



**BLOOMSBURY** INTERNATIONAL

# Books, Modals and Crazy Sentences

Crazy English sentences, suggested reading and modal verbs.



## 7 Sentences that Sound Crazy are Still Grammatically Correct

Try and understand the meaning of these sentences without going crazy.

### 1. All the love he had had had had no effect on the outcome of his life.

This is a grammatically correct sentence where we have two past perfects running back to back.

All the love he had had had had no effect on the outcome of his life.

### 2. BUFFALO, BUFFALO, BUFFALO, BUFFALO, BUFFALOS



This is a play on words where buffalo mean:

Buffalo= bison

Buffalo-= the city of Buffalo in the US

To buffalo= intimidate

Buffalo= adjective of verb to buffalo

Therefore, the meaning is: The bison from Buffalo intimidate other bison from Buffalo.

### 3. A woman without her man is nothing.

This is a fun one! The meaning can change with punctuation. Look at the difference between these two sentences:

“A woman, without her man, is nothing.”

“A woman: without her, man is nothing.”



### 4. The old man the boats

Find the verb in this sentence and you will discover the meaning!



## 5. The complex houses married and single soldiers and their families.

Here is another sentence where identifying the verb is crucial!  
The main verb is houses so this sentence means –“ the housing complex is home to single soldiers and their families”



## 6. Read rhymes with lead, and read rhymes with lead, but read and lead don't rhyme, and neither do read and lead.

Tip - look at the different pronunciations of read and lead  
/ri:/ rhymes with /li:d/, /red/ rhymes with /led/, but /ri:d/ and /led/ don't rhyme, and neither do /red/ and /li:d/.

Isn't English fun!

And finally,

## 7. Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs.

This is a strange sentence called a pangram, which is the shortest sentence you can make using all the letters of the alphabet! Good job!



- Check our [idiom](#) of the Week every Wednesday to help broaden your knowledge of English.
- Read our bi-weekly [blog](#) which includes study tips, interesting aspects of the English language, worldwide facts and much more!

## Reading Suggestions

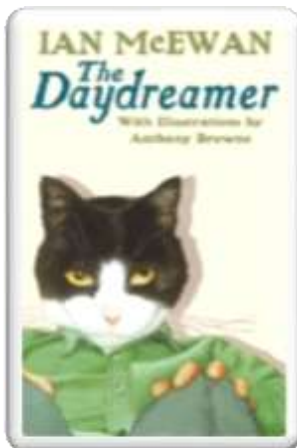
*“The more that you read, the more that you’ll know. The more that you know, the more places you’ll go.” – Dr. Seuss.*

We are often asked by our students what books we would recommend, so we decided to compile a list based on our teachers’ favourite choices.

Remember:

- Reading is rewarding
- Reading helps you improve your vocabulary and grammar structures
- Reading gives you an insight into other cultures
- Reading opens your mind

But most importantly....**Reading is fun!**



### 1. The Daydreamer – Ian McEwan

*Recommended by Stephanie*

A collection of children’s stories written by one of Britain’s most popular and respected contemporary writers. The book tells the story of a boy called Peter Fortune who spends most of his time daydreaming and imagining the most fantastical situations. In one story, he swaps bodies with his cat and gets into a fight with a local tabby. In another, he discovers a cream that makes his family disappear and in another, he wins a fight against a bully in the most ridiculous of ways. McEwan is a master of language and this book will expose you to a variety of adjectives and adverbs. It is a true delight to read and fit for any age group. (Level – Medium)

Please pick a book, read it and then leave a comment on our [Facebook](#), [Google Plus](#) or [Twitter](#) page on what you thought about the book in order to help other students choose.



## 2. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon

*Recommended by Stephanie and Fay*

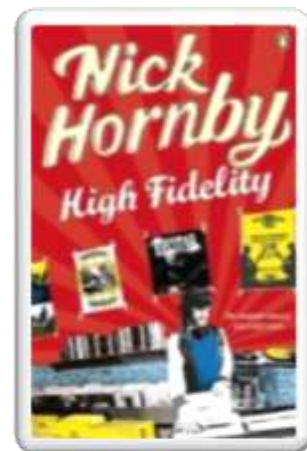
If you like murder-mystery, this is the book for you. It tells the story of Christopher, a young boy with autism, who decides to investigate the murder of his neighbour's dog. The story is told from Christopher's perspective and is easy to follow, intriguing and endearing. A really good book to begin with, especially if you are planning to start reading for pleasure. (Level – Medium)



