

## 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 (o) 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.

- o 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



### 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.



- 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:

