

May and Might

May

likely to happen (not sure of happening). The modal *may* describe possibility.

Might

Less likely to happen (highly low possibility of happening). It *describes* lower possibility of a situation.

1. Possibility of a situation

I may go on a vacation this Monday.

John may lose his job because of his rude behavior.

We can't find Clark. He may be at Siam's house.

Don't lose hope; Lara might reply to your message.

I might not come to your party. I probably will be out of the town.

examples

May and Might

2. Used For Permission

May

Might

used in common sentences

Example. May I take rest here?

If we want to give permission, use *may*, not *might*.

Example. You may sleep now.

Taken as highly formal.

Example. Might I borrow your bike for an hour?

If we have the permission, use *might*, not *may*.

Example. He might park the car here.

Note. To clear the confusion look at the following example
He may park the car here.

Here he is asking for permission to park the car but this sentence refers that he has permission to park the car. That is the problem in use of *may* because it refers both possibilities and permissions.

So in such confusion, use of *might* give clarity about the situation.

He might park the car here.

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3. Past possibility

When we talk about past possibility we use might because it refers about something that was possible in the past. May is not used in this situation.

Examples

He might have called yesterday.

John might have left earlier.

We thought you might not join me.

Gupta said that I might be busy.

I may have left the bag at your desk.

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4. Direct and Indirect speech

When *may* is used in the direct speech we change it in to *might* in the indirect speech because we consider *might* as the past tense of *may*.

Examples

Direct: Clark said, "She *may* be upset with you."

Indirect: Clark said that she *might* be upset with me.

Direct: Jakob told me, "Elisa *may* call you tonight."

Indirect: Jakob told me that Elisa *might* call me that night.

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5. Conditional sentences

We use both may and might in conditional sentences.

Note: We don't use modal May in type 3 conditional sentences.

Examples

If Ishaan talk to your father, we may get entry to the stadium.

If he was taller, they might hire you for this job.

She may have been saved if she had taken to the doctor earlier.

If Nosheen participated in the competition, she might actually win it.