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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. English multiple-choice grammar quiz about Modal Verbs of Certainty and PossibilityStart Modal Verbs of Certainty and Possibility Quiz >Preview:She must _____ all day because I havent seen her.A. have workedB. be workingThey _____ spoken to him because he knew nothing about the party.A. cant haveB. must haveShe could _____ by bus but I thought she was taking the train.A. have goneB. goHe set off ages ago. He _____ got there by now.A. must haveB. cant haveShe cant _____ at the gym because she hurt her ankle.A. have beenB. beThey may _____ the stones in another area.A. have foundB. foundIt _____ very easy for him to tell her.A. couldnt have beenB. mustnt have beenThey might _____ on the bus I dont think theyve decided yet.A. goB. have goneWe must _____ the tickets I cant find them!A. loseB. have lostYou _____ tired. Youve been sleeping for hours.A. cant have beenB. cant beI suppose he _____ be with his dad.A. couldB. canHe could _____ late it depends how long he has to work.A. beB. have beenHe _____ studying because I didnt see him outside.A. can have beenB. must have beenShe _____ to afford the tickets.A. cant be ableB. may not be ableHe must _____ about his tests next week.A. have been worriedB. be worriedRandom Topics: will, be going to, would like toKnee AnatomyPlaces in TownHave vs. HasApologizingPast Tense and Past ContinuousPrefixes SuffixesPossessive AdjectivesPassive and Active SentencesPresent Perfect and Present Perfect Progressive TensesClick on the button beside the correct answer. Alex wanted to get the promotion very much, but he didn't. He _____ disappointed. could be must be might be maybe I don't know why Stephanie isn't eating with us. She _____ hungry. might be isn't couldn't be might not be George ordered a large hamburger with everything on it except mustard. He _____ like mustard. does not mightn't may not isn't Tom is wearing a Vancouver Canucks T-shirt. He _____ a Canucks fan. can't be maybe is must be Sam is usually very friendly, but he hasn't smiled at all today. He _____ worried about something. is might have been must be might be Glen's wife is Japanese. There is a picture of a Japanese woman on his desk. That _____ his wife. might be is must be could be You just ate five large slices of pizza, two pieces of chocolate cake and some ice cream. You _____ still be hungry. mustn't couldn't be must can't I wonder why Mary and Fred are late. They _____ know how to get here. might not don't maybe not aren't Bob usually drives his car to work, but today he got on the bus. Something _____ wrong with his car. couldn't be might be is must be You went to bed at 9:30 last night and got up at 11:00 this morning. You _____ still be tired. must might can't couldn't be ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility and Certainty Worksheet - Grammar Exercises: Table Completion, Matching, Unscrambling, Gap-fill - Speaking Activity - Pair Work This comprehensive modal verbs of possibility and certainty worksheet helps students practice will, won't, probably will, probably won't, may and might... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility and Certainty Activity - Speaking: Sentence Completion, Discussion, Freer Practice - Group Work In this free modal verbs of possibility and certainty speaking activity, students make predictions and express possibility and degrees of certainty for statements about life in the year 2050 using will, will... read more ESL May and Might Game - Vocabulary and Speaking: Forming Sentences, Freer Practice - Group Work In this engaging may and might game, students use modal verbs of possibility to make sentences about things they are going to take on a day trip. First, students imagine that they are going on a day... read more ESL May and Might Activity - Speaking: Asking and Answering Questions, Freer Practice - Group Work In this insightful may and might speaking activity, students practice asking and answering questions about the future using will and won't for predictions and the modal verbs of possibility may and... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility and Certainty Game - Vocabulary and Listening: Forming Sentences, Guessing - Group Work Here is an imaginative modal verbs of possibility and certainty game to help students learn how to use the modal verbs could, may and might for possibility and must for certainty. Invite one... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility Activity - Speaking: Asking and Answering Questions, Summarising - Group Work In this thought-provoking modal verbs of possibility speaking activity, students ask and answer questions about what changes they think will take place in the next 30 years. This activity covers making... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Probability Worksheet - Grammar Exercises: Matching, Gap-fill, Writing Sentences - Speaking Activity: Forming Sentences - Pair Work In this useful modal verbs of probability worksheet, students learn and practice modal verbs of probability by talking about the weather. Students start by... