Modals and Their Meaning in Context

Read the following sentences and determine the meaning the modal is expressing. Pay close attention to the context. Choose meanings from the following list.

- opinion
- obligation
- habitual action in the past
- possibility
- impossibility
- certainty
- ability in the past
- preference
- condition
- lack of necessity

The Oil Crisis

1. The oil-producing countries of Latin America may be a source of energy relief. ________________

2. There are rumors that some countries cannot continue supplying oil as before. ________________

3. Since the Chinese are now using more oil, this increase in oil consumption will reduce the natural reserves. ________________

4. People must find a way to reduce oil consumption. ________________

5. In the past, people used to rely on other means to move goods. ______

6. Countries such as Brazil and India should consider these problems before increasing their oil demands. ________________

7. Many countries that didn’t have to depend on oil before are now demanding more. ________________

8. Some people in the United States would rather buy oil from places that are closer to home. ________________

9. A pipeline in Colombia could help the country with international investors. ________________

10. If there were an agreement among these Latin countries and the United States, there would be plenty of cheap oil to go around for a long time. __________

Myra M. Medina, 2004
Miami-Dade College