

MODAL VERBS

Introduction: Modal verbs can be divided into two basic groups:

- i) Central Modals: *can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must, ought to.*
- ii) Semi-Auxiliaries: *have to, have got to, tend to, need to, to be able to, be allowed to, to be supposed to.*

Central Modals behave as follows:

- + I can / you can / he can / she can / it can... etc.
- I can't / you can't / he can't / she can't / it can't... etc.
- ? Can I ? / Can you ? / Can he ? / Can she ? / Can it ? ... etc.

Semi-Auxiliaries, by contrast, usually act like this:

- + I have to / You have to / He, she, it has to... etc.
- I don't have to / You don't have to / He, she, it doesn't have to... etc.
- ? Do I have to ? / Do you have to ? / Does he / she / it have to ? ... etc.

Or like this:

- + I am allowed to / You are allowed to / He, she, it is allowed to... etc.
- I am not allowed to / You are not allowed to / He, she, it is not allowed to... etc.
- ? Am I allowed to ? / Are you allowed to ? / Is he, she, it allowed to ? etc.

Modal verbs are always followed by the infinitive without 'to'.

Central modal verbs do not have infinitives, past forms, present or past participles or an -s ending in the third person singular. Semi-auxiliaries are sometimes used to supply their past or future forms, as here:

PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
Could	Can	Will be able to
Had to	Must	Will have to
Might	May	
Should		Shall
Would		Will

All modal verbs have at least two meanings. These can be grouped into categories such as *Ability, Permission, Obligation, Possibility, Probability* etc.

1) **Ability:** *can, could, be able to.*

i) We use Can, Could and Be Able To to talk about the ability to do something, e.g.

"Now I *can* play the piano. I *couldn't* when I was nine years old."

"When I was nine years old, I *couldn't* drive. Now I *can*."

"When I leave university, I *will be able to*..."

ii) We also use Can and Could with verbs of perception, e.g. "I *can* hear someone coming", "I *can't* see a thing", "They *could* smell gas", "She *couldn't* taste any sugar."

iii) The difference between 'I could' and 'I was able to' is that 'I could' indicates that you had the ability to do something, e.g. 'I knew that, if necessary, I *could* swim to safety from the sinking ship', although you did not necessarily do it in reality. 'I was able to', by contrast, indicates that you succeeded in doing so, e.g. 'I *was able to* swim to safety.'

Now talk about your present, past and future abilities using modal verbs.

2) **Permission:** *can, may, be allowed to*

i) Can, May and Be Allowed To are used to talk about permission, e.g. "You *aren't allowed to* smoke in here", "We *were allowed to* take photographs", "The prisoner *will be allowed to* see his lawyer for about half an hour".

ii) Can and May are used for asking for and receiving permission: e.g. "Can I come in ?", "May I sit down ?"

Can is more direct, May is more formal, e.g. "May I use your phone ?", "Can I borrow your pen ?", "Yes, you *may*.", "No, you *can't*."

Now complete this sentence using modal verbs: When you are in court, you *can / can't / am (not) allowed to...*

3) **Obligation:** *shall, must, should, ought to, needn't, have to, be supposed to*

Shall	—	it is mandatory
Must	—	it is necessary that you do something.
Mustn't	—	it is necessary that you <u>do not</u> do something.
Have to / Have got to	—	it is necessary that you do something.
Don't have to / Haven't got to	—	it is not necessary but you can if you want to.
Needn't	—	it is not necessary but you can if you want to.
Should	—	it is the correct thing to do.
Ought to	—	it is the correct thing to do.
To be supposed to	—	it is the expected thing.

Permission and Obligation: what *can / can't / must / mustn't / needn't* you do at the following ages ?

6 14 16 18 21 67

4) **Possibility:** *can, could, may, might*

Can = a 100% possibility in the present or the future

e.g. 'Yes, I *can* do that for you immediately.'

Could = a 50% possibility in the present or the future

e.g. 'They *could* be found guilty or not guilty.'

May = a 30% possibility in the present or the future

e.g. 'The crime was serious but the judge *may* be lenient.'

Might = a 10% possibility in the present or the future

e.g. 'If we're very lucky, he *might* get community service.'

