

Modals of deduction (present)

We can use **MUST**, **MAY**, **MIGHT**, **COULD** and **CAN'T** to express how sure we are about something happening in the present or the future.

MUST

We use **must** when we feel sure about something because there is some kind of evidence.

She **must** study **very hard** because she gets really good marks.

You have been working all day. You **must** be very tired.

They **must be rich** because they have an incredible house and four cars.

CAN'T

We use **can't** when we feel sure something is not true.

She **can't study very hard** because she gets really bad marks.

You have been sleeping all day. You **can't be tired**.

They **can't be poor** because they have an incredible house and four cars.

MAY, MIGHT, COULD

We use **may**, **might** and **could** when are not sure about something, but we think it is possible.

She **might** go to the party tomorrow if you ask her.

Peter **could be** at the library. He said he was going to go one of these days.

They **may** win the match. They are quite good.

<https://sites.google.com/site/nutsaboutenglish/grammar/modals/modals-of-deduction>

Exercise 1

Choose the correct modal verbs of deduction for each gap below.

1. Paul is behaving in a very unusual way. I think he _____ again.
a. can't drink b. can be drinking c. might be drinking

2. I think there _____ a mistake in your tax return. You should check it.
a. can't be b. might be c. must not be

3. If Suzan said that, it _____ true. She never lies.
a. might be b. must be c. can be

4. Sorry, but I'm not Connor. You _____ me for someone else.
a. might be confusing b. must confuse c. must be confusing

5. I'm not sure I trust Peter. He _____ the person we think he is.
a. might not be b. can't be c. must not be

6. You have walked for ten hours. You _____ exhausted.
a. can be b. can't be c. must be

7. He _____ his son, they look completely different.
a. might be b. can't be c. must not be

8. There's a bit of traffic, so I _____ arrive in time.
a. might not b. must not c. can

9. He _____ be very proud of you right now. You disappointed him.
a. must not b. can't c. might

10. I wouldn't swim in this river if I were you. It _____ dangerous.
a. might be b. can't be c. can be

<https://test-english.com/grammar-points/b1/modal-verbs-of-deduction/>

Exercise 2

Match the halves to make complete sentences.

1. Do you remember my birthday party last year? It might be this week or possibly next week.
2. The exam results will be out soon. It's the red one at the end. You can't miss it!
3. Come in and sit down. It looks as if it might rain.
4. Whose is this coat? It can't be Paul's. It's way too small for him.
5. Take this umbrella just in case. One of them must be wrong.
6. The house isn't hard to find. You must have some incredible photos.
7. She always gets such good grades at school. Maybe it's an eagle or it could be a vulture
8. He can't be our teacher! It's got chicken in it.
9. Samira has flu. We don't know yet, I'm not sure if you'll need it but they might ask you for ID.
10. What an amazing trip! You must remember! It was the same day as your graduation.
11. That can't be the vegetarian option. It can't be Mel's – she's working at home today.
12. Have you got your passport? but she may need to take the whole week off.
13. Who left their laptop on my desk? You must be tired after the journey.
14. Your watch says a different time from mine. He looks about twelve!
15. Look at that bird! She must work very hard.

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/intermediate-to-upper-intermediate/modals-deductions-about-the-present>