

# Modal Verbs (Possibility - Certainty)

## Diagnosing a problem



**may / might / could** → are used to express a possible diagnosis. →

POSSIBILITY

**MAY** (puede)

**MIGHT / COULD** (podría)

**must** → is used to express a certain diagnosis. →

CERTAINTY

**MUST** (debe)

**may/ might/ could / must + be** → are used to talk about the present. →

PRESENT

POSSIBILITY - CERTAINTY



(infinitive)

|                            |                |                                          |                      |          |                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Present possibility</b> | The alternator | <u>may/might/could</u><br>(puede/podría) | <u>be</u><br>(estar) | Failing. | = It is <b>possible</b> that it is failing.<br>(Es <u>posible</u> que este fallando) |
| <b>Present certainty</b>   | The alternator | <u>must</u><br>(debe)                    | <u>be</u><br>(estar) | failing. | = It is <b>certain</b> that it is failing.<br>( <u>Seguro</u> está fallando)         |

**may/might/could/must + present perfect** → are used to talk about the past -

PAST

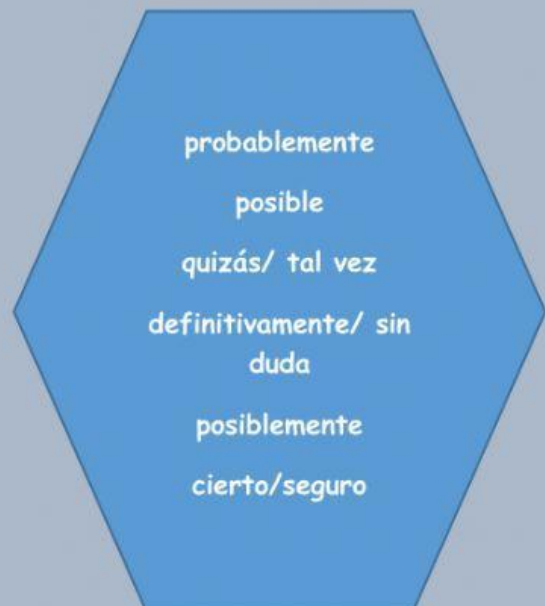
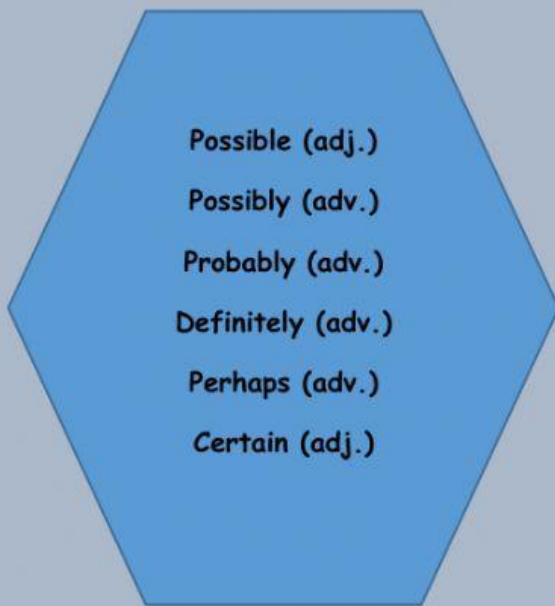
POSSIBILITY - CERTAINTY



(have + (past participle = 3° column verb/ ed))

|                         |                |                                          |                        |        |                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Past possibility</b> | The alternator | <u>may/might/could</u><br>(puede/podría) | <u>Have</u><br>(haber) | failed | = It is <b>possible</b> that it has failed but we don't know.<br>(Es <u>posible</u> que haya fallado) |
| <b>Past certainty</b>   | The alternator | <u>Must</u><br>(debe)                    | <u>Have</u><br>(haber) | failed | = It is <b>certain</b> that it is has failed.<br>( <u>Seguro</u> falló)                               |

1. What do these adverbs and adjectives mean? Match



2. What do these words express? Write "Certainty" or "Possibility"

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| probably   |  |
| certain    |  |
| possibly   |  |
| perhaps    |  |
| possible   |  |
| definitely |  |

### 3. What do these modal verbs express? Match

must be

Present possibility

must have been

Present certainty

may/might/could be

Past possibility

may/might/could have  
been

Past certainty

### 4. What do these modal verbs mean? Match

must (be)...

debe (estar/ser)...

must have (failed)

podría (estar/ser)...

may (be)...

podría haber (fallado)

might/could (be)...

puede haber (fallado)

may have (failed)

debe haber (fallado)

might/could have  
(failed)

puede (estar/ser)...

5. Construcciones Impersonales: "There be + modal verbs".  
What do these words mean? Match

there may be

there might/could have been

there may have been

there must have been

there must be

there might/could be

debe haber

puede haber habido

podría haber habido

podría haber

debe haber habido

puede haber