5) **Probability:** *must, could, may, might, can't*

It must be true 90% probability

e.g. He *must* be guilty. Three eye-witnesses identified him.

It could be true 50% probability

e.g. The charge *could* be murder or manslaughter.

It may be true 30% probability

e.g. The jury *may* take a different view to the judge.

It might be true 10% probability

e.g. The police *might* drop the charges but it's unlikely at this stage.

It can't be true 0% probability

e.g. My client *can't* be guilty of the crime, he was in Las Vegas at the time.

Now read the sentences below:

a) It will rain this weekend.

b) There is a monster in Loch Ness.

c) About 1,000,000,000 people around the world can speak English.

d) Prince William will be the next king of England.

e) Most English people dream about their monarch at least once in their lives.

f) Most Italian people dream about their Prime Minister at least once in their lives.

None of the above can be proved 100% true or false. The speaker therefore has to estimate the probability of each statement. Now comment upon them using Must, Could, May, Might or Can't, e.g. "It *must* be true", "It *can't* be true", "It *might* be true".

SARGY MANN

Watch the BBC news report: 'Sargy Mann: Painting with inner vision - BBC News'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9vHwClaswM>

Complete the sentences below using *can / can't / could / couldn't / will be able to / won't be able to*

- 1) Sargy Mann see.
- 2) Sargy Mann see again.
- 3) Sargy Mann paint the images he sees in his mind.
- 4) When he was 30, he still see.
- 5) When he was 35, he see anymore.
- 6) When he was 30, he paint landscapes.
- 7) Now, he paint landscapes anymore.
- 8) Now, he still paint portraits of his wife.
- 9) The gallery owner thinks he sell a large Sargy Mann painting for £50,000.
- 10) Sargy Mann thinks he always paint if the subject comes from his own experience.

VOCABULARY

A drawing	Sight	Eyes	Blind	To paint
A painting	Blindness	Cataracts	Edgy	To give up
A canvas	Blu tack	Collectors	Dangerous	
A landscape		Brushes		

be allowed to and have to

Complete this article about learning to drive in Britain. Put in a positive or negative form of *be allowed to* or *have to*.

In Britain you ... drive a car when you're seventeen. You ... get a special two-year driving licence before you can start. When you're learning, someone with a full licence always ... be in the car with you because you ... take the car on the road alone. You ... go to a driving school — a friend can teach you. The person with you ... take money for the lesson unless he's got a teacher's licence.

Before you ... have a full licence, you ... take a driving test. You can take a test in your own car, but it ... be fit for the road. In the test you ... drive round for about half an hour and then answer a few questions. If you don't pass the test, you ... take it again a few weeks later if you want to. In 1970 a woman passed her fortieth test after 212 driving lessons! When you've passed your test, you ... take it again, and you ... go on driving as long as you like, provided you are fit. Britain's oldest driver was a Norfolk man who drove in 1974 at the age of 100.

Before 1904 everyone ... drive, even children. Then from 1904 motorists ... have a licence. But they ... take a test until 1935. In the early days of motoring, before 1878, cars ... go faster than four miles an hour, and someone ... walk in front of the car with a red flag.

must and mustn't

Do you know what these signs mean? Use *You must ...* and *You mustn't ...* with these words: *turn round, go straight on, overtake, put some money in, smoke, stop, take photos, turn left, turn right, go faster than.*

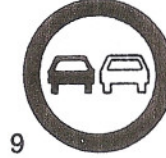
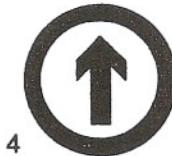
Examples



You must put some money in.



You mustn't turn left.



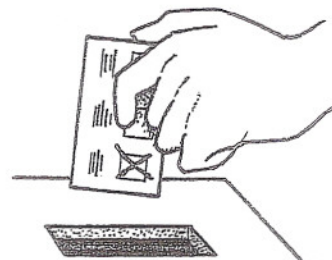
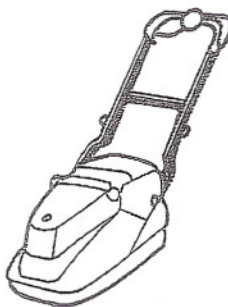
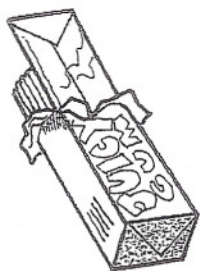
must, needn't and mustn't

Helen isn't very well today. She's in bed. She's been sick, and she's quite hot. The doctor has come to see her. Complete what the doctor says. Put in *must*, *mustn't* or *needn't*.

