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Modal Verbs Year 6

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WHAT MODAL VERBS DO



Modal verbs sit before a main verb and show how the speaker views an action.



CERTAINTY

The team **will** finish.



POSSIBILITY

The plan **might** work.



OBLIGATION

You **must** wear a helmet.



PERMISSION

You **may** begin.



ABILITY

We **can** solve it.



ADVICE

You **should** check your work.

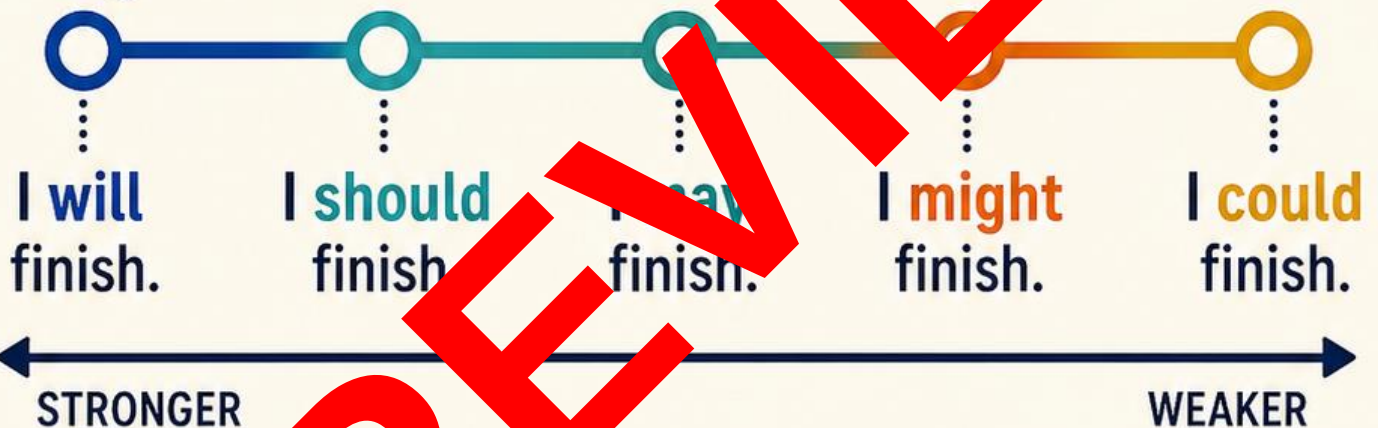
Change the modal verb and you change the meaning.

STRENGTH MATTERS

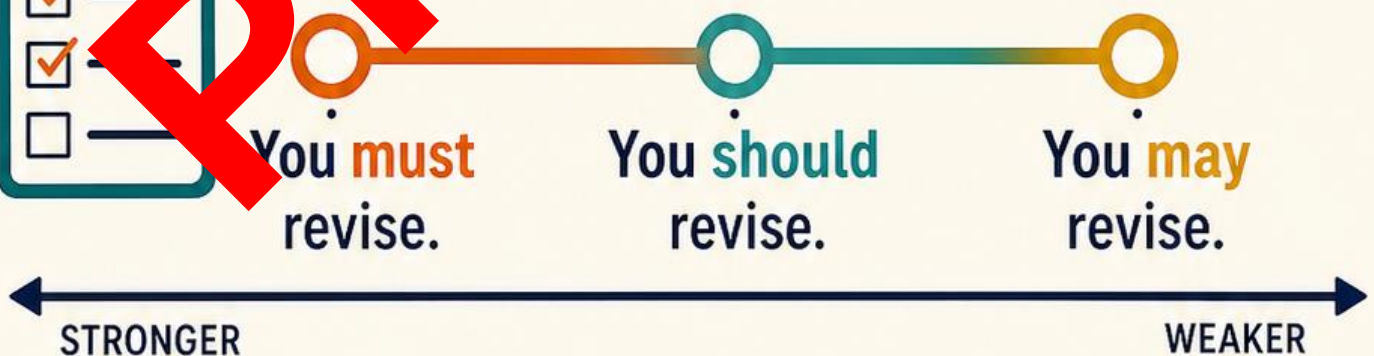
Modal verbs show different degrees of certainty and obligation.



HOW CERTAIN?



HOW NECESSARY?



Choose the modal that matches your evidence, purpose and audience.



MODAL VERBS QUICK REFERENCE

A modal verb comes before a main verb and changes the meaning.

