

# Modal Verbs of Advice

Hi English learners! Welcome to a new lesson. We will discuss the use of modal verbs of advice.

## What are modal verbs?

Modal verbs are a type of auxiliary verb that express modality, such as ability, permission, prohibition, necessity, deduction, etc. They can be used by themselves, but they are more often used before the main verb to modify it and change its meaning a bit.

- *Sarah can speak three languages. (ability)*
- *Excuse me, may I use your phone? (permission)*
- *You can't park here. It's forbidden. (prohibition)*
- *You mustn't be late for the meeting. (necessity)*
- *You must be a good student because she's got a scholarship. (deduction)*

We will look at the following modal verbs used in context:

- **Should**
- **Ought to**
- **Had better**

## Should

Should is the most commonly used modal verb for giving advice or making recommendations. We use it to tell someone what the right or best thing to do is in a certain situation.

If you think you work too hard and aren't paid enough, maybe you should think of getting a new job.

You shouldn't worry about the dog. It'll be safe in the plane's hold.

If the digestive problems persist, you should consult a doctor.

You should always check the oil in your car before setting off.

Don't you think you should ask for compensation from the insurance agent?

## Ought to

Ought to is a semi-modal verb similar to should. We use it to talk about the things that are right or ideal. Ought to is more formal than should, and we rarely use it in a negative context.

They ought to do something about the bus service in the city in terms of safety and efficiency.

You ought to have apologised if you wanted them to invite you again.

Ruth ought to lose weight and stop smoking if she wants to be healthy.

If you have a fever, you ought to stay in bed by all means.

Every student ought to develop oral and written communication and good time management.

## **Had better**

We use had better to give advice and make recommendations. The short form is 'd better and it is more commonly used than the long form.

You'd better leave now if you don't want to be late for the meeting.

He'd better forget about buying a new car, the prices have gone to heaven.

We'd better ask about the address; we don't want to get lost.

I'd better hurry up or I'll miss the flight.

You'd better see a doctor about that rash; it is getting worse.