no! ¿Te duele la mano derecha? No, es mi otra mano. Me duele el dorso de la mano izquierda.
Can you come to a party at my house on Friday evening? Yes, we can come. Thank you! We will be very happy to go to your party.	¿Puedes venir a una fiesta en mi casa el viernes por la noche? Sí, podemos ir. ¡Gracias! Estaremos muy contentos de ir a tu fiesta.

Can you come to a party at my house on Tuesday afternoon?

No, sorry, I can't. I have to work then.

No, sorry, I can't. I have too much to do that day.

¿Puedes venir a una fiesta en mi casa? el martes por la tarde?

No, lo siento, no puedo. Tengo que trabajar entonces.

No, lo siento, no puedo. Tengo demasiado mucho que hacer ese día.

Exercises with Imagination *Ejercicios con Imaginación*

Can your brother's girlfriend play the violin? Yes, she can play the violin.

Can your wife's cousin play guitar? _____

Can your grandmother speak French? _____

Can any of your family members play the trumpet? _____

Can your aunt's boyfriend help me take this box downstairs at the end of the day? _____

Can you and your friends come to a party at my house this Saturday? _____

May and Might *Hay una Posibilidad*

I can. I have the ability, time, and resources. *Tengo la capacidad, el tiempo y los recursos.*

I may. I can, but I am not sure that I will. *Puedo, pero no estoy seguro de hacerlo.*

I might. I can, or probably can, I don't know. *Puedo, o probablemente pueda, no lo sé.*

It is not common to say **may** or **might** at the beginning (*inicio*) of questions about possibilities (*sobre posibilidades*). We say **Will you?** or **Are you going to?**:

Are you going to go to Abe's party on Friday?

¿Vas a ir a la fiesta de Abe el viernes?

I may, but I'm not sure.

Puedo, pero no estoy seguro.

I might, but I'm not sure.

Existe la posibilidad, pero no estoy seguro.

I want to, but I **may** have to work then.

Quiero, pero puedo que tenga que trabajar entonces.

I want to, but I **might** have to work then.

Quiero, pero existe una pequeña posibilidad de que tenga que trabajar entonces.

Will she go to Colorado State University?

¿Se inscribirá en la Universidad Estatal de Colorado?

She **may**, or she **may** go to the University of Florida.

(Ambos son igualmente posibles.)

She **might**, or she **might** go to the University of Florida.

(Ambos son igualmente posibles.)

She **might**, or she **may** go to the University of Florida.

(Lo más probable es que vaya a Florida.)

Are you going to play violin at the party on Friday?

¿Tocarás el violín en la fiesta del viernes?

I **may**, but if my cousins play guitar at the party then I won't.

Puedo, pero si mis primos tocan la guitarra en la fiesta, entonces no lo haré.

I **might**, but I need to practice more.

Existe una pequeña posibilidad, pero necesito practicar más.

Incluya **if**, y **may** o **might**, en su respuesta:

Will you swim this weekend? I may, if it is not too cold.

Will you read (*leer*) this story (*historia*) in English? I might, if I have time.

Will you cook some food this evening? _____

Will your uncle play the drums tomorrow afternoon? _____

Will your husband want this extra large shirt? _____

Will your aunt's grandchildren play soccer next spring? _____

In modern American English, we say the long forms **may not** and **might not**. We don't say the short forms **mayn't** and **mighn't**, but you may see **mayn't** and **mighn't** in old (*viejos*) papers or movies.

I want to come to his party on Wednesday, but I may not have time.

I want to say these words, but I _____ know their pronunciations.

I want to draw a picture of her face now, but _____ have good pencils here.

We need to take a picture of those ten dogs, but they _____ sit down at the same time.

Rose and Abe want to dance at the party this evening, but there _____ be any music (*música*).

Asking for Permission Pedir Permiso

To ask for permission (*pedir permiso*), we say **May I?** or **Can I?**:

May I have this cup of coffee? Very polite (*educado*) and correct.

Can I have this cup of coffee? Polite (*educado*), but a little incorrect.

People frequently (*frecuentamente*) say **Can I?** to ask for permission, but that is not exactly (*exactamente*) correct.

Can I? is a question of ability (*capacidad*):

Can I play the drums? Yes, if you practice again and again, you will know how to play the drums.

Can a snake play the drums? No, a snake has no hands. It cannot play the drums.

May I? is a question of permission:

May I play the drums over there? No you may not play those drums. Those are my uncle Pete's drums. He does not want other people to play his drums. Only Uncle Pete may play those drums.

Para animar a una persona que está haciendo algo difícil, we say **Come on, you can do it!**

I am so tired. I don't know if I can bike up this mountain. _____

I am afraid to ask that nice girl to dance. _____

English has so many words! I will need to practice again and again. _____