CERTAINTY	POSSIBILITY	OBLIGATION	PERMISSION	ABILITY	ADVICE
					
will, shall	may, might, could	must, have to	may, can, could	can, could	should, ought to

 Strong: You must respond.

 Medium: You should respond.

 Gentle: You might respond.



Check: Is the modal before the main verb? Does its strength suit the purpose? Does its tone suit the audience?



Modal verb + main verb: We might leave.





MODAL MEANING MATCH



For each sentence by the main job its modal verb is doing.



PLAYERS: 2-4



GOAL: Match each sentence card to a purpose, then justify your choice.



1. Shuffle the sentence cards.
2. Draw a card and read it aloud.
3. Place it below the best purpose.
4. Explain the clue created by the modal verb.
5. Check the answer guide.



SCORING: 1 point for a correct match
+ 1 point for a clear explanation.

CERTAINTY — presented as sure

POSSIBILITY — may happen

OBLIGATION — required

PERMISSION — allowed

ABILITY — able to



ADVICE — recommended



MODAL MEANING MATCH – SENTENCE CARDS A

1. The river
will rise
after the storm.



2. The path
might be
slippery



3. Visitors
must remain
behind the line



4. **May** I
borrow the
binoculars?



5. Zara **can**
translate
the sign.



6. You **should**
pack drinking
water.



7. The delivery
could arrive
today.



8. We **will**
meet at
the gate.



MODAL MEANING MATCH – SENTENCE CARDS B

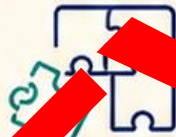
9. Cyclists **must** wear helmets.



10. **Could** I use your ruler?



11. Sam **can** solve the puzzle.



12. You **ought to** read the instructions.



13. The sky **may** clear by noon.



14. The bell **will** ring at three.



15. Participants **have to** register.



16. You **should** label each section.



MODAL MEANING MATCH – ANSWER GUIDE



Match each sentence to the main job its modal expression is doing.



MEANING		MODAL
1.	CERTAINTY	will
2.	POSSIBILITY	might
3.	OBLIGATION	must
4.	PERMISSION	may
5.	ABILITY	can
6.	ADVICE	should
7.	POSSIBILITY	could
8.	CERTAINTY	will
9.	OBLIGATION	must
10.	PERMISSION	could
11.	ABILITY	can
12.	ADVICE	ought to
13.	POSSIBILITY	may
14.	CERTAINTY	will
15.	OBLIGATION	have to
16.	ADVICE	should



Ask students to justify meaning from the whole sentence. A modal can do different jobs in different contexts.



MODALITY MISSION

Choose, compare, change and explain modal verbs to reach the finish.

PLAYERS: 2-4

YOU NEED: counters, one die, prompt cards

1. Place all counters on **START**.
2. Roll, move and draw a card that matches the icon.
3. Give an answer and explain your reasoning.
4. Correct: stay. Try again: move back one space.

First player to FINISH wins.



MODALITY MISSION — PROMPT CARDS

1. CHOOSE:

Rain is possible.
It ____ rain later.



2. CHOOSE:

A helmet is
required. You ____
wear one.



3. COMPARE:

Which is
stronger: may
or will?



4. COMPARE:

Which is more
polite: can or
could?



5. CHANGE:

We will win.
Make it ____
certain.



6. CHANGE:

You must help.
Turn it into
advice.



7. EXPLAIN:

What does can
show in 'I
can swim'?



8. EXPLAIN:

What does may
show in 'May I
enter'?



9. CHOOSE:

Give advice.
You ____ save
your work.



10. CHOOSE:

Show ability.
I ____ lift the box.



11. CHANGE:

You can leave.
Make it a formal
permission
request.



12. EXPLAIN:

How does *might*
change 'The
plan works'?





MODALITY MISSION



— ANSWER GUIDE

1.	may, might or could
2.	must
3.	will
4.	could
5.	We may/might/could v
6.	You should help.
7.	ability
8.	permission
9.	should
10.	can
11.	May I have?
12.	It makes the outcome less certain and shows possibility.

TEACHER NOTE

Accept another accurate modal when it matches the purpose and the student clearly justifies the change.

KEY



CHOOSE

= select



COMPARE

= judge strength
or tone



CHANGE

= rewrite



EXPLAIN

= name the effect





MODAL VERBS – IDENTIFY AND CLASSIFY



Name: _____

Date: _____

A. Find the modal and name its purpose

Underline the modal expression. Write: certainty, possibility, obligation, permission, ability or advice.

