

ESL Worksheet: Modals

Choose the correct answer.

Q1 - You should know better

The speaker is giving a negative opinion of the other person's behaviour now

The speaker is giving a negative opinion of the other person's behaviour in the past

Q2 - I shan't tell her

The person has already decided not to tell her

The person is making a promise

Q3 - You must do it

The speaker is not the source of authority

The speaker is the source of authority

Q4 - May I come in?

The speaker is asking for permission to come in

The speaker is asking about their ability to come in

Q5 - 'Is that the doorbell?' 'That'll be Jim.'

The speaker is not sure if it's Jim because she hasn't seen him

The speaker is fairly sure it is Jim because he always arrives at the same time

Q6 - You'd better hurry

This is an order

This is a strong suggestion

Q7 - If I hadn't broken my wrist, I'd be playing in the volleyball finals

- The finals have already been played
- The finals haven't been played yet

Q8 - I ought to leave

- OUGHT TO means the same as SHOULD
- OUGHT TO is stronger than SHOULD

Q9 - I ought to tell him

- OUGHT TO is not as strong as HAD BETTER
- OUGHT TO is stronger than HAD BETTER

Q10 - You needn't have done all that inputting alone

- The person did the inputting alone
- The person isn't going to do the inputting alone now

Q11 - He can't speak Dutch

- The person is not allowed to speak Dutch
- The person is not able to speak Dutch

Q12 - He might be there when you get there

- There is a possibility that the person will be there
- The person definitely will be there

Q13 - Surely, she can't have finished already!

- The speaker is surprised and finds it hard to believe
- The speaker is stating an absolute fact

Q14 - You needn't have bothered filling in all those forms

- The person filled in the forms
- The person didn't fill the forms in

Q15 - You oughtn't to have spoken to them like that

- The speaker is referring to the present moment
- The speaker is referring to the past

Q16 - I didn't dare go inside

- The person lacked the courage to go in
- The person wasn't allowed to go in

Q17 - We couldn't swim yesterday

- The speaker wants to tell us that he and his friends did not know how to swim
- The speaker wants to tell us that something stopped them from swimming

Q18 - You ought to try to phone her on her birthday

- 'Ought to' is stronger than 'should'
- 'Ought to' is as strong as 'should'

Q19 - You might have been killed!

- The speaker is probably angry with the person
- The speaker is pleased that the person was in danger

Q20 - I should be home by around nine so I'll see you then

- The speaker has a fairly good idea of the time he'll be home, but is not 100% sure
- The speaker is under a moral obligation to get home by nine o'clock

Q21 - You could hurt yourself

- The speaker is giving permission to the other person
- The speaker is warning the other person of a danger

Q22 - You have to get everything ready before the end of the day

The speaker is not the source of authority

The speaker is the source of authority