

Modal verbs 5 - Past forms

Lesson code: UEMK-D1RE-6H1F

INTERMEDIATE +

1 Modal verbs for obligation, prohibition, necessity and advice

Study the table below.

Modal verb	Past forms and examples
have to, must	had to I had to leave early this morning.
mustn't	<i>We cannot use mustn't to talk about the past. We use other structures, for example:</i> We couldn't arrive late. We weren't allowed to smoke.
needn't	needn't have + past participle You needn't have told him. <i>NOTE: I needn't have (done) and I didn't need to do are different. I needn't have done something = I did something that I thought was necessary, but now I know that it was not necessary.</i> I needn't have told her. She already knew. <i>If something was not necessary in the past, we use didn't need to or didn't have to:</i> I didn't need to go to bed so early, but I was tired. I didn't have to go to bed so early, but I was tired.
should/shouldn't	should/shouldn't have + past participle He failed his exams. He should have studied harder. He failed his exams. He shouldn't have been so lazy.

Dialogue

A: Fabio, you **needn't have** come. Today's English class is cancelled. Didn't you get the email?

B: No, I didn't.

A: I'm sorry. I **should have** called you to make sure.



2 Practice

Make a sentence about each situation using the structures on page 1. More than one structure may be possible in some of the sentences.

- Omar couldn't find his mobile phone, so he went to the shopping centre and bought a new phone. The next day, he found his old phone.

Omar needn't have bought a new phone.

- Kate had a house party. She forgot to invite her friend Ross. Now he is very upset.

Kate to invite Ross.

- It was against the rules to use dictionaries during the exam.

The students dictionaries during the exam.

- According to the weather forecast, it was going to rain, so Peter brought his umbrella. However, it didn't rain.

Peter his umbrella.

- Clark told Maria that he was quitting his job. Now, everybody knows his secret.

Clark Maria that he was quitting his job.

- I wanted to park in front of the bank, but there was a 'No parking' sign.

I in front of the bank.

- The only available parking space was 100 metres from the bank. It was necessary to park there.

I 100 metres from the bank.

- Keith is feeling sick. He ate too much.

Keith so much.

- Mark trained very hard every day for his judo match. In the end, the competition was cancelled.

Mark so hard.

- David got up late. It was his day off from work.

David early.

Now say something about you. Talk about something that you ...

- needn't have done
- shouldn't have done
- should have done
- had to do



3 Modal verbs for certainty, possibility and expectation

Study the table below.

Modal verb	Past forms and examples
must	must have + past participle Norman wasn't at home. He must have been on his way to work.
can't	can't have + past participle Andrew can't have missed his train. He got there 10 minutes early.
may / may not	may/may not have + past participle Robert isn't usually so rude. He may have been tired. Dan didn't say hello. He may not have seen me.
might / might not	might/might not have + past participle I'm not totally sure, but I think the match might have started already. "Why wasn't John at the meeting?" "He might not have known about it."
could / couldn't	could/couldn't have + past participle Why didn't you answer the phone? It could have been Anne. <i>NOTE: couldn't have + past participle has a similar meaning to can't have + past participle:</i> James couldn't have been on holiday. I saw his wife at the supermarket. (= it is not possible that James was on holiday.)
should / shouldn't	should/shouldn't have + past participle Where's George? He should have been here an hour ago. The price shouldn't have been \$10. It's usually much more.

Dialogue

- A:** Where's Carol? She **should have been** here an hour ago.
- B:** She **might not have known** about the meeting.
- A:** She **must have known**. I sent everyone a text message.
- B:** Her phone **may have been** switched off.



4 Must or can't

Complete the following sentences with the past form of must or can't.

1. I didn't hear you come in last night. I _____ (be) asleep.
2. Allie doesn't look very happy. Her interview _____ (go) well.
3. I didn't receive your email. You _____ (send) it to the wrong address.
4. I heard that Julie passed all her exams. She _____ (be) delighted.
5. Mike's first day at work _____ (be) easy. His new boss is very demanding.
6. Look at Paul's new sports car. It _____ (cost) him a fortune.

5 Should/shouldn't have

Yesterday was a very strange day. A lot of unexpected things happened. Read the sentences below and look at the pictures. Write a sentence about what should or shouldn't have happened in each picture.

1



2



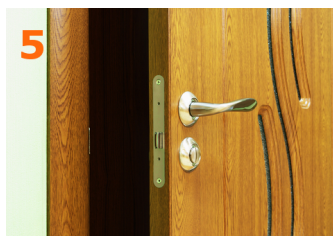
3



4



5



6



1. Jack had never played chess before.
Jack shouldn't have won (win) a game of chess.
2. The contract was carefully checked by the director.
There _____ (be) so many mistakes in the contract.
3. Mr Faber ordered an ipad.
Mr Faber _____ (receive) a laptop.
4. The weather forecast predicted sun.
It _____ (be) sunny.
5. Mario locked his front door before he went out.
Mario's front door _____ (be) open.
6. Before the start of the race, nobody gave Derek a chance of winning.
Derek _____ (lose) the race.



6 Practice

Make a sentence about each situation using a past modal verb structure. More than one structure may be possible in some of the sentences.

1. It is possible that Bill was out of town.

Bill may/might/could have been out of town.

2. It is not possible that Jane knew about my birthday party.

Jane

3. I'm certain that Joseph was responsible for the mistake.

Joseph

4. It is possible that Andrew did not hear the news about his brother.

Andrew

5. It is strange that nobody called me yesterday.

Somebody

6. It is impossible that you saw me last weekend. I was on holiday.

You

7. I'm sure the politician knew that he was going to lose the election.

The politician

8. It is strange that it was so cold last month. Normally August is a very hot month.

It so cold in August.

9. Her Russian is excellent. It is possible that she had a very good teacher.

Her Russian is really excellent. She

10. It is strange that Nick was in Paris. He booked a flight to Rome.

Nick in Paris. He in Rome.

