

Modal verbs of speculation and deduction – present and future

1 Complete the chart with the words in the box.

can't could may might must

Possibility

0% 50% 90–100%

can't _____

2 Complete the sentences with *could*, *can't* or *must*.

- That food has got meat in it. It _____ be for vegetarians.
- I don't know where Peter is. He _____ be in the kitchen or he _____ be in his bedroom.
- I've lost my mobile. It _____ be at home because I used it on the bus on my way to school.
- Greta didn't come to football practice today. She _____ be ill because she wouldn't miss it otherwise.
- I'm not sure which teacher we've got this morning. It _____ be Mr Marks if he's not teaching the other class.
- The match _____ finish soon: they've already played an extra 10 minutes.

3 Complete the sentences with *might not* or *can't*.

- I _____ come to the concert – it depends on what time my basketball match finishes.
- Jim definitely _____ be in the race because he's twisted his ankle.
- My mum is going out with her friends tonight so she _____ give us a lift.
- We've only got a few minutes before the train leaves, but if we run, we _____ miss it.
- Mr Taylor _____ be the new School Director – he's too young!
- This tree _____ be an oak tree because its leaves are the wrong shape.

4 Complete the table with the correct past modal forms. Then match each past form to its function 1–4.

Use this form when there is:

- 90–100% certainty that something was true.
- 50% certainty that something was true
- 50% certainty that something wasn't true
- 90–100% certainty that something was not true

present modal	past modal	Use this form when there is ...
must		1
mustn't	—	
could		
couldn't/can't		
may		
may not		
might		
might not		

5 Look at the photo. What could have caused this? Complete the sentences with *must/could/might/may/can't + have been* and explain your answer.



- It _____ made by an animal running around the field because _____.
- It _____ made by someone in an aeroplane because _____.
- It _____ made by an artist because _____.
- It _____ made by a tractor because _____.

Grammar extension

6 Answer each question with a short paragraph using *may/might/couldn't + have been*.

1 Who made the white horse?

2 Why did they make it?



3 What kind of animal made this footprint?

4 Where was the footprint found?

