

Using Adverbs and Modal Verbs to Indicate Degrees of Possibility

You can use adverbs and modal verbs to describe how likely things are to happen or to what degree of certainty something is known.

Modal verbs usually come before another verb to show the possibility or certainty of the action happening.

Adverbs

It is certainly going to rain later.

Tom is definitely a better singer than Alex.

Maybe you should take a shower.

Surely, you don't mean that.

I am possibly attending the party later.

My sister is clearly very lazy.

Obviously, our class is the best.

Perhaps we should visit the museum.

It would probably be a good idea to tidy up.

Florida is undoubtedly sunnier than London.

Jamil could hardly believe he had won the competition.

It is quite likely that I will eat pizza for dinner.

Modal Verbs

Positive

I will try to do my best in class.

It would be a catastrophe.

Kay can win the race.

We could buy sandwiches for lunch.

Ibrahim may play the king in the play.

Those ducks might swim across the river.

The class shall have a treat this afternoon.

Snacks should be eaten at break time.

You must open the door.

Katja ought to get up early.

Modal Verbs

Negative

I will not (won't) try to do my best in class.

It would not (wouldn't) be a catastrophe.

Kay cannot (can't) win the race.

We could not (couldn't) buy sandwiches for lunch.

Ibrahim may not play the king in the show.

Those ducks might not (mightn't) swim across the river.

The class shall not (shan't) have a treat this afternoon.

Snacks should not (shouldn't) be eaten at break time.

You must not (mustn't) open the door.

Katja ought not (oughtn't) get up early.