

## Extension exercises

### Chapter 11: Modal verbs | Comments

#### Researching how people use language

You are likely to discover that:

- people are unsure about differences.
- people vary in how they use modal verbs.
- people vary in what they consider to be correct.
- people are generally unaware of the fact that their own use may be idiosyncratic.

You may find you are more cautious in generalising about how these verb forms are used after carrying out this survey.

There may be greater uniformity in how non-native users of English use these verbs if they have studied English using similar materials. Native-speaking teachers of English are also sometimes influenced by the materials they use.

#### Comparing dictionaries

Responses to these questions will depend on the dictionaries you choose.

Dictionaries intended for advanced learners tend to provide very full, compressed information about modal verbs, with a lot of examples to illustrate the definitions and explanations. Some learners may find the information too compressed.

There is some variation in the prominence that different dictionaries give to the different meanings of modal verbs.

#### Course materials

Responses to these questions will depend on the materials you choose.

Modal verbs often receive quite a lot of attention in course materials produced in Britain. At levels below upper intermediate the different meanings are often taught separately. At higher levels there is more use of contrasting.