

MIGHT: USES

(Modal Verb)

PAST SIMPLE OF MAY

Used especially when reporting what someone has said, thought, asked, etc.: *He's so small.* [fact]

- *I brought him some sandwiches because I thought he might be hungry.*
- *Very politely the little boy asked if he might have another piece of cake (= he said "May I have another piece of cake, please?").*
- *"I thought you might have helped," she replied peevishly.*
- *He wrote to me last week regarding a business proposition he thought might interest me.*
- *Jan hasn't got a ticket but I thought we might sneak her in.*
- *I suggested that a cup of tea might settle her stomach.*
- *I've brought with me an article from yesterday's paper that I thought might amuse you.*

POSSIBILITY

We use *might* most often to refer to weak possibility:

- *I **might** go to Japan for a month to study Japanese.*
- *The dog **might** bark when we pass by the gate.*
- *They **might** not like very hot food.*

PERMISSION

We use *might* to refer to permission. It is very formal and is not used very often:

- ***Might** I ask your name?*
- ***Might** I interrupt you for a moment?*

Warning:

The reply to these will not contain *might*:

A: *Might I ask your address?*

B: *Yes. It's 41 Ross Avenue.*

A: *Might I ask you a question?*

B: *Yes. Of course.*

Not: ~~Yes. You might.~~

SUGGESTION

We can use *might* to give advice or make a suggestion sound more polite or less direct, especially when used together with *like*, *prefer* or *want*:

[A waiter politely suggesting a dessert to a customer.]

- You **might** like to try one of our wonderful desserts.

MIGHT: TYPICAL ERROR

We don't use *might* for ability; we use *can* or *could*:

- *Although you **can** visit these places, if you are tired, you're welcome to stay in the hotel.*
 - Not: ~~Although you might visit these places ...~~
- *I **could** hear the noise of an engine.*
 - Not: ~~I might hear the noise of an engine.~~

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AFFIRMATIVE FORM

Might comes first in the verb phrase (after the subject and before another verb):

- *She **might** sell her house.*
- *This **might** be true.*
 - Not: ~~That might can be true.~~ or ~~That can might be true.~~

NEGATIVE FORM

The negative form of *might* is *might not* or *mightn't*. We don't use *don't/doesn't/didn't* with *might*:

- *There **might not** be anyone in the house. (or **mightn't** be ...)*

- Not: ~~There doesn't might be anyone in the house.~~

QUESTION FORM

The subject and *might* change position to form questions.

Warning:

We don't use *do/does/did*:

- *Might this be the key?*
 - Not: ~~Does this might be the key?~~
- *Mightn't this be the key?*
 - Not: ~~Doesn't might this be the key?~~

We can use *might* and *mightn't* in question tags, but they're not very common:

- *That might not be a bad idea, might it?*
- *That plant might do better by the window, mightn't it?*