



7

Words of wisdom

Modal auxiliary verbs • Rhyme and reason • Breaking the rules of English

STARTER



- 1 Work with a partner. Which of these people have you heard of? Why are they famous?
- 2 What do their quotations mean? Which do you agree with? Do you have any favourites?

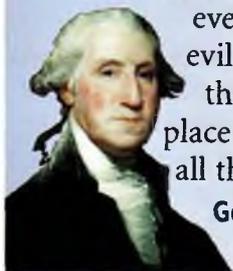
1 ‘A journey of one thousand miles begins with a single step.’

Confucius 551–479 BC



4 ‘The very atmosphere of firearms anywhere and everywhere restrains evil interference – they deserve a place of honor with all that is good.’

George Washington
1732–1799



8 ‘Love is like quicksilver in the hand. Leave the fingers open and it stays. Clutch and it darts away.’

Dorothy Parker 1893–1967



2 ‘Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship.’

Buddha 563–483 BC

5 ‘One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other.’

Jane Austen
1775–1817



6 ‘When I was fourteen years old, I was amazed at how unintelligent my father was. By the time I turned twenty-one, I was astounded by how much he had learned in the last seven years.’

Mark Twain 1835–1910



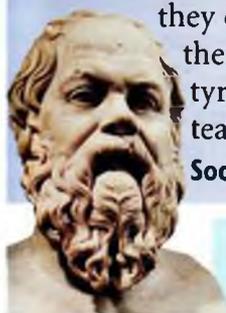
9 ‘The old law about ‘an eye for an eye’ leaves everybody blind.’

Martin Luther King 1929–1968

3 ‘Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders; they contradict

their parents and tyrannize their teachers.’

Socrates 469–399 BC



7 ‘I do not know with what weapons World War 3 will be fought, but World War 4 will be fought with sticks and stones.’

Albert Einstein 1879–1955

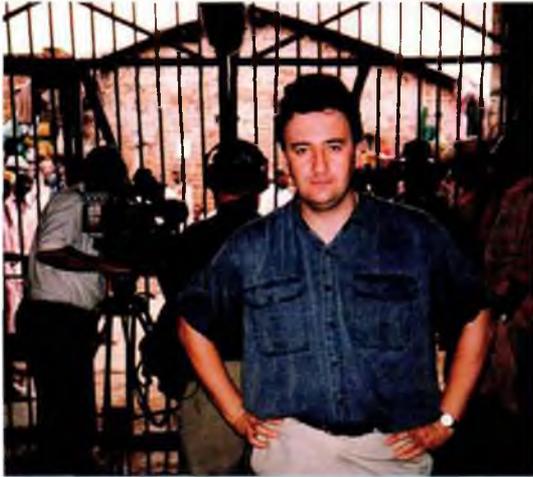
10 ‘Life is full of misery, loneliness and suffering – and it’s over much too soon.’

Woody Allen b.1935

- 3 Which quotations do you find relevant to today’s world or your own life? In what ways? Discuss with your partner, then the class.

READING AND LISTENING

Letter to a newborn son



Fergal Keane is a BBC foreign correspondent. He recorded this letter to his newborn son for a programme called *From Our Own Correspondent* while he was working in Hong Kong. Following the broadcast, hundreds of people jammed the BBC switchboard in tears because they were so moved by his words.

- 1 Read these lines from the letter and answer the questions below.
- You are asleep cradled in my left arm and I am learning the art of one-handed typing.
 - One man said you were the first baby to be born in the block in the year of the Pig.
 - Your coming has turned me upside down and inside out.
 - Like many foreign correspondents I know, I have lived a life that, on occasion, has veered close to the edge: war zones, natural disasters, darkness in all its shapes and forms.
 - And it's also true that I am pained, perhaps haunted is a better word, by the memory, suddenly so vivid now, of each suffering child I have come across on my journeys.
 - But there is something more, a story from long ago that I will tell you face to face, father and son, when you are older. It's a very personal story . . .
- 1 What do the lines tell you about Fergal's feelings on the birth of his son?
- 2 What is *the year of the Pig*?
- 3 What do you learn of his job as a foreign correspondent?
- 4 What do you think the *personal story* from long ago might be?

