

1 All modal verbs can be used to express degrees of probability. Which of these sentences express probability? Put a ✓. Which don't? Put a x.

Example She must be very rich. ✓ (probability) You must do your homework. x

- a We might go to Hawaii for our honeymoon.
b You mustn't smoke in this part of the restaurant. obligation
c He can't be coming. It's already after ten o'clock.
d She could speak three languages fluently by the time she was five. ability



- e He could be working in the library.
f The weather forecast says it may snow tomorrow.
g Good morning. May I speak to Mr Jones? permission
h Will you help me do my homework? willingness
i That will be Ken on the phone. He promised to ring.
j You should see a doctor as soon as possible. advice/obligation
k It's eight o'clock. They should be arriving soon.
l They must have won the lottery.
m You should have told her the truth. obligation
n What concepts do the other sentences express?
Example You must do your homework. (obligation)

MODAL VERBS

1 Discussing grammar

1 Which of the words in the right hand column can fit into the sentences on the left? Sometimes several will fit. Discuss the possibilities with a partner.

- a I ask you a question about this exercise?
b you help me with this exercise, please?
c He'll hurry if he wants to get here in time
d I be able to come round and see you tonight.
e Sally read when she was only three.
f I be seeing Theo later this evening, but I'm not sure
g You be feeling very excited about your trip to Florida.
h They have finished dinner by now.
i You should pass the exam easily. You've worked really hard.
j She always has to leave work early on Fridays.
k That be the taxi.

- must
can
may
might
could
should
will/'ll
have/has to

2 Underline the correct answer.

- a I'm sorry I'm late. I had to go/should have gone to the post office.
b You mustn't/don't have to go to France to learn French, but it helps.
c You mustn't/don't have to drive if you've been drinking.
d I'm sorry. I may/not/cannot be able to come to your party on Saturday.
e You lucky thing! How could you/were you able to get Madonna's autograph?



- f I just waited outside the stage door and asked her if I could/was able to have it.
g The car wouldn't/couldn't start this morning, so I was late for work.
h I wouldn't/couldn't start the car this morning, so I was late for work.
i Do this exercise for homework. You shouldn't/mustn't have any problems with it.
j We needn't have paid/didn't need to pay to get into the museum. It was free.

LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

Modal verbs of probability

1 Read the newspaper headlines. What do you think has happened to the man and the woman? Read the ideas below. Which do you agree with?

'Excuse me... I've just jumped off the Empire State Building!'

- He must be Superman!
He can't be serious. He must be joking.
He might be a bungee-jumper.
He could have come down by parachute.
He might have been trying to commit suicide.
He may be acting in a film.
He must have injured himself.
His story will be in all the newspapers.
He may become famous.

40 YEARS IN BED - WITH FLU

She probably doesn't have flu. (can't)
It's likely that she has had a more serious illness. (must)
Perhaps she is just very lazy. (might)
It's not possible that the doctor told her to stay in bed for so long. (couldn't)
Surely someone has been looking after her. (must)
She will probably find it very difficult to walk again. (may)

2 Rewrite the ideas in B using the modal verb in brackets.