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility and Certainty Activity - Speaking: Asking and Answering Questions, Presenting - Pair and Group Work - Writing: Summarising This free modal verbs of possibility and certainty speaking activity can be used to help teach students modal verbs of possibility, adverbs of probability... read more ESL Could, May and Might Activity - Reading and Speaking: Writing Sentences, Discussion, Freer Practice - Group Work In this memorable could, may and might activity, students read a short story and write sentences with modal verbs of possibility about what they think the people in the story might do or say next. To begin... read more ESL Modal Verbs of Possibility and Certainty Board Game - Speaking: Forming Sentences, Freer Practice - Group Work In this enjoyable modal verbs of possibility and certainty board game, students express possibility and degrees of certainty for statements about the future. Players take it in turns to roll the dice and... read more ESL Teacher, Timor-Leste "There are a lot of resources that are useful for teaching English. I downloaded the games which are handy and use them in my classes. With the games, my students never skip class or feel tired to learn English. The resources for teaching English helped my students progress in grammar, vocabulary, writing and comprehension. They also helped me a lot to guide my students to learn in a practical way." English Instructor, United States "Thank you for providing these incredible resources. Teach-This.com is always my go-to site for class activities, and I recommend it often. I love how it is organized. I can find resources for a specific grammar concept or language function by level and type of activity. Every time I visit your site, I discover a new classroom interaction strategy that's perfect for teaching the concept I'm focusing on! When I return after the holidays, yours will be the first subscription I restart." ESOL Teacher, United Kingdom "I am an ESOL teacher, and the resources have helped my classes enormously. In particular, the speaking activities were a great help for my intermediate students before their exam. The website is user-friendly, and I will continue to utilise the resources - next term is reading and comprehension, so I will be looking for more resources from you. Thank you for such helpful activities and worksheets. They save me a lot of time in class preparation." ESL Teacher, France "Teach This is an absolutely brilliant website, offering a vast amount of high-quality content, much of it free. Everyone involved in its creation deserves commendation. The leadership's vision has my deepest respect and gratitude. It's undoubtedly the best resource for English teachers, with its clear layout, easy navigation, concise messaging, and lack of invasive advertising - rare qualities that Teach This has perfected." English Teacher, Laos "When I need to add or change an activity from my school's curriculum, I always turn to TeachThis. While our curriculum is usually very good, it sometimes doesn't fit well with my students. With TeachThis, I can easily find activities that match my topic and level, and the resources make my classes more interesting and varied. I look forward to the monthly newsletter and exploring new materials for inspiration. Please keep it up!" English Tutor, Australia "I like the efficiency and organization of the website. The resources cater to various levels with topic-based options for higher levels. The worksheets are very engaging and the answer keys are particularly helpful for teacher. The resources are also highly specific to levels and outcomes, making planning much easier. Finding what I need is simple and time-saving with the keyword search feature. Everything is clear and straightforward." ESL Teacher, Switzerland "The easy and ready-to-go materials have helped me a lot during the last few years. Most of all I like the grammar games that activate my pupils and keep them engaged. My lessons have become way more playful and varied. Additionally, I like the grammar worksheets which I use to consolidate what I have worked on during class. The website is very user-friendly, and I have never had any difficulties finding what I was looking for." Business English Teacher, Canada "A friend told me about the site, and it's awesome. I have found the Business English resources especially engaging and relevant for my students as the materials help them understand business writing and terms. My teaching experience has also improved from using the games on the site as they allow me to teach in a fun way. The user experience is outstanding. Great job!" English Teacher, Mexico "I found Teach-This a long time ago when I started teaching. It's always had great resources. I really appreciate the grammar materials, board games, and group activities. They've saved me lots of time on lesson planning. The materials are easy to use and understand, making my job much simpler. The best thing is that many resources can be downloaded for free. I've used it for around 8 years, and it consistently offers great content." Primary School Teacher, United Kingdom "I use the resources from the Games Section as part of my daily 30-minute morning warm-up activities, and I've received rave reviews for using them. The