1. You must return library books today.	Purpose: _____
2. Mia can repair the model.	Purpose: _____
3. The train might arrive late.	Purpose: _____
4. May we begin the experiment?	Purpose: _____
5. You should reread the final paragraph.	Purpose: _____
6. The storm will reach the coast in minutes.	Purpose: _____

B. Create your own

Write two original sentences. Use a different modal purpose in each. Circle each modal verb.

7. Purpose: _____

8. Purpose: _____



MODAL VERBS – IDENTIFY AND CLASSIFY



Name: ANSWERS

Date: _____

A. Find the modal and name its purpose

Underline the modal expression. Write: certainty, possibility, obligation, permission, ability or advice.

1. You <u>must</u> return library books today.	Purpose: <u>obligation</u>
2. Mia <u>can</u> repair the model.	Purpose: <u>ability</u>
3. The train <u>might</u> arrive late.	Purpose: <u>possibility</u>
4. <u>May</u> we begin the experiment?	Purpose: <u>permission</u>
5. You <u>should</u> reread the final paragraph.	Purpose: <u>advice</u>
6. The storm <u>will</u> reach the coast tonight.	Purpose: <u>certainty</u>

B. Create your own

Write two original sentences. Use a different modal purpose in each. Circle each modal verb.

7. Purpose: <u>certainty</u> <u>The concert (will) begin at seven.</u>
8. Purpose: <u>possibility</u> <u>Our class (might) visit the museum.</u>

MODAL VERBS — STRENGTH AND CERTAINTY



Name: _____ Date: _____



A. Rank the certainty

Number each statement from 1 (strongest certainty) to 4 (weakest certainty).

☐

The rescue team will arrive.

☐

The rescue team should arrive.

☐

The rescue team may arrive.

☐

The rescue team might arrive.

Stronger
certainty



Weaker
certainty

B. Change the strength

5. Make this less certain: We will finish by Friday.



6. Make this more certain: You might complete the course.

C. Explain the effect

7. How does the meaning change from 'You must attend' to 'You should attend'?



8. How does the meaning change from 'The plan may work' to 'The plan will work'?



MODAL VERBS — STRENGTH AND CERTAINTY



Name: ANSWERS Date: _____



A. Rank the certainty

Number each statement from 1 (strongest certainty) to 4 (weakest certainty).

- 1** The rescue team will arrive.
- 2** The rescue team should arrive.
- 3** The rescue team may arrive.
- 4** The rescue team might arrive.

Stronger certainty



Weaker certainty

B. Change the strength

5. Make this less certain: We will finish by Friday.

We might finish by Friday.



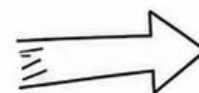
6. Make this more certain: You might complete the course.

You will complete the course.

C. Explain the effect

7. How does the meaning change from 'You must attend' to 'You should attend'?

Must makes attendance required; should makes it advice.



8. How does the meaning change from 'The plan may work' to 'The plan will work'?

Will presents success as certain; may shows possibility.





MODAL VERBS — PURPOSE IN CONTEXT



Name: _____ Date: _____

A. Choose the best modal

Circle the best choice for the context. Then name its purpose.

1. Formal permission at assembly: (May / Can) I address the group?	Purpose: _____
2. Firm laboratory rule: You (must / might) wear goggles.	Purpose: _____
3. Uncertain forecast: It (will / might) snow tonight.	Purpose: _____
4. Past ability: At age eight, Lin (could / must) swim 50 metres.	Purpose: _____
5. Advice to a friend: You (should / may) backup your files.	Purpose: _____
6. Fixed schedule: The ceremony (will / could) begin at ten.	Purpose: _____

B. Justify two choices



7. Why is your choice in sentence 1 suitable for the audience?

8. How does your choice in sentence 3 match the evidence?





MODAL VERBS — PURPOSE IN CONTEXT



Name: ANSWERS Date: _____

A. Choose the best modal

Circle the best choice for the context. Then name its purpose.

