




Modal verbs are a very useful set of verbs in the English language. We use these to indicate how likely something is to happen or how certain we are about a situation. We've highlighted all the modal verbs on this this postcard about bees. Look at the postcard then read the definitions which follow.



Bee populations are in decline. We **should** do something to help or some species **will** become extinct. There **could** be many factors involved. It **may** be due to the loss of bees' natural habitats or it **might** be linked to climate change. Scientists have shown that use of pesticides by farmers and gardeners **must** be one of the major causes.

What **shall** we do to save our bees? The good news is there are lots of things we **can** do. We **ought** to plant lots of native wildflowers to provide pollen and nectar for bees. Other things that **would** help are making bee ponds and bee hotels, and leaving grass to grow long.

Definitions

could (past tense of can) | **was able to**
he could speak English when he was younger

may (present tense) | **used to express:**

1. **possibility**
it may rain today
2. **permission**
yes, you may pick some beans from my vegetable patch
3. **wish or hope**
may the sun shine all day long



Bees Could would should of bees



might (past tense of may) | used to express:

1. **possibility**
they said it might rain last night
2. **permission**
we told him he might go to visit Morocco next year
3. **wish or hope**
you might find this book about Spanish gardens interesting

must (present tense) | used to express:

1. **a necessity or obligation**
I must water my plants or they will die
2. **a strong opinion**
there must be something we can do to help the bees

ought (present and past tense) | used to express:

1. **duty, correctness or advisability**
you ought to wear gloves when you're gardening
2. **probability**
she ought to have finished work by now but she has so much watering to do

shall (present and future tense) | used to express:

1. **the future tense: used as an alternative to 'will' when the subject is I or we**
I shall mow the lawn tomorrow
2. **an intention or a promise**
I shall visit Hever Castle one day
3. **a command**
you shall listen to your English teacher
4. **a suggestion or question**
shall I fetch my gloves and lend you a hand?

should (present and past tense) | used to express:

1. **obligation or duty**
we should be careful because this blackberry has sharp thorns
2. **something expected or likely to happen**
it should stop raining in a couple of hours
3. **a possible event**
I'll be in the orchard should anyone need me
4. **used with I and we to express a polite statement**
I should be grateful for your opinion on how to grow pineapples

will (future and present tense) | used to express:

1. **the future tense, especially as a promise or a strong intention**
we will trim the hedge today
2. **an inevitable event**
the sun will set soon



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3. a request

will you help me pick these pears?

4. ability or capacity

this apple tree will grow to 4 metres tall

5. habitual behaviour

he will be in the garden for hours

6. probability or expectation

I'm sure you will be a great gardener

would (past and present tense) | used to express:

1. the past tense of will, in various uses

they said they would trim the hedges last week

2. the consequence of a possible situation

all the plants would have died if the drought had lasted much longer

3. desire or inclination

we would love to visit Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens

4. a polite request

would you pass me the honey please?

5. opinion or hope

I would like to grow my own vegetables

Now let's look at the reverse of the bee postcard. Circle all the modal verbs you can find in the statements.

Bees must take nectar and pollen from flowers to make food.

Honeybees are the only insects in the world that can make honey.

We may soon have no apples if there are no bees to pollinate them.

We would have less food to eat if there were no bees.

We could do more to help the bees.

We should plant more nectar-rich plants in our gardens.

One way to help the bees might be to make a bee hotel.

I will put some water in the garden for the bees today.

We ought to leave an area of long grass in the garden for the bees.

I shall look after the native wildflowers where I live.



Bees Could would should of bees ANSWERS



Bees **must** take nectar and pollen from flowers to make food.
Honeybees are the only insects in the world that **can** make honey.
We **may** soon have no apples if there are no bees to pollinate them.
We **would** have less food to eat if there were no bees.
We **could** do more to help the bees?
We **should** plant more nectar-rich plants in our gardens.
One way to help the bees **might** be to make a bee hotel.
I **will** put some water in the garden for the bees today.
We **ought** to leave an area of long grass in the garden for the bees.
I **shall** look after the native wildflowers where I live.