games help me maintain student interest and participation and leave the students feeling happy and awake. I like everything about the site, and customer support is very effective as they respond in time." EFL Teacher, Argentina "Teach-This is one of the best EFL websites I've found. It's extremely user-friendly, and I always find what I need quickly. I like the design, and the content is fun, engaging and original. I am very thankful for all your work and generosity by making some resources free. I always recommend this website to my fellow teachers. Your work is really helpful, and I value it enormously." Language School Teacher, Czechia "I like the grammar-focused resources the most as they save me time. The resources also inspire me. If I see an interesting grammar activity, I often rework it for other grammar rules. I like the fact that I simply pay a flat fee, and I can download whatever I want. Teach-This really is a great timesaver. I know that if I am in need of resources for my students, I can go to Teach-This and find something interesting." English Teacher, Kenya "Getting familiar with the site and how to use the resources is not difficult. I found the writing skills resources to be the most valuable as they have enhanced my teaching of this skill. The website is elaborate and full of all types of resources to help me teach English. When I contacted customer support, they were super-fast to deal with my enquiry. So overall, I recommend it." ESL Teacher, Morocco "I have found the grammar and vocabulary resources the most valuable. They have improved my teaching experience because they are easy to use and well-organized. The materials are very engaging for my students. The website is also very user-friendly. The best thing about Teach-This is that it offers ready-made worksheets for busy teachers, and the content is well-organized and full of information." High School Teacher, Kurdistan "I'm really glad I found the Teach-This website. The materials in the General English section have proven to be really helpful and made my classes more engaging. The materials are well-structured and cover a wide range of topics, making it easy to keep my students interested and motivated. Overall, my experience using your resources has been great." EFL Teacher, Yemen "My first impression of the website was that it was amazing. The games and activities have really improved my teaching. The resources are engaging and relevant to my students' needs, and I find the website easy to use and navigate. Thanks." English Teacher, India "I would like to thank you for making a fantastic website. I particularly enjoy teaching the functional language materials, which have been very helpful in my classes. The resources have significantly improved my students' communication skills in daily life, so it was rewarding to see them benefit in this way. It feels great to be able to make a difference in my students' lives. Please keep up the good work." Academic English Coordinator, Spain "I've been teaching Academic English for over eight years, and Teach-This.com has become my go-to resource for university preparation classes. The academic vocabulary exercises and speaking test preparation activities are exceptionally well-designed for advanced learners. My students particularly appreciate the study skills resources and paragraph writing materials, which have significantly boosted their confidence and exam scores." Cookies user preferencesWe use cookies to ensure you to get the best experience on our website. If you decline the use of cookies, this website may not function as expected.AnalyticsWe use Google Analytics cookies to understand how our website is used and to improve your experience. 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You have to finish following quiz, to start this quiz: Improve your English grammar with more lessons and exercises. Click on the links below to learn and practice. 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When you submit your work or prepare your essay for publication you need 100% certainty that it is completely free of errors, inconsistencies and grammatical muddle.By using the Scribbr Academic Proofreading Service all mistakes are corrected and with our friendly feedback you will learn how to be a better writer.Weve already proofread over 10,000 academic documents! Scribbrs proofreading and editing services are rated 4.7/5 based on 14,984 reviews on Trustpilot. If you are an ESL student whose English skills leave room for improvement, or just wish to ensure there are no language mistakes in your document, then why not use the Scribbr Academic Proofreading Service?By using our proofreading service all mistakes will be corrected via Track Changes in Microsoft Word. Our editors will also provide friendly, helpful feedback on how to improve your writing. Scribbr specializes in proofreading academic documents. 