

# **Lecture 03 Model verbs: speculation and expectation**



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**1**

# Present speculation




# Present speculation

When we speculate (or make deductions), we make informed guesses about an action or situation. We use a modal followed by the infinitive of a main verb in the **simple** or **continuous** form.

*You have been practising all day,  
you **must** be exhausted!*



# Present speculation

<b><u>positive certainty</u></b> <b>must + inf</b>	They <b>must be</b> in Algiers now. I've just seen them scuba diving on Instagram. 
<b><u>negative certainty</u></b> <b>can't/ couldn't + inf</b>	They <b>can't</b> land in Algiers Flights are cancelled till Wednesday due to a hurricane
<b><u>probable certainty</u></b> <b>may/ might/ could + inf</b> <b>mighn't/ may not + inf</b>	He always wears smart suits. He <b>could be</b> a businessman.

# Present speculation

- If we strongly believe that something is **TRUE**, usually because we have **evidence**, we use **must**:

*This **must be** the place - it's the only restaurant in the street.*

*You **must be** feeling tired after your flight. Why don't you rest for a while?*



# Present speculation

- We use **have (got)** to when we want to add **emphasis**:
  - There **has (got)** to be some mistake. *I didn't order this furniture.*
  - You **have got** to be joking! *That was not a foul!*

# Present speculation

If we strongly believe that something is **NOT TRUE**, or is **impossible**, we use can't (**negative certainty**)

or couldn't:

- He **can't/couldn't** be the senior doctor, he's too young. (= I'm certain he isn't ... )



# Present speculation

Sarah **can't be** working at the moment- I see her in the garden every morning








# Check

We do not use mustn't in this sense (**sth not true**):

 ~~This mustn't be the place - there's no one inside and there are no lights on.~~

 This can't be the place - there's no one inside and there are no lights on. =to make negative deduction from evidence

# Present speculation

We also use can and could in wh- questions or with adverbs such as **only** or **hardly**:

\_ *Who could/can be at this time of night?*

\_ *It **can/could** hardly be the postman.*

*He only comes in the morning.*

*(= I don't think it is the postman.)*



# Present speculation

It **can/could** only **be** Steve. He's the only one with a key. (= I'm sure it is Steve)

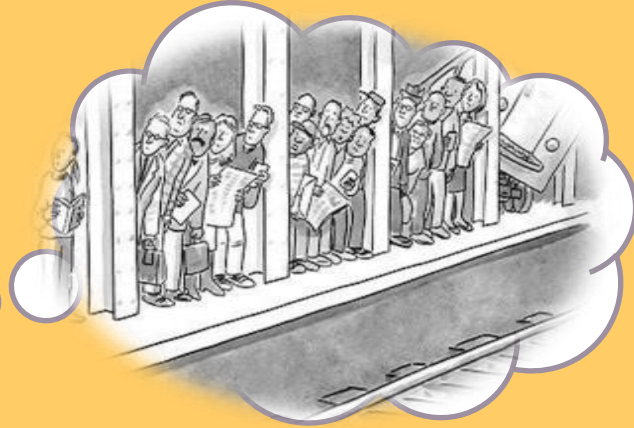


# Present speculation

- If we believe that something is **possible** or **probable**, we use **could**, **may** and **might**

A. 'Why isn't she here yet?'

B. 'I don't know. The train **may be**...  
running late.'



# Present speculation

We use might for tentative (less direct) questions:  
**Might** the losses be due to currency fluctuations?



# Present speculation

- We also use couldn't to say that something **IS UNIMAGINABLE** because we are **UNWILLING** to do it:

I **couldn't** pick up a spider; they terrify me.





**2**

# **Present and Future expectation**



# Present & Future expectation

- We use should/shouldn't or ought to/ought not to express an expectation. We expect an action **to happen now** or in the **future** because of our prior knowledge or the current circumstances:



# Present & Future expectation

Example:

- The plane took off on time, so it **should/ought to** be landing about now and there **shouldn't/ought not** to be any delays.



# Present & Future expectation

- There shouldn't/ought not to be problems with traffic at that time of the evening.



# Present & Future expectation

- a) ~~There should/ought be problems with traffic at that time of the evening.~~
- b) There 'll be problems with traffic at that time.  
The roads will be awful. (negative unpleasant situation).





# notice! Expectation



(pleasant) situation.

- There shouldn't/ought not to be problems with traffic at that time of the evening.



