Modals 1
ability; possibility; alternatives to modals

13

A Context listening

1 You are going to hear two doctors discussing a patient. Before you listen look at the newspaper headline and guess how it relates to the patient.



2 11 Listen and check if you were right.

3 11 Listen again and say whether the sentences below are true or false. Correct the sentences that are false.

1 The patient could remember all his personal details.
2 The patient definitely came from Yorkshire.
3 The patient could speak French and Italian.
4 Joe thinks that the patient might have been running away from something.
5 Joe thinks that the patient was definitely unmarried.
6 The patient has been unable to make contact with anyone he knows.
7 Deborah thinks that the patient can't have hit his head.
8 Deborah thinks that the patient will never recover his memory.

4 Underline these words in the questions and answers in Exercise 3.

could couldn't might be able to must can't will

1 Which words refer to ability?
2 Which words refer to certainty or impossibility?
3 Which words refer to possibility?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C Grammar exercises

1 **Underline the most suitable words. Sometimes both options are possible.**

1 He's a concert pianist and he *can / manages to* play all Beethoven's sonatas.
2 When I lived in a small town I *was able to / could* walk almost everywhere, but now I live in the capital city I need a car.
3 They worked all night and *could / managed to* finish the report just in time.
4 The protestors *didn't manage to / couldn't* persuade the president to change the law.
5 Next year she *can / will be able to* join the club, but she's not old enough yet.
6 In my country it *can / is able to* get very cold in the winter.
7 I was nearly late as the bus didn't come, but luckily I *could / managed to* get a taxi.
8 I hope that I *will be able to / will manage to* do some sightseeing when I'm in New York next week on business, but I've got a busy schedule.
9 She didn't get good enough grades to go to her first choice of university but she *could / was able to* get a place at another one.

2 **Tick (✓) the sentence, a or b, which best matches the sentence on the right.**

1a	He might be British.	He has a British passport.
b	He must be British. ✓	
2a	Our teacher can't be off sick.	I just saw him in the corridor talking to a student.
b	Our teacher may not be off sick.	
3a	It can be cold in Delhi in December.	I advise you to take some warm clothes just in case.
b	It must be cold in Delhi in December.	
4a	John can't have been working late last night.	He wasn't home when I called at seven.
b	John might have been working late last night.	
5a	He can't be a millionaire.	He has shares in the most successful company of all time.
b	He must be a millionaire.	
6a	I may come to the lecture this afternoon.	It depends if I finish my essay before then.
b	I must come to the lecture this afternoon.	
7a	The exam may have been very difficult.	Not many people passed it.
b	The exam must have been very difficult.	
8a	John couldn't know how to get here.	We will have to give him directions.
b	John might not know how to get here.	

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3 **Replace the underlined phrases with a suitable past modal phrase.**



The mummy of Djedmaatesankh, a young woman from the ninth century BC, lies behind a glass display in the Royal Ontario Museum. 2,800 years ago she lived in Thebes with her husband on the east bank of the river Nile. They were well-off, although as a double-income couple without children 1 it is likely they were rather unusual. Djedmaatesankh was a musician at the great Temple of Amun-Re at nearby Karnak, where her husband was a temple doorkeeper. 2 It is possible that their jobs at the temple provided the couple with a small wage and other benefits to supplement their main income from a piece of fertile Nile land on which 3 it is possible that they grew crops of barley, sesame, or dates.

We can only guess at what Djedmaatesankh's life would have been like, and try to imagine what her problems were. 4 It is possible she was anxious about her inability to have children and certainly, as she approached her thirties, 5 it is highly likely that she worried about her health.

Looking upon a face from so long ago, a face not unlike that of any other young woman in Egypt today, ties us more personally to history. In a way that 6 was impossible for her to imagine, Djedmaatesankh has achieved a degree of fame in our 21st century, appearing in dozens of newspapers and magazines.

1 they must have been ..... 4 .....

2 ..... 5 .....

3 ..... 6 .....

4 **Read the following essay. Find seven places where you can add *may*, *can* or *can't* to soften the verbs.**

'Children can be adversely affected by the influence of television.'
To what extent do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Almost every family has a television these days, and many children watch a whole range of programmes every day. Some people believe that television is harmful to children, saying that it influences behaviour in a negative way. ..... can be

There are a lot of programmes on television that are not educational and that contain violence and bad language. However, watching violence on television encourages violent behaviour in children. This is true in cases of children who have already exhibited violent tendencies, but it isn't true of all children, otherwise we would have an epidemic of child crime. It is also argued that bad language on television encourages the same in children. .....

Nevertheless, overall I believe that restricting children's television viewing to mainly educational programmes shown at a time of day when there is no violence or bad language will overcome any risks of television being a bad influence. .....

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D Test practice

Listening Section 4

Questions 1–10

Complete the summary below.

Write ***NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS*** *for each answer.*

The history of soap

In ancient times soap was used to clean **1** ..... . Soap was not seen as a means of personal hygiene until **2** ..... times. Ancient people had little technology but many **3** ..... so were probably able to discover soap by chance. Soap was probably only used in **4** ..... societies. There is no evidence that tribespeople at the time of the British **5** ..... used soap.

The history of soap has mostly been discovered from **6** ..... . The earliest known use of soap in 2500 BC was to wash **7** ..... . The Egyptians made soap by mixing salts with oil taken from **8** ..... . The Romans saw washing themselves as a social activity. They removed dirt using steam and a **9** ..... . When Pompeii was excavated, they discovered a **10** ..... for making soap.

Grammar focus task

Listen to the first part of the recording again and fill in the gaps with a modal and the verb in brackets in the correct form.

1 While you ..... (*find*) some information on the origins of soap, it is not a substance which has excited a great deal of study so far.

2 We can only assume that other activities ..... (*provide*) the basis from which this key concept arose.

3 So, how is it that these primitive people from over two thousand years ago ..... (*discover*) soap?

4 I carried out some experiments using basic techniques to try to find out what people without any chemical knowledge ..... (*observe*).

5 I was able to demonstrate that they would indeed ..... (*make*) a soap that is not dissimilar to the one we know today.

Decide whether the modals are used to show ability or possibility in these sentences.

LIVEWORKSHEETS