- 2 **T 7.1** Read and listen to the first part of the letter. Answer the questions.
- 1 What has Fergal learned about the practicalities of looking after a newborn baby?
 - 2 What do you understand by *the new grammar* of their daily lives?
 - 3 Why are the Chinese people in their apartment block so pleased?
 - 4 Is fatherhood as he expected it would be?

Letter to a newborn son

PART ONE

My dear son,

It is six o'clock in the morning on the island of Hong Kong. You are asleep cradled in my left arm and I am learning the art of one-handed typing. Your mother, more tired yet more happy than I've ever known her, is sound asleep in the room next door and there is a soft quiet in our apartment. Since you've arrived, days have melted into night and back again and we are learning a new grammar, a long sentence whose punctuation marks are feeding and winding and nappy changing and these occasional moments of quiet.

When you're older we'll tell you that you were born in Britain's last Asian colony in the lunar year of the Pig and that when we brought you home, the staff of our apartment block gathered to wish you well. 'It's a boy, so lucky, so lucky. We Chinese love boys,' they told us. One man said you were the first baby to be born in the block in the year of the Pig. This, he told us, was good Feng Shui, in other words a positive sign for the building and everyone who lived there. Naturally your mother and I were only too happy to believe that. We had wanted you and waited for you, imagined you and dreamed about you and now that you are here no dream can do justice to you.



- 3 **T 7.2** Listen only to part two. Are these statements true or false? Correct the false ones.
- 1 His Chinese friends say that his son has to be given a Chinese name.
 - 2 He might call him *Son of the Eastern Star* after the beautiful sunrise.
 - 3 He used to be very ambitious in his work.
 - 4 These children he mentions were all hurt in floods.
 - Andi Mikail from Eritrea
 - Domingo and Juste from southern Angola
 - Sharja from Afghanistan
 - Three young children from Rwanda

4 **T 7.3** Read and listen to part three. Answer the questions.

1 Who are these people? How are they connected to the places?

a young woman	–	a snowbound big city
a taxi driver	–	a shop doorway
an alcoholic man	–	a one-roomed flat
a baby boy	–	the Adventist Hospital

- 2 What indications are there that Fergal's parents loved him and each other?
- 3 Describe his father. What is Fergal's attitude to him and his problems?
- 4 What regrets does he have about his father?

PART THREE

Daniel, these memories explain some of the fierce protectiveness I feel for you, the tenderness and the occasional moments of blind terror when I imagine anything happening to you. But there is something more, a story from long ago that I will tell you face to face, father and son, when you are older. It's a very personal story but it's part of the picture. It has to do with the long lines of blood and family, about our lives and how we can get lost in them and, if we're lucky, find our way out again into the sunlight.

It begins thirty-five years ago in a big city on a January morning with snow on the ground and a woman walking to the hospital to have her first baby. She is in her early twenties and the city is still strange to her, bigger and noisier than the easy streets and gentle hills of her distant home. She's walking because there is no money and everything of value has been pawned to pay for the alcohol to which her husband has become addicted. On the way, a taxi driver notices her sitting, exhausted and cold, in the doorway of a shop and he takes her to hospital for free. Later that day, she gives birth to a baby boy and, just as you are to me, he is the best thing she has ever seen. Her husband comes that night and weeps with joy when he sees his son. He is truly happy. Hungover, broke, but in his own way happy, for they were both young and in love with each other and their son.

