

## Lesson 18 Modal verbs and possibility

**Focus** using modal verbs to show different degrees of possibility

**Key terms** auxiliary verb, **modal verb**, adverb

**Focus text** Today will be a good day. I shall stay in bed until 10 o'clock. Then I can have boiled eggs for breakfast. This afternoon I could go swimming. Then I might watch a film this evening.

### TEACH

Show the focus text and read it aloud. Discuss the plans for the day.

Ask the pupils which of the activities sound certain or most likely to happen [e.g. I shall stay in bed] and which sound like possibilities or options – things the speaker *could* do [e.g. I could go swimming]. Discuss which words show that these things are a possibility [e.g. could go; might watch].

Work with the pupils to underline the verbs in the focus text [e.g. will be; shall stay]. Explain that the verbs are made up of a main verb and an auxiliary or 'helper' verb. Circle the auxiliary verbs [will, shall, can, could, might]. Explain that these are called modal verbs. Modal verbs modify or change the meaning of the main verbs to show different levels of possibility. We use them when expressing possibilities or future happenings to show levels of certainty or how likely something is.

Discuss how the modal verbs affect the meaning of the sentences in the focus text – for example, which of the modal verbs show certainty about the event [will, shall, can] and which show possibility [could, might]. Invite the pupils to swap the modal verbs in these sentences and discuss how this changes the meaning [e.g. Today might be a good day. I will go swimming.]. Explain that modal verbs are useful in speech and writing because they allow us to show these shades of meaning.

Explain that adverbs can be used alongside modal verbs to strengthen the effect [e.g. Clearly, today will be a good day.]. Invite the pupils to add adverbs to the other sentences [e.g. I shall obviously stay in bed ...; Then I might possibly watch a film ...].

**EXTEND** Discuss the use of modal verbs in conditional sentences [e.g. If it's warm, I could go for a picnic.]. [Note: Conditional sentences are covered in Lesson 30.]

### PRACTISE

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### APPLY

- The pupils write about an important issue [e.g. conservation], using modal verbs to refer to possibilities or make predictions about the future [e.g. It could be ...; There might be a time when ...].
- When presenting an argument or point of view, the pupils use modal verbs to show certainty [e.g. We must stop bullying in our school. We can ... We will ...].
- The pupils write about book characters or famous people, using modal verbs to speculate about how their lives could have been different or might continue [e.g. She might have been ...; She could still ...].
- The pupils write horoscopes, using modal verbs to show possibilities [e.g. You will ...; You might ...].
- When they are editing writing, encourage the pupils to look for opportunities to use modal verbs.

### ASSESS

**Dictation:** We are going to hold a cake sale. Mr Green says we can hold it in the hall. Miss Wilson might help us with the cakes. It could be next week. We will make lots of money.

**Say:** Circle the modal verbs. Underline the sentences where the modal verbs show possibility.