

Modal verbs 3

Lesson code: UEMK-21RB-HKJC

INTERMEDIATE +

1 Modal verbs for possibility, certainty and expectation

We use the modal verbs **may**, **could**, **might**, **can't** and **must** to talk about things that are possible or certain.

Modal verb	Use	Examples
must	to say that you are certain that something is true	You haven't eaten all day. You must be hungry. You must be joking if you expect me to cook for you again.
can't	to say that you are certain that something is not true	"Is Anne at home?" "No, she can't be at home. She's working today." They can't have the same exam results.
could may / may not	to say that it is possible that something is true or not true	Anne may be at work, but I'm not sure. "Who's that at the door?" "It could be the postman." "Ask Jack if he knows a good restaurant." "Sure, but he may not know ."
might / might not	to say that it is possible (but not very likely) that something is true or not true	You might like to know that we are having a meeting tomorrow evening. It might not be a good idea to call John. He usually prefers email.
should / shouldn't	to say that we expect or don't expect something to happen or to be different	The price should be \$10, not \$20. If we leave now, we should get there on time. Maria shouldn't be back before midnight.

Dialogue

A: Where is David?

B: He **should be** at work.

A: He **can't be** at work. He has a day off today.

B: He **might be** at home then.



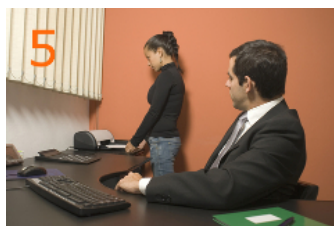
2 Practice - must or can't

Complete the sentences below with **must** or **can't**:

1. Sandra's new boyfriend _____ be very popular. Everybody seems to know him.
2. Phillip _____ be on Facebook. Everybody is these days.
3. You know your grammar really well. This exercise _____ be difficult for you.
4. Running a marathon _____ be really difficult if you don't run every week.
5. It _____ be Hector at the door. He left the party an hour ago.
6. You've been working in the garden all day. You _____ be really tired now.
7. The dog _____ be hungry. Feed her!
8. It _____ be easy living in an extremely cold climate like in Siberia.

3 Practice - should or shouldn't

In each of the pictures below, something is wrong or not expected. Complete each person's thought using **should** or **shouldn't** and a suitable infinitive:



1. "The bill _____ so expensive."
2. "My food _____ here by now."
3. "I _____ feeling so ill after taking the medicine."
4. "There _____ all these spelling mistakes."
5. "She _____ how to use a printer."
6. "They _____ here. The meeting is about to start."



4 Practice

Rewrite the sentences below using a suitable modal verb from page 1. More than one answer is possible in some cases.

1. There is a chance that Jean is at home.

Jean

2. I expect that it won't be difficult to finish this task on time.

This task

3. It is possible that Patrick isn't playing football with his friends.

Patrick

4. It is possible that the criminal is dangerous.

The criminal

5. Alison doesn't speak Italian (this is unexpected because her mother is Italian).

Alison

6. I don't know the score, but I am certain Spain are winning the match.

I don't know the score, but Spain

7. I don't expect that we will have any problems on our journey.

We

8. You can ask Alan, but it's possible that he doesn't know.

You can ask Alan, but

9. It's impossible that Shenzhen is in India. It sounds more like a Chinese city.

Shenzhen