1. Formal permission at assembly: (May) / Can) I address the group?	Purpose: <u>permission</u>
2. Firm laboratory rule: You (must) / might) wear goggles.	Purpose: <u>obligation</u>
3. Uncertain forecast: It (will) / (might) snow tonight.	Purpose: <u>possibility</u>
4. Past ability: At age eight, Lin (could) / must) swim 50 metres.	Purpose: <u>ability</u>
5. Advice to a friend: You (should) / may) be on your files.	Purpose: <u>advice</u>
6. Fixed schedule: The ceremony (will) / could) begin at ten.	Purpose: <u>certainty</u>

B. Justify two choices



7. Why is your choice in sentence 1 suitable for the audience?

May is formal and respectful for an assembly audience.

8. How does your choice in sentence 3 match the evidence?



Might shows possibility because the forecast is uncertain.

MODAL VERBS — EDIT AND APPLY



Name: _____ Date: _____

A. Repair each modal verb group

Rewrite each sentence so its modal verb group is grammatically correct.

1. You must to submit the form today.

2. She can solves the final clue.

3. We might will leave early.

4. He should studies the map.

5. May I can borrow the marker?

6. They not must enter this area.

B. Apply modal verbs

Write a four-sentence message persuading students to reduce litter.
Use at least four different modal verbs. Underline each modal.



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Modal verb + base form: *should check, can help, might change*

MODAL VERBS — EDIT AND APPLY



Name: ANSWERS Date: _____

A. Repair each modal verb group

Rewrite each sentence so its modal verb group is grammatically correct.

1. You must to submit the form today.

You must submit the form today.

2. She can solves the final clue.

She can solve the final clue.

3. We might will leave early.

We might leave early.

4. He should studies the map.

He should study the map.

5. May I can borrow the marker?

May I borrow the marker?

6. They not must enter this area.

They must not enter this area.

B. Apply modal verbs

Write a four-sentence message persuading students to reduce litter. Use at least four different modal verbs. Underline each modal.



1. We must put rubbish in the correct bin.

2. We can carry reusable containers.

3. We should remind others kindly.

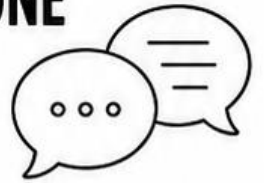
4. Our school will become cleaner when everyone helps.



Modal verb + base form: *should check, can help, might change*



MODAL VERBS – AUDIENCE AND TONE



Name: _____ Date: _____

A. Rewrite for the audience

Rewrite each sentence so the modal choice suits the audience and purpose.

1. Email to the principal: 'Can I leave early?' Make it formal and respectful.

2. Recommendation to a friend: 'You must watch this film.' Make it friendly advice.

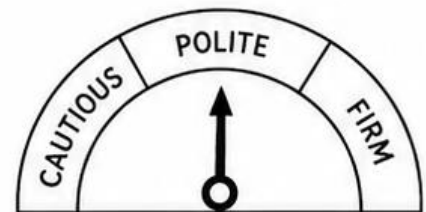
3. Safety sign: 'You could wear eye protection.' Make it a warning.

4. Science report: 'The result will come from heat.' The evidence is uncertain.

5. Group deadline: 'You may bring your section tomorrow.' Completion is required.

B. Name the tone

Write firm, polite or cautious.



6. You must graduate now.

Tone: _____

7. Could you pass the notes?

Tone: _____

8. The data might change.

Tone: _____

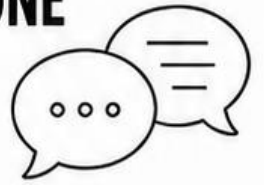
C. Explain

9. How can a modal verb show respect for an audience?





MODAL VERBS – AUDIENCE AND TONE



Name: ANSWERS Date: _____

A. Rewrite for the audience

Rewrite each sentence so the modal choice suits the audience and purpose.

1. Email to the principal: 'Can I leave early?' Make it formal and respectful.

May I leave early?

2. Recommendation to a friend: 'You must watch this film.' Make it friendly advice.

You should watch this film.

3. Safety sign: 'You could wear eye protection.' Make it a firm instruction.

You must wear eye protection.

4. Science report: 'The result will come from heat.' The evidence is uncertain.

The result might come from heat.

5. Group deadline: 'You may bring your section tomorrow.' Completion is required.

You must bring your section tomorrow.

B. Name the tone

Write firm, polite or cautious.

