Grammar Practice

Unit 31 & 32: Modals of Ability, Possibility, Certainty.

Read the Theory and solve.

Ability and Possibility

31a Circle the correct answers. There may be more than one correct answer.

A: My father's really fit for his age. He plays tennis a lot and he (0)(*can*) / *could* / *will be able to* run quite a distance.

B: I wish my father were the same! He (1) *can* / *could* / *was able to* play tennis well a few years ago but not any longer. Sometimes I worry about his health. He was so ill a year ago that he (2) *can die* / *could die* / *could have died* but fortunately, he's all right now.

A: Perhaps I should introduce him to my father and they (3) *can* / *are able to* / *manage to* play tennis together.

A: Where have you been?

B: I had an important letter to post. Luckily, I (4) *could get* / *was able to get* / *could have got* to the post office just as it was closing.

A: Congratulations! I hear you passed your driving test. Was it difficult?

B: I had lessons for months and I (5) *can't* / *couldn't* / *wasn't able to* pass a driving test. But then I found a good instructor and I (6) *could* / *managed to* / *succeeded in* pass on my third attempt!

A: That's great news. Personally, I love (7) *being able to* / *been able to* / *can* drive.

A: (8) *Can you* / *Will you be able to* / *You could* come to the party tomorrow?

B: I think so. I (9) *was eventually able to* / *eventually managed to* / *eventually succeeded in* arranging a lift.

A: I thought you might have to work.

B: I (10) *can* / *'ll be able to* / *'ve been able to* get so much more done since I got the new computer that I (11) *can* / *be able* / *could have* take some time off.

A: Great! I'm sure someone (12) *will be able to* / *will succeed in* / *being able to* give you a lift home.

31b Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in bold. Use between two and five words.

0 We got lost but we managed to find our way home using a map. **were**
We got lost but we ..... *were able to find* ..... our way home using a map.

1 I am afraid it is not possible for him to see you now. **unable**
I am afraid he ..... you now.

2 You will have the ability to understand Spanish after a few lessons. **able**
You ..... Spanish after a few lessons.

3 Lucy is often bad-tempered when she is working under pressure. **can**
Lucy ..... when she is working under pressure.

4 They managed to persuade Francis to join them. **succeeded**
They ..... Francis to join them.

5 Joan managed to get to the bank just before it closed. **was**
Joan ..... to the bank just before it closed.

6 Alex had the opportunity to leave work early but he decided to stay on. **have**
Alex ..... work early but he decided to stay on.

Degrees of Certainty

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32a Circle the correct answer.

0 Her new car looks expensive. It (*must*) / *can't* have cost a fortune!
1 They *might* / *can't* have gone home. I don't see them anywhere.
2 Surely he *mustn't* / *can't* still be alive after all this time!
3 Our car broke down and we *couldn't* / *may not* have enough money to pay for the repairs.
4 Many accidents *could* / *must* be prevented with a little care.
5 She *couldn't* / *might not* want to come with us.
6 Mr Morris *must* / *can't* be nearly ninety years old but he doesn't look it.
7 I don't know where Bernard is – he *must* / *could* be playing tennis with Carrie.
8 They're going whitewater rafting. They *have to* / *may* be mad to do such a thing!

32b Correct the incorrect sentences.

0 That mustn't be the right answer. You've made a mistake.
That can't be the right answer.
1 She's wearing a nurse's uniform. She can be a nurse.
.....
2 I don't know if Dominic's here – he must be outside.
.....
3 She isn't here and she hasn't rung. She can have forgotten our appointment.
.....
4 He spoke to me about it this morning so he could have forgotten about it.
.....
5 I think it can rain this afternoon – it's very cloudy.
.....
6 A: Why didn't she come to the party last night?
B: I don't know. She might be feeling tired.
.....
7 Mickey can be going out. He's wearing a coat and boots.
.....
8 That mustn't have been Davina you saw last night. She's abroad.
.....
9 Our neighbours can be going away. Their cases are packed and there's a taxi waiting for them.
.....
10 Some scientists believe there can be life on other planets.
.....

32c Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in bold. Use between two and five words.

0 It's lunchtime and I'm sure you're hungry. **must**
It's lunchtime so *you must be* ..... hungry.
1 It's possible that we'll get a reply in a few weeks. **could**
We ..... a reply in a few weeks.
2 Perhaps Sandy is playing golf this afternoon. **might**
Sandy ..... golf this afternoon.
3 I'm certain Emily realises that she's made a mistake. **must**
Emily ..... that she's made a mistake.

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4 I'm sure they're out because they aren't answering the phone. **be**
They aren't answering the phone so they ..... at home.

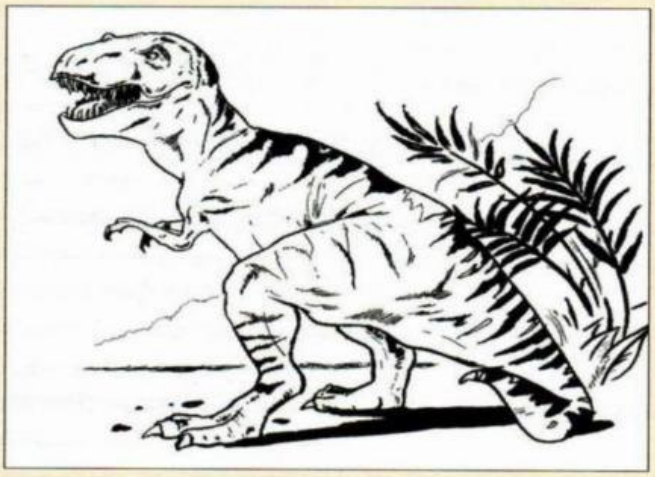
5 It's possible that the man I saw her with was her brother. **could**
The man I saw her with ..... her brother.

6 I'm certain Richard's new car cost around £20,000. **must**
Richard's new car ..... around £20,000.

7 I'm sure Suzanne was running to catch the bus when I saw her. **must**
Suzanne ..... to catch the bus when I saw her.

32d Complete the article. Use the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DINOSAURS?



Many people think that because the dinosaurs died out so many years ago, we (0) ***may never know*** (may / never / know) what really happened to them. In fact, there are several theories.

Some scientists claim that a single event (1) ..... (might / kill) these enormous reptiles. They believe that a large asteroid (2) ..... (must / collide) with the Earth about 65 million years ago and that the impact resulted in dramatic climate change. There is some evidence for this theory: in the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico there is an enormous crater measuring ten to sixteen kilometres across, which (3) ..... (may / be) caused by an asteroid strike.

Other scientists say that this theory (4) ..... (can't / be) the whole truth and that a single event – even one as cataclysmic as an asteroid strike – (5) ..... (can't / cause) all the dinosaurs to die out at once. They think that in future other evidence (6) ..... (might / provide) us with important clues about conditions on Earth at the time of the great extinctions. They speculate that intense volcanic activity (7) ..... (may / cause) the Earth's climate to change and this (8) ..... (could / destroy) the dinosaurs' natural habitats.

And finally, a large number of scientists think that the dinosaurs (9) ..... (may not / die out) at all. They claim that today's birds (10) ..... (could / be) the descendants of the dinosaurs – and there is some very persuasive anatomical evidence to back up their claim. If you would like to find out more about the subject, there are a number of very interesting websites:



LIVEWORKSHEETS