

PRESENT PAST		MODAL OVERVIEW of FUNCTIONS, SENSES & USE				for (#) see Modal Supplements	SOCIAL INTERACTION	
CAN	COULD ¹ Do	ABILITY & OPPORTUNITY		CONDITIONAL <u>PROBABILITIES</u>	SHOWS EMPATHY WITH PSYCH VERBS	COULD ¹ & COULD ² ⁽²⁾ Past Marker or Past Context is needed. I could run faster + when I was young . 1 or 2? → 1! COULD ¹ IS NOT used for a SINGLE PAST ACHIEVEMENTS or RESULTS, and "was/were able to" is used instead. But COULD ¹ CAN be used for a FAILURES and verbs of Perception & Cognition. Incorrect → I could ¹ finish it yesterday. Use → I was able to finish it yesterday. However → I couldn't ¹ finish it yesterday. = I wasn't able to finish it yesterday. Compare → I could ² have finished it yesterday. The last example is Counterfactual and finishing is no longer a Possibility .	REQUESTS	PERMISSION & OFFERS ⁽³⁾
		I couldn't do it yesterday ; I can do it today or tomorrow, but I can't do it Friday. He wasn't a good writer, but I knew he could get better. I can think of a few reasons. +/- VOWELS: /kən/ vs. /kænt/		Based on What is Believed to Be If you have the skills, you can work here. You can't do that if you don't know how. Students can ask questions here. Or What is Often and Generally True The winds can change quickly here. There can be trouble there at times. They can be loud at times.	I can see your point. I can understand why you did it. I can't imagine what that was like. SHOWS IMPROBABILITY and DENIAL WITH NEGATIVES ONLY ⁽¹⁾ That can't be true. I can't believe it. This can't be the place. He can't have done it.		Can you help me buddy? Can someone get the phone? Can we come in? Can I go to the bathroom? You can go if you promise to do your chores tonight. Can I help you with that?	
COULD ²	COULD ² Have Done	SPECULATIVE <u>POSSIBILITY</u> & CONDITIONAL <u>IMPROBABILITY</u>		SUGGESTIONS & CRITICISM			REQUESTS	PERMISSION & OFFERS
		We could be there soon if we don't hit traffic. There could be another cause. He couldn't be there yet; he just left here.					We could have been there on time if we had not hit traffic. There couldn't be another reason. He couldn't have been there; he was with me at the time.	You could try asking the teacher. You could have tried calling me, I could have helped you. Questions create Strong Disapproval. How could you do that?
WILL	WOULD ¹ Do	FUTURE TIME		OBJECT FUNCTIONALITY	DEDUCED CERTAINTY FOR THE PRESENT	HABITUAL REPETITION IN THE PAST Can't use with static verbs or singular actions . Incorrect - I asked him to stop and he would . Incorrect - I would believe him as a child. Unlike "USED TO" does not mean "no longer" & past tense marker or context required. I would usually go there when I was a kid . When I lived in L.A., I would hear that a lot. I used to eat there a lot and would always order the special.	REQUESTS & INVITATIONS	SPONTANEOUS OFFERS
		It will start at nine. It won't start a minute earlier. He'll be an adult next year. PREDICTIONS & WARNINGS Based on Promises, Evidence or Habits I'll have it finished by tomorrow. It won't be easy from my experience. The boss'll leave early on Friday?		Will this key work? It'll make a sound when it starts. The computer won't start now. PROMISES & REFUSALS I will pay you tomorrow. I said I would , and I will . Students will be welcome there. She said we wouldn't do it.	That will be Tom at the door. You will have heard by now that ... This Use is More Frequent in the U.K. U.S. use prefers would, should or must . HABITS & DISAPPROVAL We'll often watch television after diner. He'll be on his phone as soon as she leaves. She'll forget to check the gas every time. What will people say?		Will you help me with this? Will you try some of my cake? Will you come out for dinner? I'll help you with that. Won't you try some?	
WOULD ²	WOULD ² Have Done	CONDITIONALS & COUNTERFACTUALS		DESIRES & WISHES	INSISTENCE	DRUTHERS & PREFERENCES 1. would rather (verb than verb) I'd rather live than die. 2. would prefer (infinitive) 3. would prefer (noun TO noun) I'd prefer living to dying.	REQUESTS	PERMISSION
