



Possibility (may/might/could): Speculation About the Present: May/Might/Could + Be + -ing

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- Tom isn't in his room. He ____ in the garden.
a) might be playing
b) might plays
c) might is playing
d) might playing
- I can hear music from next door. The neighbours ____.
a) could having a party
b) could be have a party
c) could be having a party
d) could are having a party
- She's been in the meeting room for hours. She ____ a new project.
a) may planning
b) may be planning
c) may be plan
d) may is planning
- Why is the dog barking? Someone ____ at the door.
a) might standing
b) might be standing
c) might be stood
d) might is standing
- I can smell something burning. Dad ____ dinner.
a) could cooking
b) could is cooking
c) could be cooking
d) could be cook
- Laura hasn't replied to my message. She ____ her phone.
a) might be not checking
b) might not be checking
c) might not checking
d) not might be checking
- A: Where is James? B: He ____ at the gym. He goes there every afternoon.
a) could working out
b) could be work out
c) could be working out
d) could is working out
- The boss looks angry. He ____ about the sales report.
a) may thinking
b) may is thinking
c) may be thinks
d) may be thinking
- It's very quiet upstairs. The children ____ already.
a) might be sleeping
b) might be sleep
c) might sleeping
d) might are sleeping
- He ____ the truth. His story doesn't add up.
a) might be not telling
b) might not be telling
c) might not telling
d) not might be telling



Answers

1. a) might be playing
2. c) could be having a party
3. b) may be planning
4. b) might be standing
5. c) could be cooking
6. b) might not be checking
7. c) could be working out
8. d) may be thinking
9. a) might be sleeping
10. b) might not be telling
11. d) could be waiting
12. c) may be preparing
13. a) could be reading
14. c) might be studying
15. d) may be running
16. d) could be crying
17. a) might be having
18. d) may be doing
19. a) could be waiting for
20. b) might not be staying in



Explanations

1. “might be playing” (a)

Use 'might + be + -ing' to speculate about an action that is possibly happening now. The structure is: modal + be + verb-ing.

2. “could be having a party” (c)

Use 'could + be + -ing' to guess what is happening now. Never put 'are' after 'could' — the structure is: could + be + verb-ing.

3. “may be planning” (b)

'May be planning' speculates about an ongoing activity. After a modal verb, use 'be + -ing', not 'is + -ing'.

4. “might be standing” (b)

'Might be standing' speculates about what is happening right now. The correct form is: might + be + -ing.

5. “could be cooking” (c)

'Could be cooking' speculates about an action in progress. The structure is: could + be + verb-ing.

6. “might not be checking” (b)

The negative form is 'might + not + be + -ing'. Put 'not' after the modal verb, before 'be'.

7. “could be working out” (c)

'Could be working out' speculates about what James is possibly doing right now, based on his usual routine.

8. “may be thinking” (d)

'May be thinking' speculates about what is going on in the boss's mind right now. 'Think' can be used in the continuous form when it means 'considering'.

9. “might be sleeping” (a)

'Might be sleeping' speculates about what the children are possibly doing. The structure is always: modal + be + -ing.

10. “might not be telling” (b)

The negative is 'might + not + be + -ing'. We suspect he is possibly lying because his story is inconsistent.

11. “could be waiting” (d)

'Could be waiting' speculates about an ongoing situation. After 'could', use 'be + -ing' for continuous speculation.

12. “may be preparing” (c)

'May be preparing' speculates about a current action. The sounds from the study give us a clue about what she is possibly doing.

13. “could be reading” (a)

'Could be reading' speculates about why he is smiling — perhaps he is reading something positive on his phone.

14. “might be studying” (c)

'Might be studying' speculates about what Emma is doing at this moment, based on what she said earlier.

15. “may be running” (d)

'May be running' speculates about the reason the computer is slow — possibly a large program is using resources.

16. “could be crying” (d)

'Could be crying' speculates about what is happening now, based on the visible evidence (red eyes).

17. “might be having” (a)

'Might be having' speculates about an activity happening at the time of the call. 'Have a meeting' in continuous form is 'be having a meeting'.

18. “may be doing” (d)

'May be doing' speculates about a current activity that explains the empty classroom.

19. “could be waiting for” (a)

'Could be waiting for' speculates about the reason he is late — perhaps the bus hasn't arrived yet.

20. “might not be staying in” (b)

The negative continuous form is 'might + not + be + -ing'. The dark house suggests they are possibly not at home.