

## AUXILIARY VERBS

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**Abstrak:** Different lecturers and different books have different ideas, perspectives and methods in introducing auxiliary verbs to their students. If this case continues to happen, it could influence the students in understanding the lesson. Many students don't have any fixed reference and they are confused about auxiliary verbs. This topic, however, will give you clear explanation about English auxiliary verbs and how they are used in sentences. In this topic the writer will introduce five auxiliary verbs, only five auxiliary verbs, in English. Since there are only five auxiliary verbs in English, they will be quite easy for the students to remember them.

**Keyword:** *Auxiliary verbs.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every book, or writer and also lecturer has different ideas about English auxiliary verbs. They have their own reasons to introduce them to their learners. R.W. Zandvoort, in Handbook of English Grammar: "An auxiliary is a verb used to form tenses, moods, voices, etc. of other verbs. They include auxiliary of periphrasis, which assist in expressing the interrogative, negative, and emphatic forms of speech, viz, do (did); auxiliaries of tense, have, be, shall, will; of mood, may, should, would; of voice, be; of predication (i.e. vbs. of incomplete predication which require a verbal complement), can, must, ought, need, also shall, will, may, when not auxiliaries of tense or mood.

Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, 1991 stated: "An auxiliary verb is a verb used to help form tenses, aspects, voices, and moods of other verbs, as will, shall, have, do, be, can, ought, might, would, and may."

Pamela J. Sharpe, on her book "How to prepare for the TOEFL Test", 2002, states that "auxiliary verbs are additional verbs that may be used with main verbs to add meaning". Up to definition, it is seems all right to me, but she adds "examples, of all of the forms of BE, HAVE, DO, and all modals are auxiliary verbs".

These explanations imply that auxiliary verbs include; be, am, are, is, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, need, dare, used,

can, may, must, shall, will, could, might, ought, should, would, etc. These explanations could cause confusion to students, since there are too many auxiliary verbs which have different characteristics and usage in sentences.

Form of Auxiliary Verbs

No	Finite STEM form	Finite STEM+ED form	Indonesian meaning
1	can	could	dapat, bisa, mungkin
2	may	might	boleh, mungkin
3	must	ought to*	harus, seharusnya, pasti
4	shall	should	seharusnya, akan
5	will	would	akan, mau

Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition, 1991 stated "an auxiliary means 1. giving help or aid; assisting or supporting; 2. additional; supplementary; reserve." This simple definition might be better to describe auxiliary verbs in broad sense. The writer would pick one meaning of auxiliary based on this definition that is to assist, or as an additional verb. So, an auxiliary verb is a verb that its function is to assist other verbs in sentences.

Based on this definition, the writer could select only five auxiliary verbs in English,

namely: can, may, must, shall and will. These verbs have only two forms, namely; finite stem form which is used in present tense, and finite stem+ed form which is used in past tense, or they can be used in the present tense as a modal of modesty.

The term finite is used to refer that the verb has a concord with the tense, or number of subject. A finite verb can be defined as a verb that will change its form when we change the tense from present to past, or vice versa, or the verb will change its form when we change the number of subject from plural to singular, or from subject pronoun; I, we, you or they, to pronoun; he, she and it, or vice versa.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF AUXILIARY VERBS

Different from other writers, I would like to describe auxiliary verbs in our own way. Auxiliary verbs have their characteristics that differ from general English verbs. These characteristics relate to their application in sentences. However, there are some principles of using auxiliary verbs in sentences that we have to keep in mind.

1. Auxiliary verbs never stand alone in sentences. Their function is to assist other verbs in sentences. (Webster's New World Dictionary)

Examples:

- The ATC should give an emergency aircraft priority to land.
- Passengers ought to fasten their seat belt at take-off and landing.
- Flight attendants shall demonstrate emergency procedure before take-off

Therefore, it is quite clear that other verbs, like; be, am, are, is, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, need, dare, etc. are not auxiliary verbs, since they can stand alone in sentences, as in:

- Peter is an aircraft mechanic.
- The aircraft passengers are in the waiting lounge.
- The students do their assignment at home.
- Some students have dinner in the dining room.
- The government needs a lot of money to build intra structure.