But, Daniel, time had some bad surprises in store for them. The cancer of alcoholism ate away at the man and he lost his family. This was not something he meant to do or wanted to do, it just was. When you are older, my son, you will learn about how complicated life becomes, how we can lose our way and how people get hurt inside and out. By the time his son had grown up, the man lived away from his family, on his own in a one-roomed flat, living and dying for the bottle. He died on the fifth of January, one day before the anniversary of his son's birth, all those years before in that snowbound city. But his son was too far away to hear his last words, his final breath, and all the things they might have wished to say to one another were left unspoken.

Yet now, Daniel, I must tell you that when you let out your first powerful cry in the delivery room of the Adventist Hospital and I became a father, I thought of your grandfather and, foolish though it may seem, hoped that in some way he could hear, across the infinity between the living and the dead, your proud statement of arrival. For if he could hear, he would recognize the distinct voice of family, the sound of hope and new beginnings that you and all your innocence and freshness have brought to the world.

5 **T 7.1-3** Listen again to the whole letter. Summarize each part in one or two lines.

Vocabulary work

6 Work with a partner. Who or what do the pronouns in *italics>* refer to? What is the meaning of the words underlined? Use a dictionary if necessary.

- 1 *He* was winded, fed and cradled.
- 2 *He* gambled with death, veering close to the edge of danger.
- 3 *He* cried out when the wind blew dust onto *his* wounds.
- 4 *He* was dying from malnutrition.
- 5 *It* was ransacked and in ruins.
- 6 *They* huddled and clung together.
- 7 *She* pawned her possessions to pay for *his* addiction.
- 8 *He* was hungover and broke.
- 9 The cancer of alcoholism ate away at *their* lives.

What do you think?

- What does Fergal Keane mean when he says:
'So much that seemed essential to me has, in the past few days, taken on a different colour.'
- How will his relationship with his son differ from the one with his own father?
- What lessons about life does Fergal Keane want his son to learn from this letter?
- Which parts of the letter do you think particularly moved the listeners to the BBC?
- What lessons have you learned from your upbringing that you would like to pass on to your children?

The logo consists of the letters 'D', 'P', and 'K' in a stylized, blocky font. Each letter is contained within a square frame. The 'D' is white on a blue background, the 'P' is blue on a white background, and the 'K' is white on a blue background.

Daniel Patrick Keane

was born on
Thursday, February 4th
in Hong Kong

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Modal auxiliary verbs

Modal verbs in the present and future

- 1 All modal verbs can be used to express varying degrees of likelihood or probability. Match a sentence on the left with an explanation on the right.

It	will	be difficult.	I'm not sure but it's possible. (x3) All evidence points to this. I predict this strongly.
	must		
	could		I have a lot of evidence that it is. I have a lot of evidence that it isn't.
	may		
	might		There are times when it is difficult. If everything goes according to plan.
	can		
	can't		
	shouldn't		

- 2 Certain modals can also be used to express *obligation* (mild and strong), *permission*, *ability*, *willingness*, and *habit*.

You should see a doctor. (mild obligation/advice)

You may go in now. (permission)

She will bite her nails. (habit)

Give some more examples.

▶▶ Grammar Reference p153

- 1 Which sentences express a degree of probability?

- 1 He always looks so stressed. He *must* have a very demanding job.
- 2 You *must* come with us next time. You'd love it.
- 3 I *can't* hear you – the line's bad.
- 4 They *can't* be coming. They'd have been here by now.
- 5 She *might* change her mind if we keep on at her.
- 6 You *could* be right.
- 7 You *can* borrow the car. I don't need it.
- 8 We *may* stay over at Claire's if the party finishes late.
- 9 No, you *may* not go out on a school night just before your exams.
- 10 You *should* have no trouble passing. You're good at exams.
- 11 You *should* be studying three hours a night.
- 12 *Will* you give me a hand with this?
- 13 It's half past ten. She'll be at the airport by now.
- 14 It's so annoying. He *won't* admit when he's in the wrong.
- 15 He *can* read and he's only three.
- 16 Learning English *can* be difficult.

What are the uses in the other sentences?

Modal verbs in the past

- 1 Modals expressing probability all form their past in the same way.

