MODALS OF PROBABILITY

OR SPECULATION AND DEDUCTION

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My morning phone conversations

John:

I'll phone you in the afternoon at about five o'clock.

Me:

But I'll be in class.

John:

Never mind, your students will understand.

Ian:

I'll phone you as soon as I arrive in Vitoria.

Me:

What time does your bus leave Madrid?

Ian:

1:30 p.m.

Me:

Ok. Talk to you later.

- Mary:

  Sorry, I can’t hear you. The signal is very weak here in the countryside. I’m on my way back tomorrow. I’ll phone you then.

  Me:

  Tomorrow? Ok. Let’s talk tomorrow. I can’t hear you well either.

This is me in the classroom at 05:05 pm

My phone rings

A student says:

Teacher, your mobile is ringing.
Who is calling?

Let me think …

It CAN'T be Mary because she said she would phone tomorrow.

It MIGHT be Ian because he set off at 1:30 pm but I'm not sure, it takes about four hours so I think it's too early.

Oh, I know!. It MUST be John, he said he would phone at about five and it's only five minutes past…. Hello? …. Yeah, it's John.

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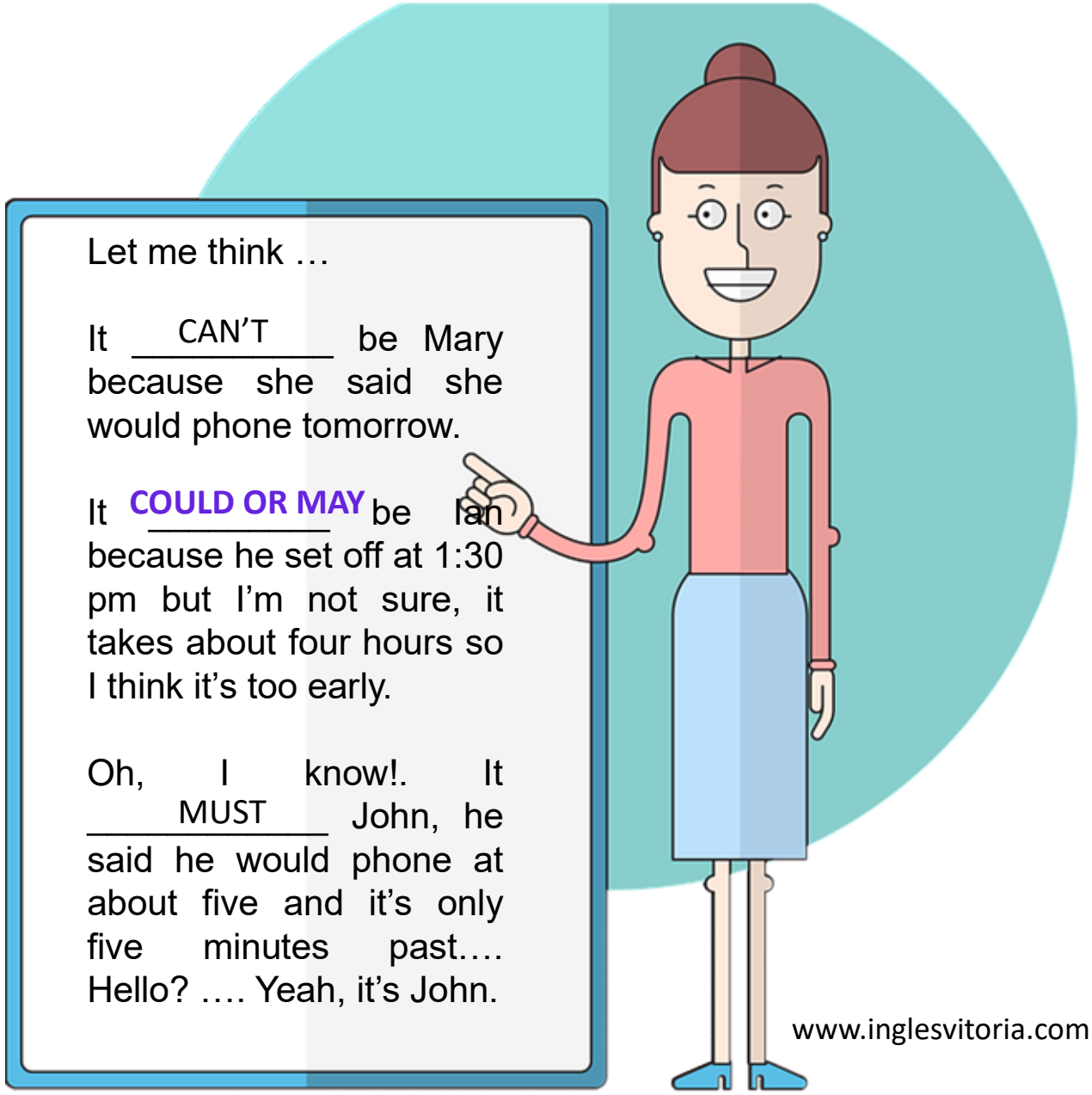
ALSO