2. Auxiliary verbs come before any other verbs in sentences. They never come after any other verbs in sentences.

Examples:

- The aircraft should be inspected before every flight.
- The aviation security personnel will check the luggage at the entrance gate.
- The metal detector can detect any metal object in the case.

While other verbs like; be, do, have, need, etc. could come after other verbs in sentences, as in:

- The aircraft is being inspected.
- Some workers don't do a lot of job at home.
- You don't have to finish the exercise today.
- We don't need only courage but also skill to accomplish this task.

3. The verb that comes directly after auxiliary verbs must be in the non-finite stem form.

Examples:

- Peter will fly to Medan tomorrow.
- We should have collected the assignment before we sat at examinations.
- The pilot will have to check the aircraft before he continue his flight.
- Every passenger must show his boarding pass before boarding.

Other verbs like; be, have, do, need, etc. may be followed by different forms of verbs, as in:

- The aircraft is parked at parking stand Bravo.
- The aircraft is being overhauled in the hangar.
- The mechanic has replaced the broken component of the aircraft.
- The broken component of the engine has been replaced.
- The government needs to take appropriate action.
- An authorized mechanic has to sign the log-book.

4. Only one auxiliary verb may appear in one simple sentence.

Examples:

- The cargo door shall be firmly locked.
- The aircraft might be approaching the runway in light rain.



- The mechanic should have replaced the broken component of the aircraft.

Other verbs like; be, do, have, need as mentioned in the previous paragraph may come together in one simple sentence, as in:

- Some students don't do their exercise themselves.
- They have had breakfast at home.
- The aircraft is being overhauled in the hangar.
- Modern aircraft don't need flight engineer in flight.

These four characteristics of auxiliary verbs are the essential and basic characteristics that aren't owned by other verbs in English.

5. However, auxiliary verbs can be used in either present or past tense.

The finite stem forms of auxiliary verbs are used in present tense and they cannot be used in past tense. While the finite stem+ed forms of auxiliary verbs can be used in either past tense, or they can be used in the present tense as a modal of modesty.

Examples:

- The pilot must remove the pitot cover before taxi out. (present tense)
- The pilot ought to check the cargo door before he took-off, but he forgot it. (past tense)
- The passenger should check-in an hour before departure time. (modal of modesty)

The auxiliary verb "shall" is commonly used only for the subject pronoun I or We. However, "shall" can also be used after other subjects for specific use, as in rule and regulation.

Examples:

- I shall see a doctor today.
- We shall make coordination.
- The government shall provide education free of charge for its citizen.

From the characteristics mentioned previously, we can be sure that verbs, like: is, am, are, was, were, do, does, did, have, has, had, need, dare, and others, are not auxiliary verbs, as they can stand alone in sentences, or they may appear together in one sentence.

Even their positions in these following sentences, as in:

- All tools are kept in the tool-box.
- Some victims were rescued by SAR team a few days ago.
- The workers have gone home.
- She is reading a book in the library.
- The project has been executed.

They are not auxiliary verbs as they can still be combined with an auxiliary verb. From the characteristics above we could see that there is only one auxiliary verb in one single sentence. These sentences still can be added with auxiliary verbs as in:

- All tools must be kept in the tool-box.
- Some victims could be rescued by SAR team a few days ago.
- The workers might have gone home.
- She might be reading a book in the library.
- The project should have been executed.

Here are some more examples of auxiliary verbs used in different sentences. The odd numbers are sentences without auxiliary verbs, whereas the even numbers are sentences with auxiliary verbs.

