

Modals of deduction

Present tense modals

Modal	Uses	example	
Must	something is true; based on strong evidence	<i>You are all wet.</i> It must be raining outside.	
Could, May, Might	something is possible, but we are not sure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Don't put the book on the window.</i> It could fall.• We will try to get there on time, but we may arrive late <i>if there is a lot of traffic.</i>• <i>Did you hear that?</i> I think there might be someone at the door.	followed by infinitive, without "to" (modals + V(infinitive))
Can't	something is not true, for sure	<i>He works on Christmas.</i> He can't be happy about that	

E1. Fill in the gaps

1. I'm surprised she's not here yet. She's never late.

I know. Her bus _____ be late, or maybe she decided to walk.

2. Is that her brother?

No, that _____ be him. Her brother has blond hair. Maybe it's her boyfriend?

3. Chelsea _____ win this match, but I wouldn't bet on it!

4. What are you doing tonight?

I haven't decided yet. I _____ go to the cinema.

5. We found his fingerprints on the knife. He _____ be the killer!

Past tense modals

Modal	Uses	example	
Must	We use must have + past participle when we feel sure about what happened.	The thief must have had a key. The door was locked and nothing was broken.	followed by present perfect.
May, Might	We can use might have or may have + past participle when we think it's possible that something happened.	- I think I might have left the air conditioning on. Please can you check? - Police think the suspect may have left the country using a fake passport.	(modals + have + past participle)
Can't/ couldn't	We use can't have and couldn't have + past participle when we think it's not possible that something happened.	- She can't have driven there. Her car keys are still here. - I thought I saw Adnan this morning but it couldn't have been him – he's in Greece this week.	

E2. Fill in the gaps

1. I've just woken up and it's 11am! I _____ forgotten to set my alarm last night!

2. I just failed my exam!

That exam was really easy. You _____ studied very hard.

3. I've got such an awful hangover. I _____ drunk too much last night.

4. That exam was so hard! I _____ passed or I _____ failed – I just don't know!

5. Da Vinci _____ been an astronaut if he had been born 500 years later.

E3. For each sentence, fill in the blank with the best modal choice and the verb. (modals of deduction – past tense)

1. Your mother _____ (be) a great cook. Everyone wants her recipe book!
2. I don't know why I was so tired in college. I _____ (be) working too hard.
3. Do you know where Carl went? He _____ (leave) - his car keys are on the table.
4. You seem to know everything about that old band. You _____ (listen) to them a lot!
5. To give the promotion to Harold was silly. He _____ (know) much about this company after only a year working here. No wonder our sales are down!
6. Go and look in the kitchen for your gloves. You _____ (put) them in there.
7. Oh, we have a missed call. It _____ (be) Kate. She always calls on Wednesday.
8. Dan had been practicing for the concert since June. He _____ (do) his part perfectly!
9. That couple _____ (think) much of the show. They left after only 20 minutes!
10. The family next door to me growing up had a new car every week. They _____ (make) a lot of money!

E4. Complete the following sentences with CAN'T, MUST, MIGHT

1. I can hear some music coming from that window. He _____ be at home.
2. Mark told me Sarah was working late today, so she _____ be home right now.
3. Harry doesn't answer the phone. He _____ be in the movies.
4. Ring! Ring! That _____ be mom; she said she'd call me back in a minute.
5. I _____ have left my keys in the car...or maybe at John's.

6. Sue is late for class. She _____ have missed the bus.

7. That DVD _____ cost more than 15€; it's an old movie!

8. Christina has already been three times to that new pizza restaurant. It _____ be really good.

9. Robert always gets straight A's. His parents _____ be really proud of him.

10. Her new boyfriend is absolutely gorgeous. He _____ be a model.

11. A: What's that deafening noise out there?

12. B: My downstairs neighbors _____ be having another barbecue. It's the fifth one this month!

13. A: Have you called Sam?

14. B: yeah, but he _____ have already left, because nobody answered the phone.

15. A. How much further do we have to go?

16. B: Not much. Her house _____ be very far from here.

17. Lisa failed her driving test, so she _____ be in a good mood right now.

18. George wasn't promoted as he had expected, so he _____ be totally disappointed with himself.

19. He and his sister _____ come with us if their parents give them permission.

E5. Choose the correct option

1. Do you remember my birthday party last year? You _____ remember! It was the same day as your graduation.

- can't
- could
- must

2. Come in and sit down. You _____ be tired after the journey.

- must

- b. might
- c. can't

3. Whose is this coat? It _____ be Paul's. It's way too small for him.

- a. must
- b. could
- c. can't

4. The exam results will be out soon. It _____ be this week or possibly next week.

- a. must
- b. might
- c. can't

5. She always gets such good grades at school. She _____ work very hard.

- a. must
- b. could
- c. can't

6. The doctor said my headaches _____ be because of the hot weather but they're going to do some tests to be sure.

- a. must
- b. could
- c. can't

7. He _____ be our teacher! He looks about twelve!

- a. must
- b. might
- c. can't

8. Take this umbrella just in case. It looks as if it _____ rain.

- a. must
- b. might
- c. can't

