



# FRENCH TABLE

Modals



What about modals in the past tense?!

| MIGHT / MAY / COULD                 |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| I might / may / could have done it. | <i>pouvoir</i> in the past conditional                      | <i>J'aurais pu le faire.</i>   |
|                                     | <i>peut-être</i> + action verb in the past conditional      | <i>Je l'aurais peut-être fait.</i>   |
|                                     | <i>il est possible que</i> + action verb in the subjunctive | <i>Il aurait été possible que je le fasse.</i><br>(or " <i>que je le fisse</i> " but this is very, very formal!) |

What if we conjugate *pouvoir* in the imperfect?

Description of an ability in the past *Il ne pouvait pas s'empêcher de rire.*

He could not stop laughing.

| SHOULD                           |   |  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| You should have said it earlier! | <i>devoir</i> in the past conditional   | <i>Tu aurais dû le dire plus tôt !</i>   |
|                                  | <i> falloir</i> in the past conditional | <i>Il aurait fallu que tu le dises plus tôt !</i><br>(Or " <i>que tu le disses</i> " but this, too, is very, very formal!) |

What if we conjugate *devoir* and *falloir* in the imperfect?

Obligation in the past.

*On devait arriver à midi.*

We had to arrive for noon.

*Il fallait que vous rendiez les clés.*

You had to return the keys.



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| MUST                              |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| We must have taken the wrong way. | <i>devoir in the passé composé</i>                     | <i>On a dû prendre le mauvais chemin.</i>        |
|                                   | <i>certainement + action verb in the passé composé</i> | <i>On a certainement pris le mauvais chemin.</i> |

| WOULD                            |  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| She would have done it this way. | <i>action verb in the past conditional</i> | <i>Elle l'aurait fait comme ça.</i> |