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Generate accurate references and citations with Scribbrs free reference generator and save hours of repetitive work. Our dream team Youre not alone. Together with our team and highly qualified editors, we answer all your questions about academic writing.Open 24/7, 365 days a year. Always available to help you. Meet the team Scribbr Knowledge Base Free resources used by 4,000,000 students every month. Bite-sized videos that guide you through the writing process. Get the popcorn, sit back, and learn! Ready-made slides for teachers and professors that want to kickstart their lectures. Accessible how-to guides, full of examples that help you write a flawless essay, proposal, or dissertation. Handy checklists to make sure you don't forget anything important. Time-saving templates that you can download and edit in Word or Google Docs. Click here to download this explanation as a PDF.Click here for all the exercises about modal verbs.Click here for our complete programme to perfect your English grammar. We can use these modal verbs (also called modals of deduction, speculation or certainty) when we want to make a guess about something. We choose the verb depending on how sure we are.1: Talking about the present:must / might / could / may / can't + infinitiveFor example:I am waiting for Julie with another friend, David.I ask: 'Where is Julie?'David guesses:She must be on the bus. (I'm fairly sure this is a good guess)She might come soon. (maybe)She could be lost. (maybe)She may be in the wrong room. (maybe)She can't be at home. (I'm fairly sure this isn't true)Notice that the opposite of 'must' is 'can't in this case.Will / won'tWe use will and won't when we are very sure: Should / shouldn'tShould and shouldn't are used to make an assumption about what is probably true, if everything is as we expect:They should be there by now.It shouldn't take long to drive here.This use of should isn't usually used for negative events. Instead, it's a better idea to use will:The underground will be very busy now (not: 'should be').CanCan is used for something that is generally possible, something we know sometimes happens:Prices can be high in London.Can is not used to talk about specific possibilities:He could be on the bus (not: 'can be').2: Using modal verbs to talk about the past:must / might / could / may / can't + have + past participle(Click here to review how to make the past participle.)must have + past participlemight / might not have + past participlecould / couldn't have + past participlemay / may not have + past participlecan't have + past participleFor example:You: Where was Julie last night?David:She must have forgotten about our date.She might have worked late.She could have taken the wrong bus.She may have felt ill.She can't have stayed at home.Will / won't + have + past participleWill and won't / will not + have + past participle are used for past certainty (compare with present use of 'will' above):The parcel will have arrived before now.Should + have + past participleShould + have + past participle can be used to make an assumption about something that has probably happened, if everything is as we expect (compare with present use of 'should' above):The train should have left by nowCouldWe can use could + infinitive to talk about a general possibility in the past (compare with the use of 'can' above):Prices could be high in the sixteenth century.This is not used to talk about specific possibilites in the past (instead we use could + have + past participle):He could have been working late (not: 'could be'. As this is a specific possiblity, 'could be' is present tense)Click here for our complete programme to perfect your English grammar. A modal verb (also called a modal auxiliary verb) is used along with a main verb to express possibility, ability, permission, or necessity. For example, in the statement you must leave, must is a modal verb indicating that its necessary for the subject (you) to perform the action of the verb (leave).The modal verb will is used to form the future tense, indicating an action that has not yet occurred (e.g., I will clean the garage).Examples: Modal verbs in a sentenceWe should listen to some music.Can you drive me to the airport?Amanda might practise her German. Be assured that you'll submit flawless writing. Upload your document to correct all your mistakes. How are modal verbs used in sentences?Modal verbs are used along with a main verb to indicate ability, necessity, possibility, and permission. In sentences containing modal verbs, the main verb typically takes the infinitive form. Modal verbs come before main verbs and never change form.Examples: How to use modal verbsI might walk to work today.You may have as many cookies as youd like.Lina must order tickets in advance if she wants to go to the theatre. The academic proofreading tool has been trained on 1000s of academic texts and by native English editors. Making it the most accurate and reliable proofreading tool for students. Upload my document Modal verbs listBelow is a table that illustrates some of the various uses of modal verbs. Note that modal verbs are very commonly used in a wide variety of senses this table doesnt cover every possible usage.Modal verbFunctionExampleCanIndicate abilityIndicate possibilityIndicate permission (informal)Make a request (informal)Javi can play the guitar.We can drive or walk.You can borrow that book.Can I have some water?CouldPast form of canIndicate possibilityMake a polite requestShe could speak French.You could become a