6. You must evacuate now.

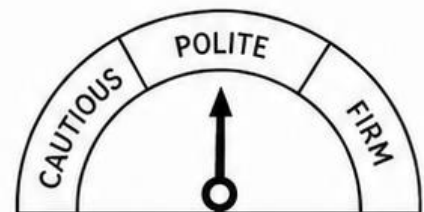
Tone: firm

7. Could you pass the notes?

Tone: polite

8. The data might change.

Tone: cautious



C. Explain

9. How can a modal verb show respect for an audience?

A modal can soften or strengthen a message to suit the relationship and purpose.



MODAL MEANING IN ACTION – ASSESSMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

A. Analyse and apply

1. Underline the modal and name its purpose: Volunteers *must* sign in. Purpose: _____
2. Rank from strongest to weakest certainty: may, should, will. _____ > _____ > _____
3. Circle the more formal request: May / Can I borrow the tools?
4. Explain the difference: *You must attend.* / *You should attend.*

5. Correct the verb group: She *can* *explains* the plan.

6. Show uncertainty: The garden *will* *open* on Saturday.



B. Community garden notice

Community garden volunteers are preparing for opening day.
Write a five- or six-sentence notice for volunteers.

- ☐ one obligation
- ☐ one permission
- ☐ one possibility
- ☐ one example of ability or advice
- ☐ underline at least four modal expressions

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



Explain why your strongest modal is suitable:

MODAL MEANING IN ACTION – ASSESSMENT

Name: ANSWERS Date: _____

A. Analyse and apply

- Underline the modal and name its purpose: Volunteers must sign in. Purpose: obligation
- Rank from strongest to weakest certainty: may, should, will. will > should > may
- Circle the more formal request: May / Can I borrow the tools?
- Explain the difference: *You must attend.* / *You should attend.*
Must makes attendance required; should makes it a choice.
- Correct the verb group: *She can explains the plan.*
She can explain the plan.
- Show uncertainty: *The garden will open on Saturday.*
The garden might open on Saturday.



B. Community garden advice

Community garden volunteers are preparing for opening day.
Write a five- or six-sentence advice for volunteers.

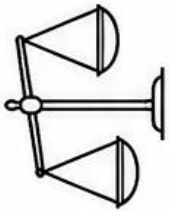
- ☒ one obligation
- ☒ one permission
- ☒ one possibility
- ☒ one example of ability or advice
- ☒ underline at least four modal expressions

- Volunteers must sign in at the gate.
- You may collect gloves from the shed.
- The weather might delay the opening.
- You should check each garden bed.
- We can work safely as a team.
- The garden will welcome visitors at noon.



Explain why your strongest modal is suitable:

Must is suitable because signing in is a required safety rule.



MODAL VERBS YEAR 6 RUBRIC



Student: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____

CRITERIA	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ACHIEVING	CONFIDENT	EXCEEDING
Recognising modal verbs	Finds a few with support.	Finds common modal verbs consistently.	Identifies modal verbs accurately.	Identifies modal expressions in varied texts.	Identifies and explains subtle modal choices.
Explaining purpose and meaning	Gives limited meaning.	Names some purposes.	Explains purpose in context.	Explains how context affects meaning.	Evaluates multiple possible meanings.
Comparing strength	Needs support to compare.	Makes simple comparisons.	Orders modal verbs by strength.	Justifies fine differences in strength.	Evaluates the effect on the reader.
Applying grammar	Modal groups are often inaccurate.	Uses some correct modal + base forms.	Uses modal verbs accurately.	Justifies varied modal groups accurately.	Controls complex choices precisely.
Audience and purpose	Choices rarely suit context.	Makes some suitable choices.	Chooses modals for audience and purpose.	Adjusts tone and purpose.	Crafts nuanced tone and justifies it.

Teacher comment: _____

Modal Verbs

PREVIEW





Learning Goals

We are learning to recognise modal verbs and explain their effect.

We will compare strength, choose purpose and adjust tone for a specific audience.

Success: I can identify, compare, apply and justify a modal verb choice.



PREVIEW



What Is a Modal Verb?

A modal verb comes before a main verb and changes how an action is presented.

It can show certainty, possibility, obligation, permission, ability and advice.

We might leave. You must listen. Ava can swim.



PREVIEW



Where Modal Verbs Sit

Pattern: subject + modal + base verb

They might arrive. You should check. We can help.

The main verb stays in its base form after a modal.

Correct: she can explain. Not: she can explains.





