

## May and might (2)

### A. We use may and might to talk about possible actions or happenings in the future:

- \* I haven't decided yet where to spend my holidays. I may go to Ireland. (= perhaps I will go to Ireland)
- \* Take an umbrella with you when you go out. It might rain later. (= perhaps it will rain)
- \* The bus doesn't always come on time. We might have to wait a few minutes. (= perhaps we will have to wait)

The negative forms are may not and might not (mightn't):

- \* Ann may not come to the party tonight. She isn't well. (= perhaps she will not come)
- \* There might not be a meeting on Friday because the director is ill. (= perhaps there will not be a meeting)

### B. Usually it doesn't matter whether you use may or might. So you can say:

- \* I may go to Ireland. or I might go to Ireland.
- \* Jane might be able to help you. or Jane may be able to help you.

But we use only might (not may) when the situation is not real:

- \* If I knew them better, I might invite them to dinner. (The situation here is not real because I don't know them very well, so I'm not going to invite them. 'May' is not possible in this example.)

### C. There is also a continuous form: may/might be ~ing. Compare this with will be ~ing:

- \* Don't phone at 8.30. I'll be watching the football on television.
- \* Don't phone at 8.30. I might be watching (or I may be watching) the football on television. (= perhaps I'll be watching it)

We also use may/might be ~ing for possible plans. Compare:

- \* I'm going to Ireland in July. (for sure)
- \* I may be going (or I might be going) to Ireland in July. (possible)

But you can also say 'I may go (or I might go) to Ireland...' with little difference of meaning.

### D. Might as well/may as well

Study this example:

Helen and Clare have just missed the bus. The buses run every hour.

Helen: What shall we do? Shall we walk?

Clare: We might as well. It's a nice day and I don't want to wait here for an hour.

'(We) might as well do something' = (We) should do something because there is nothing better to do and there is no reason not to do it.

You can also say 'may as well'.

- \* A: What time are you going?  
B: Well, I'm ready, so I might as well go now. (or ... I may as well go now)
- \* The buses are so expensive these days, you might as well get a taxi. (= taxis are just as good, no more expensive)

## EXERCISES

### 1. Write sentences with may or might.

1. Where are you going for your holidays? (to Ireland???)  
I haven't decided yet. \_I may go to Ireland.\_
2. What sort of car are you going to buy? (a Mercedes???)  
I'm not sure yet. I ---
3. What are you doing this weekend? (go to London???)  
I haven't decided yet. ---
4. Where are you going to hang that picture? (in the dining room???)  
I haven't made up my mind yet. ---
5. When is Tom coming to see us? (on Saturday???)

I don't know yet. ---

6. What is Julia going to do when she leaves school? (go to university???)  
She hasn't decided yet. ---

**2. Complete the sentences using might + one of these verbs:**

**Bite/ break/ need/ rain/ slip/ wake**

1. Take an umbrella with you when you go out. It **\_might rain\_** later.
2. Don't make too much noise. You --- the baby.
3. Be careful of that dog. It --- you.
4. I don't think we should throw that letter away. We --- it later.
5. Be careful. The footpath is very icy. You ---
6. I don't want the children to play in this room. They --- something.

**3. Complete the sentences using might be able to or might have to + a suitable verb.**

1. I can't help you but why don't you ask Jill? She **\_might be able\_** to help\_ you.
2. I can't meet you this evening but I --- you tomorrow evening.
- 3 I'm not working on Saturday but I --- on Sunday.
4. George isn't well. He --- to hospital for an operation.

**4. Write sentences with may not or might not.**

1. (I don't know if Ann will come to the party.) **Ann might not come to the party.**
2. (I don't know if I'll go out this evening.) I ---
3. (I don't know if Tom will like the present I bought for him.)  
Tom ---
4. (I don't know if Sue will be able to meet us this evening.) ---

**5. Read the situations and make sentences with may/might as well.**

1. You and a friend have just missed the bus. The buses run every hour.  
You say: We'll have to wait an hour for the next bus. **\_We might as well wait.\_**
2. You have a free ticket for a concert. You're not very keen on the concert but you decide to go. You say: I --- to the concert. It's a pity to waste a free ticket.
3. You're in a cafe with a friend. You've finished your drinks. It's a nice cafe and there is no reason to go now, so why not have another drink? You say: We ---. What would you like?
4. You and a friend are at home. You are bored. There's a film on TV starting in a few minutes. You say: ---. There's nothing else to do.

**Answers:**

- |   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1.2. I may/might buy a Mercedes.            | 2.2.might wake  |
| 1.3. I may/might go to London               | 2.3.might bite  |
| 1.4. I may/might hang it in the dining room | 2.4.might need  |
| 1.5. He may/might come on Saturday.         | 2.5. might slip |
| 1.6. She may/might go to university         | 2.6.might break |

- 3.2.might be able to meet/see  
3.3.might have to work  
3.4.might have to go

- 4.2.may/might not go out this evening
- 4.3. Tom may/might not like the present I bought for him
- 4.4. Sue may/might not be able to meet us this evening.

- 5.2.may/might as well go
- 5.3.may/might as well have another drink
- 5.4. We may/might as well watch it or ....watch the film.