

Quick reference to Modal X-words

Modal + BASE

Time frame				
THEN		Now		
would could	should have d-t-n might have d-t-n	will can may	shall must	
Making predictions				
UNCERTAIN		CERTAIN		
could	might	may	should	will
Making inferences				
UNCERTAIN		CERTAIN		
could	might	may	must	
Imagined or real?				
IMAGINED SITUATIONS		REAL EXPECTATIONS		
would	should	will/shall	should	
could	might	can	may/might	
Giving Permission, obligation				
MOST FREE		LEAST FREE		
<i>Permission</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>		<i>Obligation</i>	
can may	could might should		must have to have got to had better	
Requests				
POLITE		DIRECT		
could	would	can	will	imperative
Asking permission				
POLITE		DIRECT		
might (British)	could	may	can	