Modals of Deduction — Worksheet

30 exercises · Level B1–B2 · Answer key on the last page Free for classroom use

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Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Choose the correct option (a–d) for each gap or question. Check yourself with the answer key on the last page.

1. Anna has been travelling all day. She _____ tired.
   a) must be b) must to be c) musts be d) must being

2. Where's Ben? I'm not sure — he _____ in the library.
   a) might is b) might to be c) mights be d) might be

3. Nobody is answering the phone at the office. They _____ in a meeting.
   a) may be b) maybe c) may to be d) may are

4. That man _____ her father — he looks the same age as her.
   a) can't to be b) can't is c) can't be d) don't can be

5. The music upstairs is very loud. The neighbours _____ a party.
   a) must having b) must be having c) must be have d) must are having

6. Don't call Tom now — he _____ for his exam.
   a) might studying b) might be study c) might be studying d) might studies

7. Kate looks very happy. She _____ her driving test.
   a) must passed b) must have passed c) must have pass d) must has passed

8. Leo _____ my message — he hasn't been online since Friday.
   a) can't has read b) can't have readed c) can't reads d) can't have read

9. I can't find my glasses. I _____ them at the café.
   a) may have left b) may have leave c) may left d) may has left

10. Tell Maria about the change of plan — she _____ yet.
    a) may not knows b) may not know c) may not to know d) doesn't may know

11. The lights are off and nobody is answering the door. I'm sure they _____ out.
    a) must be b) might be c) can't be d) must to be

12. I'm not sure where Lucy is. She _____ at the gym, or maybe at work.
    a) must be b) can't be c) might to be d) might be

13. Mark _____ hungry — he's just eaten a huge pizza.
    a) must be b) can't be c) might be d) can't to be

14. Your phone hasn't stopped ringing. Somebody _____ to talk to you urgently.
    a) must want b) can't want c) must wants d) must wanting

15. Jack is late again. He _____ his bus, or maybe he overslept.

a) must have missed b) can't have missed c) might have miss d) might have missed

16. You _____ my sister at the party — she was in Paris that weekend.

a) must have seen b) might have seen c) can't have seen d) can't have saw

17. The front door is open and my laptop is gone. Someone _____ in!

a) must have broken b) can't have broken c) must have broke d) must broken

18. Sam has worked in this small office for thirty years. He _____ everyone here.

a) can't know b) must know c) must knows d) must to know

19. The window was locked from the inside, so the thief _____ in that way.

a) must have climbed b) might have climbed c) couldn't have climbed d) couldn't climbed

20. Don't throw that box away — it _____ useful one day.

a) can't be b) could be c) could to be d) could being

21. Emma's light was still on at 2 a.m. She _____ late last night.

a) must work b) must be working c) must have worked d) must worked

22. Paul keeps yawning. He _____ tired — he _____ much last night.

a) must be … can't have slept b) can't be … must have slept c) must have been … can't sleep d) must be … can't sleep

23. I _____ my keys somewhere, so I _____ wait outside for an hour.

a) had to drop … must have b) must have dropped … must have c) must drop … had to d) must have dropped … had to

24. Nina didn't hear the doorbell last night. She _____ to music.

a) must be listening b) must listen c) must have been listening d) must have listen

25. "Is that Anna's bike?" "It _____ hers — she sold her bike last month."

a) must be b) might be c) can't have been d) can't be

26. Which sentence is correct?

a) She must works from home today.
b) She must be working from home today.
c) She must to work from home today.
d) She must working from home today.

27. Which sentence is correct?

a) They must have went to bed early.
b) They must went to bed early.
c) They must had gone to bed early.
d) They must have gone to bed early.

28. Which sentence is correct?

a) He can't have finished already — he only started ten minutes ago.
b) He can't has finished already — he only started ten minutes ago.
c) He can't finished already — he only started ten minutes ago.
d) He can't to have finished already — he only started ten minutes ago.

29. Which sentence is correct?

a) I'm not sure, but she must be at a meeting.
b) I'm not sure, but she can be at a meeting.
c) I'm not sure, but she might be at a meeting.
d) I'm not sure, but she mights be at a meeting.

30. Which sentence is correct?

a) You must be very worried yesterday.
b) You must have been very worried yesterday.
c) You must been very worried yesterday.
d) You must were very worried yesterday.

Answer Key

Modals of Deduction · Explanations are shortened — the full interactive version is at gramvoy.com/exercises/modals-of-deduction/

1. a) must be

A modal of deduction takes the base form without to, the same for every person: she must be tired.

2. d) might be

I'm not sure shows a possibility, so might + the base form be.

3. a) may be

A possible reason takes the modal may + the base form be: they may be in a meeting.

4. c) can't be

He looks too young, so it is almost certainly not true: can't + the base form be.

5. b) must be having

The party is going on right now, so the deduction takes must + be + -ing: they must be having a party.

6. c) might be studying

Now points to an action in progress, so might + be + -ing: he might be studying.

7. b) must have passed

The test is in the past, so the deduction takes must + have + past participle: she must have passed.

8. d) can't have read

A negative deduction about the past: can't have + past participle.

9. a) may have left

A possibility about the past: may have + past participle — may have left.

10. b) may not know

"Possibly not" is may not + the base form: she may not know.

11. a) must be

Dark windows, no answer and I'm sure: the evidence is strong, so must be.

12. d) might be

I'm not sure and or maybe show two possibilities, so might be.

13. b) can't be

After a huge pizza you are almost sure he is not hungry, so can't be.

14. a) must want

Call after call is strong evidence, so must + the base form want.

15. d) might have missed

Or maybe he overslept gives two possible reasons, so it is only a possibility about the past: might have missed.

16. c) can't have seen

She was in another city, so you are sure it did not happen: can't have seen.

17. a) must have broken

An open door and a missing laptop are strong evidence about the past: must have broken in.

18. b) must know

Thirty years in a small office is strong evidence, so must know.

19. c) couldn't have climbed

A locked window makes it impossible, so a negative past deduction: couldn't have climbed (= can't have).

20. b) could be

A possibility in the future takes could + the base form: it could be useful.

21. c) must have worked

Last night puts the deduction in the past, so must have + participle: must have worked.

22. a) must be … can't have slept

Yawning now → must be tired (present).

23. d) must have dropped … had to

The first gap is a guess about the past: must have dropped.

24. c) must have been listening

An action in progress at a past moment (last night) takes must have been + -ing: must have been listening.

25. d) can't be

The question is about now, and she has sold her bike, so it is almost certainly not hers: can't be.

26. b) She must be working from home today.

A deduction about an action in progress takes must + be + -ing: She must be working.

27. d) They must have gone to bed early.

A past deduction is must + have + past participle: must have gone.

28. a) He can't have finished already — he only started ten minutes ago.

Ten minutes is too short, so a negative past deduction: can't have finished.

29. c) I'm not sure, but she might be at a meeting.

I'm not sure calls for a possibility: she might be.

30. b) You must have been very worried yesterday.

Yesterday makes it a deduction about the past: must have been.