

Methodological clues

Clues: Please do not forget to write down the instructions for the participants in your mother tongue before copying.

Objectives:

Introduction of the grammatical resemblance of the English language in relation to modal verbs, to avoid interferences, point out the differences, as well. Attention! The use of modal verbs is not identical in English and German.

Exercise 1: Compare sentences with and without modal verbs in both languages. Translate them into their mother tongue.

In Exercise 1, the passages on which to focus are already marked.

At first, the participants should only read the English sentences and explore the difference between the first and the last three sentences.

The difference is: first until third sentence: Modal verb + Verb
fourth until sixth sentence: Verb + 'to' + Verb

The same difference can be noticed in the German sentences.

Advanced groups may also notice the following difference between English and German: in German, the verb is always at the end of the sentence, not so in English. When the participants do not notice this, the abovementioned conclusions are enough.

Exercise 2: Compare your mother tongue with English and German.

In order to find answers to the questions, the participants can present some examples in their mother tongue which could be used as basis of discussion. Think about which questions are of further relevance to discuss resemblances and differences. Even (simple) examples in all languages are helpful to illustrate the discussion. English examples can be suggested by the learners.

The results should provide basic knowledge on modal verbs which can be improved.

Exercise 3: Where is the modal verb located? Where is the verb? Write down the sentences of nr. 3, also nr. 1 and 2.

If not already noticed in Exercise 1, that is to say, discussed in Exercise 2, the difference between German and English is to be defined in this exercise. The syntax becomes obvious through the dislocation of words and parts of a sentence. Discuss the illustration in class. Afterwards, the participants write down the sentences of Example 3 among each other like this:

Solution:

I must write this letter in Spanish.

Ich muss diesen Brief auf Spanisch schreiben.

Exercise 4: Formulate the rules of the syntax with modal verbs in German.

The participants formulate a simple rule in their mother tongue.

The participants already know the rule that the verb always takes the second place in a German main clause. Thus, they should be able to recognize the modal verb taking second place and the verb in infinitive being now at the end of the sentence.

Exercise 5: Write down the words in the right order.