

Legal obligation /official	MUST	Police officer: 'You must wear a seatbelt.'
Reporting a rule	BE SUPPOSED TO	We are not supposed to speak Spanish in class.
Personal necessity / obligation	HAVE TO / HAVE GOT TO	I have to call my mom tonight.
Possibility	CAN	I can meet with you on Friday.
Ability	CAN / BE ABLE TO	I can play the piano. I'm able to speak Spanish.
Permission	CAN / BE ALLOWED TO	I can have a dog in my apartment.
Past ability	COULD / WAS ABLE TO	When I was a child, I could run for hours.
Past permission	WAS ALLOWED / PERMITTED TO	I wasn't allowed to stay up after 10pm.
Advice	SHOULD	You should call your mother on her birthday.
Warning	HAD BETTER	You had better study before the test [or you'll fail].
A choice / not required	DON'T HAVE TO	I don't have to wear a suit to work.
Logical conclusion	MUST	The teacher's absent. She must be sick.
Certainty about the future	WILL	I will call you tonight.
Possibility / uncertainty about the future *adverb: MAYBE	MAY / MIGHT	It might rain this evening. / It may rain this evening. Maybe it will rain this evening.
Polite request	WOULD / COULD / CAN / WILL	Could you open the door, please?
Permission	MAY / CAN / COULD	May I borrow your book?
To express what you want	WOULD LIKE	I'd like to take Grammar 4 next semester.
Preference	WOULD RATHER	I'd rather have coffee than tea.

