# Grammar Mini-Lesson: Modals of Deduction and Speculation (B2 Level)

🔍 What are Modals of Deduction and Speculation?

Modals of deduction and speculation are used to guess or make logical conclusions about something based on evidence or probability. They help us say how sure or unsure we are about a situation — in the present, past, or future.

## 🧠 Modals for Present Deduction

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Modal | Meaning | Example |
| must | 90–100% sure (positive) | He must be tired after the trip. |
| might / may / could | 40–60% sure (possibility) | She might be at the library. |
| can't / couldn't | 0–10% sure (negative) | He can't be the manager — he's too young! |

## ⏳ Modals for Past Deduction

Use this form: modal + have + past participle

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Modal | Meaning | Example |
| must have + V3 | Almost certain (positive) | She must have left already. |
| might/may/could have + V3 | Possible | They might have missed the train. |
| can't/couldn't have + V3 | Almost impossible | He can't have eaten the whole cake! |

## 🔁 Modals for Future Speculation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Modal | Meaning | Example |
| will | Confident prediction | She will be late — traffic is awful. |
| might / may / could | Possibility | He might win the competition tomorrow. |

## ⚠️ Common Mistakes

❌ He must has gone.

✅ He must have gone. → Use have, not has, after a modal.

❌ She can be at home now. It’s late.

✅ She must be at home now. It’s late. → Use must (not can) for strong deduction.

❌ They might had forgotten.

✅ They might have forgotten.

## ✏️ Practice Activity

A. Complete the sentences with a suitable modal of deduction. Use the present or past form.

1. He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be hungry. He just had lunch.

2. You \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have seen me. I was abroad!

3. She \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be the new manager — I saw her in the director’s office.

4. They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have arrived by now — the meeting started at 10.

5. This \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ be Emma’s coat. Hers is red.

## 🧩 Answers:

1. can’t

2. can’t / couldn’t

3. must

4. must

5. might / could / may