(unpleasant) situation.

b) There 'll be problems with traffic at that time.  
The roads will be awful



# Present & Future expectation

- We rarely use **should** to 'predict' a negative (unpleasant) situation.




practice  
MAKES  
progress

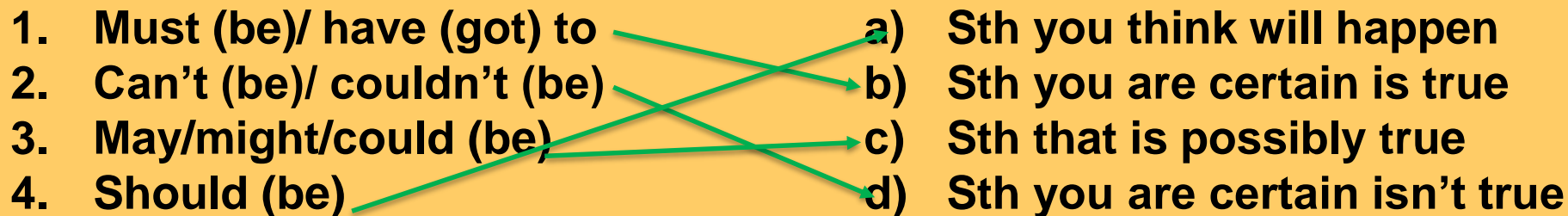
**Quick practice**



# Match each modal verb of speculation/ expectation with its function

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Must (be)/ have (got) to  | a) Sth you think will happen      |
| 2. Can't (be)/ couldn't (be) | b) Sth you are certain is true    |
| 3. May/might/could (be)      | c) Sth that is possibly true      |
| 4. Should (be)               | d) Sth you are certain isn't true |
- 

## Key Answer

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Must (be)/ have (got) to  | a) Sth you think will happen      |
| 2. Can't (be)/ couldn't (be) | b) Sth you are certain is true    |
| 3. May/might/could (be)      | c) Sth that is possibly true      |
| 4. Should (be)               | d) Sth you are certain isn't true |
- 





practice  
MAKES  
progress

**Quick practice**



# Fill the gap

- ✓ I'm calling Hana but I can't get through. She..... at class.



# Key Answer

- ✓ I'm calling Hana but I can't get through. She **may** be at class.  
= possibly



# Fill the gap

✓ **Monsters..... be real! through.**



# Fill the gap

✓ Monsters **Can't** be real! through.

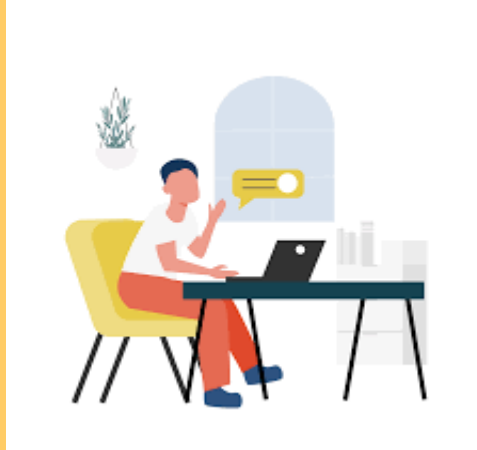


# Key Answer

- ✓ **Someone's been at home, but it  
.....James, he was at work.**

# Key Answer

- ✓ Someone's been at home, but it couldn't be James, he was at work.



# Fill the gap

- ✓ If I post the letter today, it .....  
arrive on Friday.





# Key Answer

✓ If I post the letter today, it **should** arrive on Friday.

(= used to describe a situation we expect to happen)



# Fill the gap

- ✓ She didn't come to school today. She  
.....ill

# Key Answer

- ✓ **She didn't come to school today. She **may be** ill.** (possible – no evidence)
- 

# Fill the gap


- ✓ He .....at home. I saw him leaving  
10 mn ago

# Key Answer

- ✓ He can't be at home. I saw him leaving 10 mn ago

# Fill the gap

✓ It .....him. He went to Canada last weel



# Key Answer

- ✓ It **can't be** him. He went to Canada last week

# Fill the gap

- ✓ You .....tired . When you come home from 12 h day at work.



# Key Answer

- ✓ You must be tired . When you come home from 12 h day at work.

# Fill the gap

✓ Nobody is answering. They  
.....out.

# Key Answer

- ✓ Nobody is answering. They must be out.

# Say how much percent are you certain?



- Mike **must** be at home.
- Mike **may /might /could** be at home.
- Mike **can't** be at home.

You're 100% sure  
Mike **IS**  
at home.

You're 50% sure  
Mike **IS**  
at home.

You're 100% sure  
Mike **ISN'T**  
at home.

- Mike **must** be at home.
- Mike **may /might /could** be at home.
- Mike **can't** be at home.



# Thanks!



Do you have any questions?