ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Modal Verbs Test B1 Grammar Exercises

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Explanations

1. You _____ join the meeting on Friday, but you _____ if you like.
✔ **D) needn't / can**
Needn't means it is not necessary: you don't have to come to the meeting. **Can** gives permission: you are free to come if you like. Not **mustn't**, because that means it is forbidden, which doesn't fit with "if you like".

2. _____ you read this text for me so that I _____ type it quickly?
✔ **B) Could / can**
Could you …? is a polite way to ask someone to do something. After **so that**, we often use **can** to show purpose: **so that I can type it**. Not **May you**, because **may** is used to ask permission for yourself (**May I …?**), not to make requests.

3. I'm sure you _____ why I wasn't in the office yesterday. Well, I _____ a day off.
✔ **A) must be wondering / had to take**
Must be wondering is a confident guess about what someone is thinking right now ("I'm sure"). **Had to take** is the past of **have to**, used for a past necessity: I needed to take a day off yesterday.

4. One of us _____ here because there _____ an urgent call.
✔ **D) had better wait / might be**
Had better + base verb gives strong advice: **One of us had better wait here**. **Might be** shows a possibility in the future: maybe there will be an urgent call. Not **must wait / should have been**, because **should have been** refers to the past and doesn't fit.

5. We _____ all the major points now because we _____ again until next Sunday.
✔ **C) should discuss / won't be able to meet**
Should discuss is advice about what is best to do now. **Won't be able to meet** is the future of **can**, used because we can't say **will can**. The clue "until next Sunday" shows the future.

6. _____ we eat out tonight for a change? It _____ an expensive place.
✔ **B) Shall / needn't be**
Shall we …? is used to make a suggestion. **Needn't be** means it is not necessary: the restaurant does not have to be expensive. Not **Why don't / can't have been**, because **can't have been** is a guess about the past and doesn't fit a plan for tonight.

7. _____ you please answer that call? I _____ care of the baby.
✔ **A) Will / have to take**
Will you please …? is a way to ask someone to do something. **Have to take care of** shows necessity: I'm busy with the baby, so I can't answer the call. Not **Could / needn't take**, because **needn't** means it isn't necessary, which gives no reason to ask for help.

8. Randall thinks he _____ the promotion, but he _____ it yet.
✔ **C) should get / hasn't been able to get**
Should get shows what Randall expects or thinks is right. **Hasn't been able to get it yet** is the present perfect of **be able to**; the word **yet** needs the present perfect. Not **couldn't get**, because the past simple doesn't go with **yet** here.

9. When _____ I wake you up? You _____ up early tomorrow morning, don't you?
✔ **C) shall / need to get**
Shall I …? is used to offer to do something. The question tag **don't you** needs a main verb in the present simple, so **You need to get up** is right. The tags don't match **may**, **had to** or **can**.

10. She _____ well when she first got her driving licence, but she _____ it by now.
✔ **A) couldn't drive / must have learnt**
Couldn't drive describes past ability: at first she was not able to drive well. **Must have learnt** is a confident guess about the past: I'm sure she has learnt by now. Not **wasn't able to drive / shouldn't have learnt**, because **shouldn't have** criticises a past action.

11. You _____ me with my shoelaces, Mum. I _____ them by myself.
✔ **D) don't need to help / can tie**
Don't need to help means it is not necessary for Mum to help. **Can tie** shows present ability: I am able to do it myself. Not **can't help**, because the child isn't saying that Mum is unable to help.

12. They _____ here by now; I wonder why they haven't yet.
✔ **A) should have arrived**
Should have + past participle means something was expected but did not happen. The clue "I wonder why they haven't yet" shows they have not arrived. Not **may have arrived**, because that suggests they possibly arrived, which contradicts the second part.

13. The groom _____ the bride before the wedding ceremony because it _____ bad luck.
✔ **C) is not allowed to see / may bring**
Is not allowed to see expresses a rule or tradition that forbids something. **May bring bad luck** shows a possibility. Not **mustn't see / had to bring**, because **had to** is past necessity and doesn't fit a general belief.

14. _____ inviting some friends over for dinner next Saturday?
✔ **B) What about**
What about + **-ing** is used to make a suggestion: **What about inviting some friends? Let's**, **Why don't we** and **Shall we** are followed by the base verb (**invite**), not by **inviting**.

15. The children _____ in the garden because it's raining, so they _____ somewhere else.
✔ **D) can't be playing / must be**
Can't be playing is a strong guess that something is impossible: it's raining, so they're not in the garden. **Must be** is a strong guess that something is true: they are surely somewhere else. Not **mustn't be playing**, because **mustn't** expresses a rule, not a guess.

16. _____ I talk to the manager in person, please? I _____ him something very important.
✔ **C) Might / must tell**
Might I …? is a very polite, formal way to ask for permission. **Must tell** shows that the speaker feels it is necessary to tell him. Not **Can / may have told**, because **may have told** is a guess about the past and doesn't make sense here.

17. I think we _____ very early tomorrow; or else, we _____ our flight.
✔ **A) will have to leave / may miss**
Will have to leave is the future of **have to**, used for a necessity tomorrow. **May miss** shows a possible result if we don't leave early. Not **must leave / might have missed**, because **might have missed** refers to the past.

18. When _____ to go to work after the operation?
✔ **C) will I be able**
Will be able to is the future form of **can**, used to ask about future ability after the operation. The gap is followed by **to go**, and only **be able** fits with **to**. **Must**, **need** (as a modal) and **should** are followed by the base verb without **to**.

19. _____ close the windows, please? I've started to feel cold.
✔ **B) Would you**
Would you …, please? is a polite way to ask someone to do something. Not **Will I**, because the speaker is asking another person, not offering.

20. He _____ properly for the past two weeks because of the injury in his leg.
✔ **A) hasn't been able to walk**
The clue **for the past two weeks** needs the present perfect, because the situation started in the past and continues now. **Hasn't been able to walk** is the present perfect of **can**. Not **couldn't walk**, because the past simple doesn't connect the past to now.

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