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

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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS