

Modality is concerned with degrees of possibility, probability, or certainty. Modality is expressed through auxiliary verbs or modifiers such as may be, should go, and certainly.

Modal verbs are a set of verbs such as can, may, might, will, which are used to express different degrees of certainty.

A list of common Modal Verbs:

High Modality	Medium Modality	Low Modality
Must	Will	May
Mustn't	Won't	Might
Ought to	Should	Mightn't
Shall	Shouldn't	Could
Shan't	Can	Couldn't
Has to	Can't	Would
Have to	Need to	Wouldn't

Experimenting with modal verbs and modal adverbs (intensifiers)

Modality type	'Everyday language'	More precise language with modal adverbs (intensifiers)
low modality	might feel bad	might possibly experience discomfort or embarrassment or might possibly have an impact on student confidence
medium modality	will feel bad	will probably experience discomfort and embarrassment or would probably have a significant impact on student confidence
high modality	will absolutely feel bad	will definitely experience discomfort and embarrassment or would certainly have a significant impact on student confidence

Students can write the sentences they are celebrating on a shared digital space. The teacher can then lead a discussion of the characteristics of the celebratory sentences. This can provide opportunities for the class to see and understand what makes successful writing in the particular genre being studied, such as the examples detailed below that explore the use of modality in persuasive texts.

Discussion of the example sentences could include discussion points such as the following:

- Modal verbs of different strength such as might, will, must can modulate the writer's stance or position.
- Modal adverbs or intensifiers of different strength such as possibly, probably, certainly can also modulate the writer's stance or position.
- More precise language choice such as 'experience' instead of 'feel', 'discomfort' or 'embarrassment' instead of 'bad' suggest a stronger sense of negative attitudes or feelings.
- Including a noun group such as 'a significant impact on student confidence' is more 'written like' or academic language and provides a sense of the author's authority or expertise on the topic.