



Mini Lesson 006 - Modals of Deduction: Making Educated Guesses

Modal verbs like "must," "might," "could," and "can't" help us make educated guesses about what might be happening in the present. These guesses can range from strong certainty to mild possibility. The verb "be" is commonly used with these modals to express our deductions.

- **She must be working late.** (We're almost certain, around 90% sure.)
- **He might be studying in his room.** (A 50% possibility.)
- **They could be at the new restaurant.** (Another 50% chance.)
- **She can't be asleep already!** (We're almost certain this isn't true, around 90% sure it's not.)

Additional Tips:

- Notice that "must" and "can't" are used when we feel quite sure about something, while "might" and "could" indicate uncertainty.
- It's important not to confuse "must" with "have to" or "can't" with "mustn't." In these contexts, "must" and "can't" are about making deductions, not giving instructions or expressing obligations.



Let's practice!

Transform the following sentences by using "must" or "can't" to express the deductions. You should drop the phrase "I'm sure."

1. I'm sure Sarah isn't at the office.

2. I'm sure David is preparing dinner.

3. I'm sure the kids are playing outside.

4. I'm sure the computer isn't malfunctioning.

5. I'm sure they aren't out of town.

6. I'm sure she's planning a surprise.

7. I'm sure the store isn't out of stock.

8. I'm sure the manager isn't in the meeting room.

9. I'm sure he is telling the truth.

10. I'm sure she is enjoying the movie.



Answers:

1. Sarah **can't** be at the office.
2. David **must** be preparing dinner.
3. The kids **must** be playing outside.
4. The computer **can't** be malfunctioning.
5. They **can't** be out of town.
6. She **must** be planning a surprise.
7. The store **can't** be out of stock.
8. The manager **can't** be in the meeting room.
9. He **must** be telling the truth.
10. She **must** be enjoying the movie.