

TEACHING MODAL VERBS TO ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, many students who are first-time English learners can face some problems when they start to learn English as a second language. The main problem why these students come across difficulties is not very simple to solve, especially, once students try to learn modal verbs. Modal verbs are not too much difficult, however, the confusion among students in the learning process may bring about some disorders even they might stop learning because of the challenge they are getting. In this case, instructors should mainly focus on the meaning of the modal verbs in students' native language in much more simple way as the modal verbs are an essential part of English grammar. They help students express various ideas such as ability, possibility, permission, and obligation. Teaching modal verbs to elementary level students can be an exciting and engaging experience. Interestingly, in the realm of elementary education, fostering creativity and practical understanding through hands-on activities is crucial.

INTRODUCTION

Modal verbs are essential in elementary education for several reasons. Modal verbs play a crucial role in everyday communication. They allow speakers to convey different shades of meaning and nuance in their sentences. For young learners, mastering modal verbs can significantly improve their expressive capabilities and comprehension. By understanding modals, students can better articulate their thoughts, make polite requests, offer suggestions, and understand the subtleties of language. Modal verbs, such as can, could, will, would, may, might, shall, should, must, and ought to, are essential components of the English language. They are used to express abilities, possibilities, permissions, and obligations. Teaching these verbs to elementary level students can be challenging yet rewarding. A structured approach can make this process engaging and effective.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs play a crucial role in everyday communication as they are used almost each sentence of the native speakers. They actually allow speakers to convey different shades of the meaning in the context and nuance in the sentences. For elementary level, the students need to have a specific way of learning and utilizing them in their daily conversations since they can significantly impact their expressive

meaning, comprehension and capabilities. By understanding modals, students can better articulate their thoughts, make polite requests, offer suggestions, and understand the subtleties of language.

MODAL VERBS

- **Expressing Ability:** Modal verbs like “can” and “could” are used to express what someone is capable of doing. For example, “She can swim” indicates an general ability.

- **Indicating Possibility:** Modals such as “might” and “may” are used to discuss possibilities. For example, “It might rain today” expresses that there is a possibility of rain.

- **Giving Permission:** Words like “may” and “can” are used to grant or request permission. For instance, “May I leave early?” is a polite way to ask for permission.

- **Making Requests and Offers:** Modal verbs like “would” and “could” help in making polite requests and offers. For example, “Could you pass the salt?” or “Would you like some tea?”

- **Expressing Obligation and Necessity:** “Must” and “should” are used to express obligations and necessities. For example, “You must wear a seatbelt” indicates a requirement, while “You should see a doctor” suggests a recommendation.

- **Forming Hypothetical Situations:** Modal verbs are crucial in discussing hypothetical or unreal situations, particularly with “would,” “could,” and “might.” For example, “If I were you, I would study harder.”

- **Conveying Politeness and Softening Statements:** Using modal verbs can make statements and requests sound more polite and less direct. For example, “Could you help me?” is softer than “Help me.”

- **Expressing Future Intentions and Predictions:** “Will” and “shall” are used for future intentions and predictions. For example, “I will go to the store tomorrow” expresses a future action.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH MODAL VERBS IN CLASSROOM

- **Contextual Learning:** Introduce modal verbs within the context of sentences and real-life situations. Contextual learning helps students grasp the practical use of modals. For example, using sentences like “Can I go to the bathroom?” or “You must finish your homework.”

- **Visual Aids and Stories:** Using visual aids, such as pictures and storybooks, to illustrate the use of modal verbs. Creating stories where characters ask for permission, make offers, or express abilities can help students see modals in action.

•Interactive Activities: Engaging students with interactive activities such as role-playing, games, and group exercises. Role-playing scenarios where students ask and answer questions using modal verbs can be particularly effective.

•Worksheets and Exercises: Providing worksheets with fill-in-the-blank sentences, matching exercises, and sentence construction tasks. These activities can reinforce the usage of modal verbs in various contexts.

•Songs and Rhymes: Incorporating songs and rhymes that include modal verbs. Music and rhythm can aid memorization and make learning fun.

•Explicit Teaching: Explaining the rules and functions of different modal verbs explicitly. Use simple, clear language and provide plenty of examples. For instance, explain that “can” is used to express ability. For example; “I can swim”, while “must” indicates obligation, for instance; “You must wear your seatbelt”.

PRACTICAL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR MODAL VERBS

Modal Verb Charades: To have students act out different scenarios using modal verbs while others guess the verb and the situation. For example, acting out “You should brush your teeth” or “May I have some water?”

Question and Answer Sessions: Conducting Q&A sessions where students practice asking and answering questions using modal verbs. This can be done in pairs or small groups.

Modal Verb Bingo: Creating bingo cards with sentences or pictures that correspond to different modal verbs. As you call out the verbs, students mark the matching squares on their cards.

Story Creation: In groups, having students create short stories or dialogues that incorporate a variety of modal verbs. They can then present their stories to the class.

Daily Practice: Integrating modal verbs into daily classroom routines. For example, start the day with questions like “Can you tell me what day it is?” or “Should we start with math or reading today?”

CONCLUSION

Teaching modal verbs to elementary level students is a vital part of their language development. By using a combination of contextual learning, interactive activities, and explicit instruction, educators can effectively introduce these verbs and enhance students’ communication skills. With patience and creativity, modal verbs can become a fun and integral part of the elementary English curriculum and this has a crucial step for building their future English prospects.

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