Might, Must or Will? Showing Possibility

Teacher		**Class**	Year 5
Subject	English	**Topic**	Modal verbs
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Pupils learn to show how sure they are with modal verbs and adverbs. They order words on a washing line and write ranked predictions.

Curriculum links

- using modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility

Learning objectives

- Students will use modal verbs to show degrees of possibility.
- Students will use adverbs to show how sure they are.
- Students will choose stronger or weaker words on purpose.

Success criteria

- I can spot a modal verb in a sentence.
- I can write certain, possible and impossible sentences.
- I can choose a stronger or weaker word to match certainty.

What students already know

Ask: What does might mean? Show thumbs up if It will rain is more sure than It might rain. Listen for will is more sure.

Key words

modal verb	a little helper that goes with an action to show how likely or needed it is [2][3]
adverb	a describing word that says more about how surely something happens [3]
possibility	how likely it is that something will happen [3][8]
certain	very sure, with almost no doubt [8][9]
impossible	something that cannot happen or be true [9]
base form	the simplest form of an action, with no extra ending added [18]

Materials

- string and pegs for washing line
- sentence strips with modal verbs and adverbs
- mini-whiteboards and pens
- Slides 1-7, 9-12
- Video clip 1 (0:00-4:00) on Slide 6
- Worksheet Task F printed, one per pair

Before the lesson

- Hang string line across board and test pegs hold cards
- Print sentence strips with will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought [2] and adverbs definitely, probably, possibly, perhaps
- Print Worksheet Task F, one per pair, for ordering weakest to strongest

- Test Slide 6 Video clip 1 (0:00-4:00) for sound and captions
- Set out mini-whiteboards and check Slide 5 vote and Slides 9-10 task display

Lesson outline

0–8 min **Starter** 8 min · Whole class

To hook pupils and check that will is stronger than might.

YOU DO

1. Welcome class, show Slides 1-2 and read the three aims in pupil words.
2. Use the hook: If I say it will rain and if I say it might rain, which one means you should grab a coat?
3. Show Slide 5 vote: Grey clouds gather. Read aloud It might rain later, It will rain later, It must rain later.
4. Take a vote by hands up and ask two pupils to justify which is most sure.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to hook and learning aims on Slides 1-2.
2. Vote for the strongest prediction on Slide 5 and tell a partner why.
3. Join in class count of votes for might, will and must.

Say: Today we show how sure we are. Some words sound strong and sure. Some sound shaky and unsure. Your job is to pick the right strength on purpose.

Worked example: It might rain later = unsure, coat is maybe needed because may and might express less certainty [8]. It will rain later = very sure, take a coat because will shows something is either certain or extremely likely [8]. It must rain later = sounds wrong here, too strong for weather.

Ask: Which is more sure: It will rain or It might rain? (It will rain is very sure; might is only possible.) · What would you do if a forecaster says It might rain at break? (Be ready but not sure; might means less certainty.)

Check understanding: Hands-up vote for strongest; if split, model will at certain end and might in middle again before moving on.

Support: Offer only two choices to compare first, will and might, with hand signals tall for sure and wobbly for unsure. **Stretch:** Ask why It must rain later sounds too strong and when must fits better for a near-certain deduction.

Use: Slides 1-2, 5

8–18 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To teach the modal possibility scale from shaky to sure.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 cards and read the three strengths: must/will very sure, should quite sure, may/might possible.
2. Show Slide 4 and teach there are 10 main modal verbs will, would, can, could, may, might, shall, should, must and ought [2].
3. Peg will at certain end and might in middle, then place must, should, could and may with class help [8].
4. Model three versions about rain tomorrow and point to the modal to justify strength.

STUDENTS DO

1. Chant the 10 modals and repeat tall, middle, wobbly poses for strength.
2. Tell a partner where to peg could and should and why.
3. Copy the three rain sentences and underline the modal verb.

Say: Modal verbs are helping verbs that support other verbs to show possibility or necessity [4]. Will is certain or extremely likely. May and might are much less sure [8].

Worked example: Shaky: It might rain tomorrow. Middle: It should rain tomorrow. Sure: It will rain tomorrow. Must is also very sure. Ranked weakest to strongest: might, may, could, should, will, must.

Ask: Which modal is most certain here: might, should or will? (Will, it shows certain or extremely likely.) · Why do may and might sit at the shaky end? (They express less certainty, only possible not sure.)

Check understanding: Mini-whiteboards: write S for sure or U for unsure for It may snow, It will snow; reteach scale if mixed.

Support: Keep a partly finished line with will at the certain end and might in the middle, so pupils only place must, should, could and may [8]. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to explain what changes if should becomes must in a school rule sentence.

Use: Slides 3-4

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18–30 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

To teach correct modal grammar and how adverbs fine-tune certainty.

YOU DO

1. Play Video clip 1 (0:00-4:00) on Slide 6; pupils clap when they hear might, must or will.
2. Pause twice to ask what the modal adds to the main verb, teaching modal verbs do not show actions on their own, they always need to work with a main verb [3].
3. Show Slide 7 cards: definitely very sure, probably quite sure, possibly/perhaps not sure.
4. Model correct form: modal directly before the main verb in its base form, with no to, -s, -ed or -ing ending [18].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch Video clip 1, clap for target modals and note one example each.
2. Repeat correct pairs aloud: will rain, might snow, could win.
3. Spot and fix two wrong sentences on mini-whiteboards.

Say: Put the modal right before the action, with no extra bits. We say will rain, might break, could fix. Adverbs like definitely, probably and possibly make the shade stronger or weaker.