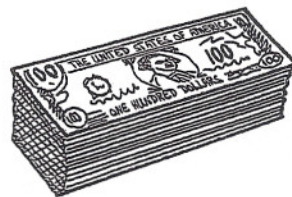
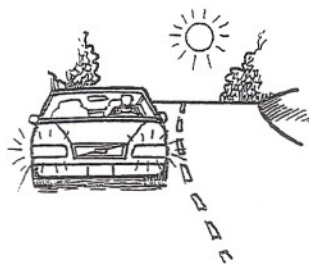
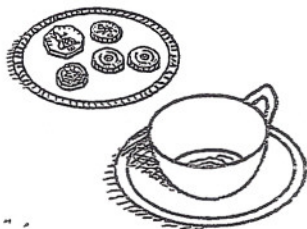
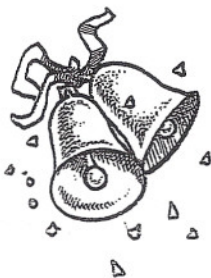
Doctor Well, I'm going to give you some medicine. You ... take it four times a day before meals. And go on taking it even if you feel better. You ... stop taking it until you've finished the bottle. You ... drink all of it. Now, you ... stay in bed today. It's the best place for you at the moment. You can get up tomorrow if you like. You ... stay in bed all the time when you start to feel better. But you ... go outside this week. It's too cold. And you really ... do any work at all. You need absolute rest. You ... just relax for a few days. You can eat a little if you like, but you ... if you don't want to. But don't forget to keep drinking. You ... drink as much water as you can. You'll probably be all right again next week, so you ... call me again unless you feel worse. But I'm sure the worst is over.

Activity

Imagine that your partner has a bad cold. What would you recommend him/her to do?



- 1 You *must/are allowed to/can't* drive a car when you are 16 in the UK.
- 2 Children in Japanese primary schools *have to/don't have to/mustn't* clean their classrooms.
- 3 In Singapore you *can/aren't allowed to/should* eat chewing gum.
- 4 British men over the age of 18 *have to/don't have to/mustn't* do military service.
- 5 In Germany you *are able to/aren't allowed to/are supposed to* mow the lawn on a Sunday.
- 6 You *mustn't/don't have to/should* eat with your left hand in India.
- 7 One hundred years ago, women in the UK *were allowed to/couldn't/ had to* vote.
- 8 You *can't/are allowed to/must* get married at 16 in the UK with your parents' permission.
- 9 You *can/have to/can't* vote in Japan if you're 19.
- 10 Turkish men over the age of 20 *have to/should/don't have to* do military service.
- 11 You *have to/ought to/shouldn't* tip waiters and waitresses in Iceland.
- 12 You *shouldn't/are supposed to/are able to* drive with your lights on during the day in Sweden.
- 13 In the USA you *can/ought to/aren't allowed to* burn your own money.
- 14 Brazilians over the age of 18 *have to/don't have to/ought to* vote.
- 15 In the 19th century, female teachers in the USA *had to/were allowed to/ weren't allowed to* get married.





Match Online Profile

Name Jackie

Location Bristol

Age 31

Height 169 cm

Relationship status Single

Job Restaurant manager

Looking for Friendship and maybe more

Wants children Ask me later!

About me

When I'm not working, I really enjoy going out and meeting people. But I also like staying at home and cooking dinner for my friends. I love tennis and I do judo. I'm fun-loving and I'm generally happy with my life, but I would like to share it with someone special.

My ideal match

He's got an interesting job, but life isn't only about work – he has time to play too. He's between 28 and 38 years old. He enjoys eating good food and having fun. He lives in or near Bristol.

BLIND DATE

Face2Face Pre-Intermediate: Unit 3

Jackie is going on a blind date. Watch what happens.

1) Jackie & Damon

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DrxMHAj_Wc

2) Jackie & Kevin

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Di_kdXJfUk

Make notes about Damon and Kevin. Who do you think Jackie should meet again?

