

LEARN THIS! Modal verbs

- a We use *may / might / could have* + past participle for speculating about past events.
She may / might / could have gone home hours ago.
(= It's possible she went home hours ago.)
- b We use *may / might not have* + past participle (but not *could not have*) as the negative.
She didn't phone. She might / may not have known my number. (= It's possible she didn't know it.)
- c We use *must have* and *can't / couldn't have* + past participle to make logical deductions about the past.
You can't / couldn't have seen Louis in town. He lives abroad now. (= It's not possible that you saw him.)
You must have seen somebody who looks like him.
(= That is the only possible explanation.)
- d We use *should / shouldn't have* + past participle to criticise past actions.
You should have phoned her before you went out.
You shouldn't have used all the credit on your phone.

Choose the best words (a, b or c) to complete the sentences.

- 1 You look freezing. You worn a coat.
a should have b might not have c could have
- 2 Ask that question again; the teacher heard you.
a shouldn't have b could have c can't have
- 3 Your brother has been using your email account. You told him your password.
a must have b mustn't have c couldn't have
- 4 Jack is really upset. You laughed at him!
a may not have b can't have c shouldn't have
- 5 I sent you a postcard, but you received it yet.
a may have b should have c might not have
- 6 Your phone is dead. You recharged it this morning.
a might have b shouldn't have c can't have
- 7 I can't remember when I last saw you. Maybe it was last April, or it been in the summer.
a might have b must have c can't have
- 8 You invited Sam to your party. He's a really nice guy.
a can't have b should have c might not have
- 9 Let's run for the bus. It left yet.
a should have b may have c might not have

Circle the correct modals to complete the sentences.

- 1 She **can't have / might have / must have** left her phone at school. Or perhaps she left it on the bus.
- 2 There's no pizza left. They **can't have / could have / must have** eaten it all.
- 3 Juliet **can't have / may have / must have** gone on holiday. She was at school yesterday!
- 4 I didn't get your email. Do you think you **can't have / could have / must have** sent it to my old email address?
- 5 Your smartwatch probably isn't broken. It **can't have / could have / must have** run out of charge.
- 6 The school show is on YouTube. Our teacher **can't have / might have / must have** uploaded it.
- 7 You went 130 km in less than an hour? You **can't have / could have / must have** driven very fast!
- 8 Max isn't replying to my texts. He **can't have / might have / must have** taken his phone with him.

Complete the dialogue with the modals below. You can use the same modal more than once.

can't have may / might / could have

might not have must have

Erica What's the matter, Jack? You look worried.

Jack I can't find my phone. I¹ _____ left it somewhere.

Erica Did you have it on the bus?

Jack Yes, I did. But I² _____ left it there because I used it just after I got off. I sent you a text.

Erica You³ _____ dropped it when you were walking here from the bus stop.

Jack Yes, that's possible. I was listening to my MP3 player.

Erica Somebody⁴ _____ found it by now and handed it in to the police.

Jack Or they⁵ _____ handed it in. They⁶ _____ kept it.

Erica Shall I phone the police station and ask?

Jack Yes, OK. But why don't you call my phone number first?

Erica OK, I will. I can hear your phone ringing.

Jack Me too. I⁷ _____ dropped it in the street.

Erica No. You⁸ _____ put it down somewhere in the house.

Jack That's a relief! But where is it?

USE OF ENGLISH For each mini-dialogue, write the option (a–c) that makes the most sense in the gap.

1 Bill I can't find my camera.

Ben _____

Bill Yes, maybe. I'll look there tomorrow.

- a You should have kept it in a safe place.
- b You might have left it at school.
- c You couldn't have lost it.

2 Alex She didn't get my email.

Kat _____

Alex I'm sure I did. I checked before I sent it.

- a You might have sent it to the wrong address.
- b You should have sent it to a different address.
- c You can't have sent it to the right address.

3 Clare My dad wasn't answering his phone.

Liz _____

Clare But he always has it.

- a He should have been at work.
- b He might not have gone to work.
- c He can't have taken his phone to work.