

Literacy Moments: Improving your English!



Take a look at this sentence...

I would of done it but I was busy.

What is the error here?

Why do you think people make this error?

Challenge: Can you explain the error using **technical vocabulary**?

Take a look at this sentence...

I would of done it but I was busy.

If you didn't get it before, does the colour help you recognise the error?

Now are you able to explain it?

Take a look at this sentence...

*I **would of done** it but I was busy.*

When we say this sentence aloud **correctly**, it sounds exactly like the sentence above. It's important that we are able to write it properly!

When spoken aloud, **would of** and its fellows **should of** and **could of** sound exactly like **would've**, **could've** and **should've**. But even if no one can tell the difference when you're speaking, the mistake becomes obvious as soon as you write it down.

Would of / Would have...

When people write *would of*, *should of*, *could of*, *will of* or *might of*, they are usually confusing the verb *have* with the **preposition of**.

So *would of* is *would have*, *could of* is *could have*, *should of* is *should have*, *will of* is *will have*, and *might of* is *might have*.

Task (two minutes):

Are these sentences right or wrong? If wrong, what should they be?

1. I would of come earlier, but I got stuck at work.
2. He would have stayed if he'd known you were coming.
3. You should of called yesterday.
4. You should have finished your homework by now.

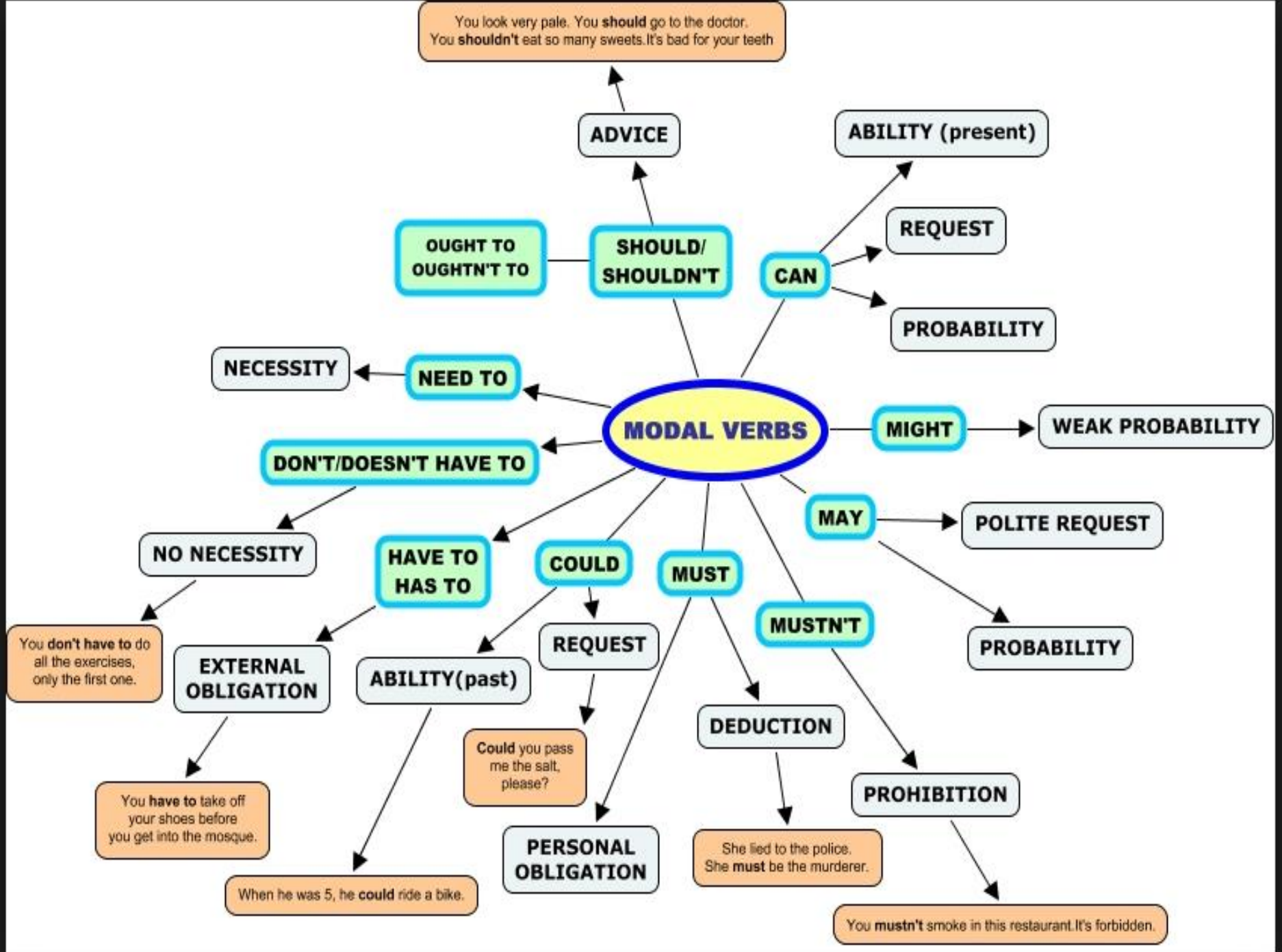
Modal verbs...

This whole section has been on the idea of correct use of **modal verbs**.

Modal verbs indicate **necessity** (things that **have to happen**) or **possibility** (things that **may happen**).

Task (three minutes):

Can you think of a list of modal verbs?



MODAL	EXAMPLES	USES
CAN	He can find any street in London. You can take a taxi. Can you take me to Victoria Station?	<i>Ability</i> <i>Suggestion</i> <i>Request</i>
BE ABLE TO	He is able to find any street in London.	<i>Ability</i>
CAN'T	That story can't be true.	<i>Certainty that something is impossible</i>
COULD	I could play tennis when I was younger. Could you take me to Victoria Station? You could take a taxi.	<i>Ability</i> <i>Request</i> <i>Suggestion</i>
MAY	It may be quicker to travel by train. May I come in?	<i>Possibility</i> <i>Formal request/Permission</i>
MIGHT	It might be quicker to travel by train.	<i>Possibility</i>
MUST	You must be back at 10 o'clock. Look at the snow. It must be cold outside.	<i>Obligation</i> <i>Certainty that something is true.</i>
HAVE TO	You have to be back at 10 o'clock.	<i>Obligation</i>
NEED TO	You need to study a lot.	<i>Obligation.</i>
NEEDN'T	You needn't have a university degree.	<i>Lack of obligation.</i>
MUSN'T	You mustn't drive without a license.	<i>Prohibition</i>
DON'T HAVE TO	You don't have to call a taxi.	<i>Lack of obligation</i>
SHOULD	You should drive more carefully.	<i>Opinion/Advice</i>
OUGHT TO	You ought to drive more carefully.	<i>Opinion/Advice</i>

Could, would, should

There's no such phrase as 'could of', 'would of' or 'should of'.

It's 'could have', 'would have' or 'should have'...



Key Words from Today's Session...

Grammar: The whole system and structure of language

Predicate: The part of the sentence that tells us what the subject does.

Verb: An action, or 'doing' word. E.g. He *ran*, she *looks*.

Modal verb: An auxiliary verb which expresses necessity or possibility.

Auxiliary verb: a verb used in forming the tenses, moods, and voices of other verbs. The primary auxiliary verbs in English are *be*, *do*, and *have*