## 3. High Fidelity – Nick Hornby

*Recommended by Stephanie*

High Fidelity is a must-read for all you music lovers. It tells the story of a heartbroken North London record shop owner who is trying to get over a breakup. The language is current, the story is fast-paced, the conversations are funny and there are many, many references to music. The book was picked up by a film company and made into one of the most popular films of the year in 2000, starring Jack Black and John Cusack. Once you have read the book, watch the film. You won't be disappointed. (Level – challenging)



## 4. Animal Farm – George Orwell

*Recommended by Tamlin*

An absolute classic! This short book tells the story of a group of farm animals who decide to rebel against their masters and regain their freedom from the hard labour they had been subjected. This freedom is short-lived, however, as two of the animals, Napoleon and Snowball (both pigs) start fighting against each other to gain the love, support and trust of the other animals. Napoleon wins and ends up running the farm in the same way the masters did before the revolt. The story has a political undertone as it reflects the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and then on into the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. This book is educational, easy to read and the sentences are short and clear. (Level-easy).

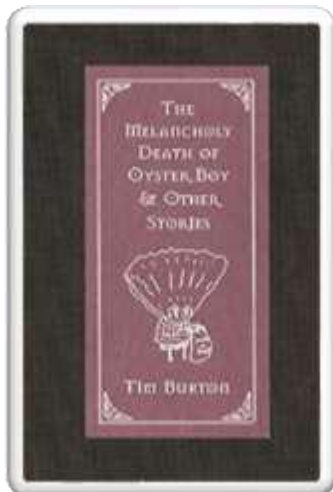




### 5. Fantastic Mr Fox – Roald Dahl

*Recommended by Olga*

A wonderful and fantastical story about animals by one of the greatest British children's authors of all time, Roald Dahl. The story is about a mischievous fox who goes out hunting for food every day to feed his wife and cubs, and runs into a lot, and I mean a lot, of trouble with the local farmers, Mr Boggis, Bunce and Bean. This book has become very popular with both adults and children; it has an exciting plot, a fun dialogue, and watch out for the twist at the end. (Level – easy)



### 6. The Melancholy Death of Oyster Boy & Other Stories – Tim Burton

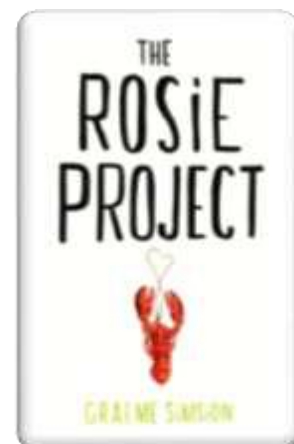
*Recommended by Tanya*

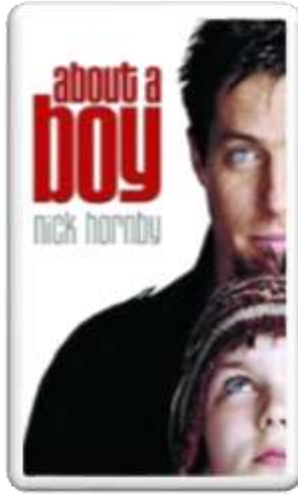
This slightly macabre and creepy collection of poems written and illustrated by Tim Burton, contains tales of bizarre and wondrous creatures such as the Melon Head man, the zombie girls, the robot boy, and various comical and curious superheroes, to name but a few. Quite an easy and fun read if you are into black humour and gothic themes. (Level – easy/medium)

### 7. The Rosie Project – Graeme Simsion

*Recommended by Fay*

An awkward genetics professor called Don Tillman is finding it hard to find love so he develops a questionnaire, called the Wife Project, to find the perfect partner. In theory the questionnaire seems to work, but unfortunately in practice it doesn't, however, he doesn't give up. One night he is introduced to a bartender called Rosie who he immediately eliminates as a candidate for romance. However, he is slightly drawn to her and decides to help her find her biological father. They embark on a rollercoaster adventure together with surprising outcomes. (Level – medium)





## 8. About a boy – Nick Hornby

*Recommended by Tamlin*

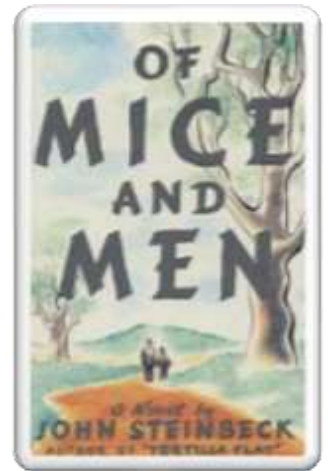
A wonderful coming of age novel by Nick Hornby. The story revolves around the relationship that develops between a 36 year-old bachelor, a young schoolboy and his semi-suicidal mother. Will, the confirmed bachelor, realises one day that a good way to pick up women is to attend single parent support groups. In order to join the group he pretends to be a single parent himself and invents a two-year old on called Ned. At one of the group sessions he meets a woman called Fiona, who has an interesting son called Marcus. Following a dramatic event, Marcus and Will become close. But what will happen when the truth about Ned is

revealed...? The book is very enjoyable to read and truly reflects British wit, awkwardness and comedy. (Level – medium/ challenging)