chef.Could you tell me the time?MayIndicate possibilityIndicate permission (formal)Make a request (formal)Dana may arrive late.You may enter.May I respond?MightIndicate possibilityI might order pizza.MustIndicate obligationIndicate likelihoodCyclists must wear helmets.You must be very proud.ShallIndicate a future action (normally used only with I and we)Ask a question (normally used only with I and we)I shall attend.Shall we arrange a meeting?ShouldMake a suggestionIndicate likelihoodYou should watch that film.Tom should be at the office.WillIndicate a future action or eventMake a polite requestFay will book the venue.Will you get the door?WouldPast form of willMake a polite requestShe would often work late.Would you call back later? Modal verbs are classed as a type of auxiliary verb. Auxiliary verbs are used along with a main verb to express tense, mood, or voice. However, unlike modal verbs, regular auxiliary verbs follow subject-verb agreement and must be conjugated for tense and mood.Examples: Auxiliary verbs in a sentenceMary was building a sandcastle.Gordon has burned the toast.Do you know what time it is?Modal verbs can be used along with auxiliary verbs to refer to possible past, continuous, or future action.When a modal verb is followed by another auxiliary verb (e.g., have, be), the main verb takes either the past participle form (typically ending in -ed, -n, or -t) or the present participle form (ending in -ing).The modal verb will is used in all aspects of the future tense (e.g., I will talk, you will be travelling).Examples: Modal and auxiliary verbs combinedHe should have asked me first.You may be wondering what I mean.Farrah will have finished work by then.Modal verbs and moodThe grammatical mood of a verb indicates the intention of the sentence. Modal verbs and auxiliary verbs are used along with a main verb to express mood.Grammatical moodFunctionExampleIndicativeState a factLana is drinking coffee.ImperativeExpress a command or a request (often with a negative auxiliary verb)Dont forget to call.InterrogativeAsk a questionWould you open the window?ConditionalExpress a conditionYou should leave now if you want to get the bus.SubjunctiveExpress a wish, doubt, or hypothetical situationIf you were free, we could watch a movie. The academic proofreading tool has been trained on 1000s of academic texts and by native English editors. Making it the most accurate and reliable proofreading tool for students. Upload my document Other uses of modal verbsModal verbs have various other functions in English. They can also be used:In indirect speechIn negative statementsFor emphasisIndirect speechModal verbs are used in indirect speech to indicate what someone else said. While most modal verbs stay the same when used in indirect speech, the past form of some modal verbs is used instead (e.g., can becomes could).Examples: Modal verbs and reported speechDarren said I will visit on Saturday.Darren said he would visit on Saturday.Pria said we should go to France.Pria said we should go to France.Negative statementsIn negative statements containing modal verbs, the adverb not comes immediately after the modal verb and before all other verbs. The negative form is often contracted (e.g., would not becomes wouldnt).Examples: How to use modal verbsTera cant focus because her brother is playing the drums.You mustnt play football inside the house anymore.EmphasisIn everyday conversation, people sometimes place emphasis on a modal verb to refute a previous statement or question. The emphasised word is often italicised when written down.Examples: Modal verbs emphasising a statementWhy cant you be nice?I can be nice!You wont finish the project on time.I will finish it on time!Other interesting language articlesIf you want to know more about commonly confused words, definitions, common mistakes, and differences between US and UK spellings, make sure to check out some of our other language articles with explanations, examples, and quizzes. Frequently asked questions Is it would of or would have? Would is a modal verb thats often used along with the auxiliary verb have to indicate that something was possible in the past but no longer is (e.g., She would have been a professional athlete if she hadnt broken her leg). It can be contracted to wouldve.People sometimes mistakenly write would of because of its similar pronunciation. However, would of is never correct. What does may mean? May is a modal verb used to indicate possibility (e.g., I may miss the bus), make a request (e.g., May I have a drink?), or indicate permission (e.g., You may sit down). We strongly encourage students to use sources in their work. You can cite our article (APA Style) or take a deep dive into the articles below. This Scribbr article Ryan, E. (2023, December 06). What Is a Modal Verb? | Definition & Examples. Scribbr. Retrieved 23 June 2025, from Sources Aarts, B. (2011). Oxford modern English grammar. Oxford University Press. Butterfield, J. (Ed.). (2015). Fowlers dictionary of modern English usage (4th ed.). Oxford University Press. Show all sources (3) Garner, B. A. (2016). Garners modern English usage (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

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