



GRAMMAR PRACTICE

# Modal Deduction in the Natural World

The Natural World | must, might, could, can't | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0511

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner. You may already use this grammar without noticing it.

No.	Question
1	What might happen before a storm?
2	What must be true if a beach is covered in rubbish?
3	What can't survive without clean water?
4	What could cause changes in animal behaviour?

## 2. Grammar in context

Read the text. The bold phrases show the grammar used in a natural topic context.

### Making Guesses About Nature

When the sky becomes dark and the wind gets stronger, it **might rain** soon. If birds suddenly become quiet, there **could be** a change in the weather.

On a beach covered in plastic bottles, visitors **must have left** rubbish behind, or the waste may have been carried there by the sea. It **can't be** a healthy place for wildlife.

Scientists use evidence to make careful guesses. If animals move to cooler areas, the temperature **might be rising**. If a river has no fish, pollution **could have damaged** the habitat.

## 3. Notice the pattern

Use modal verbs to make deductions or careful guesses based on evidence.

Use	Form / signal	Example
Strong deduction	must	It must be a serious problem.
Possibility	might/could/may	The weather might change soon.
Negative deduction	can't	It can't be safe for wildlife.
Past deduction	must/could/might have + past participle	Pollution could have damaged the river.

## 4. Build accurate sentences

Complete each sentence using the grammar focus. Then write two examples of your own.

No.	Prompt	Use	Your answer
1	The beach is covered in rubbish. Visitors / leave / waste behind.	must have	
2	The sky is very dark. It / rain / soon.	might	
3	There are no fish in the river. Pollution / damage / the habitat.	could have	
4	The water smells terrible. It / be / safe to drink.	can't	

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Use it in exam answers

Complete the tasks using the grammar focus naturally.

Task	What to do
Speaking	Look at an environmental problem and make deductions about possible causes.
Writing	Write a short paragraph explaining what might have caused a natural-world problem.
Reading	Underline modal deductions in the context text and decide how certain they are.

## 6. Common mistakes

Correct the mistakes.

No.	Mistake	Your correction
1	It must to be polluted.	
2	The storm might comes soon.	
3	Visitors must left rubbish behind.	
4	It can't to be safe for animals.	

## 7. Topic discussion questions

Use these for pair work, small-group discussion, or speaking-test warm-up practice.

1. What might cause animals to leave an area?
2. What must be true if a river has no fish?
3. What could have caused more extreme weather?
4. How can people make better guesses using evidence?

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## 4. Build accurate sentences

1. Visitors must have left waste behind.
2. It might rain soon.
3. Pollution could have damaged the habitat.
4. It can't be safe to drink.

Own answers will vary. Check that the grammar focus is accurate and natural.

## 6. Common mistakes

1. It must be polluted.
2. The storm might come soon.
3. Visitors must have left rubbish behind.
4. It can't be safe for animals.

## Notes for checking

1. Strong deduction: must - It must be a serious problem.
2. Possibility: might/could/may - The weather might change soon.
3. Negative deduction: can't - It can't be safe for wildlife.
4. Past deduction: must/could/might have + past participle - Pollution could have damaged the river.