QUICK REVIEW ●●●

Choose a partner, but don't talk to him/her yet. Write four things you think you know about your partner. Work in pairs. Ask questions to check your information is correct: *You studied here last year, didn't you?* Ask follow-up questions: *Where did you study before that?*

Vocabulary Work collocations

1 a) Choose the correct verbs in these phrases. Check in V2.1 p116.

- 1 take/be work home
- 2 be/have time to relax
- 3 get/work long hours
- 4 work/spend overtime
- 5 get/be a workaholic
- 6 meet/take deadlines
- 7 take/be time off work
- 8 have/be under pressure at work
- 9 leave/spend a lot of time at work
- 10 have/be good working conditions

b) Think of three people you know who have jobs. Choose two phrases from 1a) for each person.

c) Work in pairs. Tell your partner about the people you chose. Which person works the hardest?

Listening and Grammar

2 a) Look at the photo and the cartoon. What is the book about and what is happening in the cartoon, do you think?

b) R2.1 Listen to the beginning of a radio programme. Two journalists, Kim and Rob, are discussing *In Praise of Slow* by Carl Honoré. Check your answers to 2a).

3 a) Work in pairs. Try to fill in the gaps in sentences 1–6 with these countries. Use one country twice.

the USA France Japan Germany the UK

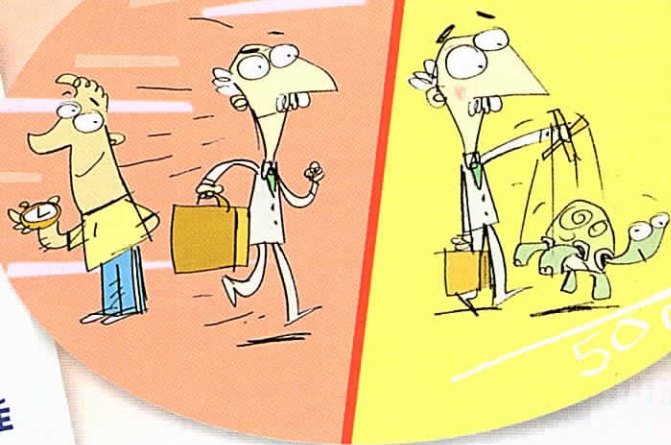
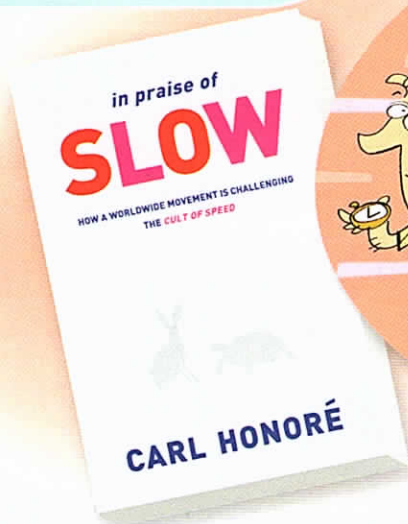
- 1 Some companies in give their employees three days off at the weekend.
- 2 People in spend 15% less time at work now than they did in 1980.
- 3 In 20% of people work more than 60 hours a week.
- 4 60% of people in said they didn't take all their paid holiday.
- 5 In 20% of people don't take time off when they're ill.
- 6 In they have a word that means 'death from working too hard'.

b) R2.2 Listen to the second part of the radio programme. Check your answers to 3a).

