

Modal Helping Verbs Worksheet

Can, should, have to - and the early request verbs want and need - asking, refusing and saying what must happen.

MASTERED BY

Can and want are early, usually in the 2-to-3-year band, and ASHA has children

ITEMS

26

Name: _____

Date: _____

Modals are helpers that say something about how an action stands: whether it is possible, required or advisable. Want and need are ordinary verbs rather than modals, but they do the same early job - asking for something and turning it down - so they sit on this page too. This page deliberately sticks to the handful children actually need - can, can't, want, need, should, have to. They map onto the things a child most needs to do with language: ask for something, turn something down, and say that something must or should happen.

What to expect: Can't and don't often show up before can and do, because refusing is more urgent than describing. "Want" is frequently an early request form all by itself ("want juice"), with the rest of the sentence filled in later. Should and have to come later because they involve reasoning about obligation, not just desire.

Can and Cannot

Fill in the blank with can or cannot.

1. Birds have wings, so they ____ fly.
2. Fish live in water, so they ____ walk on land.
3. I am too short, so I ____ reach the shelf.
4. My sister is five, so she ____ ride a bike.
5. The baby has no teeth, so she ____ eat an apple.
6. I practiced a lot, so I ____ tie my shoes.
7. The door is locked, so we ____ get in.

Want and Need

Use want for something you would like, and need for something you must have. Fill in the blank.

8. I am thirsty. I ____ a drink.

9. The cake looks good. I ____ a piece.
10. My shoe is untied. I ____ help.
11. I ____ to play outside, but it is raining.
12. It is cold out. You ____ a coat.
13. I ____ the red crayon, not the blue one.
14. The plant is dry. It ____ water.

Should and Have To

Use should for a good idea, and have to for something there is no choice about. Fill in the blank.

15. It is bedtime, so I ____ go to sleep.
16. You are being loud. You ____ use a quieter voice.
17. The light is red, so we ____ stop.
18. Your hands are dirty. You ____ wash them.
19. School starts at eight, so I ____ get up early.
20. He took your turn. You ____ tell him how you feel.

Ask for It

Say a whole sentence asking for each thing. Use can, want or need.

21. You are thirsty.
22. The jar will not open.
23. You would like a turn on the swing.
24. You cannot reach your coat.
25. You do not want any more peas.
26. The TV is too loud.

Answer Key

Can and Cannot

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. can | 5. cannot |
| 2. cannot | 6. can |
| 3. cannot | 7. cannot |
| 4. can | |

Want and Need

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 8. need | 12. need |
| 9. want | 13. want |
| 10. need | 14. needs |
| 11. want | |

Should and Have To

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 15. have to | 18. should |
| 16. should | 19. have to |
| 17. have to | 20. should |

Ask for It

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 21. Can I have a drink? | 24. I need help getting my coat. |
| 22. Can you help me open it? | 25. I do not want any more, thank you. |
| 23. I want a turn, please. | 26. Can you turn it down? |