

English Modal Verbs: “Shall”

“Shall” is a formal English word and is used to make suggestions, promises and philosophical predictions. It is usually used with “I” or “we”. Except in the case of suggestions, it can be replaced by “will”. “Shall” is more common in British English than in American English. Here are some examples:

<u>Context</u>	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Alternatives</u>
Suggestions:	Shall we eat pizza tonight?	How about pizza tonight? Let’s eat pizza tonight.
	Shall I call you later?	Can I call you later?
	Shall I help you?	Can I help you?
	Shall we continue?	Let’s continue.
	What shall we do tonight?	What can we do tonight?
	What shall I make for dinner?	What can I make for dinner?
Promises:	I shall help you later.	I will help you later.
	I shall make sure everything is fine.	I will make sure
	I shall be there before 8pm.	I will be there
	I shall buy a present for you.	I will buy
	I shall never forget you.	I will never
Predictions:	Man shall explore new planets.	Man will explore
	We shall overcome oppression.	We will overcome
	We shall never know how he died.	We will never know
	He shall become the new king.	He will become

The word “shall” is also used in **tag questions**, when the statement is a **suggestion**.

Examples:

- I’ll go first, **shall** I?
- I’ll do the dishes, **shall** I?
- Let’s go out tonight, **shall** we?
- Let’s change the subject, **shall** we?

Exercise:

- Make a suggestion to your teacher.
- Make a promise to your teacher.
- Make a prediction about the future of Brazil.

At the beginning of WW2, on 4 June 1940, the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, gave a famous speech to the House of Commons. It included these words:

*“Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we **shall** not flag or fail. We **shall** go on to the end. We **shall** fight in France, we **shall** fight on the seas and oceans, we **shall** fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we **shall** defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We **shall** fight on the beaches, we **shall** fight on the landing grounds, we **shall** fight in the fields and in the streets, we **shall** fight in the hills; we **shall** never surrender!”*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdAD0bo_tNA