

MODAL VERBS IN FRENCH

When to use them:

- when you would normally say “I can...” or “I have to...” or “I want to...” in English

To conjugate a modal verb, we must learn these verbs by heart (haha! See what I did there?! I just used a modal verb!...)

Here are the verbs;

ENGLISH Subject pronoun	French Subject pronoun	VOULOIR to want to	POUVOIR to be able to (‘can’)	DEVOIR to have to / must
I	je	veux	peux	dois
you (sgl.)	tu	veux	peux	dois
he / she / we	il / elle / on	veut	peut	doit
we	nous	voulons	pouvons	devons
you (pl.)	vous	voulez	pouvez	devez
they (m.) / (f.)	ils / elles	veulent	peuvent	doivent

There are other modal verbs but SAVOIR (to know a fact or how to do something – NOT to know a person) is in the top ten most used verbs, so worth memorizing like the above!

ENGLISH Subject pronoun	French Subject pronoun	SAVOIR to know (a fact)
I	je	sais
you (sgl.)	tu	sais
he / she / we	il / elle / on	sait
we	nous	savons
you (pl.)	vous	savez
they (m.) / (f.)	ils / elles	savent

All the modal verbs above can be followed by an INFINITIVE (i.e. a verb that ends in -er, -ir or -re).

par exemple:

Je **veux** **aller** à Paris = I want to go to Paris

Vous **pouvez** **manger**! = You can/are able to eat!

Ils **doivent** **faire** les devoirs = They have to/must do their homework

On **sait** **nager** = We know (how) to swim