

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. (Es <u>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

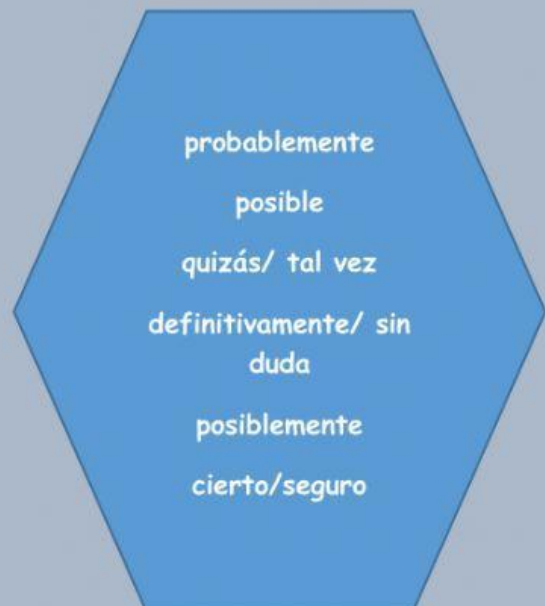
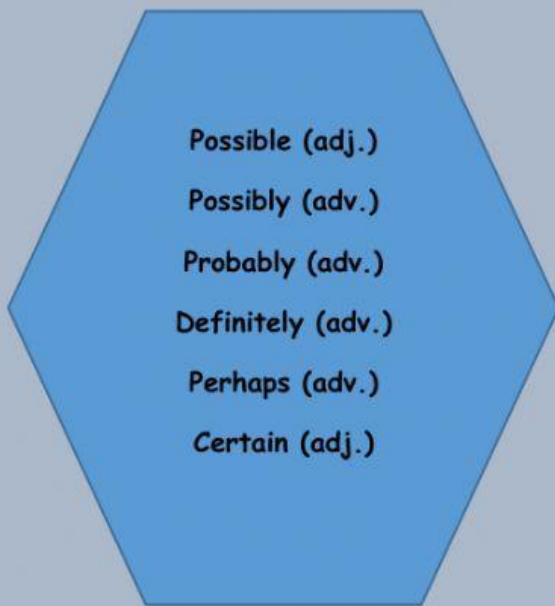
POSSIBILITY - CERTAINTY



(have + (past participle = 3° 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. (Es <u>posible</u> que haya fallado)
Past certainty	The alternator	<u>Must</u> (debe)	<u>Have</u> (haber)	failed	= It is certain that it is has failed. (<u>Seguro</u> falló)

1. What do these adverbs and adjectives mean? Match



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

there might/could have been

there may have been

there must have been

there must be

there might/could be

debe haber

puede haber habido

podría haber habido

podría haber

debe haber habido

puede haber