Worked example: Correct: We will definitely finish today. Modal will + base finish [18], adverb definitely makes it very sure. Wrong: We will to finish / She cans swim. Fix: remove to and -s because core modals do not normally take -s with he, she or it [16] and use only one modal verb per verb phrase [18].

Ask: What is wrong with She must to finish? (To must go; write She must finish with base form straight after [18].) · How does definitely change We will finish today? (It makes the certain prediction even stronger.)

Check understanding: Show correct or crossed arms for She might goes, They must finish, It might could rain; correct together if errors.

Support: Give a bank of correct pairs such as will fall, might break, could fix, with the base form already correct [18]. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to combine a negative and adverb, such as It can't possibly snow, and explain why both parts strengthen impossibility.

Use: Slides 6-7, Video clip 1 (0:00-4:00)

30–50 min **Main activity** 20 min · Groups

To order modals and adverbs and write ranked sentences.

YOU DO

1. Set the Possibility Washing Line task and show Slides 9-10 steps: How sure 0 to 100, pick weak, middle or strong word, put modal before base verb.
2. Give groups cards to peg from shaky to sure, then match definitely, probably, possibly and perhaps to the same line.
3. Hand out Worksheet Task F; pairs cut or number the sentences from weakest possibility to strongest certainty to check the line.
4. Circulate, prompt full sentences with because where needed, and select three groups to read their certain, possible, impossible set.

STUDENTS DO

1. Peg modals and adverbs on the line and justify order from weakest to strongest.
2. Complete Worksheet Task F by ordering sentences weakest to strongest.
3. Write four ranked sentences, underline modal or adverb, and read three aloud pointing to the line.

Say: Peg your line from shaky to sure. Then pick one idea like break time, a game or a trip. Write one certain, two possible and one impossible sentence. Underline the modal or adverb.

Worked example: Idea: break time. Weak: We may possibly play outside, 30 out of 100. Middle: We should probably play outside, 70 out of 100. Strong: We will definitely play outside, 95 out of 100. Impossible: We can't play outside if the hall is locked. Each modal sits before the base verb [18].

Ask: Where does probably sit and why? (Middle, quite sure, stronger than possibly but weaker than definitely.) · How do you know your certain sentence is strongest? (It uses will or must plus definitely, near 100 percent [9].)

Check understanding: Each group reads three versions of same prediction; class signals 1 unsure, 2 possible, 3 certain; reorder line if misplaced.

Support: Give a partly finished line with will at the certain end and might in the middle, so pupils only place must, should, could and may [8]. **Stretch:** Add certainly, probably and maybe to sentences and explain how the adverb changes the degree even when the modal stays the same.

Use: Slides 9-10, Worksheet Task F

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50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

To compare must and might and check exit success.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 question: A student says the gate must be locked. Your partner says it might be locked. What is different?
2. Take paired talk for one minute, then collect answers about strength and evidence needed.
3. Show Slide 12 exit ticket and give two minutes to write one sentence with might or must.
4. Summarise scale and preview next writing where precise modals make ideas clear.

STUDENTS DO

1. Think, pair, share the gate difference in certainty.
2. Write exit ticket: one thing learnt, one sentence with might or must, one question.
3. Self-check: can I spot a modal and write with different strengths?

Say: Must means almost 100 percent certain, might means only possible [9]. Good writers pick the strength that matches the proof. If you are not sure, choose might or may.

Worked example: Must: The gate must be locked because school has started and no one is outside, almost certain [9]. Might: The gate might be locked because we cannot see it, only possible. To upgrade might to must you need proof.

Ask: What is different about must be locked and might be locked? (Must is very sure, almost certain; might is only possible.) · What could you add to make might stronger without changing might? (Add probably instead of possibly to lift certainty.)

Check understanding: Read three exit sentences aloud; if modal missing or form wrong, model modal plus base verb again.

Support: Provide frame: It ___ be ___ because ___, with must/might and base verb bank to copy. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to rewrite a must sentence as a may sentence and say what evidence would make it strong again.

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Adding to, -s, -ed or -ing after a modal, for example She must to finish or He cans swim	Look right after the modal; the next word should be a plain action with no ending	Put the base form straight after with no to: She must finish, He can swim, because a modal verb is always followed directly by the base form [18] and core modals do not normally take -s [16]
Stacking two modals, for example She might could go	Hear or see two helpers before one action	Keep only the one that matches meaning, for example She might go, because use only one modal verb per verb phrase in standard English [18]
Treating should and must as equal, or might as certain	Advice and strong rule sorted together, or might placed at certain end	Teach must is a lot more forceful than should, which sounds more like advice [8]; will shows certain or extremely likely while may and might express less certainty [8]

Support

- Use partly finished washing line with will at certain end and might in middle so pupils only place must,

Stretch

- Add certainly, probably, maybe and definitely to sentences and explain how the adverb changes

should, could and may.

- Provide word bank with must, can't, could, might plus base verbs to copy and sentence frames It must be... because...

degree even when modal stays same.

- Rewrite soft rules as strong rules and strong as soft, and argue whether a safety rule should use should or must.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Stay with target group at washing line; hold cards, prompt 0-100 rating, check modal plus base verb with no to or -s endings.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Circle the modal verb: It might rain after break.	might
Which is stronger: It should be sunny or It must be nearly home time?	It must be nearly home time, must is very sure.
Fix it: She cans swim well.	She can swim well, no -s after can.

Homework

Write two predictions about tomorrow, one with might and one with will, and underline each modal.

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