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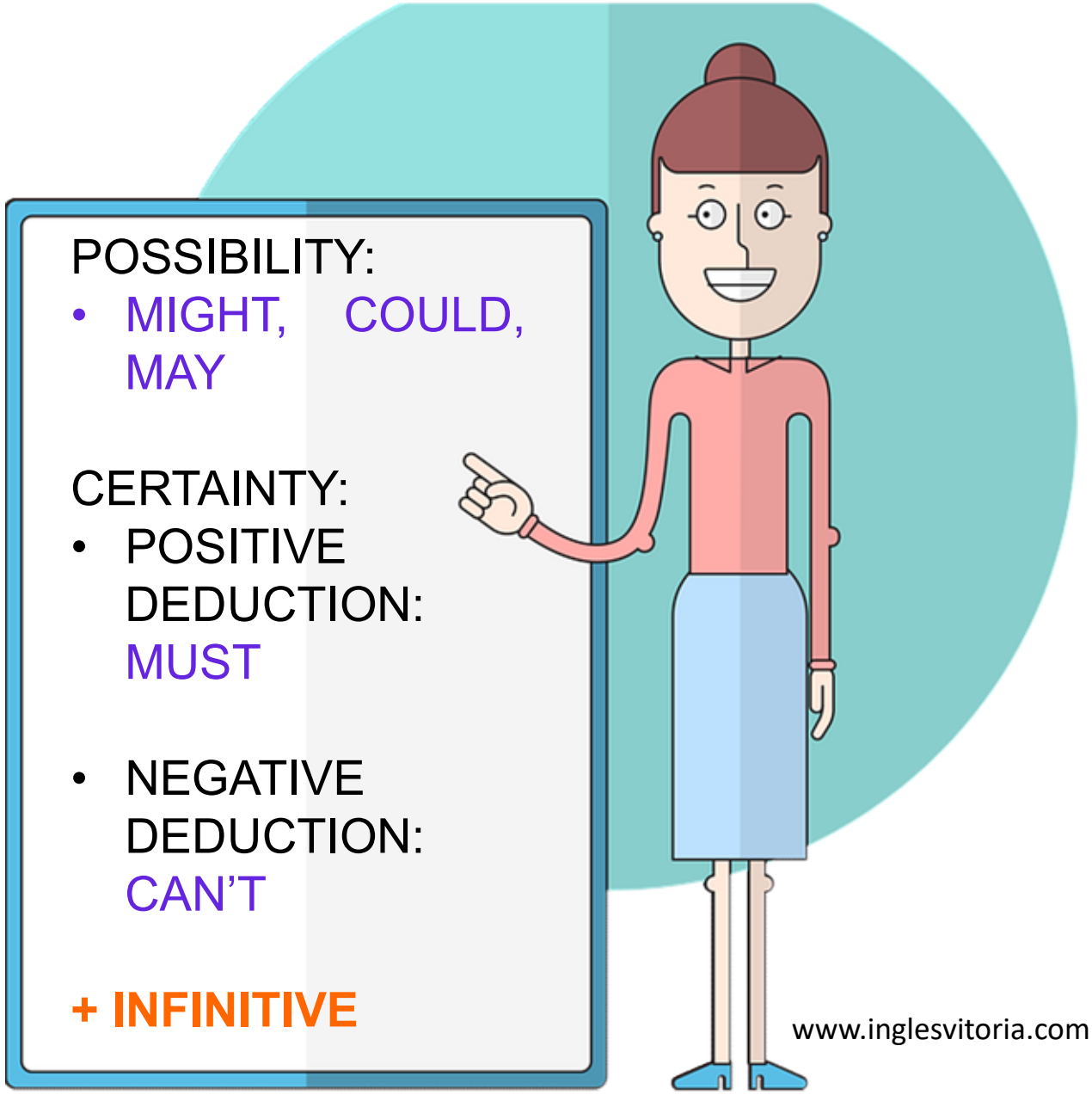