Vocabulary work collocations

Grammar modal verbs (1); *be able to*, *be allowed to*, *be supposed to*

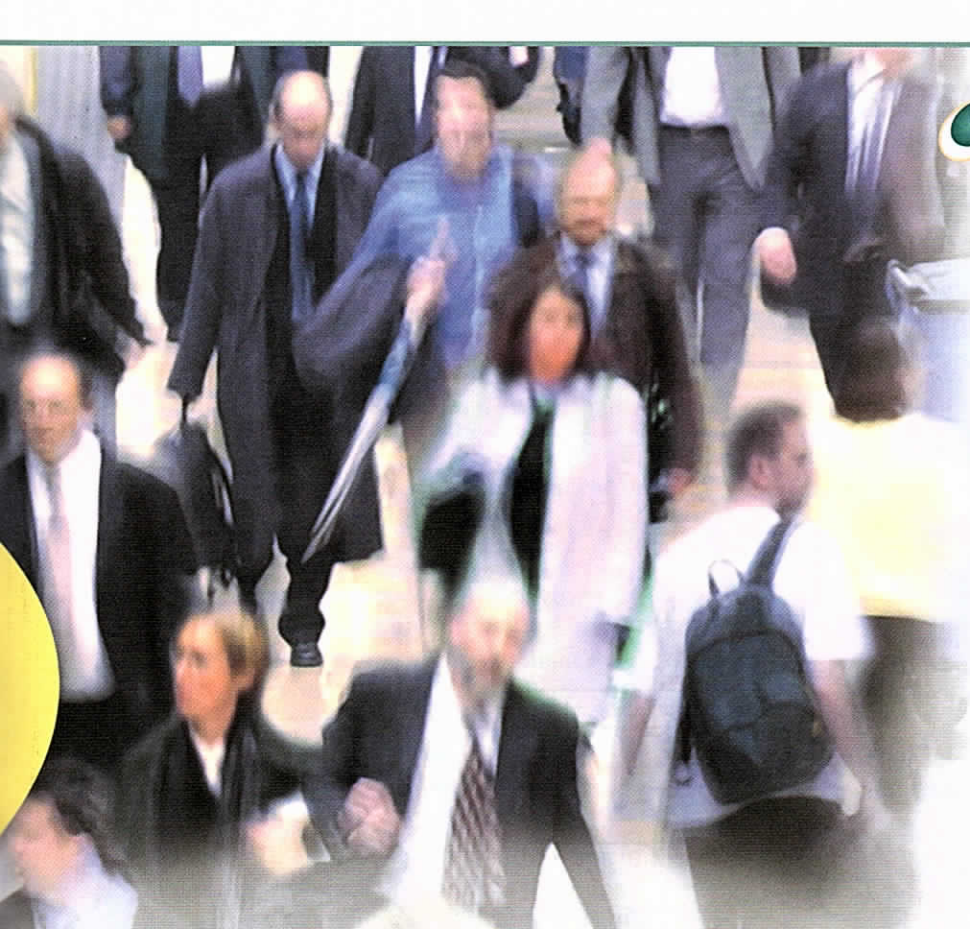
Review question tags



4 a) R2.2 Listen to the second part of the radio programme again. Fill in the gaps with one or two words.

- 1 Rob says he **must** take more time off work.
- 2 Honoré thinks people **should** only work hours a week.
- 3 Some French employees **are allowed to** begin their weekend at on Thursday.
- 4 Honoré says we **ought to** spend more time relaxing with
- 5 People **can** get their best when they're doing nothing.
- 6 In some American companies, employees **can** whenever they want.
- 7 In the UK people **are supposed to** have a break every
- 8 Kim says that lots of people **have to** take
- 9 Rob says that we're **able to** continue working when we're

b) Do you agree with Carl Honoré's ideas? Why?/Why not?



Help with Grammar Modal verbs (1); *be able to*, *be allowed to*, *be supposed to*

5 a) Look at the sentences in 4a). Then complete the rules with the verb forms in **bold**. Use the infinitive form if necessary.

- We use *be supposed to* to say a person is expected to do something.
- We use *can* and to talk about ability or possibility.
- We use *must* and to say something is necessary.
- We use and to give advice.
- We use and to say we have permission to do something.

b) Look again at the verb forms in **bold** in 4a). Answer these questions.

- 1 Do we use the infinitive or *verb+ing* after these verb forms?
- 2 Which verb forms include *to*?
- 3 How do we make these verb forms negative?
- 4 How do we make questions with these verb forms?

c) Look at these sentences. Then complete the rules with *mustn't* or *don't have to*.

*You **mustn't** send personal emails from the office. You can only send work emails.*

*You **don't have to** wear a suit to work, but you can if you want to.*

- We use to say something isn't necessary.
- We use to say something is not allowed.

d) Check in G2.1 p117.

6 a) Kim and Rob are talking after the radio programme. Read their conversation and choose the correct verb forms. Who has the best working conditions?

