

PRACTICAL ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONALS

LESSON 16

MODAL VERBS: DEDUCTION ABOUT THE PRESENT

Some modal verbs can be used to express deduction about the present: **must**, **can't**, **may**, **might**, **could**.

STRUCTURE: MODAL + VERB INFINITIVE WITHOUT 'TO'	
We use must to express that we feel sure that something is <u>true</u> .	<i>The team is playing really well today; they must win.</i> <i>They must be very rich – look at their big house!</i>
We use can't to say we are sure that something is <u>impossible</u> .	<i>She can't be so ill – I saw her playing volleyball yesterday.</i> <i>I don't believe you – it can't be true.</i>
We use may , could or might to say that <u>it is possible that something will happen in the future or is happening now</u> .	<i>They may be arriving tomorrow.</i> <i>He might be away on holiday at the moment.</i> <i>He could be away on holiday.</i> <i>He might get the job.</i>
The negative of may is may not . The negative of might is might not . Both may not and might not mean that <u>it is possible that something will not happen or is not happening now</u> .	<i>He might not get the job.</i> <i>I may not pass the exam.</i> <i>I might not go to the match tomorrow.</i>

Fill in each gap using a modal verb.

Example:

Someone is knocking on the door. I'm sure it's my brother – he promised to come today.

*Someone is knocking on the door. It **must** be my brother – he promised to come today.*

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1. I'm sure he is here - I can see his car in front of the building.
He _____ be here. I can see his car in front of the building.
2. They're coming this week but I don't know which day.
They _____ be coming tomorrow.
3. I'm not sure I'm going to pass the exam. I don't feel very confident.
I _____ pass the exam. I don't feel very confident.
4. I've bought a lottery ticket. There's a chance I'll become a millionaire!
I _____ become a millionaire!
5. I'm sure she doesn't speak French very well - she's only lived in Paris for a few weeks.
She _____ speak French very well. She's only lived in Paris for a few weeks.
6. My key's not in my pocket or on my desk so I'm sure it's in the drawer.
My key's not in my pocket or on my desk so it _____ be in the drawer.
7. Someone told me that Mark was in Mexico but I saw him yesterday so I'm sure he's not abroad.
Mark _____ be abroad.
8. You got the job? That's great. I'm sure you're delighted.
You got the job? That's great. You _____ be delighted.
9. They told me to prepare the project by tomorrow but it's almost impossible to have it done so fast.
I _____ finish it by tomorrow if I stay at work all night, but I'm not sure.
10. I asked them to send the goods as soon as possible; we _____ receive them by the end of the week if the post is fast.