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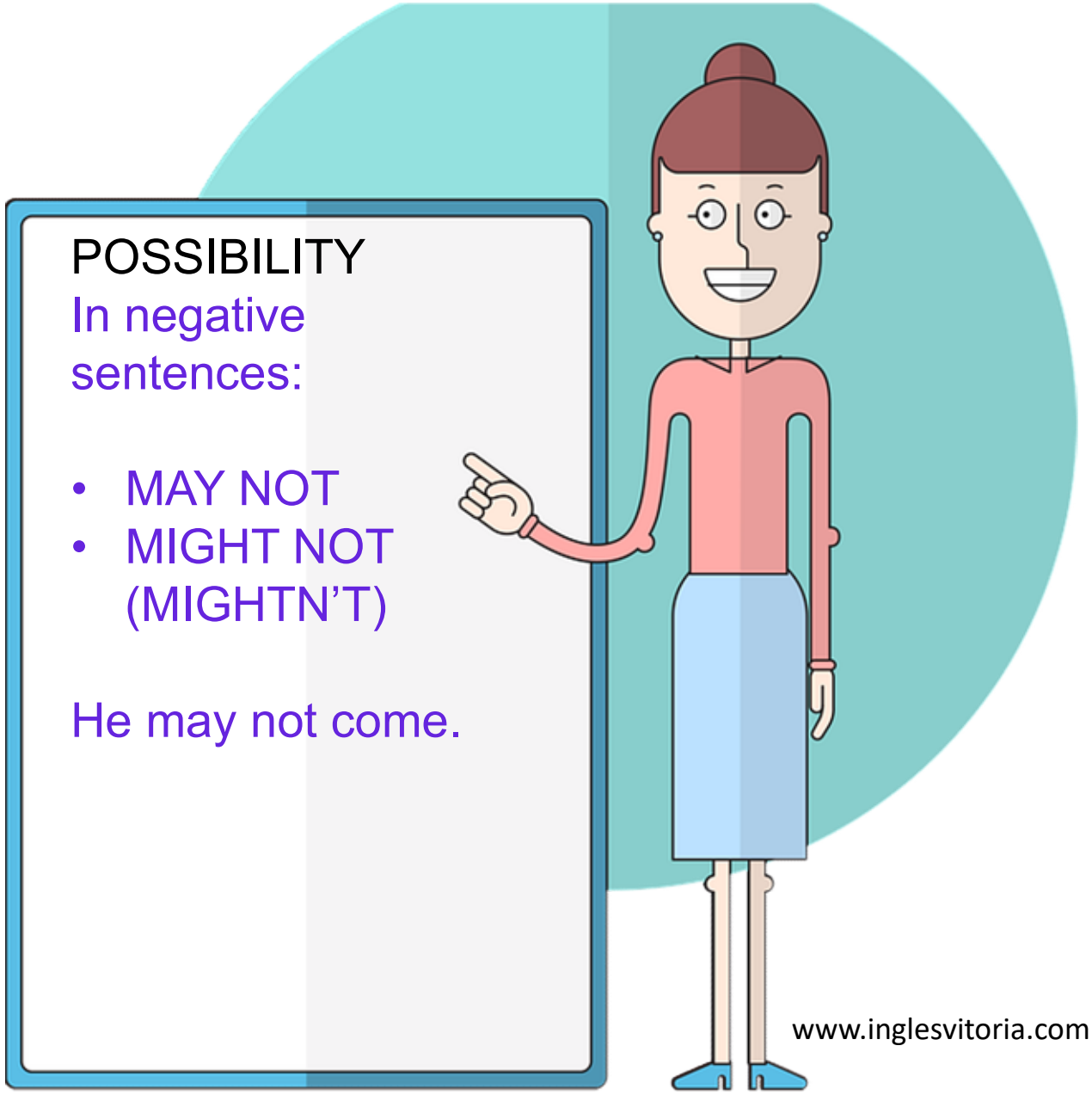
NOT
COULDN'T *THAT*
EXPRESSES ***CERTAINTY***
(positive deduction)*.*

He ***COULDN'T*** *have arrived.*
He was in a traffic jam.



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