Six Jobs Modal Verbs Can Do

Certainty — will

Possibility — may, might, could

Obligation — must, have to

Permission — may, can, could

Ability — can, could

Advice — should, ought to



PREVIEW



Certainty and Possibility

will = presented as certain

should = expected

may, might, could = possible

Compare: The team will win. / The team might win.

The modal shows how strongly a speaker commits.





Comparing Strength

Stronger → weaker: will → should → may → might/could

Context matters: could can also show ability or permission

Ask: What does the whole sentence mean?

Choose a modal that matches the evidence.





Obligation and Advice

must / have to = required

should / ought to = recommended

You must wear goggles. You should check your notes.

Changing must to should turns requirements into advice.



PREVIEW



Permission

May I enter? — formal permission request

Can I borrow it? — everyday permission request

Could I speak now? — polite request

Choose a form that suits the audience and situation.



PREVIEW



Ability

can = present ability: I can solve it.

could = past or conditional ability: At eight, I could swim.

Can may also show permission.

Use the sentence context to identify the job.



PREVIEW



Negative Modals

cannot / can't = inability or lack of permission

must not = prohibition

should not = advice against an action

may not / might not = negative possibility

Word order: modal + not + base verb



PREVIEW



Audience and Formality

Firm: You must respond today.

Polite: Could you respond today?

Cautious: The result might change.

Formal: May I request an extension?

Tone comes from strength, purpose, and audience.





Modal Verbs in Persuasive Writing

Modal verbs position a reader.

We must reduce litter. — strong obligation

We should use reusable containers. — advice

This change will help our school. — certainty

Choose deliberately; do not overstate weak evidence.



PREVIEW



Informative and Procedural Texts

Informative: Temperatures may fall overnight.

Procedure: You must wear gloves.

Schedule: The session will begin at ten.

Advice: Participants should bring water.

Match the modal to evidence and purpose.



PREVIEW



Avoid Common Errors

Use the base verb: can explain, not can explains.

Do not stack modals: might leave, not might will leave.

Place not after the modal: must not enter.

Choose one modal that carries the intended meaning.



PREVIEW



Edit, Justify and Improve

Repair: She can explains the plan. → She can explain the plan.

Change strength: We will win. → We might win.

Change tone: You must help. → Could you help?

Justify every change with purpose, evidence or audience.





Modal Verbs Mastered!



Modal Verbs Quiz





Question 1

Underline the modal verb:

The hikers might return before sunset.



PREVIEW



Answer 1

might

It shows possibility.



PREVIEW



Question 2

Which sentence states a firm rule?

- A. You might wear a helmet.
- B. You should wear a helmet.
- C. You must wear a helmet.
- D. You could wear a helmet.



Answer 2

C. You must wear a helmet.
Must shows obligation.



PREVIEW



Question 3

True or False?

The sentence “The bus will arrive soon” is more certain than “The bus may arrive soon.”



PREVIEW



Answer 3

True.

Will presents the arrival as more certain than may.



PREVIEW



Question 4

What purpose does may show?

May I borrow your ruler?



PREVIEW



Answer 4

Permission

The speaker is asking to be allowed to borrow the money.



PREVIEW



Question 5

What does should show?

You should check your calculations.



PREVIEW



Answer 5

Advice

The action is recommended, not required.



PREVIEW



Question 6

Which sentence shows ability?

- A. Leah must lift the box.
- B. Leah can lift the box.
- C. Leah might lift the box.
- D. Leah should lift the box.



PREVIEW



Answer 6

B. Leah can lift the box.

Can shows ability in this context.



PREVIEW



Question 7

Which sentence is most certain?

- A. We might finish.
- B. We may finish.
- C. We should finish.
- D. We will finish.



PREVIEW



Answer 7

D. We will finish.

Will is the strongest certainty in this set.



PREVIEW



Question 8

Rewrite this rule as advice:
You must revise your draft.



PREVIEW



Answer 8

You should revise your draft.

Should weakens obligation to advice.



PREVIEW



Question 9

Which is the most polite request?

- A. Help me.
- B. You must help me.
- C. Could you help me?
- D. You will help me.



PREVIEW



Answer 9

C. Could you help me?

Could softens the request.



PREVIEW

Question 10

How does the meaning change?

The team will win. → The team might win.



PREVIEW

Answer 10

The result becomes less certain.

Might changes certainty to possibility.



PREVIEW



Modal Verb Expert!



PREVIEW