Verb + Perfect Infinitive		
She	will	have arrived.
It	must	
They	may	

Give some more examples.

- 2 Modals expressing other meanings can have different forms in the past.

We must stop to get petrol.
(present obligation)

We had to stop to get petrol.
(past obligation)

- 3 What are the meanings of the modals in these sentences?

She could/was able to read at three.

He wouldn't admit that he was wrong.

You should have seen the doctor.

He would always argue the point.

I needn't have brought my umbrella.

▶▶ Grammar Reference p153



*'I've got the bowl, the bone, the big yard,
I know I should be happy.'*

2 Put the modal in the first sentence into the past to complete the second sentence.

1 It must be raining. Everyone's putting up their umbrellas.

It **must have been raining**. The ground is still wet.

2 I must stop smoking.

I _____ smoking because I became breathless just walking upstairs.

3 He should stop smoking before it's too late.

He _____ before it was too late.

4 We can go to Bob's party on Saturday.

We _____ to Bob's party last Saturday.

5 There's the phone. It'll be Paul.

Did he have a deep voice? It _____ Paul.

6 You needn't give me a lift, but if you're going my way that's great.

She _____ me a lift, but she did.

7 You needn't give me a lift because I've got my car with me.

She _____ me a lift, so she didn't.

8 My niece can't read very well because she's dyslexic.

My niece _____ until she was twelve.

9 Let's take a map. We'll get lost if we don't.

I'm glad we took the map. We _____ if we hadn't.

10 What's wrong with him? He'll just sit for hours staring into space.

Something was wrong. He _____ staring into space.

3 Look at these pairs of sentences and discuss possible differences in meaning with a partner.

1 He must be on his way.
I must be on my way.

2 I must stop smoking.
I have to stop smoking.

3 They must share a flat together.
We must share a flat together.

4 You don't have to buy her chocolates.
You mustn't buy her chocolates.

5 The exam will have started.
The exam will be starting.

6 He can't be married.
We can't be married.

4 Extend each sentence in exercise 3 to illustrate its meaning.

He must be on his way **because he said he was leaving at ten o'clock.**

I must be on my way. **I'm meeting John in half an hour.**

SPEAKING

Dilemma!

1 Work in groups. In this game you have to predict how one of your classmates would behave in a certain situation. Your teacher will give each group cards like this.

SITUATION

You are a taxi driver.

You find a bag in your cab with €20,000 in it.
The name of the owner is on the bag,
but not the address.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



2 Choose a card. Then choose someone in the room and discuss with your group how you think he or she would react in that situation. Write down their prediction.

3 When it is your turn, read out the situation card to the person you chose. Ask him or her how he/she would react. If your prediction is right, your group scores a point. If it is wrong, challenge them and explain why you are right. The whole class votes to make a final decision.

4 The secret is to match a person and a situation, and then it is a question of how well you know your classmates. Be prepared for some surprises!

LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Words of wisdom

1 **T 7.4** Listen to some people talking about advice they have been given in their lives. Take notes after each person to complete the chart.



Name	Words of wisdom	Given by whom?
1 Elaine		
2 Lizzie		
3 Justin		
4 Claire		
5 Henry		
6 Simon		
7 Fiona		
8 Chris		
9 Sue		
10 Martyn		

- 2 Work with a partner and use your notes to talk to each other about the people in the chart.
Which pieces of advice do you find most interesting or relevant to you?
- 3 Have you ever been given any particularly memorable words of wisdom that have helped you in your life? Tell the class.

VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION

Rhyme and reason

- 1 Work with a partner. Read the poem on p69 and discuss which is the best word to complete the lines. Use a dictionary if necessary. Compare your version with others in the class. Justify your choice of words.
- 2 **T 7.5** Listen and compare with the actual poem. Whose was closest to the original?
- 3 Listen again and mark the stresses in the first two verses. Read the poem aloud to each other, concentrating on the rhythm.
- 4 **T 7.6** Read and listen to one of the poems some school children wrote, modelled on Lewis Carroll's verses.

