

Grammar: Modals of probability – *must*, *can't*, *may*, *might*, *could*

6. Complete the chart.

Use <i>must</i> for something you're almost certain of.	Use <i>can't</i> for something you believe is impossible.	Use <i>may</i> , <i>might</i> , and <i>could</i> for something that you believe is possible.
You have to be 14 or older to go on that ride. It _____ be really terrifying.	Ralph doesn't speak French, so he _____ be from France.	I don't know where your sister is, but she _____ be upstairs. I _____ not go to the barbecue because I haven't finished my homework. My dog doesn't want to eat. He _____ be sick.

➤ Check your answers: Grammar reference, p. 110

7. Choose the correct answers.

- The roller coaster **must** / **can't** be fun. There are lots of people in line.
- You **must** / **can't** expect to win the lottery. Millions of people play it every week.
- You **must** / **can't** be really tired. You fell asleep twice during the movie.
- My neighbor **must** / **can't** make a lot of money. He's always taking expensive trips.
- She **must** / **can't** be a good student. She misses school at least once a week.
- I **must** / **can't** be late. I left an hour early!



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Use *must* for something you're almost certain of.
Use *can't* for something you believe is impossible.
Use *might*, *may*, and *could* for something that you believe is possible.

I/You/He/She/It/We/They

must be really terrifying.

must be terrified.

must not be relaxed.

can't be from France.

may/might/could be upstairs.

may/might not go to the barbecue.

may/might/could be sick.

**2. Circle the correct answer. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.**

1. I ____ be in class tomorrow. I don't feel well.
a. could b. might not c. must d. may not
2. You ____ be exhausted. You only slept an hour last night.
a. can't b. must not c. must d. might not
3. Eva ____ be confused about our homework. She just explained it to me.
a. can't b. could c. may d. might not
4. We ____ go on the roller coaster. I don't think we're tall enough.
a. must b. might not c. may not d. could
5. They ____ be surprised. They knew we were planning a party.
a. could b. may c. can't d. might

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

1. You haven't eaten all day? Let me make you a snack.
You _____ be hungry!
2. My mom _____ be at work or at the mall. She's not here.
3. We _____ fail the test. The teacher said we could look at our books.
4. Your brother _____ get hurt if he's not careful.
5. That guy over there is speaking French. He _____ be the new student from Canada.
6. You drank three glasses of water 15 minutes ago. You _____ be thirsty again.

Get it RIGHT!

Don't use *must* to discuss probability in the future.

If you don't go to bed now, you **will** be tired tomorrow. NOT: ~~If you don't go to bed now, you **must** be tired tomorrow.~~

Speaking: Surprising situations

9. **YOUR TURN** Read the situations below. Why do you think they're happening? Discuss with a partner. Be creative, and use *must*, *can't*, *might*, *may*, and *could*.

Situation 1: John bought a new bike last week, but he isn't using it. He's walking to school this morning.

Situation 2: Sean is a great athlete. He loves to play basketball, baseball, and football, but he isn't playing any sports at school this year.

Situation 3: Alicia has an important test in school tomorrow, but right now she's on a plane, going to Japan.

John's bike must be broken.

It can't be broken. It's new.

Well, it could have a flat tire. Maybe . . .

SITUATION 1

Jon's must have a flat tire

Jhon might not know how to drive a bike

He must have a flat tire If his bike isn't in working condition, walking would be the only option

SITUATION 2

He may have a broke leg

He must be focusing on academics. Perhaps he has decided to prioritize his studies this year over sports

He might be busy with other things

SITUATION 3

She must be tired of school

Alicia must have planned this trip before knowing about the test. It's possible that her travel plans were made well in advance.

Jhon may have a flat tire

The teacher may be is getting married.

Sean may have a health emergency.

Alice must had an interview in Japan.