		He would do it if you wanted him to. I would go if it would just stop raining. I would say (if I had to) that ... He wouldn't have wanted to if he'd known. I would have done that if I had been there.		I would (like + infinitive) I would like to sleep all day. I wish it would stop. I wouldn't want that. I wouldn't have had it any other way.	He WOULD do that, wouldn't he? <u>HE</u> would say that, but <u>SHE</u> wouldn't . <u>Strong Word Stress</u> = criticism. <i>Unspoken</i> condition is "if that person were here/there."		Would you show me how to use this? Would you be so kind as to offer me ...? Would you mind showing me how to ... ? You wouldn't mind if I sat here, would you? *mind - see Social Interaction Table	
SHOULD	SHOULD Have Done	SUGGESTIONS & DIRECTIVES DESIRES & WISHES (indirect)		EXPECTATION OF CERTAINTY & NORMS, ⁽⁴⁾ REGRETS & CRITICISM WHEN CONTRARY	U.K. USE GREATER FOR SHALL	U.K. USE GREATER FOR SHOULD Greater use of should over if (Should/if) you get lost, don't hesitate to call. Greater use of should over subjunctive It is essential that he (should arrive/be) on time. We propose that he (should) continue working. It's strange that he (should/would) do that.	GRATITUDE	UNCERTAIN OFFERS
		You should try it. You shouldn't worry so much. They said (that) we should do it. You should call before coming over. They shouldn't be wearing shorts. The city should fix these streets.		It should be there. I should think so. He should have done it by now. (Certainty) It should have been there. (Regret) You shouldn't have done that. (Criticism) I'm shocked that he should feel that way.	First Person (I & we) is often used for Future Obligations & Intentions . We shan't be long, shall we? I shall be ready on time. U.S. use ranges from Legal to Ironic and will is nearly always preferred .		You really shouldn't have . You shouldn't have troubled yourself. Should I help you with that? Should you need assistance, don't hesitate to ask.	
MUST	MUST Have Done	OBLIGATION, PROHIBITION, RULES & LAWS		CERTAINTY & DEDUCTION	RECOMMENDATIONS & DIRECTIVES	DENYING DEDUCTIONS Mustn't is usually a Negative Deduction , so can't (cannot) is preferred for Denials . ⁽¹⁾ Using either is often seen as informal . A: You must have forgotten to sign it. B: That can't be, I'm sure I did.	EMPHATIC INVITATION	Reproach & Criticism
		You must have a ticket to enter. Visitors must check in at reception. You mustn't smoke here. (Prohibition) Mustn't we report in? (unsure if Obligation or Lacks Necessity)		He must not be here; the lights are off. You must not be from around here. That must have been a horrible time. She must have left already. You must have the wrong number.	You mustn't forget your medication. You must get some sleep. Formal Directives with Impersonal Subjects . We must remember to cite our work. Their sacrifices must never be forgotten.		You must try this cake! You must call me! Must they play music so loud? Why must you always be late?	
MAY	MAY Have Done	CONCESSIONS & SUGGESTIONS		GENERAL TRUTHS, WISHES & CURSES	STRONG POSSIBILITY	AMBIGUITY CAN REQUIRE CONTEXT I may not join you tonight. Unclear if it is possible I won't join you or that I don't have permission. Might can also be ambiguous (see below).*	Prohibition & Permission	Permission & Offers
		You may/might have won the game, but ... You may/might very well have a point, but ... He may/might be faster than you, but you are much quicker.		Rain may occur here without warning. Teachers may not always accept excuses. May you have a happy new year. May you rot in hell!	If we drive all night, we may actually get there on time. They may have not finished yet; their truck is still here.		You may not do that. You may help yourself. May I be excused? May I help you?	
MIGHT	MIGHT Have Done	Suggestions use TRY, LIKE, & WANT (+try) You may/might try another door. You might have tried asking her. (+like) You may/might like our apple pie. (+want) You may/might not want to them.		MIGHT'S FORMALITY	WEAK POSSIBILITY	COUNTERFACTUAL POSSIBILITY I might have tried harder if I had known . * Counterfactual versus Possibility ⁽⁵⁾ She might have come ; if you had invited her . She might have come ; I haven't seen her .	PERMISSION & EMPHATIC OFFERS	
		As the former past tense of May , Might is preferred for past tense in writing and is more formal and remote in speech, especially in British English .		If we drive all night, we might arrive on time, but probably not. He might have forgotten , but he usually remembers.	Might I leave? (UK > US) Might I offer you some cake? "(just) as well" creates Directives You may/might (just) as well stay.			
		MAYBE		ADVERB NOT MODAL	He may be American. = Maybe he is American.	He maybe go there. He maybe have done it.		

