Modals: Of Probability

FORM:

	Possible	**Probable**
(more certain)	**may**	**must + main verb**
	might + main verb	
(less certain)	**could**	

USE: **MAY, MIGHT** and **COULD** can all be used to express possibility, when the speaker is not certain about the topic. **COULD** is the least certain of the modals. **MUST** is used when the speaker is almost certain about a topic (about 90% certain). Like most modals they are followed by the base form of the main verb. The modals can also be used in negatives but modals of probability are not usually used in questions.
No modal is used if a speaker is 100% certain.

EXAMPLES: *It's very cloudy, so it <u>may rain</u> tonight.*
Jack has to work late, but he <u>might come</u> to the party after work.
I've never seen that woman before. She <u>could be</u> our new teacher.
Paul is a doctor. He <u>must make</u> a lot of money.
She looks upset. She <u>must not have</u> passed the test.
*I <u>am going</u> to the party. (**100% certain** -no modal of probability)*

Decide how certain each speaker is. Circle the best choice to complete each sentence.

1. A: Why is Penny late every morning?
    B: I don't know. She _____ to take her kids to school before she comes to work.
    must have   has   might have

2. Sylvia is getting married next weekend. She _____ excited.
    must be   might be   could be

3. The doctor _____ very busy today. I've been waiting for two hours.
    could be   may be   must be

4. A: Who is that man?
    B: I don't know. He _____ be a new student in our class or a substitute teacher.
    is   could be   must be

5. A: Why is Janet not in class today?
    B: She _____ a good reason. She never misses class.
    could have   might have   must have