Modal Auxiliary Verbs Exercise

Fill in the blanks with an appropriate modal auxiliary verb.

1. You ......................... not play with fire. (prohibition)
   - must
   - may
   - will

2. The children asked whether they ......................... go for a swim. (permission)
   - would
   - should
   - could

3. We ......................... hear music playing in
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the next room. (ability)

- can
- may
- shall

4. If you start now, you ......................... reach there by midnight. (prediction)

- may
- will
- shall

5. I did all that I ......................... (ability)

- can
- could
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Either could be used here

6. He said that he ................. lay down his life for his country. (determination)

will
would
might

7. Work hard lest you ............... fail. (certainty)

would
should
might
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8. I …………………… pass. I am not sure. (weak probability)
   - may
   - might
   - would

9. To whom …………………… I address this letter?
   - would
   - could
   - should

10. …………………… you mind moving a bit?
    - Should
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11. She ........................................ not wait any longer. (lack of necessity)

12. I don’t know whether I ................................ have time.
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Answers

1. You must not play with fire.

2. The children asked whether they could go for a swim.

3. We can hear music playing in the next room.

4. If you start now, you will reach there by midnight.

5. I did all that I could.

6. He said that he would lay down his life for his country.

7. Work hard lest you should fail.

8. I might pass. I am not sure.

9. To whom should I address this letter?

10. Would you mind moving a bit?

11. She need not wait any longer.

12. I don’t know whether I will have time.