

# Modals of deduction and possibility (Present and Past)

Los modales de deducción y posibilidad se utilizan para expresar qué grado de seguridad tenemos sobre una situación, tanto en el presente como en el pasado.

## A. Deducción y posibilidad en el PRESENTE

Estructura: **Subject + modal verb + infinitive (sin to)**

### 1. **CAN'T** (certeza negativa)

Usamos can't cuando estamos seguros de que algo no es verdad.

It can't be her birthday today. She was born in June. (No puede ser su cumpleaños hoy. Nació en junio.)

He can't be at home. The lights are off. (No puede estar en casa.)

### 2. **MAY / MIGHT / COULD** (posibilidad)

Usamos estos modales cuando no estamos seguros, pero pensamos que algo es posible.

She may be ill. (Puede que esté enferma.)

He could be at home. (Podría estar en casa.)

They might be late because of the traffic. (Puede que lleguen tarde.)

Importante: No usamos couldn't para expresar posibilidad negativa. Usamos: may not / might not

x **You couldn't get the job.** **You might not get the job.**

### 3. **MUST** (certeza positiva)

Usamos must cuando estamos casi seguros de que algo es verdad.

You must be tired. You worked all day. (Debes de estar cansado.)

She must like music. She goes to concerts every week.

## B. Deducción y posibilidad en el PASADO

Estructura: **Subject + modal verb + have + past participle**

### 1. **MUST HAVE** (certeza positiva en el pasado)

Estamos seguros de que algo ocurrió.

The thief must have had a key. (El ladrón debió de tener una llave.)

She must have forgotten the meeting.

### 2. **CAN'T HAVE / COULDN'T HAVE** (certeza negativa en el pasado)

Estamos seguros de que algo no ocurrió.

He can't have taken the money. He wasn't there.

They couldn't have known the answer.

### 3. **MAY HAVE / MIGHT HAVE / COULD HAVE** (posibilidad en el pasado)

No estamos seguros de lo que pasó.

She may have missed the bus.

They could have left early.

He might not have seen your message.



# Exercises modals

## EXERCISE 1 – Choose the correct modal (PRESENT)

Completa las frases con can't / must / may / might / could.

- She \_\_\_\_\_ be at home. The lights are on and her car is outside.  
He \_\_\_\_\_ be very rich. He never works and travels all the time.  
They \_\_\_\_\_ be in class now. It's Saturday.  
Anna isn't answering her phone. She \_\_\_\_\_ be asleep.  
This \_\_\_\_\_ be John's bag. His name is on it.  
He \_\_\_\_\_ be the teacher. He looks too young.  
She \_\_\_\_\_ be angry. She hasn't spoken to anyone all day.  
That \_\_\_\_\_ be the right answer. It doesn't make sense.

## EXERCISE 2 – Rewrite using a modal of deduction (PRESENT)

Reescribe las frases usando un modal de deducción.

Ejemplo:

I'm sure she is tired. → She must be tired.

1. I'm sure it isn't his phone. → \_\_\_\_\_
2. It's possible they are late. → \_\_\_\_\_
3. I'm sure he isn't at school today. → \_\_\_\_\_
4. It's possible she is ill. → \_\_\_\_\_
5. I'm sure they like music. → \_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 3 – Choose the correct option (PAST)

Elige la opción correcta.

1. She didn't answer the phone. She must have / can't have been asleep.
2. He wasn't at home, so he may have / must have left early.
3. They can't have / might have known the answer. They didn't study.
4. The door was locked. The thief must have / may have had a key.
5. He looks surprised. He can't have / might have heard the news.

## EXERCISE 4 – Complete the sentences (PAST)

Completa con must have / can't have / might have / could have.

1. She didn't come to the party. She \_\_\_\_\_ forgotten about it.
2. He passed the exam easily. He \_\_\_\_\_ studied a lot.
3. They \_\_\_\_\_ taken the money. It's still here.
4. I'm not sure, but she \_\_\_\_\_ missed the bus.
5. The lights were off. They \_\_\_\_\_ been at home.

## EXERCISE 5 – Translate into English

Traduce usando modales de deducción.

1. Debe de estar cansado. Ha trabajado todo el día.
2. No puede ser verdad. Yo estuve allí.
3. Puede que haya perdido el tren.
4. Debieron de llegar tarde por el tráfico.
5. No puede haber visto el mensaje.

## EXERCISE 6 – Mixed present & past

Decide si la frase necesita un modal en presente o en pasado y complétala.

1. She isn't here. She \_\_\_\_\_ be at home.
2. He didn't answer yesterday. He \_\_\_\_\_ been busy.
3. That \_\_\_\_\_ be her car. She sold it last week.
4. They arrived very early. They \_\_\_\_\_ left home early.
5. He \_\_\_\_\_ be the thief. He was with me all day.

## EXERCISE 1 – Choose the correct modal (PRESENT)

- She must be at home.  
He must be very rich.  
They can't be in class now.  
Anna isn't answering her phone. She may / might / could be asleep.  
This must be John's bag.  
He can't be the teacher.  
She may / might / could be angry.  
That can't be the right answer.

## EXERCISE 2 – Rewrite using a modal of deduction (PRESENT)

- I'm sure it isn't his phone.  
→ It can't be his phone.  
It's possible they are late.  
→ They may / might / could be late.  
I'm sure he isn't at school today.  
→ He can't be at school today.  
It's possible she is ill.  
→ She may / might / could be ill.  
I'm sure they like music.  
→ They must like music.

## EXERCISE 3 – Choose the correct option (PAST)

- She didn't answer the phone. She must have been asleep.  
He wasn't at home, so he may have left early.  
They can't have known the answer.  
The door was locked. The thief must have had a key.  
He looks surprised. He might have heard the news.

## EXERCISE 4 – Complete the sentences (PAST)

- She didn't come to the party. She might have / could have forgotten about it.  
He passed the exam easily. He must have studied a lot.  
They can't have taken the money.  
I'm not sure, but she might have / could have missed the bus.  
The lights were off. They can't have been at home.

## EXERCISE 5 – Translate into English

- He must be tired. He has worked all day.  
It can't be true. I was there.  
He / She may have missed the train.  
They must have arrived late because of the traffic.  
He / She can't have seen the message.

## EXERCISE 6 – Mixed present & past

- She isn't here. She may / might / could be at home.  
He didn't answer yesterday. He must have been busy.  
That can't be her car.  
They arrived very early. They must have left home early.  
He can't be the thief.

# SOLUTION