

What are Modal Verbs?

Worksheet

Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs that modify or color the meaning of another verb — 'pouvoir' means ability, 'devoir' means obligation, 'vouloir' means desire, and 'savoir' means knowing how to do something.

Questions

1. Which modal expresses ability or permission?

- A) Devoir
- B) Pouvoir
- C) Vouloir
- D) Savoir

2. Conjugate 'devoir' (present): Elle... partir demain.

- A) Elle devons partir
- B) Elle dois partir
- C) Elle doit partir
- D) Elle dû partir

3. What does 'savoir' express?

- A) Permission
- B) Obligation
- C) Knowledge or skill
- D) Desire

4. Choose the correct form: Nous ____ aller à la plage.

- A) Nous pouvons aller
- B) Nous peux aller
- C) Nous peuvent aller
- D) Nous pouvez aller

5. Conjugate 'pouvoir' (present) and use with 'parler': Je... français.

6. Use 'devoir' (present) to express obligation: Il... finir ses devoirs.

7. Form 'vouloir' (passé composé) with 'partir': Elle... partir à 8h.

8. Define: What is a modal verb?

9. Define: Name the four main French modal verbs.

10. Define: What does 'devoir' express?

Answer Key

1. B) Pouvoir — 'Pouvoir' means 'can' — expressing ability and permission.
2. C) Elle doit partir — Third person singular: elle doit. (She must leave tomorrow.)
3. C) Knowledge or skill — 'Savoir' = knowing how to; 'Je sais nager' (I know how to swim).
4. A) Nous pouvons aller — First person plural: nous pouvons. (We can go to the beach.)
5. Pouvoir present: je peux, tu peux, il/elle peut, nous pouvons, vous pouvez, ils/elles peuvent.
Sentence: Je peux parler français. (I can speak French.)
6. Devoir present: je dois, tu dois, il/elle doit, nous devons, vous devez, ils/elles doivent. Sentence:
Il doit finir ses devoirs. (He must finish his homework.)
7. Vouloir passé composé: j'ai voulu, tu as voulu, il/elle a voulu, etc. Sentence: Elle a voulu partir à 8h. (She wanted to leave at 8.)
8. A verb that modifies the meaning of an infinitive — expressing ability, obligation, desire, or knowledge.
9. Pouvoir (can), devoir (must), vouloir (want), savoir (know how to).
10. Obligation, necessity, probability, and duty.

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