



MODAL VERBS

PROBABILIDAD Y CERTEZA¹

MUST, CAN, MAY, MIGHT y COULD son verbos modales. Se utilizan para expresar certeza o probabilidad. Después del verbo modal, utilizamos el verbo en infinitivo, sin 'TO'.

MUST y CAN'T

Se utilizan para expresar una deducción lógica basada en evidencia presente. Lo usamos cuando estamos seguros de que algo es verdadero.

You've been working all day. You must be tired.
That can't be Jim because he's in Canada.
You can't be hungry after eating so much.

MAY / MIGHT / COULD

Se utilizan para expresar que algo es posible en el presente o en el futuro. Puede ser verdadero, podrá serlo o podrá pasar.

She might / may / could be Dave's sister. She looks like him. (Perhaps she is Dave's sister.)
Dave didn't come to class today. He may / might / could be ill. (Perhaps he is ill.)
If you take a taxi you may / might / could get there on time. (Perhaps you will get there on time.)
Take a coat. It may / might / could rain later. (Perhaps it will rain.)

MAY NOT / MIGHT NOT

Expresan una posibilidad negativa; algo que probablemente no suceda.

Don't worry. It may / might not ever happen. (Perhaps it won't happen.)
Don't worry. It couldn't ever happen. (It's impossible for it to happen.)

Certeza: Could not : algo imposible que suceda

CAN

Se usa para expresar que algo es posible porque:

- alguien tiene la habilidad:

When they are three, most children can speak.
Can you use a computer?
I can't understand this exercise.

- está permitido:

You can go home now if you want.
I'm sorry, madam, you can't park here. (It isn't permitted.)
Can I open the window? – Yes, of course you can.

También se utiliza para expresar una posibilidad en sentido general:

Learning a new language can be difficult.
You can take a train there. There's one every hour.

CAN es diferente de **MAY / MIGHT / COULD**:

It can snow a lot here in winter. (It's possible for it to snow in general.)
It may snow this weekend. (Perhaps it will snow this weekend) NOT ~~It can snow this weekend.~~

Si se habla de algo específico que puede suceder, se utiliza **MAY / MIGHT / COULD**.

¹ Clarke, Simon. *Macmillan English Grammar in Context*. Essential with key. Macmillan. Thailand: 2012.

Ejercitación

1) Put the words in order.

- a might I it later rain think *I think it might rain later.*
- b think do you us they can see ?
- c may the experts the climate say warmer get
- d the think answer I correct don't can this be
- e the lights they are on at home must be because
- f could right you be but not sure I'm
- g it's can't park there prohibited because you
- h they the too results can't be right are because high

2) Choose the correct form.

- a That may / *must* be John's calculator but I'm not sure.
- b She *can* / *could* be Italian because of her accent.
- c There's still no answer so they *must* / *can't* be out for the evening.
- d You never know, it *can* / *could* be sunny tomorrow.
- e That information *can* / *might* be correct but I'm going to check on the Internet.
- f The Loch Ness monster *may* / *can't* exist. It's impossible.
- g I *can't* / *might* go to the football match but I don't know yet.
- h This *must* / *could* be the right answer – I'm certain.
- i It *can* / *might* be difficult to get a job without a good education.
- j He's been working on the book 14 hours a day for a month. He *could* / *must* be exhausted.
- k He *can't* / *may* be from Austria. He doesn't speak German.

3) Read the text about Darwin's theory of evolution.

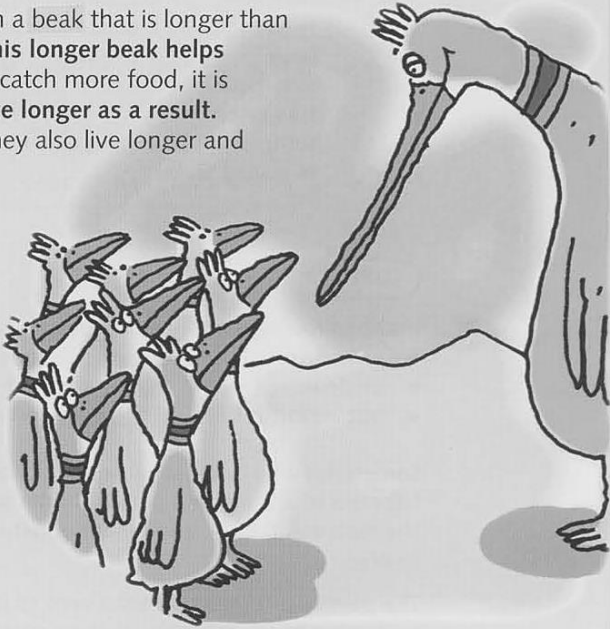
The Theory of Evolution

Charles Darwin based his theory of evolution on his observations as a naturalist. He noticed that animals produce more young than they need to replace themselves. He also noticed that animals of the same species can be different, and that the young inherit these differences from their parents.

Imagine a bird species. One day a bird is born with a beak that is longer than the beak of other birds in the species. **a Perhaps this longer beak helps the bird to catch more food.** Because the bird can catch more food, it is healthier than the other birds. **b It will possibly live longer as a result.** The chicks inherit the gene for the longer beak. They also live longer and therefore have more chicks. The gene continues from generation to generation. **c Eventually, it is possible that all the birds in the species will have the longer beak.**

d We are certain that this process takes thousands of years. The better adapted animals are more successful. **e When a species cannot evolve fast enough, it is possible for it to die out.** **f Perhaps this explains the disappearance of the dinosaurs.**

Darwin's Theory of Evolution is based on what we can see now. **g It is not possible for us to be sure that it is correct.** That is why it is a theory and not a law.



Rewrite the sentences in **bold** using the words given:

- | | | |
|----|-------|--|
| a. | might | This longer beak might help the bird to catch more food. |
| b. | may | |
| c. | could | |
| d. | must | |
| e. | can | |
| f. | might | |
| g. | can't | |