⌘ Mark Wynn ⌘

SEMI-MODALS		Other terms such as phrasal modals, modal phrases & phrasal auxiliaries more or less mean the same & there is little agreement on their distinctions. (6)			UNLIKE PURE MODALS		they may show Person , may follow Modals & Auxiliaries , and/or combine with each other .	I am supposed to . He has to go. I will be able to . He didn't have to . He ought to have let us go.
HAVE TO "hafta" "hasta"	HAD TO "hadda"	OBLIGATIONS & NECESSITY You hafta do your homework. I had to help her with it. He'll have to have finished by 5:00. Do I have to work this weekend? Didn't you have to pick him up?	EMPHATIC SUGGESTIONS You hafta eat to live. You don't have to eat ice cream. You didn't have to do that. You have just got to try this cake. You just got to see this movie.	CERTAINTY & DEDUCTION It hasta be here somewhere. It hadda be there. (past Certainty) He hasta have finished by now. (Deduction or Conclusion) They hafta have heard that. You've gotta be kidding me.	Negative Must ≠ Negative Have To PROHIBITION You mustn't do that; it's illegal. LACK OF NECESSITY You don't hafta to go. You don't gotta go out every night. I haven't gotta be there until 10:00.	Positive Must = Positive Have To EXTERNAL OBLIGATIONS The door must remain unlocked. Employees have to report errors. INTERNAL OBLIGATIONS I must see a doctor soon. I have to get a hair cut.		
GOT TO & HAVE GOT TO	Have Got To Have Done [‡]	For "HAVE GOT TO" use Subject Inversion for Questions and Negatives . I haven't got to be there yet. Haven't you got to go to work? Have you got to to leave now?	For "HAVE TO" & "GOT TO" use "DO" for Questions and Negatives . It doesn't have to look perfect. Don't you gotta go? I don't gotta pay for that.	[‡] CERTAINTY & DEDUCTION "Have Got To" has no past tense form except for Perfective Deduction . He's gotta have heard by now. We('ve) gotta have met before.	"Have To" is preferred over "Will Have To" for Future Obligations , and "Haven't you" can imply future in Questions . However, sudden Obligations prefer "will". I broke this; I'll have to pay for it.	Most grammarians state Must is more internal than "Have To". However, outside of Deductions , must is much rarer in the U.S. and "have to" is used for both .		
HAD BETTER 'd better	HAD BETTER Have Done [‡]	STRONG SUGGESTIONS We'd better get going. You'd better see a doctor. Hadn't you better tell her?	WARNING You'd better not go in there. You had better have paid the bill. [‡] You had better not have (or else...) [‡] .	DESIRES & DESPERATE HOPE I'd better study for the test. They had better get here soon. It had better rain soon.	Informally, "had" is often dropped, and "Had Best" is used less frequently. You better hurry! - You better not! You'd best pay for what you broke.	"HAD" is Not Past but Subjunctive . [‡] With Warnings in Pefect , speaker doesn't know if action was completed but is implying consequences if it wasn't.		
OUGHT TO "oughta"	OUGHT TO Have Done	SUGGESTIONS & DESIRES You ought to try this; it's delicious. You ought not (to) have done that. [‡] I really ought to be there today.	EXPECTATIONS & CONCLUSIONS It ought to begin about eight. It ought to take a week or two. It ought to have been where I left it.	[‡] NEGATIVES may rarely drop "to", reduce the "t's" to /əʔənʔə/, and are often used in Tag Questions , ..., oughtn't I? ..., oughtn't we?				