- The manager is in his office.
- The manager might be in his office.
- He reads the monthly progress report.
- He will read the monthly progress report.
- He is preparing material for the meeting.
- He might be preparing material for the meeting.
- His secretary has arranged the meeting.
- His secretary should have arranged the meeting.
- The schedule has been delivered to them.
- The schedule should have been delivered to them.
- This report was typed this morning.
- The report ought to be typed this morning.
- Some workers left the office early.
- Some workers could leave the office early.
- She has been working there for ten years.
- She may have been working there for ten years.
- She is going to retire next year.
- She might be going to retire next year.
- A meeting is being prepared.
- A meeting might be being prepared.
- A new building is built beside the old one.



- A new building will be built beside the old one.
- A new policy to run business in town has been established.
- A new policy to run business in town should have been established.

## SYNONYM

Some auxiliary verbs have their synonyms, such as;

can = be able to

must = have to

will = be going to

Since they (be able to, have to, be going to) are not auxiliary verbs, they can be used together with other auxiliary verbs and they can come after other verbs in sentences. We can even use more than one of them in one sentence. Here are examples:

- The trainee should be able to accomplish the task themselves.
- You must be able to solve the problem yourself.
- The participants will be able to overhaul a simple car engine without difficulties.
- They will have to do it without any help.
- You might have to survive in the jungle yourself in a plane crashed.
- The trainee may have to work in the isolated area far from the city.
- They are going to be able to do it themselves.
- She wants to be able to drive her own car when he grown up.
- You need to be able to ride a motor cycle or drive a car to be salesman.

Notes:

When you have to use "have to" instead of "must", in communication, however, please keep in mind that they are not exactly alike. They have the same structure and meaning in positive statement, as in:

- A pilot must follow the standard operation procedure.
- A pilot has to follow the standard operation procedure.

They have the same meaning but different structure in interrogative statement, as in:

- Must the authorized mechanic sign the log book?
- Does the authorized mechanic have to sign the log book?

However, they have different meaning in negative statements. Please take a look at these following examples:

- You must not wear sandals or shoes in the mosque. (It is not correct to say; You don't have to wear sandals or shoes in the mosque.)
- You don't have to wear sarong in the mosque. (It is not correct to say; You must not wear sarong in the mosque).
- You must not smoke in the petrol station. (It is not correct to say; You don't have to smoke in the petrol station).
- Drunk drivers must not drive cars on the road. (It is not correct to say; Drunk drivers don't have to drive cars on the road).
- You don't have to be able to speak English well to join this college. (It is not correct to say; You mustn't be able to speak English well to join this college).
- People don't have to able to read Al-Qur'an to be Moslem. (It is not correct to say; People must not be able to read Al-Qur'an to be Moslem).
- You don't have to be Indonesian citizen to stay in Indonesia. (It is not correct to say; You must not be Indonesian citizen to stay in Indonesia).

Aircraft passenger must not activate cellular phone on board. (It is not correct to say; Aircraft passengers don't have to activate cellular phone on board).

## D. Simple pattern of sentences using auxiliary verbs

Aux. verb	Subj.	Aux. verb	Neg.	Main verb in the non finite stem form	
--	They John Peter He	must will should could	---	speak English in class do the assignment in class	
--	We She I You	will may might should	not	join the club work hard all day	
Must Will Can Could	they you we she	---	---	type the application form send the application by post check the operation list	?



Notes:

1. We don't usually use auxiliary verb "ought to" in interrogative statement.

When we use ought to in negative statement, we put the word "not" before the preposition "to", as in:

- We ought not to leave our children alone.
- You ought not to park your car in direct sun heat for long time.
- You ought not to change the brake liquid of your car without any reason.

2. We use "shall" in daily communication only after subject pronoun; I or We.

Examples:

- I shall see a doctor to have a medical check-up.

3. We shall deliver the message right away.

- I shall call the doctor right now.
- We shall finish our job today.
- I shall do this job myself.

