1. modal verbs:

A. MUST
As well as for obligation, we also use must + infinitive to say that we are almost sure something is true about the present, and must have + past participle to say that we are almost sure something was true or happened in the past.

Mel and Trudy must be very well off – they’ve got an enormous house.
You must have seen him – he was standing right in front of you!

B. CAN'T
We use can’t and can’t/couldn’t + perfect infinitive (NOT mustn’t/mustn’t have) to say that we are almost sure that something isn’t true in the present or didn’t happen/wasn’t true in the past.

They can’t be playing very well – they’re losing 0–3.
You can’t/couldn’t have spent very long on this essay – you’ve only written 100 words.

C. MAY/MIGHT/COULD
We use may/might/could + infinitive and may/might/could + perfect infinitive to say that we think it’s possible that something is true in the present or was true/happened in the past.

I haven’t seen the sales manager today. He may/might/could be off sick.
He may/might not have heard the message I left on his voicemail.

COMPARE:
He might not have done it. (= Maybe he didn’t do it.)
He couldn’t have done it. (= It is impossible that he did it.)

D. SHOULD
Use should + infinitive (or should have + participle) to describe a situation you would expect to happen (or would expect to have happened in the past).

If I post the letter today, it should arrive on Friday.
I posted the letter a week ago. It should have arrived by now.

! Compare the use of the infinitive and the continuous infinitive after these modals.
He must work really hard. He never gets home before 9.00 p.m. = deduction about a habitual action
There’s a light on in his office. He must still be working. = deduction about an action in progress at the moment of speaking

2. adjectives for speculation:

A. BOUND / SURE
We use be bound or be sure + infinitive to say that we think something is certain to be true or to happen.

He’s bound/sure to be here in a minute. He left an hour ago.
She’s sure to know. She’s an expert on the subject.
B. LIKELY / UNLIKELY
We can use subject + be likely/unlikely + infinitive, or it is likely/unlikely + that + clause.
They describe something that will probably happen or won’t probably happen.

I think she’s likely to agree to our proposal – we’ve given her some very good reasons.
The doctors say that at his age he’s unlikely to recover.
I think it’s very likely that the meeting will be over by 6.00.
It’s unlikely that the government will raise interest rates this year.

C. DEFINITELY / PROBABLY
They go before a main verb and after the auxiliary (if there is one) in positive sentences and before the auxiliary verb in negative sentences.

She’ll definitely pass the exam. She’s worked really hard.
She definitely won’t pass the exam. She hasn’t done any work at all.
He’ll probably be here around 8.00. He usually leaves work at 7.30.
He probably won’t be here until about 8.15. He’s stuck in a traffic jam.

With be they go after the verb in positive sentences and before it in negative sentences,

He’s probably British.
The painting definitely isn’t genuine.

I be likely to and will probably are very similar in meaning, but be likely to is more formal.
COMPARE:
• The new coach is likely to be appointed today.
• The new coach will probably be appointed today.