

Grammar Past modals



1 Choose the correct option in *italics*. There may be more than one possible answer.

- 1 The negotiation *should* / *must* / *ought to* have started earlier because now we don't have enough time to discuss all the issues.
- 2 Both companies *could* / *ought to* / *shouldn't* have agreed mutually beneficial goals to avoid this conflict.
- 3 The company *must* / *should* / *couldn't* have arranged the emergency meeting last week because the CEO wasn't available then.
- 4 The clients were extremely embarrassed – you *couldn't* / *shouldn't* / *mustn't* have forgotten their names during the introductions.
- 5 Philip *couldn't* / *ought not to* / *can't* have given the press details of the alliance because he hasn't even seen the file.
- 6 The manager *may* / *must* / *can't* have told the staff about the changes, but I'm not sure.



2 Put the phrases in the correct order to make sentences.

- 1 the project / have expected / with such an inexperienced team / to run smoothly / she couldn't

- 2 any decisions / have discussed / the merger before / we ought to / were made

- 3 the airport / because he's just / he can't have / called me from / lost his phone

- 4 consulting their / have signed / lawyer first / the contract without / they shouldn't

- 5 have forgotten to / in your diary / make a note / of the deadline / you might

- 6 due to start / late as we were / must have run / ten minutes ago / their previous appointment / this meeting



3 Complete the sentences with the past form of the modals in the box.

can't go couldn't write may decide might find must agree should respond
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- 1 I think we should call lost property because someone _____ your wallet after you dropped it in the seminar.
- 2 I _____ the report earlier because the figures weren't available until today.
- 3 The shareholders _____ to the alliance or we would have heard otherwise by now.
- 4 Tina and Gino _____ straight to the apartment because neither of them has the keys.
- 5 Ursula planned to work late today so she _____ to go straight to the restaurant and meet us there rather than come home first.
- 6 The client _____ to my previous email about the new designs. Perhaps she doesn't like them.