KIM So, do you think you ¹***should***/are allowed to relax more?

ROB Absolutely! I ²*am able to/must* try to slow down a bit.

KIM ³*Are you able to/Should you* start work when you want?

ROB ⁴*I'm supposed to/I can* be in the office at eight. What about you?

KIM I ⁵*don't have to/mustn't* be at work until ten.

ROB Lucky you. ⁶*Are you allowed to/Should you* work at home?

KIM Yes, we ⁷*ought to/can* work at home two days a week.

ROB Oh, we ⁸*have to/are able to* be in the office every day.

KIM Perhaps you ⁹*ought to/are supposed to* look for another job.

ROB Yes, maybe. Anyway, I ¹⁰*have to/can* go. I ¹¹*mustn't/don't have to* be late for my next meeting. Bye!

b) R2.3 Listen and check.

c) R2.4 P Listen and practise the sentences in 6a).

Do you /dʒə/ think you should relax more?

Get ready ... Get it right!

7 Work in groups. You run a company with good working conditions. Make notes on the important things about your company. Use these ideas.

- the name of the company
- what your company does
- the number of employees
- working hours and overtime
- what employees can wear
- breaks and holidays
- any other interesting information

8 a) Work with students from different groups. Take turns to describe your companies. Ask questions to find out more information. Which is the best company to work for? Why?

b) Tell the class which company you think is the best to work for. Which is the most popular company in the class?

FORMAL LETTERS:
1) PRESENTATION

OMG Legal Services
85 Chichester Road
Harwich CO12 5JU
Tel./Fax: +(44) 1255 269438
E-mail.: OMG@iweb.com

← Letterhead of the
sender's organization

Barry Trotter
Trotter Towers
Uppingham
Berkshire BF FU2

← NAME & ADDRESS OF THE RECIPIENT

14 February 2022 ← DATE

Dear Mr Trotter ← SALUTATION

Letter of Advice ← THE SUBJECT OF THE LETTER

The following is my professional opinion as to your neighbour's right to fly a drone near your home.

According to your letter of 10 February 2022, your neighbour, Mr Snape, has recently bought a radio-controlled drone which you have observed flying over and around your garden. The drone is equipped with a video-camera which Mr Snape has already used to acquire footage of local sporting events and which he has then published on social media. Your wife and daughters, whose bedrooms overlook the garden, are naturally concerned that Mr Snape might use this drone to invade their privacy. Moreover, you, as the householder, are worried that the security of Trotter Towers could be compromised if the layout of your property and details of its security features became public. You have remonstrated with Mr Snape and he has assured you that such a small drone cannot be a threat or a nuisance to anyone.

↑
↙ THE MESSAGE ↘

Naturally, you must be worried and your concerns are indeed valid, so allow me to put your mind at rest. In English law, a radio-controlled drone is classified as an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle and, as such, "shall abide by the same regulations as any other aircraft". Drones weighing between 250g and 20kg have to be registered and all remote pilots should be competent when flying, so they need to pass an online competency test. In addition, they are supposed to understand enough about the relevant laws to operate a drone safely and legally as a hobbyist. If Mr Snape is also using the drone for professional purposes, he ought to have a Permission for Commercial Operation (PfCO), the legal document you need to operate a drone commercially in UK airspace. However, regardless of its size and purpose, Mr Snape is not allowed to fly a drone equipped with cameras within 165 feet of persons, vehicles or buildings not owned by the pilot or within 500 feet of a congested area or a large group of people. This means that, legally, the drone cannot approach your house and garden and Mr Snape must not continue to film sporting events with it. The fact that he is apparently unaware of this may indicate that he has not got the certificates and/or permit any owner should have and may be required to produce on demand.

I would therefore advise you to, (i) point out to Mr Snape that his conduct is illegal; (ii) ascertain, if you can, whether Mr Snape has registered the drone and passed the necessary online competency test, since failure to do so is also an offence; (iii) check if he has a Permission for Commercial Operation (PfCO), although he needn't have one if the drone is not used for commercial purposes. If reasonable persuasion fails, you may contact me again and I can draft a Cease and Desist letter to stop any further misconduct on Mr Snape's part.