AM ABLE TO	WAS ABLE TO	ABILITY You are able to read this. We were able to make it. I won't be able to call him.	More FORMAL & FLEXIBLE than Can Will you be able to come tomorrow? He should have been able to do it? Unable is even more formal.	Singular Achievements in Past (2) I was able to finish it last night, but he (couldn't/wasn't able to) finish it. Singular Failures can be either.				
AM TO	WAS TO	OBLIGATIONS from THIRD PARTY They were to be married. Exits are to remain unlocked. They are not to be disturbed.	STRONG DIRECTIVES & INTENTIONS You are to report at dawn. If we are to leave, then it must be now. What are we to do?	DESTINY, INEVITABILITY, & FIXED EVENTS The dog she rescued was to become hers. The battle was to decide the nation's fate. The wedding is to be held outside.				
AM GOING TO "gonna" "gon" "a"	WAS GOING TO	EXPECTATIONS OF PLANS & INTENTIONS I'm going to fly home tomorrow. (are) You gonna go to the store?	UNFULFILLED INTENTIONS I was going to call him, but my phone died and I couldn't .	VISIBLE PREDICTIONS You're going to drop that. It sure looks like it's gonna rain.				
AM ABOUT TO "fixing to" "fitten"	WAS ABOUT TO	IMMEDIATE PLANS & INTENTIONS I was about to tell you. We're just about to head out now. I'm not about to tell you. (unwillingness)	He's fixing to head out. (Southern) I'm finna go up there tomorrow Black English "finna" is from "fixing", but is much closer to "gonna".	Based on actualization of new evidence & not used for hypothetical predictions I'm gonna call her now; I hope she'll answer. If you're going to use the car, I'll take an uber.				
	USED TO "ustah"	PAST HABITS or ACTIONS no longer true I used to use an Apple; now I use a PC. (7) I didn't use to swim, but now I do. They used to not enforce this rule.	PAST SITUATION no longer existing There used to be a school there. You used to live in California, didn't you? Did there use to be so many students?	Unlike "would", no Past Marker needed and can be used /uzd/ with Static Verbs . I used to believe him when I was a kid. I used to know the answer to that.				
LET'S		SUGGESTIONS & APPEALS Let's keep going. Let's try again.	"Don't let's go" is very rare and formal compared to "Let's not go" as are uncontracted forms "Let us pray".	LEXICAL : The boss let us go early. (past) (6) IMPERATIVE : Don't let us leave. (2nd person) JUSSIVE : Let him wait. (3rd person)				

?

REQUESTS: MIND + GERUND
Would you mind **helping** me?
Do you mind **opening** the door?
PERMISSION & OFFERS: MIND + IF CLAUSE
Would you mind if I help myself?
Do you mind if I help myself?

!

Instructions - Cook it for an hour.
Directions - Turn right at 1st Street.
Warning - Watch out for traffic.
Advice - Get some sleep.
Appeal - Please drive safely.
Please do this for me.
Invitation - Have a cup of tea.
Come by some time.
Apology - Excuse me.
General Prohibitions (No + gerund)
No Smoking - No Sarking
ELLIPTICAL OPTATIVES
Prayer - (may he) forgive us of our sins.
Wishes - (may you) have a nice day.