4. We use "shall" and "should" in the interrogative statements to make an offer.

Examples:

- Shall I sign the curriculum vitae?
- Shall we collect the assignment today?
- Shall we contact your station manager for the inquiry?
- Shall we provide an ambulance on your arrival?
- Should we make an appointment to see the manager?
- Should we contact your maintenance unit to get assistance?
- Should I call you back later?
- Should we delay our departure due to this traffic condition?

However, in a regulation, "shall" can be used after other subjects, except I, or We, as in:

- Shall the aircraft have emergency situation, the air-traffic controller should give him a priority to land.
- The airport authority shall provide facilities for emergency situation.
- The government should guarantee their citizen for their basic education.
- Every government shall protect their citizen from any threat.

The finite stem+ed form of auxiliary verbs can be used in present tense as "modal of modesty".

Examples:

- Mr. John might be in his office now.

- I could speak English a little.
- You ought to pay the fee before the tenth of every month.
- You should understand the situation of our company.
- Would you give me a hand?
- Could you do me a favor?
- Might I use this computer to write a letter?
- Should he be in the office before seven every day?
- Could I be excused?
- They should contact the local government on their arrival.

However, when we relate to how to change a sentence into negative and interrogative statement, we could use these rules.

1. When the finite verb of a statement is a single verb "be", we just simply add a word "not" after it to make a negative statement, or put the finite verb before its subject to make an interrogative statement, as in:

- The flight attendants are busy serving the passengers.
- The flight attendants are not busy serving the passengers.
- Are the flight attendants busy serving the passengers?

2. When the finite verb of a statement is a single verb other than "be", we have to change the finite verb to the non-finite stem form, and add a finite verb "do+not" after the subject to make a negative statement, or add a finite verb "do" or "don't" before its subject to make an interrogative statement.

Examples:

- They work hard every day.
- They don't work hard every day.
- Do they work hard every day?
- John works hard every day.
- John doesn't work hard every day.
- Does John work hard every day?
- Peter worked hard last year.
- Peter didn't work hard last year.
- Did Peter work hard last year?

(The finite verb "do" must have the concord with the tenses; "did" for past tense, and "do" for present tense with plural subject, or subject pronoun; I, We, You or They, and "does" for present tense with a singular subject, or subject pronoun He, She or It)

3. When the finite verb of a statement is the first verb in a verb group, we just simply add a word "not" after the finite verb to

make a negative statement, or put the finite verb before it's subject to make an interrogative statement, as in:

- The aircraft is taxiing to the runway for take-off.
- The aircraft is not taxiing to the runway for take-off.
- Is the aircraft taxiing to the runway for take-off?
- The aircraft has landed and now is taxiing to the apron.
- The aircraft hasn't landed yet.
- Has the aircraft landed?
- The aircraft is parked at parking stand Bravo.
- The aircraft is not parked at parking stand Bravo.
- Is the aircraft parked at parking stand Bravo?
- The letter will be delivered by mail.
- The letter will not be delivered by mail.
- Will the letter be delivered by mail?

The first verb is considered to be part of a verb group when it not separated with any preposition to the second verb. When the first verb is separated with a preposition from the second verb, it is not considered as a verb-group, even the main verb is part of verb group. To make a negative and interrogative statement of this kind of sentences should follow rules number 2. Please take a look at this example!

- You have to be able to accomplish the job yourself.
- You don't have to be able to accomplish the job yourself.
- Do you have to be able to accomplish the job yourself?
- A pilot in command needs to check the cargo door himself for safety.
- A pilot in command doesn't need to check the cargo door himself when there is an authorized ground handling personnel in charge.
- Does a pilot in command need to check the cargo door himself?

I am sure that this explanation could help the readers figure out English auxiliary verbs in a better and simple way. We don't need to consider so many auxiliary verbs in English, but five basic auxiliary verbs are enough to be used in communication.

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