

## Modal Verbs: must/can't (deduction), past modals, may, ought to

**B2 Upper  
Intermediate**

### Student Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_ / 56

### Exercise 1 — True or False? (8 points)

Read each statement. Write **True** or **False**.

1. When we say "She must be tired", we are making a logical deduction, not giving an order.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. "Can't" for deduction means we are certain something is true.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

3. "Should have" + past participle is used to express criticism or regret about the past.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

4. "Could have" means it was impossible to do something.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

5. "May" is generally more formal than "might".

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

6. "Ought to" has exactly the same form as "should" — neither uses "to".

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

7. "Would have" is used to talk about hypothetical results in the past.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

8. We can use "must" for both obligation and logical deduction.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise 2 — Multiple Choice (8 points)

Choose the correct option. Circle your answer.

1. There's no answer at the door. They \_\_\_\_ be out.

( must / may / ought to )

2. That \_\_\_\_ be right — the figures don't add up at all.

( can't / must / may )

3. You \_\_\_\_ told me about the meeting — I missed it completely.

( should have / could have / would have )

4. If I had studied harder, I \_\_\_\_ passed the exam.

( would have / should have / could have )

5. I \_\_\_\_ finished the project earlier, but I ran out of time.

( could have / would have / should have )

6. \_\_\_\_ I ask what this charge is for?  
( May / Ought / Must )
7. You \_\_\_\_ to inform your line manager before taking leave.  
( ought / may / must )
8. She \_\_\_\_ be the new director — she has only been here a month.  
( can't / must / ought to )

### Exercise 3 — Matching (8 points)

Match each sentence (1–8) to its correct meaning (a–h). Write the letter.

| Sentences                                                   | Meanings                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. He must know the answer — he wrote the report. ____      | A. A logical deduction that something is true.                |
| 2. She can't have received the email. ____                  | B. A logical deduction that something is false or impossible. |
| 3. You should have saved your work more often. ____         | C. Criticism or regret about a past action.                   |
| 4. I could have taken a different route. ____               | D. An unrealised possibility in the past.                     |
| 5. She would have won if she hadn't made that mistake. ____ | E. A hypothetical result that did not happen.                 |
| 6. May I leave the room? ____                               | F. A formal request for permission.                           |
| 7. There may be some disruption to services. ____           | G. A formal possibility.                                      |
| 8. You ought to read the terms before signing. ____         | H. A recommendation or duty.                                  |

### Exercise 4 — Gap Fill (8 points)

Choose the correct modal form from the brackets.

1. The lights are on — someone \_\_\_\_ be home.  
( must / can't / may )
2. That story \_\_\_\_ be true. It's completely impossible.  
( can't / must / ought to )
3. We \_\_\_\_ booked in advance — the hotel is fully sold out now.  
( should have / could have / would have )
4. If you'd asked me, I \_\_\_\_ given you a lift.  
( could have / should have / would have )
5. They \_\_\_\_ won the contract if they had prepared better.  
( would have / should have / could have )
6. \_\_\_\_ I ask you a few questions about your experience?  
( May / Ought / Must )
7. Employees \_\_\_\_ to submit expenses within 30 days.  
( ought / may / must )
8. She's been studying for twelve hours — she \_\_\_\_ be exhausted.

( must / can't / ought to )

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### Exercise 5 — Word Order (8 points)

Put the words in the correct order to make a sentence.

1. very / She / stressed / must / be

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2. the / be / right / can't / address / That

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3. arrived / should / You / have / earlier

---

4. handled / could / better / I / have / it

---

5. called / would / He / have / if / could / he

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6. attention / May / have / I / your / please

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7. decision / You / to / reconsider / ought / your

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8. changes / be / may / There / to / the / schedule

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## Exercise 6 — Word Sort (8 points)

Write each sentence in the correct column of the table below.

**Word bank:** That can't be the right answer. | She must know — she was there. | He can't have understood the instructions. | You should have checked before sending it. | I could have told you that would happen. | We would have stayed if the weather had been better. | May I interrupt for a moment? | There may be a delay with your order. | May I take your coat? | You ought to take better care of yourself. | They ought to have responded by now. | You really ought to see this film.

| Deduction<br>(must/can't) | Past Modal<br>(should/could/<br>would have) | Formal Possibility<br>(may) | Duty/Recommendation<br>(ought to) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____                     | _____                                       | _____                       | _____                             |
| _____                     | _____                                       | _____                       | _____                             |
| _____                     | _____                                       | _____                       | _____                             |

## Exercise 7 — Complete the Conversation (8 points)

Choose the correct modal form from the brackets.

