

## Session 2

Meet the weather supercomputer. Scientists hope it will make future weather predictions more accurate - but we will still need the words **may**, **might** and **could**. In this Session we'll show you how to use them.

### Activity 1 The Weather Supercomputer

#### Might, may and could

Before we meet the supercomputer, let's look at the words **might**, **may** and **could** in more detail.

We use **might + verb**, **may + verb** or **could + verb** to talk about the possibility of something in the present or the future, when we are making a guess about a present situation, or we aren't sure if something will happen in the future.

Examples:

I **might go** to the exhibition at the Tate this afternoon. (future)  
He's travelling in Eastern Europe. He **may be** in Ukraine by now. (present)  
We **could have** some problems later this year. (future)

There is no difference in meaning between **might**, **may** and **could**.

We use **might not / mightn't** and **may not** to talk about negative possibility. We don't usually use a contraction for **may not**.

We cannot use **could not / couldn't** for possibility in the same way as **might not** and **may not**.

Examples:

We **might not move** into the new offices until the New Year.  
Our client **may not agree** with our suggestions.



#### To do

Read this article about the weather supercomputer. Watch out for words and phrases that talk about future possibilities - then do the activity to test what you've learnt!

#### The Met Office supercomputer: what it means

##### (Part 1)

Britain loves nothing more than talking about the weather, so **the Met Office's latest project might be** the most British thing ever. They're

building a £97m supercomputer to provide more accurate, frequent weather forecasts. **It will also help** with climate modelling, which is when weather scientists, or meteorologists, use a computer model of how the atmosphere, oceans, land and ice all interact.

**It could help** the Met Office forecast the future of our planet's climate. Read on to learn about some other changes **this supercomputer could also bring**.

#### (Part 2)

##### **Parties at the newspapers...**

One thing the media in the UK know very well is that British people love a weather story. The Daily Express had more than 10 weather stories on their front page last year! Despite the fact that winter comes round every year, the annual changing of the seasons continues to make headlines in all the major newspapers and across the BBC.

This new supercomputer promises a variety of new potential weather stories. **There might be** a darker side to this though...

#### (Part 3)

##### **Weather headlines may get more serious**

British weather has previously been very difficult to forecast. Britain is an island nation between the Atlantic Ocean and mainland Europe, so if the wind direction changes even a little bit, you can really feel it. It's also the meeting place for warm tropical air and cold arctic air, so there are lots of complex weather systems.

**The new supercomputer will be** a lot more accurate. **There will be** a lot more data available to the media - and **this could mean** that headlines are full of catastrophic – and accurate – predictions!

#### (Part 4)

##### **The Met office will become world leaders in weather**

**The Cray XC40 machine will be** one of the most advanced supercomputers in the world, when it is completed (in 2017).

To give you an idea:

It is more powerful than 100,000 PlayStations.

It can perform 16 quadrillion calculations every second.

At 140 tonnes, it weighs the same 11 double-decker buses.

**It will have** 120,000 times more memory than your smartphone.

##### **The supercomputer's predictions could change our lives**

Weather forecasts are really, really important. Floods destroy people's homes. Airports rely on predictions to help them fly safely. Hospitals need predictions from the Met Office to calculate how much bed space **they may need**, because extreme weather often affects people's health.

#### (Part 5)

**More accurate forecasts can also help** businesses - if bad weather's on the way, gas and electricity companies can prepare for increased demand. Extreme weather **could also cause** damage to supply lines so engineers need to be ready to make repairs.

##### **More weather to talk about**

Whether it's on the bus, the train, or on social media, we love talking about the weather. However, British people love humour - so you **may see and hear** many more jokes about it as well!

This article is based on an original [BBC news story](#).

#### **Next**

Hopefully you now feel more confident using **may**, **might** and **could** to talk about probable and definite future situations.

Are you wondering what might happen in the next activity?! Click on 'next' and you will find out!

