



# Modals of Possibility

## MUST

90 - 100%  
(sure it's true)

She **must be** in the garden. (=I'm sure she is in the garden)

They **must know** each other.

## MAY/MIGHT (NOT)

30 - 50%  
(maybe true)

He **may/might be** late.

30 - 50%  
(maybe NOT true)

He **may/might NOT remember** who you are (=Maybe he does NOT remember)

## CAN'T

90 - 100%  
(sure NOT true)

She **can't be** his mother. (=I'm sure she is NOT his mom)

He just left.  
He **can't be** too far.



### Use **can't** (NOT **mustn't**)

✗ He's just left. He **mustn't be** too far.

✓ He's just left. He **can't be** too far.

### Use **may/might** (NOT **can**)

✗ He isn't here. He **can be** at home.

✓ He isn't here. He **might be** at home.



+ be + -ing verb

### To speculate about actions in progress

They are in Ibiza. They **must be having** a great time.

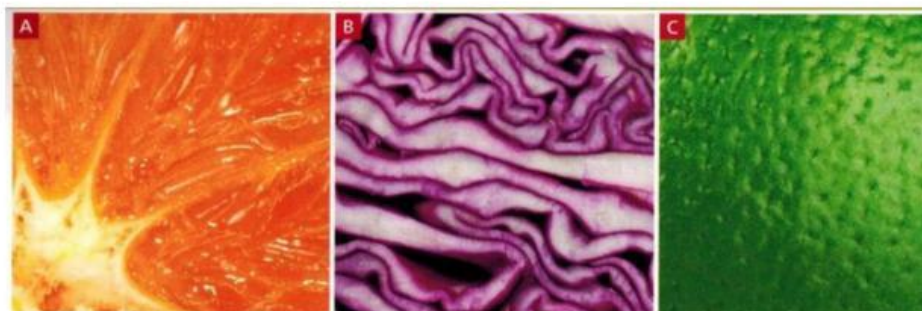
You are always hungry. I think that you **might not be eating** enough.

New study suggests that air pollution **may be making** people unhappy.



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**LIVEWORKSHEETS**



1. Look at the photos. What do you think they are.

2. Listen to the conversation and write the words you hear in the gaps.

**A** It \_\_\_\_\_ be anything like an apple because they don't have that kind of middle.

**B** It \_\_\_\_\_ be a lemon. They look like that in the centre.

**C** It \_\_\_\_\_ be an orange. It's the right shape for an orange.

3. Match the modals of possibility from Activity 2 to their meanings A - C.  
What verb form comes after each modal verb? \_\_\_\_\_

**A** I'm sure it is.

1. Could

**B.** It's possible.

2. Must

**C.** I'm sure is not.

3. Can't



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**LIVEWORKSHEETS**

## ☺ + modal verb + verb in infinitive + C

4. Complete the sentences using **must**, **might/could** or **can't** + a form of the verb be or have

- 1 He \_\_\_\_\_ vegetarian because I saw him eating a steak.
2. It \_\_\_\_\_ time to go! All the others have left.
3. They \_\_\_\_\_ international food; but probably not. It's a local restaurant.
4. The restaurant \_\_\_\_\_ a table tonight if they're not busy.
5. This milk \_\_\_\_\_ past it's use-by date. I only bought it this morning.
6. There \_\_\_\_\_ a mistake on this bill. I didn't order champagne!



### LANGUAGE TIP

*Could*, *might* and *may* can also be used to say that something is possible in the future.

**For example:** I might be late tonight.



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