



Grammar: Modal verbs

5 Look at the examples in the table and complete the first set of rules with *may*, *could*, *might* and *will*.

Modals of possibility: *may*, *could*, *might* and *will*

I may be a couple of minutes late.

Could they mean an hour?

90 seconds might not matter in other parts of the world.

In countries with strict time keeping, a 9 a.m. business meeting will start promptly at nine.

Rules:

1 When we're sure something is going to happen, we use _____.

When we're unsure and we're talking about possibilities, we use _____, _____ and _____.

6 *May*, *could*, *might* and *will* are all modal verbs. Choose a or b to complete the second set of rules.

2 Modal verbs are followed by ...

- a an infinitive with *to* (*to do*).
- b an infinitive without *to* (*do*).

To form questions with modal verbs we ...

- a use *do*.
- b change the word order.

To form negatives we use ...

- a *not*.
- b *don't*.

>> For more information on modal verbs, see page 169.

7 Make sentences using the modal verbs from the table.

- 1 Think of something that you feel sure you will do tomorrow.
I will attend a nine o'clock meeting.
- 2 Think of three things that might/could/may happen when you do them.
Some people may be late.
- 3 Think of two things that *might not* or *may not* happen.
The meeting might not start on time.

Speaking: Solving problems

8 Work in pairs or groups. Have you ever had a similar problem to this?

One of your colleagues regularly turns up an hour late for work and your manager is ignoring the problem. You need to process the work she completes but she doesn't pass it to you promptly because she arrives late. You have asked her to arrive on time but she ignores you.

9 Here are some things you could do. Discuss which ideas might and might not help. Then tell the class which actions you think could be most effective and why.

- *Ignore the problem.*
- *Copy her and show up late, too.*
- *Ask your manager to change her working hours.*
- *Buy her an alarm clock as a present.*
- *Find out why she's late.*

A: *We could complain to the manager.*

B: *That might work. She won't listen to us but she'll have to listen to the manager.*

C: *Yes, but she could be angry with us for complaining about her.*

10 Describe a problem you have at work. What different things could you do about it? Which ones might and might not work?