Formal

Adding **PLEASE** raises the formality of any Permission or Request.

Do & Please soften Imperatives.

Please, do come early.

Might I offer you...?

May I help you?

Could I help you?

Can I help you?

Let me help you!

Might I leave now?

May I leave now?

Am I (**permitted / allowed**) to leave?

Could I leave now?

Can I leave now?

Is it okay if I leave?

Would you help me?

Could you help me?

Can you help me?

Will you help me?

100

100%

0%

0

absolutely definitely

will hasta

won't absolutely not definitely not

50%

MAY

COULD

MIGHT

INFORMAL



***PERFECT WITH MODALS (THE FAKE TENSE)**

Only two **Pure Modals**, **could**¹ and **would**¹, are **Preterite** (past tense). They express the **ROOT** functions of **ability** and **volition in the past**. The **EPISTEMIC** functions of **could**² and **would**² are used for present and future to show **REMOVEDNESS and INDIRECTNESS** by adding **Willingness** or **Possibility** to **Questions** and **Requests**.

Will you do it?
Can you do it?



Would you do it?
Could you do it?



As inflected verbs can not follow **Modals**, the **perfect** is used as a **Fake Tense** to reference the past, and the **constraints** of the **perfective aspect** no longer apply.

I have done it **yesterday**. (*)

I **could** have done it **yesterday at 5:00**. ✓

I have seen him **two weeks ago**. (*)

I **may** have seen him **two weeks ago**. ✓

EPISTEMIC: The world as it **might** be, based on what we know (**necessity**) or are not certain of (**possibility**). The **Fake Tense** can make **Deductions** and **Conclusions** and **Counterfactuals** as well as **Possibilities**.

DEONTIC: The world as it **should** be, based on **Obligations & Prohibitions (necessity)** or on our freedom to act (**possibility**) with **Suggestions, Warnings, Permissions, and Requests**. The **Fake Tense** can show **Criticism** or **Approval** of past actions.

SOCIAL INTERACTION STRUCTURES

QUESTIONS: MIND + GERUND
Would you mind **helping** me?
Do you mind **opening** the door?

PERMISSION & OFFERS: MIND + IF CLAUSE
Would you mind if I help myself?
Do you mind if I help myself?

OFFERS WITH NEGATION:
Wouldn't you like some cake?

SUGGESTIONS WITH NEGATION:
Isn't this a good time to go?

