ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Modals MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 7

English Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF: https://englishtestsonline.com/modals-test-7/

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11	**C**	12	**D**	13	**B**	14	**D**	15	**D**	16	**D**	17	**C**	18	**B**	19	**A**	20	**D**

Explanations

1. You _____ read this book: you are grown up.
✔ **A) may**
We use **may** to give permission. The clue is **you are grown up**, so you are allowed to read the book. Not **mustn't** or **can't**, because these say the opposite.

2. I _____ come to see you tonight as I _____ answer many questions.
✔ **B) can’t / have to**
Can't shows you are not able to come tonight, and **have to** shows the reason, an obligation: **I have to answer many questions**. Not **can / may**: the second part gives a reason why you cannot come, so it needs an obligation.

3. Last night the plane _____ land because of the sudden change of the wind.
✔ **D) had to**
Last night tells us the sentence is about the past. **Must** has no past form, so we use **had to** for a past obligation: the wind made the landing necessary. Not **has to**, because that is present.

4. _____ he speak French as well as English last year?
✔ **E) could**
Could is the past of **can** and talks about ability in the past. The clue is **last year**. Not **can**, because that is present.

5. She said that he _____ take her dictionary.
✔ **E) might**
After a past reporting verb (**She said that…**), the permission **may** usually changes to **might**: **“You may take my dictionary.” → She said that he might take her dictionary.** Modal verbs are never followed by **to**. **Is allowed** and **is able** would need **to**, and they are present tense.

6. As my sister was taking an examination, I _____ look after her baby yesterday.
✔ **B) had to**
Had to expresses a past obligation. The speaker's sister was taking an exam, so it was necessary to look after her baby, and **yesterday** shows the past. Not **must**, because it has no past form. Not **could** or **was able to**, because the sentence is about necessity, not ability.

7. “He _____ in the house now,” thinks the girl.
✔ **C) might be**
Might be expresses a possibility in the present (**now**): the girl is not sure he is in the house. A modal needs the base verb **be** after it. That is why **could**, **will** and **may being** are wrong. **Had to be** refers to the past.

8. Your brother is ill, so he _____ go out for a walk.
✔ **E) must not**
Must not (mustn't) means it is not allowed or it is a bad idea. Your brother is ill, so going out is forbidden. **Can**, **could**, **may** and **might** all suggest going out is possible or allowed.

9. It _____ rain today: we _____ see clouds in the sky.
✔ **D) may / can**
May shows a possibility (it is possible that it will rain). **Can** shows what we are able to see: **we can see clouds**. Not **might / must**: we don't say **we must see clouds** for something we simply see.

10. Charles Dickens _____ go to school at an early age, as he _____ help his family.
✔ **B) couldn’t / had to**
Couldn't is past inability: he was not able to go to school. **Had to** is past obligation: he needed to help his family. Both verbs are in the past because the sentence is about Dickens's childhood.

11. They _____ tell the truth, but they _____.
✔ **C) must / can’t**
Must expresses a strong obligation in the present, and **can't** says they are not able to do it: **They must tell the truth, but they can't.** Both verbs are present. That is why the options that mix past and present (**have to / couldn't**, **had to / can't**) are wrong.

12. I have very little time, so I _____ take a taxi.
✔ **D) have to**
Have to expresses necessity caused by the situation: there is very little time, so a taxi is necessary. **Don't have to** and **needn't** say it is not necessary, and **mustn't** means it is forbidden. **Have** without **to** is incomplete.

13. You _____ this. Why didn't you take the chance?
✔ **B) could have done**
Could have + past participle talks about a past possibility that did not happen: **You could have done this** (you were able to, but you didn't). The clue is **Why didn't you…?** Not **can do**, because that refers to the present.

14. I _____ send him a letter yesterday.
✔ **D) had to**
Yesterday shows the past, and **had to** is the past form of **have to/must**: it was necessary to send the letter. **Can**, **may** and **should** do not refer to the past here.

15. She told him he _____ go home.
✔ **D) might**
After a past reporting verb (**She told him…**), permission **may** becomes **might**: **“You may go home.” → She told him he might go home.** Modals take the base verb without **to**. **Ought** needs **to**, and **have to** does not agree with **he** (it should be **had to**).

16. No matter how hard she _____ try, the door _____ open.
✔ **D) might / wouldn’t**
In the formal structure **no matter how hard + subject + might + verb**, **might** stresses that her efforts did not matter. **Wouldn't** shows the door refused to open in the past: **the door wouldn't open**. The other pairs mix tenses or give the wrong meaning.

17. _____ I take your book? I _____ write many exercises tomorrow.
✔ **C) may / shall have to**
May I…? is a polite way to ask for permission. **Shall have to** (= **will have to**) expresses a future obligation, and the clue is **tomorrow**. Not **might / had to**, because **had to** is past.

18. She _____ get up and she _____ stay in bed as she is seriously ill.
✔ **B) can’t / has to**
Can't means she is not able or not allowed to get up. **Has to** shows the obligation to stay in bed because she is **seriously ill**. **Must / has to** would mean she is obliged to get up, which contradicts the reason.

19. My cousin _____ read and write when he was five.
✔ **A) could**
Could is the past of **can** and shows ability in the past. The clue is **when he was five**.

20. We _____ to meet at the theatre entrance at a quarter to eight yesterday.
✔ **D) were**
Be to + infinitive expresses an arrangement or plan. **Yesterday** needs the past: **We were to meet…** (it was arranged that we would meet). Not **are** or **have**, because they are present, and **must** and **couldn't** are not followed by **to**.

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