## 9. Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck

*Recommended by Lorna.*

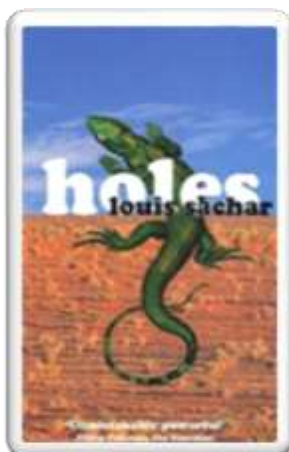
Of Mice and Men tells the story of two ranch workers travelling from town to town in California to find work during the Great Depression of the 1930s. George is a small dark man and Lennie is his childhood friend, a gentle giant who is mentally challenged. On the surface the story is simple; however, greater themes of love, friendship and loyalty run through the narrative which is set against the backdrop of social change. This is a dramatic and emotional story told in simple language. (Level – easy)



## 10. Holes – Louis Sachar

*Recommended by Simon R.*

A boy called Stanley Yelnats finds a pair of trainers which belonged to his favourite baseball star and he takes them home. He is then unfortunately accused of stealing the trainers and is sent to a place called Camp Green Lake, a burning hot dry desert where the now dried-up Green Nora Lake once stood. As punishment, every day he is forced to dig a hole that has to be exactly 1.5m deep and 1.5m wide. Only once the hole has been dug is he allowed to stop and go and enjoy himself. Anything he finds whilst digging has to be handed over to the warden. But what are they looking for? What is the purpose of this punishment? Why did the dimensions have to be so precise? Find out by



reading this exciting and intriguing book in which all the characters play an important role. The book is by an American author so expect some American slang and challenging vocabulary. Again, once you have read the book, watch the film to see how it compares. (Level – challenging)

## How to Understand Modal Verbs

A modal verb is used to express possibility or necessity. Modals are quite complex and can be easily confused. Especially as one modal can have several meanings or functions. My advice is to get to know them gradually. Get used to a function of one modal and be comfortable using it then progress on to another function.

What you shouldn't do is try and understand them all at once, it is impossible and will give you an immense headache. Not nice!! Try and learn them in context of everyday situations where you may use them. Just to fill in random gap e fill exercises that have no context will not help.



Most importantly do not be scared of them. Remember while you are at Bloomsbury your teacher will help. When you are reading in English (which I sincerely hope you are doing!!) highlight any modals you come across and think of its purpose!

Why is it there and what is it telling me? What **could** I replace it with? (See, use of a modal already) Remember **will** is a modal and **would** is a modal and **NOT** the past of **will** as modals do not have no past form. Likewise the same can be said for **can & could**. For example '**Could** I ask you I question? Here the modal has a present context. Confused you say? Don't be, take your time with them.



### Try Our Modals Quiz:

1. How many modal are there in English?
2. Can you think of a modal that you would use for:
  - Ability
  - Obligation
  - Necessity
  - Possibility
  - Logical deduction
  - Disproval
3. What generally follows a modal, e.g. modal + ?
4. Can a modal be followed by *to*, e.g. model + *to*?
5. Is there any difference between 'have to' & 'must', e.g. ***I must do my homework*** and ***I have to do my homework***?

### Answers:

1. How many modal are there in English? (9 'pure' modals: ***can/could/may/might/must/shall/should/will/would***. We also have what we call 'semi-modal' verbs, which are ***ought to/have to/had better/be able to***)
2. Can you think of a modal that you would use for:
  1. Ability (can)
  2. Obligation (ought to)
  3. Necessity (must)
  4. Possibility (can)
  5. Logical deduction (could)
  6. Disproval (will)
  7. What generally follows a modal e.g. modal + ? (bare infinitive)
  8. Can a modal be followed by *to* e.g. model + *to*? (never with 'pure' modals)
  9. Is there any difference between 'have to' & 'must' e.g. ***I must do my homework*** and ***I have to do my homework***? (Yes, but it can be said 'native' speakers do not necessarily differentiate. ***Must*** is internal obligation something you are responsible to do and ***have to*** is external obligation e.g. laws & rules that you have no control of)