**A:** Did you hear about the mix-up? It \_\_\_\_ been very stressful for the organisers.  
( must have / could have / ought to )

**B:** Someone \_\_\_\_ double-checked the room bookings.  
( should have / would have / may )

**A:** They \_\_\_\_ avoided the whole situation with one phone call.  
( could have / must have / ought to )

**B:** \_\_\_\_ I ask — do you know who was responsible?  
( May / Must / Ought )

**A:** It \_\_\_\_ have been the venue — they always manage everything so well.  
( can't / must / ought to )

**B:** You \_\_\_\_ speak to the events manager directly.  
( ought to / may / must have )

### Exercise 1 — True or False?

1. When we say "She must be tired", we are making a logical deduction, not giving an order.

✓ **True**

2. "Can't" for deduction means we are certain something is true.

✓ **False**

3. "Should have" + past participle is used to express criticism or regret about the past.

✓ **True**

4. "Could have" means it was impossible to do something.

✓ **False**

5. "May" is generally more formal than "might".

✓ **True**

6. "Ought to" has exactly the same form as "should" — neither uses "to".

✓ **False**

7. "Would have" is used to talk about hypothetical results in the past.

✓ **True**

8. We can use "must" for both obligation and logical deduction.

✓ **True**

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### Exercise 2 — Multiple Choice

1. There's no answer at the door. They \_\_\_\_ be out.

✓ **must**

2. That \_\_\_\_ be right — the figures don't add up at all.

✓ **can't**

3. You \_\_\_\_ told me about the meeting — I missed it completely.

✓ **should have**

4. If I had studied harder, I \_\_\_\_ passed the exam.

✓ **would have**

5. I \_\_\_\_ finished the project earlier, but I ran out of time.

✓ **could have**

6. \_\_\_\_ I ask what this charge is for?

✓ **May**

7. You \_\_\_\_ to inform your line manager before taking leave.

✓ **ought**

8. She \_\_\_\_ be the new director — she has only been here a month.

✓ **can't**

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### Exercise 3 — Matching

1. He must know the answer — he wrote the report.

✓ **A logical deduction that something is true.**

2. She can't have received the email.

✓ **A logical deduction that something is false or impossible.**

3. You should have saved your work more often.

✓ **Criticism or regret about a past action.**

4. I could have taken a different route.

✓ **An unrealised possibility in the past.**

5. She would have won if she hadn't made that mistake.

✓ **A hypothetical result that did not happen.**

6. May I leave the room?

✓ **A formal request for permission.**

7. There may be some disruption to services.

✓ **A formal possibility.**

8. You ought to read the terms before signing.

✓ **A recommendation or duty.**

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### Exercise 4 — Gap Fill

1. The lights are on — someone \_\_\_\_ be home.

✓ **must**

2. That story \_\_\_\_ be true. It's completely impossible.

✓ **can't**

3. We \_\_\_\_ booked in advance — the hotel is fully sold out now.

✓ **should have**

4. If you'd asked me, I \_\_\_\_ given you a lift.

✓ **could have**

5. They \_\_\_\_ won the contract if they had prepared better.

✓ would have

6. \_\_\_\_ I ask you a few questions about your experience?

✓ May

7. Employees \_\_\_\_ to submit expenses within 30 days.

✓ ought

8. She's been studying for twelve hours — she \_\_\_\_ be exhausted.

✓ must

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### Exercise 5 — Word Order

1. ✓ She must be very stressed
  2. ✓ That can't be the right address
  3. ✓ You should have arrived earlier
  4. ✓ I could have handled it better
  5. ✓ He would have called if he could
  6. ✓ May I have your attention please
  7. ✓ You ought to reconsider your decision
  8. ✓ There may be changes to the schedule
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### Exercise 6 — Word Sort

**Deduction (must/can't):**

- ✓ That can't be the right answer.
- ✓ She must know — she was there.
- ✓ He can't have understood the instructions.

**Past Modal (should/could/would have):**

- ✓ You should have checked before sending it.
- ✓ I could have told you that would happen.
- ✓ We would have stayed if the weather had been better.

**Formal Possibility (may):**

- ✓ May I interrupt for a moment?
- ✓ There may be a delay with your order.
- ✓ May I take your coat?

**Duty/Recommendation (ought to):**

- ✓ You ought to take better care of yourself.
- ✓ They ought to have responded by now.

✓ You really ought to see this film.

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### Exercise 7 — Complete the Conversation

1. A: Did you hear about the mix-up? It \_\_\_\_ been very stressful for the organisers.

✓ must have

2. B: Someone \_\_\_\_ double-checked the room bookings.

✓ should have

3. A: They \_\_\_\_ avoided the whole situation with one phone call.

✓ could have

4. B: \_\_\_\_ I ask — do you know who was responsible?

✓ May

5. A: It \_\_\_\_ have been the venue — they always manage everything so well.

✓ can't

6. B: You \_\_\_\_ speak to the events manager directly.

✓ ought to