

THEME 6 OPEN YOUR HEART GRAMMAR

PAST MODALS

When we know that something happened in the past, we use a normal past tense. (He *did*, I *saw* them, etc.)

If we are not completely sure, we use a modal (*must, may, might, could + have*). The choice of modal depends on the degree of certainty, as in the following table.

PROBABILITY	VERB	EXAMPLE
100%	past simple	<i>She knew.</i>
almost certain 95%	<i>must have</i>	<i>We must have arrived.</i>
50% (possible)	<i>could have</i>	<i>She could have forgotten.</i>
possible but unlikely	<i>might/ may have</i>	<i>We might/may have made a mistake.</i>
highly unlikely	<i>can't/couldn't have</i>	<i>You can't have lost it.</i>
0% impossibility	past simple negative	<i>He didn't know.</i>

EXERCISE A. The following sentences are about an escaped criminal. Rewrite them using a modal from the above table, as in the example.

Example: It is almost certain that he left before breakfast.

He must have left before breakfast.

1. It is highly unlikely that he carried the gold by himself.
2. He has almost certainly been spotted by the police by now.
3. It is possible but unlikely that he headed towards London.
4. It is almost certain that he realised how serious it was.
5. It is highly unlikely that he thought things through clearly.
6. Possibly he escaped by boat.
7. It's quite likely that he made contact with his friends.

ANSWERS

- 1 He can't / couldn't have carried the gold by himself.
2. He must have been spotted by the police by now.
3. He might have headed towards London.
4. He must have realized how serious it was.
5. He can't / couldn't have thought things through clearly.
6. He could have escaped by boat.
7. He may have made contact with his friends.

SHOULD / OUGHT TO HAVE + V3

We use **should/ought to + have + past participle (V3)** to talk about an obligation in the past. It often indicates some criticism.

- Tina should have asked me before she took my mobile. (I'm annoyed)
- You cough terribly. You shouldn't have walked in the rain. I mean you should have taken a taxi.

EXERCISES B. Which sentence, (a) or (b), comes after the given one.

1. I don't know why he didn't come to the art exhibition.

- a) He might have liked it.
- b) He might like it.

2. Nobody knows where the bicycles have gone.

- a) They might have been stolen. B) They might be stolen.

3. Don't throw away the rest of the chicken.

- a) Mom may have used it for dinner. b) Mom may use it for dinner.

4. I wish I had seen my brother's performance in the school choir.

- a) He must have played really well. b) He must play well.

5. He had a beautiful smile on his face.

- a) He can't have had the bad news. b) He can't have the bad news.

6. I was so angry with you.

- a) You should have left a note for me. b) You should leave a note for me.

7. The director is shouting.

- a) He must have been very angry. b) He must be very angry.

8. Oh,no! Not again. Where are my keys?

- a) I might have left them on the table. b) I might leave them on the table.

EXERCISE C. Rewrite the sentences using the modals below.

could have / should have / can't have / must have / shouldn't have

1. It was certain that Amanda suffered from anxiety when she was a teenage girl.

Amanda **must** have suffered from anxiety when she was a teenage girl.

2. It was possible that Mike sent you these roses.

Ron _____

3. Seeing a physician was the right thing to do, but she didn't.

She _____

4. It was not possible that you saw the maths teacher.

You _____

5. I am sure that Linda didn't take the lift to the fifth floor; she's claustrophobic.

Linda _____

6. I am annoyed that you took my mobile phone without asking my permission.

You

7. The interns probably stayed back at work yesterday.

The interns