You are old, Uncle John

'You are old, Uncle John,' the young girl did say,

'Yet you spend six hours a day at the gym,

And you jog down the road before break of day

Pray, why keep yourself so very trim?'

'In my youth,' Uncle John replied to his niece

'I was hugely enormously fat,

But now that I've met a young lady from Greece

Motivation has got rid of that!'



- 5 Work with your partner to write some similar verses. Read them to the class.

You are old, Father William

BY LEWIS CARROLL

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said,
'And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your _____.
Do you think, at your age, it is _____?'

head/hands/bed
smart/right/bright

'In my youth,' Father William replied to his son,
'I feared it might _____ the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have _____,
Why, I do it again and again.'

injure/hurt/destroy
none/one/gone

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I _____ before,
And have grown most _____ fat,
Yet you turned a back somersault in at the door,
Pray what is the reason of that?'

stated/mentioned/suggested
hugely/uncommonly/unnaturally

'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his grey _____,
'I kept all my limbs very _____
By the use of this ointment – one shilling the box –
Allow me to sell you a couple?'

curls/beard/locks
supple/fit/nimble

'You are old,' said the youth, 'and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than _____;
Yet you finished the goose, with the _____ and the beak
Pray, how did you manage to do it?'

cake/suet/jelly
body/feathers/bones

'In my youth,' said his father, 'I took to the law,
And argued each _____ with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my _____,
Has lasted the rest of my life.'

case/day/night
tongue/jaw/chin

'You are old,' said the youth, 'one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as _____ as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose –
What made you so _____ clever?'

steady/true/focused

'I have answered three questions, and that is enough,'
Said his father. 'Don't give yourself _____!
Do you think I can listen all day to such _____?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!'

really/awfully/very

airs/manners/away
rubbish/stuff/nonsense



THE LAST WORD

Breaking the rules of English

- 1 Look at two quotations on the subject of English grammar rules. What point is being made by both writers?

‘Ending a sentence with a preposition is something up with which I will not put.’

WINSTON CHURCHILL

‘There is a busybody on your staff who devotes a lot of his time to chasing split infinitives. Every good literary craftsman splits his infinitives when the sense demands it. I call for the immediate dismissal of this pedant. It is of no consequence whether he decides to go quickly or quickly to go or to quickly go. The important thing is that he should go at once.’

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW in a letter to *The Times* newspaper

- 2 There are many ‘rules’ in English which linguistic pedants insist should be taught to children. Work with a partner. Read these tips and say how the ‘rule’ in each one is broken. Correct them according to the rule where possible.

20 TIPS FOR PROPER ENGLISH

- 1 A preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with. Never do it.
- 2 Remember to never split an infinitive.
- 3 Don't use no double negatives.
- 4 Don't ever use contractions.
- 5 And never start a sentence with a conjunction.
- 6 Write i before e except after c. I'm relieved to receive this anciently weird rule.
- 7 Foreign words and phrases are not 'chic'.
- 8 The passive voice is to be avoided wherever possible.
- 9 Who needs rhetorical questions?
- 10 Reserve the apostrophe for it's proper use and omit it when its not necessary.
- 11 Use fewer with number and less with quantity. Less and less people do.
- 12 Proof read carefully to see if you any words out.
- 13 Me and John are careful to use subject pronouns correctly.
- 14 Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
- 15 You've done good to use adverbs correctly.
- 16 If any word is incorrect at the end of a sentence, an auxiliary verb is.
- 17 Steer clear of incorrect verb forms that have snuck into the language.
- 18 Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing your idioms.
- 19 Tell the rule about 'whom' to who you like.
- 20 At the end of the day avoid clichés like the plague.

- 3 Which rules above do you think are ‘good’ rules and which are not? Why?
- 4 Which rules in your language do you think are unnecessary or silly?