Modals of probability No.2

SPECULATING ABOUT THE PRESENT

Exercise 1. ***In the Despatch Department of a mail order firm selling office supplies there are three packages, but the address labels are not complete. The packages are for three customers, Mr. Green, Mr. Brown, and Mr. White. The packages contain paper, a personal photocopier, and a computer. The packages weigh 18kg, 20kg, and 22kg.***

PACKAGE	A	B	C
NAME:	Mr. Green		
CONTENTS:		computer	paper
WEIGHT:			18kg

TASK A. Complete the sentences using MUST, MIGHT, CAN'T. NOTE: type the answers in lower case.

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1. Package B _____ be for Mr. Brown or it _____ be for Mr. White.
   Package C _____ be for Mr. Green, because we know A is for him.
2. Package A _____ contain the photocopier, because the computer is in B and the paper is in C.
3. Mr. Brown's package _____ be heavier than C, but it _____ not be as heavy as A.

TASK B. Fill in the missing details in the table using the following piece of information:

Mr. Green's package is not as heavy as Mr. Brown's.

NOTE: COMPLETE THE TABLE BY WRITING THE NAME OR WEIGHT ACCORDING TO THE GIVEN EXAMPLE.

SPECULATING ABOUT THE FUTURE

Exercise 2. Complete the newspaper article with the words in the box.

might harbor	could have	may be able to
may strike	might start	could still be
might kill	could escape	could prevent

Scientists are planning to examine the body of a young woman who died almost 100 years ago.

They believe that the body of Phyllis Burn _____ (1) the deadly virus which killed over 20 million people in the great influenza epidemic of 1918.

Experts know that the influenza virus – which can take many forms - _____ (2) again at any time; while most forms of the virus are fairly harmless, they fear that a form similar to the one in 1918 _____ (3) millions of people. If they can study the 1918 virus, they _____ (4) develop a vaccine against this dangerous strain. Such a vaccine _____ (5) any future outbreaks of the disease, and _____ (6) enormous commercial value as well.

Some people have expressed fears about disturbing the body, pointing out that the virus _____ (7) in the event of an accident. Even after 100 years, it _____ (8) lethal and _____ (9) a new outbreak.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exercise 3. ***Speculate about possible future events based on the following information. Using MAY, MIGHT or COULD say what you think will happen. DON'T PUT A FULL STOP at the end of each sentence, it has already been done!***

e.g. The political situation in the Middle East is unstable.
The price of oil might rise.

1. The Christian Democrats are doing very well in the opinion polls.
   They _____ .
2. The new Apple iPhone has had excellent reviews.
   _____ .
3. The government is spending much more than it is earning in taxes.
   _____ .
4. There have been a number of delays in the project.
   _____ .

SPECULATING ABOUT THE PAST

Exercise 4. ***Speculating about the past: modal verb + have + past participle.***
Write sentences using the words in brackets. Add any other necessary words, e.g. prepositions, articles, etc. DON'T PUT A FULL STOP at the end of each sentence, it has already been done!

1. They say they definitely sent the shipment, but it never arrived.
   (They/must/send it/wrong address)
   _____ .
2. You receive a memo saying that a company's phone number has changed.
   (They/must/move/new premises)
   _____ .
3. You have come for a 10 o'clock meeting. It is now 10.15 and no-one else is there.
   (The meeting/must/be cancelled)
   _____ .
4. It is 12.20. You ring a colleague but there is no reply.
   (He/might/go to lunch)
   _____ .
5. She was engaged when I rang her but I don't know who she was talking to.
   (She/might/be phoning/Sales Department)
   _____ .
6. The equipment was repaired last week, but it has gone wrong again.
   (It/can't/ repair/properly)
   _____ .

Exercise 5. ***REVIEW. Rewrite each of the following sentences using MIGHT, CAN'T, MUST, and a suitable infinitive. DON'T PUT A FULL STOP at the end of each sentence, it has already been done!***

1. It's possible that they will give us the discount we want.
   They _____ .
2. Judging by the phone bill, I am sure she has been making long international calls.
   Judging by the phone bill, she _____ .
3. The factory is on a three-day week. I'm sure they aren't selling many cars.
   The factory is on a three-day week. They _____ .

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4. It was a very bad deal. I am sure they lost a lot of money.
   It was a very bad deal. They _____ .
5. There's a chance he will be promoted at the end of the year.
   He _____ .
6. She seemed very surprised to see me, so I am sure she wasn't expecting me.
   She seemed very surprised to see me. She _____ .
7. He went home at 4.30, so I am sure he hasn't heard the announcement.
   He went home at 4.30, so he _____ .

LIVEWORKSHEETS