

Modal Verbs: Probability and Impossibility

“Must” / “Can’t”

When you are almost sure of something, you can use *must* and *can’t*.

1) When we feel sure that something is **certain**, we use *must*:

- “You worked all night, you *must* be tired.”
- “Tina went to bed at ten o’clock last night.”
“Tina? You *must* be kidding! I saw her at a party at 1am!”

2) When we feel sure that something is **impossible**, we use *can’t*:

- “We had a big dinner. You *can’t* be hungry!”
- “Peter and Jocelyn are getting married? You *can’t* be serious!”

3) When talking about the past, we use *must have* and *couldn’t have*.

- “Why is this happening? I *must have* done something wrong!”
- “He *couldn’t have* passed his test, he didn’t study at all!”

Exercise: Complete the following sentences using *must* or *can’t*:

1. This night club _____ be very good. It’s always so empty.
2. Congratulations on your promotion! You _____ be very pleased.
3. He said I owe him a million dollars. He _____ be serious!
4. This restaurant _____ be very good. It’s always difficult to get a table.
5. You’re going to Italy next week. You _____ be very excited about it!