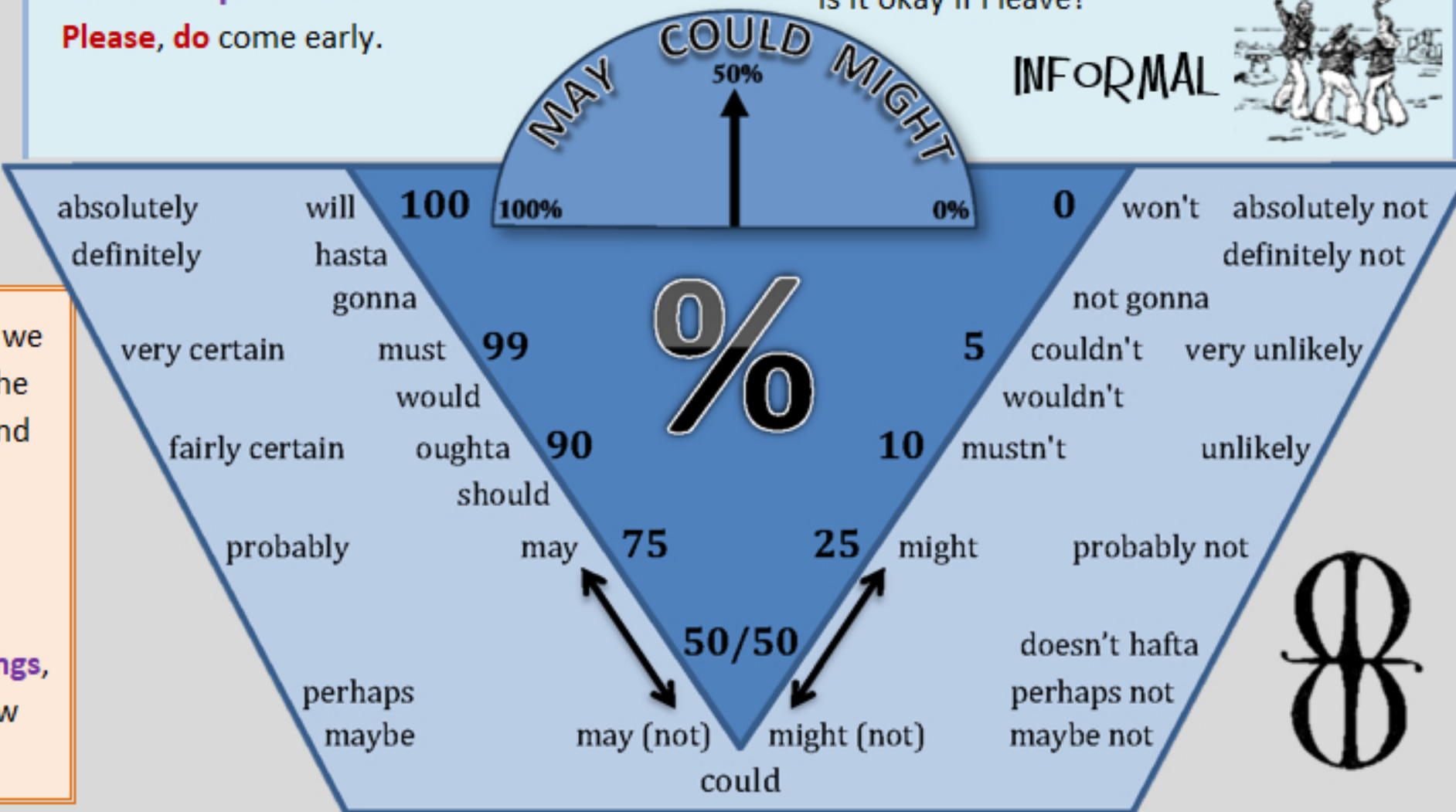
REQUESTS WITH NEGATION:
Couldn't you come by? **Won't** you help me out?

DIRECTIVES WITH NEGATION:
Can't you ever be on time?

IMPERATIVES & OPTATIVES

Instructions - Cook it for an hour.
Directions - Turn right at 1st Street.
Warning - Watch out for traffic.
Advice - Get some sleep.
Appeal - Please drive safely.
Please do this for me.
Invitation - Have a cup of tea.
Come by some time.
Apology - Excuse me.
General Prohibitions (No + gerund)
No Smoking - No Sarking
ELLIPTICAL OPTATIVES
Prayer - (may he) forgive us of our sins.
Wishes - (may you) have a nice day.

OFFERS	PERMISSION	REQUESTS
Formal Adding PLEASE raises the formality of any Permission or Request. Do & Please soften Imperatives. Please, do come early.	Might I offer you...? May I help you? Could I help you? Can I help you? Let me help you!	Might I leave now? May I leave now? Am I (permitted / allowed) to leave? Could I leave now? Can I leave now? Is it okay if I leave?



The diagram shows a probability scale from 0% to 100% with a central 50/50 point. On the left (high probability): absolutely definitely (100%), very certain (99%), fairly certain (90%), probably (75%), perhaps maybe (50/50). On the right (low probability): won't absolutely not definitely not (0%), not gonna very unlikely (5%), couldn't wouldn't unlikely (10%), might probably not (25%), doesn't hafta perhaps not maybe not (0%). In the center (50/50): MAY COULD MIGHT, 50%, 100%, 0%, 0%, 5%, 10%, 25%, 25%, 50/50, 50%, 100%, MAY COULD MIGHT.