

What are Modal Verbs for Permission and Possibility?

Worksheet

Permission modals: 'can' (informal), 'may' (formal). Possibility modals: 'might' (lower likelihood), 'could' (neutral, often permission too). Each fits different contexts and shows the speaker's confidence level.

Questions

1. Formal request for permission: '___ I ask a question?'

- A) Can
- B) May
- C) Might
- D) Could

2. Express possibility: 'It ____ rain this afternoon.'

- A) can rain
- B) may rain
- C) might rain
- D) can't rain

3. Which is correct for informal permission: 'Can I use the bathroom?'

- A) correct
- B) should be 'May I'
- C) should be 'Might I'
- D) should be 'Could I'

4. 'She ____ have called, but I didn't hear my phone.'

- A) can
- B) may
- C) might
- D) could

5. Choose the right form for formality: '___ I use your phone?' (formal, asking teacher)

6. Express low possibility: 'She ____ be at the office; I'm not sure.'

7. Grant casual permission: 'Sure, ____ I help you with that?'

8. Define: Difference between 'can' and 'may' for permission?

9. Define: What does 'might' express?

10. Define: Can 'could' mean possibility?

Answer Key

1. B) May — 'May' is the formal way to ask permission (to a teacher, authority).
2. C) might rain — 'Might' expresses uncertainty about the future.
3. A) correct — 'Can' is acceptable in informal contexts, though 'May' is more polite formally.
4. D) could — 'Could' expresses past possibility: she might have called (uncertain).
5. Context: formal (teacher) Function: permission request Correct form: May Result: May I use your phone? (polite, formal)
6. Context: expressing doubt, low certainty Function: possibility Correct form: might Result: She might be at the office; I'm not sure.
7. Context: informal (friend, casual) Function: permission offer Correct form: can Result: Sure, can I help you with that?
8. 'Can' is informal; 'may' is formal. 'Can I go?' vs 'May I leave?' (to teacher/boss).
9. Possibility with lower certainty. 'He might come' means he possibly will, but it's uncertain.
10. Yes. 'She could be right' = she might be right. Also used for permission: 'Could I borrow this?'

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