

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 volleball 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

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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

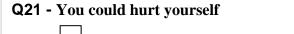
Q20 - I should be home by around nine so I'll see you then

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The speaker has a fairly good idea of the time he'll be home, but is not 100%



The speaker is under a moral obligation to get home by nine o'clock



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