

7.1 Present modal verbs

GR7.1)))

- 1 I **might leave** early this afternoon, as the meeting has been cancelled.
- 2 You **needn't buy** any sugar – I've given it up.
- 3 Children no longer **have to wear** uniforms in school, thank goodness. I hated wearing mine.
- 4 They **shouldn't behave** like that in class. The teacher **ought to be** much stricter with them.
- 5 You **can't smoke** inside the building. You **have to go** to the smoking area.
- 6 Do you think that young man **could be** Angela's brother? He looks very like her.

We use modal verbs (e.g. *must, can, could, might, should*) in a number of ways. We also use some non-modal verbs (e.g. *have to, need (to), ought to*) in a similar way. These uses include:

Obligation and necessity

- We use *must, mustn't* and *have to* to talk about what we are obliged to do (or obliged not to do) or what is necessary (or not necessary).

You **must be** at work by 9 a.m.

We **mustn't be** late for the meeting.

Lack of obligation and necessity

- We use *don't have to*, to talk about what we are not obliged to do. We do not use *mustn't* in this way.
- We use *don't need to* to talk about what isn't necessary. We can also use *needn't*, but this is less common.

We **don't have to wear** a tie at work. It's our choice.

We **don't need to leave/needn't leave** until this afternoon.

Advice and recommendation

- We use *should, shouldn't* and *ought to* to give advice, recommendations and suggestions. We generally do not use *ought to* in direct questions and negatives.

Do you think I **should say** something?

You **ought to talk** to your boss.

Permission and prohibition

- We use *can* to talk about what is permitted or allowed. We also use *may*, but this is less common and more formal.
- We use *can't* to talk about what is not permitted or not allowed. To give more emphasis, we can use *mustn't*.

Employees **can use** the gym for free.

You **can't smoke** in public buildings.

Possibility and probability

- We use *could, might* and *may* to talk about what is possible.

The meeting **might be** quite interesting.

- 1 Choose the correct options to complete the email.

Dear Mr Bertrand,

This email is to confirm that you have been entered for the ITE exam at 9.30 a.m. on 24th April.

If you are unable to attend the exam on this date, you ¹ *should / can* let us know as soon as possible so that we ² *must / may* offer the place to another candidate. If you are able to attend the exam, you ³ *do not need to / shouldn't* contact us. However, if due to unforeseen circumstances you fail to attend the exam on the day, you ⁴ *must / might* contact us within 24 hours so that we ⁵ *can / must* enter you for the exam on another date at no extra cost.

You ⁶ *must / can* bring some form of photo ID to the exam. This ⁷ *must / might* be an original document and not a photocopy. If you do not provide photo ID, you ⁸ *will not have to / will not be able to* take the exam. You also ⁹ *could / need to* bring your own pen and pencil. You ¹⁰ *have to / can* also take one bottle of water into the examination room.

Directions for how to find the examination centre are in the attachment.

Best wishes,

The Examinations Office

- 2 Complete the conversations with appropriate modal verbs or (*don't*) *have to*/*(don't)* *need to*/*ought to*.

A Are you going to the meeting tomorrow?

B I ¹ _____ go, but I'm not sure.

A You ² _____ tell Suzy about my new job. I don't want her to know just yet.

B OK, don't worry. I won't say anything to her.

A ³ _____ (you) smoke in public buildings in England?

B No, you ⁴ _____. It was banned in 2007.

A Do you think I ⁵ _____ look for a new job? What's your advice?

B Well, you've been saying for ages you're fed up with your job. So, maybe yes, you ⁶ _____.

A ⁷ _____ (you) wear jeans at your work?

B Yes, we ⁸ _____ if we want to. But they ⁹ _____ be dark blue and smart.

A ¹⁰ _____ (you) wear a suit at your work?

B No, we ¹¹ _____. But of course we ¹² _____ if we want to. Some people do and some don't.

7.2 Past modals of deduction

GR7.2

- 1 It's awfully quiet up there. I think the children **must have fallen** asleep.
- 2 Do you think he **could have heard** us? He doesn't look very pleased.
- 3 Go back and look for it. You **might have dropped** it in the car.

We can use *may/must/can't/might/could* + *have* + past participle to make deductions about something in the past.

- We use *must have* + past participle when we feel we are certain something happened or is true.

*James isn't in his office. He **must have just left**.*

*I didn't know Olivia lived in Berlin. She **must've moved** there quite recently.*

In speaking and informal writing we generally use 've instead of the full form *have*.

*He **must've been mistaken**.*

*They **might've got lost**.*

- We use *can't/couldn't have* + past participle when we feel we are certain something didn't happen or wasn't true.

Jim wasn't at the meeting this morning, which isn't like him.

*He **can't have known** about it.*

*You **couldn't have seen** Alice earlier. She's in Dubai at the moment.*

We can sometimes use *must not have* in the same way.

However, we do not usually use the contracted form *mustn't have*.

*They **must not have read** the notice.*

- We use *might/could/may have* + past participle when we think something possibly happened or was possibly true. We do not use *can have*.

*She's late. She **might've missed** the bus.*

*I've looked everywhere for my phone. I suppose I **could've left** it in the taxi.*

*They don't know what to do. They **may not have understood** the instructions correctly.*

- 1 Complete the sentences with words from each box.

A can't have could have might have must have (x2)

B been finished had handed in met

- 1 You _____ already! You only started a few minutes ago.
- 2 The new accounts manager Silvia looks familiar. I think we _____ before. But I'm not sure.
- 3 I saw Carlos driving a new sports car. He _____ a pay rise!
- 4 Someone _____ your keys at reception. Let's go and ask.
- 5 You were still in the office when the burglars broke in? You _____ terrified!

- 2 Complete the conversations using an appropriate modal verb of deduction and the verb in brackets.

1 A Where on earth are Olga and Bogdan? They should've been here half an hour ago.

B Well, they _____ (get) lost. They've never been here before, I don't think.

2 A The bill is £75!

B That can't be right. I think they _____ (overcharge) us.

3 A Erica hasn't been in touch yet.

B Well, she _____ (not/get) your message asking her to call you.

4 A I had a drink with Andrew Horton last night.

B That _____ (be) fun! He just seems to talk about work all the time, doesn't he?

5 A I didn't see you at the reception last night.

B Oh, we _____ (just/miss) each other. I left quite early – at about 7.30 a.m.

- 3 Complete the second sentence using an appropriate modal verb of deduction so the meaning is the same.

1 Maybe she missed the bus.

*She **might've missed** the bus.*

2 I'm sure there was some mistake.

There _____

3 Perhaps he didn't understand.

He _____

4 I'm sure they didn't realize.

They _____

5 It's possible Karen went home early.

Karen _____