

Chapter 4

Amber knew she didn't really have a choice at all. There was an outside chance that she might be able to make the smallest of the three objects disappear. She convinced herself that using her limited knowledge of spells she might just be able to make the pencil vanish – if only briefly!

Miss Finch, as was her custom, started with the pupils at the front of the class, which gave Amber the chance to watch and listen to what the other girls were saying and doing. The more confident children made the chair disappear. Some made the book vanish, but most children (Amber was pleased to note) opted for the pencil. Larger objects required a good deal of power and most of the girls in the class were not yet twelve; there would be time to learn the more powerful magic at a later date. So far, all the girls had been successful, though it took one or two of them a second attempt. After each vanishing act Miss Finch had to make the object reappear – the girls hadn't learnt to do that yet!

The girls in the front of Amber's bench were now about to test their magic powers. "I can do this," Amber kept repeating in her head. "I must do it," she thought miserably. Then she remembered Mr Broom's advice: positive mental attitude. "I will do it," she thought more positively. "I can make that pencil disappear. I know I can!"

"Dripping! Amber Dripping!" It was Miss Finch calling for Amber to come to the front of the class. Amber had been so caught up in her thoughts that she hadn't noticed that all the girls on her bench had completed the task and everyone was now waiting for her. She reached down to take her mother's wand out of her basket. Grimsby was asleep, blissfully unaware of the torment his mistress was going through. With butterflies in her stomach she walked nervously to the front of the class. The girls looked on with barely concealed smirks; they knew what Amber was capable of!

"What's it to be, Dripping?" Miss Finch asked.

"The pencil please, miss," Amber replied.

"Very well." Miss Finch held the chosen object aloft. It was a normal sized pencil. She could do this! Amber pointed her wand at the pencil and recited the spell: "I summon the powers of the celestial sphere, to make this pencil disappear!" A small puff of smoke appeared above the pencil, but the pencil refused to vanish. For a moment it appeared to vibrate. Then it seemed to lose its rigidity and it limply wobbled over. Amber had turned the pencil to jelly!





Name: _____



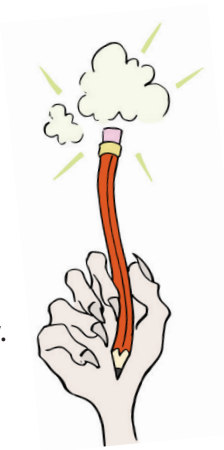
I can use modal verbs to indicate degrees of possibility.

A modal verb is a bit like an auxiliary verb – it helps the main verb. Words like *could*, *would* and *should* are all modal verbs. They show you how likely an action is. They change the meaning of other verbs in the sentence.

The main modal verbs are **will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must** and **ought**.

Underline the modal verb in each sentence.

- 1 Amber thought she might be able to make the pencil vanish.
- 2 If she made it disappear she would be able to stay at Spellcaster Academy.
- 3 "I must do it!" she said to herself.
- 4 The pencil just wobbled like jelly and she feared she might have to leave the academy.
- 5 She realised that she should have done her homework.
- 6 Now she may never have another chance to graduate as a witch ever again.



Modal verbs show the degree of possibility. (Some modal verbs are interchangeable.)

7 Tick which sentences sound the most likely.

- Amber will have to leave the academy.
- Amber may have to leave the academy.
- Amber shall have to leave the academy.
- Amber might have to leave the academy.

Choose the correct form of the modal verb in brackets to complete these sentences:

- 8 Amber now have to go to Miss Canning's office. (*can / would*)
- 9 Amber knew she have practised at home. (*should / will*)

Extension Write some sentences of your own about what Amber *should* have done.





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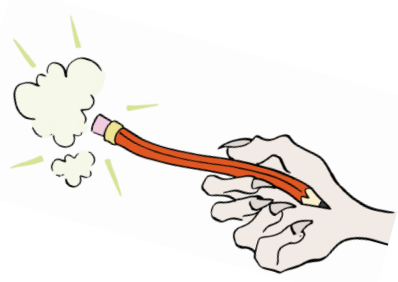
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These sentences have the modal verb missing. Write the modal verbs in the order they are most likely to happen, starting with the most likely first.

- 7 Amber have to leave the academy.
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- 9 Amber leave the academy.
- 10 Amber leave the academy.



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