I am available at the above address and telephone number and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Gregory Grinch

← CONVENTIONAL ENDING

← SIGNATURE OF THE SENDER

Gregory Grinch (Solicitor) ← NAME AND JOB TITLE OF THE SENDER

2) In the world of work, if you want your message to be taken seriously, you have to present it professionally. Letters of advice are formal and may be used as evidence in a court of law, so it is important to use the correct format. Now look at the various modal verbs in the main body of the letter. Notice their meanings and how they are used.

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Yours sincerely

Gregory Grinch (Solicitor)

3) Modal Verbs Gap-Fill Exercise: complete the letter below with appropriate modal verbs in the past, present or future (there is often more than one possible answer).

OMG Legal Services
85 Chichester Road
Harwich CO12 5JU
Tel./Fax: +(44) 1255 269438
E-mail.: OMG@iweb.com

Anastasia Steele
17 Greek Street
Bedford
Bedfordshire BD S0B

1 March 2022

Dear Ms Steele

Letter of Opinion Regarding a Case of Harassment in the Workplace

Further to your letter of 14 February concerning an accusation of harassment, I am writing to provide you with legal advice with regard to your employer and the co-worker involved.

I understand that since you started work at the IT company, VIP Autodata, your supervisor, Christian Grey, (i) has been verbally abusive to you on a number of occasions in front of your colleagues; (ii) set you unrealistic deadlines which you (1) not meet; (iii) has relentlessly criticised the quality of your work; (iv) told you that you (2) attend training courses with the rest of your team. This caused you such alarm and distress that you felt that you (3) make an official complaint to your employer via the Human Resources department. Mr Grey was duly reprimanded but the harassment has continued albeit in a subtle and more devious manner.

For you to take legal action against Mr Grey and/or VIP Autodata, you (4) prove that Mr Grey's actions amounted to harassment in law. This means that an Employment Tribunal (5) be satisfied that what occurred was more than a simple clash of personalities and that your supervisor's behaviour was not merely "unattractive and unreasonable" but (6) be construed as "oppressive and unacceptable" or (7) even be deemed "intimidating or tormenting". At this point, you (8) claim that the "alarm and distress" you (9) have suffered was at the level required for criminal liability. The fact that your employers disciplined Mr Grey, as they (10), is not in itself evidence that his conduct was harassment in law. On the other hand, VIP Autodata, too, (11) be vicariously liable for Mr Grey's behaviour if you (12) prove that he committed an act of harassment against you in the course of his employment. As for damages, they (13) be demanded of the person responsible for the harassment, in this case Mr Grey, or they (14) be made against that person's employer if you (15) prove that Mr Grey (16) act as he did because he (17) by VIP Autodata.

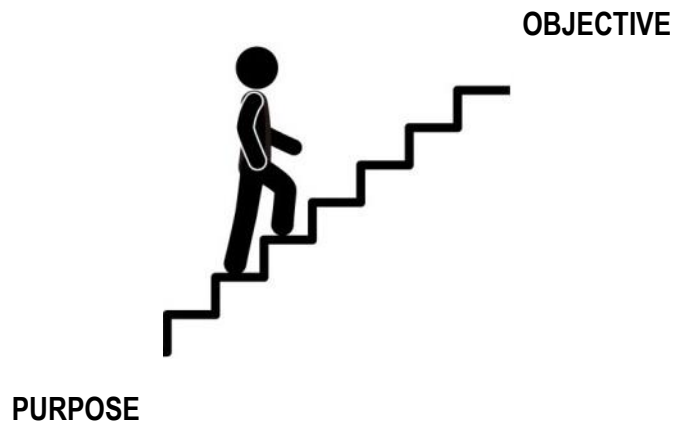
If you decide to pursue a claim for damages, you (18) decide the precise allegations you wish to make against him in the context of your working environment, you (19) gather together as much evidence as you (20) and present it to me. At that point, I (21)..... advise you fully on the merits of your case.

I hope this answers your question but please do not hesitate to contact me with any further queries you (22)..... have at this stage.

