



Bigfoot

Bigfoot is a mysterious creature that may live in the forests of north-west Canada. Some theories suggest that the creature might be a bear, and others that it could be a giant ape similar to a gorilla. Similar stories are also told in Indonesia and Australia and many say there must be some truth to them. Others say the creatures can't possibly exist as no one has ever been able to find a body or the remains of a body.

Presentation

You can use *may*, *might*, *could*, *must*, *can't* and *couldn't* to discuss possible and probable explanations of present situations:

*It **may** live in the forests of north-west Canada.*

*The creature **might** be a bear.*

*It **could** be a giant ape.*

*Many say there **must** be some truth to the stories.*

*Others say they **can't** possibly exist.*

may, might and could

You use *may*, *might* and *could* to say that you think something is possible but that you cannot be certain that is true:

*The creature **may / might / could** be a bear.*

may not and might not

You use *may not* and *might not* to say that you think it is possible that something is not true:

*It **may not** exist.*

can't and couldn't

You use *can't* and *couldn't* to say that you think something is impossible:

*It **can't** be true.*

must

You use *must* to say that you believe very strongly that something is true:

*There **must** be some truth to the story.*

You do not use *mustn't* to say that something is impossible:

*Say It **can't** be true. (don't say It ~~mustn't~~ be true.)*

May, might, could and must are modal verbs.

In the present and in the past

We use a modal verb + infinitive to talk about the present:

*It **may live** in the forest.*

When the action is in progress around the time of speaking, use modal verb + *be* + *-ing*:

*He often goes to the forest at the weekend. He **might be driving** there now.*

When you talk about certainty and possibility in the past, use modal verb + *have* + past participle:

*They went to the forest. They **might have lost** their way.*

Exercises

1 Choose the correct modal verb. Sometimes both are possible.



The Yeti, or Abominable Snowman

The Yeti, or Abominable Snowman, is another mysterious creature, similar to Bigfoot, that may or ¹*can't / may not* live in the Himalayas. Some theories suggest that the creature ²*could / may* be an ape and others say it ³*might / must* be an enormous grey wolf. Locals say there ⁴*must / couldn't* be some truth to the story and point to giant footprints as proof of its existence. Scientists argue that it ⁵*can't / mustn't* possibly be true as no real evidence has ever been found.

2 Ⓞ Complete the sentences with *might*, *must* or *can't*. Then listen and check.

- 1 Is that Rose over there? No, it be. She's gone to visit her mother.
- 2 You've been working since six o'clock this morning. You be exhausted.
- 3 You're going in the sea? You be serious! It's too cold.
- 4 Sue want us to bring some food to the party. I'll phone and ask her.
- 5 He love his job. He's always at the office.
- 6 He works so hard, he spend much time with his family.
- 7 That's the phone. I'll get it. It be my mother. She sometimes phones around this time.
- 8 Jamie's so happy these days. He's always smiling and singing to himself. He be in love!

3 Complete these sentences about the present and past using the verbs in brackets.

- 1 She isn't in the office. She *might be visiting* some customers today. (might / visit)
- 2 Jeff wasn't in the office this morning. You him. (can't / see)
- 3 They to your house now because they left five minutes ago. (must / drive)
- 4 The plane late. The weather was very bad earlier today. (might / land)
- 5 A: I don't know where Simon is!
B: Call him at home. He his lunch around this time. (could / eat)
- 6 A: Where have you all been?
B: We got lost. We the left instead of right by mistake (must / turn)
- 7 This kitchen window is open so the burglar in through it last night.
(could / climb)
- 8 A: I've shouted up to Peter in his bedroom three times.
B: He (may / listen) to his music. He always plays it very loud and can't hear anything else.