

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)

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

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

PAST

POSSIBILITY - CERTAINTY

↓

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

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

1. What do these adverbs and adjectives mean? Match

Possible (adj.)

Possibly (adv.)

Probably (adv.)

Definitely (adv.)

Perhaps (adv.)

Certain (adj.)

probablemente

possible

quizás/ tal vez

definitivamente/ sin
duda

posiblemente

cierto/seguro

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

debe haber

there might/could have been

puede haber habido

there may have been

podría haber habido

there must have been

podría haber

there must be

debe haber habido

there might/could be

puede haber