

MODAL VERBS FOR DEDUCTION

The modal verbs of deduction, *might*, *may*, *could*, *must*, and *can't* (also *cannot*), are used to express an opinion or a guess about a situation or an event now or very soon.
e.g. *It might* (not) *rain tomorrow*. = There is a possibility that it will rain.

The sentence above indicates that there is a possibility of rain tomorrow, whether it is based on the opinion of the speaker or based on some kind of evidence.

It is also possible to use *may*, and *could*, in the same way with little or no difference although *may* is considered the strongest, *could* slightly less possible, and *might* is considered the least possible. However, the difference is very small.

e.g. *It may* (not) *rain tomorrow*. e.g. *It could* *rain tomorrow*. *

Must is used when the speaker is very confident about their deduction.

e.g. *It must* *rain tomorrow*. = I am very certain it will rain tomorrow.

Can't is used when the speaker is sure that something is not true.

e.g. *It can't* *rain tomorrow*. = I am very certain it will not rain tomorrow.



Convert the sentences below so that they reflect the degree of probability in each case.

e.g. I am sure it will not rain tomorrow. *It can't rain tomorrow.*

1. Perhaps she is tired.

She might, could, may, be tired.

2. I am sure he is not hungry.

He

3. I am sure the restaurant is open.

4. Perhaps they will be late.

5. Perhaps they will not come.

6. I am sure he is working.

7. Perhaps they are unhappy with the service.

8. Perhaps the restaurant is expensive.

9. I am very sure she is not at work.

10. I am very sure she is at home.

11. Perhaps the keys are in the car.

12. Perhaps they are hungry.

13. Perhaps they don't know.

14. I am sure it is not cheap.

15. I am sure it is expensive.

16. Perhaps the package will not arrive today.

17. I am sure he is not working.

18. Perhaps the film is interesting.

19. I am sure it is cold.

20. Perhaps they will come by bus.

21. I am sure they earn a lot of money.

22. Perhaps she lives nearby.

23. I am sure she has a car.

24. I am sure he does not walk to work.

25. Perhaps he wants us to call him.

26. Perhaps the company is looking for workers.

27. Perhaps the shop is having a sale.

28. I am sure they will have enough money.

29. I am sure that they are not in bed.

30. Perhaps there is a problem with the internet.

31. I am sure he doesn't know.

32. Perhaps they have a dog.

33. I am sure he knows where the keys are.

34. Perhaps the package will arrive tomorrow.

35. I am sure the secretary is in the office.

36. I am sure the phone is not broken.

LOOK!

We don't use a negative with *could* when talking about a possibility, unless we are talking about the past with a *strong* certainty in the same way as "*can't have*."

Can't is the opposite of *must*. *Mustn't* means that something is prohibited or forbidden in some way.