

What is a Modal Verb?

One of a small group of verbs that

"tweak" the meaning of the main verb.

In English the main modal verbs are will/would, can/could, shall/should, may/might. They give additional information about the main verb. Note the differences among the following sentences.

- I give to charity.
- I will give to charity. (future/intention)
- I can give to charity. (ability)
- I should give to charity. (duty)
- I might give to charity. (possibility)
- I ought to give to charity. (obligation)



In Danish the most common modal verbs are: *vil, kan, skal, må*

In general, they mean:

vil "want"

Jeg vil snakke med dig.

I want to talk with you.

skal "will"

Han skal ringe til mig i morgen.

He will call (to) me tomorrow.

kan "can"

Vi kan ikke rejse til København.

We can not travel to Copenhagen.

må "may"

Må jeg få en kop kaffe?

May I have a cup [of] coffee?

skal is normally pronounced "ska"

Note that there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between the Danish and English meaning/use of given modals in certain situations



Example: English "might"; Danish "can":

English: "Some rain might fall."

Danish: "Der kan komme nogen regn" (literally: "There can come some rain")

Modals in Danish always require infinitive verbs!

Hun svømmer på torsdag.
She swims on Thursday.

Present Tense:
Infinitive + "r"

Hun skal svømme på torsdag.
She will swim on Thursday.

Modals:
Use Modal + Infinitive

See next page for a little info on "infinitives"

What is a "Verb"?

The "action" of a sentence.

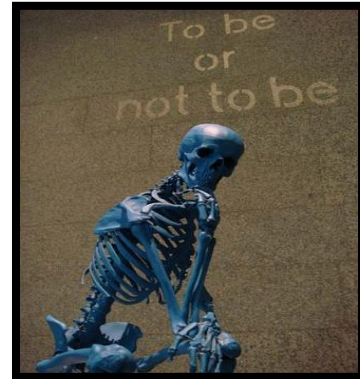
a physical activity

(to sing, to play,
to operate, to love)



a condition

(to be, to have, to seem)



a mental activity

(to think, to calculate,
to analyze, to suppose)



Verbs

are powerful! With a single verb, you can create a sentence (a complete thought). Without a verb, you can not create a full sentence. For example, a short sentence such as *stop it!* can be reduced to *stop!* but can not be reduced to *it!*



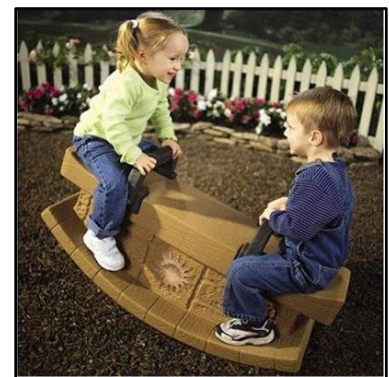
There are a couple of ways to describe verbs.

Here are some important *subcategories*:

Infinitive: the "dictionary form" of the word. It carries no tense, like "present" or "past" tense.



***intransitive** verbs stand alone. They do not need an *object*



* **transitive** verbs can not work alone. They require an *object*

VERB	OBJECT
Intransitive: I stand.	-----
I sleep.	-----
Transitive: I expect	co-operation.
I enjoy	my kids.
I built	the teeter-totter.