Muddling Modals



Are you in a muddle with your modals?

Do you find you get a bit mixed up with their different meanings? That's totally understandable, as they can be rather confusing.
Let's try reviewing some of them and putting them into practice.

Activity One **- *First read the definitions.***

Could do something -> It's possible for someone to do something.
Must do something -> It's absolutely necessary for someone to do something.
Need to do something -> It's important to do something.
Have to do something -> It's absolutely necessary for someone to do something and someone else requires it.
Mustn't do something -> It's forbidden for someone to do something.
Couldn't do something -> Someone is unable to do something.
Don't have to do something -> It isn't necessary for someone to do something.
Shouldn't do something -> It isn't a good idea for someone to do something.
Should do something -> It's a good idea for someone to do something.
Might do something -> It's a possibility that someone might do something.
Mustn't do something -> It's forbidden for someone to do something.
Couldn't do something -> Someone is unable to do something.
Don't have to do something -> It isn't necessary for someone to do something.
Shouldn't do something -> It isn't a good idea for someone to do something.
Should do something -> It's a good idea for someone to do something.
Might do something -> It's a possibility that someone might do something.

Activity Two Now draw a line from the column on the left to the corresponding definition on the right.

Xavier could get to work earlier.	Jack's unable to get to work earlier.
Xavier must get to work earlier.	It isn't necessary for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier should get to work earlier.	It's forbidden for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier needs to get to work earlier.	It's important for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier might get to work earlier.	It's possible for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier has to get to work earlier.	It's absolutely necessary for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier couldn't get to work earlier.	It's a good idea for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier doesn't have to get to work earlier.	It isn't a good idea for Xavier to get to work earlier.
Xavier mustn't get to work earlier.	It's a possibility that Xavier might get to work earlier.
Xavier shouldn't get to work earlier.	

Activity Three - Now use **modal verbs** to say these sentences differently:

1. It's absolutely necessary for me to work on Saturdays.
2. It's absolutely necessary for me to work on Saturdays and someone forces me to do so.
3. I'm unable to work on Saturdays.
4. It isn't necessary for me to work on Saturdays.
5. It's possible for me to work on Saturdays.
6. It's a good idea for me to work on Saturdays.
7. It's important for me to work on Saturdays.
8. It's a good idea for me to work on Saturdays.
9. It's forbidden for me to work on Saturdays.
10. It isn't a good idea for me to work on Saturdays.
11. It's a possibility that I might work on Saturdays.

Activity Four - Now let's talk about things you can and can't do at work.

1. Can you smoke pot at work?
2. Would you like to?
3. Can you drink at lunchtime?
4. Should you avoid doing that?
5. Do you have to work at weekends?
6. Could you refuse to?
7. Do you need more help from your manager or boss at work?
8. Do you think you should ask?
9. Do you think you could ever fall in love with someone at work?
10. Do you sometimes have to stop yourself from falling asleep at your desk?
11. If so do you think you should go to bed earlier?
12. Do you think you might be promoted soon?

Activity Five – Listen to the song and prepare answers to these questions:

1. What does the singer need to know?
2. What are the two options?
3. If he chooses to stay what are the advantages and disadvantages?
4. What does he threaten?
5. What is annoying him?
6. What would you do in his position?
7. What should his girlfriend do?
8. What does she have to do if she wants him to stop bothering her?

The Clash – Should I stay or Should I go.

Darling, you gotta let me know
should I stay or should I go?
If you say that you are mine
I'll be there till the end of time
So you gotta let me know
Should I stay or should I go?

I'll always tease,tease,tease
you're happy when I'm on my knees
one day is fine and the next is black
so if you want me off your back
well, come on and let me know
should I stay or should I go?

chorus:
Should I stay or should i go now?
Should I stay or should i go now?
if I go there will be trouble
and if I stay it will be double
so come on and let me know

The indecisions bugging me
if you don't want me ste me free
Exactly who I'm supposed to be
Don't you know which clothes even fits me?
Come on and let me know
Should I cool it or should I blow?