



UNIT 6

La modalité / The environment

1 - Verbs and prepositions.

Complete the following sentences with the suitable preposition. Answers are provided in the Key at the end of the unit.

1. The exercise consists ____ summing up and commenting on the text. The exercise thus consists ____ two steps.
2. Have you heard ____ the forthcoming storm ? If only you would listen ____ the news sometimes, you wouldn't be relying ____ me all the time!
3. Only the U.N. has the power to interfere ____ a country's decisions.
4. The Nobel Prize said he hoped ____ an end to political violence in his country.
5. If you don't understand all the vocabulary, you need to infer the meaning ____ the context.
6. Please do not insist ____ my participation. I have no intention of getting involved ____ the dispute.
7. I leave it ____ my superior to hire you. It's up ____ him. Leave ____ your résumé and he will call you.
8. I expect all the students to participate ____ the debate.
9. "Did you know that Rover merged ____ BMW ?" "I'd say it was more a case of BMW taking ____ Rover".
10. He's mad ____ online games. His parents are not so keen ____ them. They rather disapprove ____ them.

2.a – Grammar : La modalité.

✓ Le preterit modal

Le preterit modal, contrairement au preterit temporel ne dit rien du passé mais s'utilise pour un fait présenté comme irréel.

Comparez : He **came** and we went to the cinema. Il est venu et nous sommes allés au cinéma.
On pourrait ajouter 'yesterday'. Il s'agit d'un preterit temporel.

☞ If he **came**, we would go to the cinema. S'il venait, nous irions au cinéma. Impossible d'ajouter 'yesterday' dans ce cas. Il s'agit d'un preterit modal.

☞ Le preterit modal se conjugue comme le preterit temporel **SAUF** pour « If I were rich » / « I wish I were rich » (et non ~~if I was / I wish I was~~). [UNIT 5]

Wish

☞ I wish I **knew** the truth. J'aimerais connaître la vérité *ou* Je regrette ne pas connaître la vérité.

☞ à la négation => I wish I **didn't know** the truth. Je regrette **de connaître** la vérité.

I wish you **had told** me the truth. J'aurais aimé que tu me dises la vérité. Je regrette que tu ne m'aies pas dit la vérité.

I wish you **would come** (1) / **could come** (2) J'aimerais que tu viennes. (sous-entendu (1) que tu acceptes de venir / (2) que tu puisses venir)

I'd rather [UNIT 5]

I'd rather **come** with you (même sujet : infinitif)

☞ I'd rather you came with me tomorrow (sujets différents : preterit modal)

I'd rather you had been with me.

If only he weren't so lazy. (☞ he weren't et non pas ~~he wasn't~~)

Suppose / Imagine he called tomorrow, what should I say ?

☞ **It's (high) time he gave** us an answer.

He behaved as if he were still a child.

✓ Les modaux

En utilisant un modal, l'énonciateur prend position, permet, ne permet pas, s'exprime sur le caractère certain voire moins certain (en utilisant la forme passée du modal) d'un énoncé etc.

☞ **au contexte** car la forme passée d'un modal ne renvoie pas nécessairement à du passé.

One never knows what **might happen** in the future => *might*, forme passée de *may* parle du futur !

I **could do** it if you asked me => je pourrais le faire si vous me le demandiez => valeur d'irréel.