Yours sincerely

John Masters (Solicitor)

4) LETTERS OF OPINION / LETTERS OF ADVICE: The Conventional Order of Steps (Harper 2006)



Step 1: SALUTATION:

If you know the name of the recipient: *Dear Mr Smith* (for a man) / *Dear Ms Jones* (for a woman)

If you do not know the name of the recipient: *Dear Sir* (for a man) / *Dear Madam* (for a woman)

If you do not know the name or the sex of the recipient: *Dear Sir or Madam*

For a company: *Dear Sirs*

Step 2: TITLE: The subject of the letter (printed on a line). For example,

Reply to e-mail / phone-call / fax / letter (date)...

Letter of Opinion

Letter of Advice

Re: _____ (This means 'with reference to...' / 'this is about...')

Step 3: INTRODUCTION: Explain the purpose of the letter.

This letter of advice constitutes my professional opinion as to...

I am writing to provide you with legal advice regarding...

Step 4: EXPOSITION: Explain the situation. Summarize the legal problem the client enquired about.

According to / Further to... your letter / our conversation / your email I understand that... It seems that...

However... In addition... Moreover... Furthermore... You are concerned about... You fear that...

Step 5: ADVICE: Advise the client as to what he/she should do.

I would therefore advise you (not) to... In my considered opinion, you should/shouldn't... You might consider...

You should be aware that... Please bear in mind that... If... then... You may decide to...

Step 6: INVITATION TO FURTHER COMMUNICATION: Invite the recipient to contact you.

If you wish to take this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

In the meantime, I am available at the above address and telephone number.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Step 7: CONVENTIONAL ENDING:

Yours sincerely if you know the name and if you started the letter with *Dear Mr / Ms...*

Yours faithfully if you do not know the name and if you started the letter with *Dear Sir / Madam*

Step 8: IDENTIFICATION: Signature, then full name and job title, printed clearly.

NB. **Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8** are always necessary. **Step 6** is optional if, for example, you are simply providing the recipient with information and do not expect a reply.

5) WRITING:

(i) Look at the definition of 'Conversion' shown below

Conversion

When someone takes your property for themselves or acts like something you own belongs to them. The outcome of this action, changing the value, attributes, or usability of the "converted" goods.

The Basics of Conversion

Conversion is a legal expression that describes a Civil Tort (when someone does something wrong, but Criminal Law is not broken) where one person "converts" another person's property for themselves. Basically... stealing. Other ways to think about it? When someone pretends to own something that belongs to someone else. Or, when someone does something to property that changes its value that they don't have the right to do because it isn't theirs to change.

Standard Remedies for Conversion in a Civil Case

The standard remedy for Conversion is a judgment for damages in an amount equal to the fair market value of the property. Punitive damages are also possible, because Conversion is an Intentional Tort. The standard remedy is an order that the property be returned.



(ii) You are Olive Ogmores of OMG Legal Services. Your client, Letty Ortiz, has written to you, saying that she lent her Ford Mustang GT, worth 50,000 euros, to her boyfriend, Dom Toretto, last July. However, the couple have since separated and, now, Dom Toretto is refusing to give Letty Ortiz her car back. Write Letty Ortiz a letter of advice, telling what she can do, legally, to rectify the situation.

5) WRITING:

(i) Look at the definition of 'Conversion' shown below

Conversion

When someone takes your property for themselves or acts like something you own belongs to them. The outcome of this action, changing the value, attributes, or usability of the "converted" goods.

The Basics of Conversion

Conversion is a legal expression that describes a Civil Tort (when someone does something wrong, but Criminal Law is not broken) where one person "converts" another person's property for themselves. Basically... stealing. Other ways to think about it? When someone pretends to own something that belongs to someone else. Or, when someone does something to property that changes its value that they don't have the right to do because it isn't theirs to change.

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The standard remedy for Conversion is a judgment for damages in an amount equal to the fair market value of the property. Punitive damages are also possible, because Conversion is an Intentional Tort. The standard remedy is an order that the property be returned.

(ii) You are Olive Ogmore of OMG Legal Services. Your client, Letty Ortiz, has written to you, saying that she lent her BMW M3 E30 GRA, worth 89,000 euros, to her boyfriend, Dom Toretto, last July. However, the couple have since separated and, now, Dom Toretto is refusing to give Letty Ortiz her car back. Write Letty Ortiz a letter of advice, telling what she can do, legally, to rectify the situation.