

### ***The Girl in the Lobby***

She stood by the elevator, phone in hand. Most people **assumed** she was waiting for someone. The receptionist **thought** she looked **nervous**, and the security guard **reported** that she **seemed upset**. A businessman **guessed** she had gotten **lost**. No one asked.

In reality, she had just walked out of a job interview that had gone badly. She was trying to **compose herself** before heading home.

Later, someone **claimed** she had been crying. Others **believed** she might have been in some kind of trouble. One person even **suggested** she had received bad news.

None of them knew that she had just made a life-changing decision — and that her silence was a choice, not a sign.

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#### **COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. What were some of the assumptions people made about the girl in the lobby?

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2. What was the real reason she was standing there?

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3. Why didn't anyone approach her to ask directly?

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4. What does the last sentence imply about the girl's intentions?

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5. What message do you think the story sends about how people interpret others?

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#### **VOCABULARY EXERCISE 1 – Match the word to the definition**

##### **Vocabulary**

1. compose herself
2. assumed
3. claimed
4. believed
5. guessed

##### **Definitions**

- a. to think or accept something is true without proof
- b. to say something might be true without knowing for sure
- c. said that something was a fact, often without evidence
- d. to regain control of emotions
- e. accepted something as true or correct

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## VOCABULARY EXERCISE 2 – Fill in the gaps

Use these words: **seemed – upset – nervous – lost – suggested**

1. She looked clearly \_\_\_\_\_ during the interview.
2. The receptionist said she \_\_\_\_\_ a bit strange.
3. Everyone thought the girl had gotten \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A man \_\_\_\_\_ she had received some bad news.
5. The security guard said she seemed \_\_\_\_\_.

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## GRAMMAR EXPLANATION

### Advanced Reported Speech: Modals + Verbs of Perception/Assumption

When reporting **how someone appeared to feel, act, or react**, we often rely on **verbs of perception and assumption**. These are used to describe what people think, suspect, or infer — even if they're wrong.

#### Common verbs:

- **Perception:** seem, appear, look
- **Assumption & thought:** think, believe, assume, guess, suppose, claim, suggest, say, report

We often combine them with **modals of deduction** to express levels of certainty or doubt:

- **must have** (certainty)
- **might have / may have / could have** (possibility)
- **can't have / couldn't have** (impossibility)

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#### Example Transformations:

##### Direct speech:

“She is crying.”

“He must be tired.”

“Maybe she left.”

##### Reported speech:

→ They said she **seemed upset**.

→ They assumed he **must have been tired**.

→ He guessed she **might have left**.

⚠ Tense changes apply (present → past) and modal usage should reflect speaker certainty.

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### **GRAMMAR EXERCISE 1 – Fill in the gaps**

Complete with an appropriate reporting verb + a modal or linking verb (e.g. seemed, looked, might have, must have, was, etc.).

1. The guard \_\_\_\_\_ she might have forgotten her badge.
2. They \_\_\_\_\_ he must have misunderstood the question.
3. A witness \_\_\_\_\_ the suspect appeared to be hiding something.
4. The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ that James might have been copying.
5. The director \_\_\_\_\_ the meeting had already started.
6. She \_\_\_\_\_ he must have been joking.
7. They \_\_\_\_\_ she seemed to be avoiding eye contact.
8. The guide \_\_\_\_\_ that the hikers could have taken the wrong trail.
9. People \_\_\_\_\_ she looked pale and tired.
10. One colleague \_\_\_\_\_ he may have been under pressure.

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### **GRAMMAR EXERCISE 2 – Multiple choice**

Choose the correct reported version.

1. “He’s probably tired.”
  - A. They guessed he might have been tired.
  - B. They guessed he was being tired.
  - C. They guessed he must be tired.
2. “She looks confused.”
  - A. I say she is confused.
  - B. I thought she looked confused.
  - C. I think she had looked confused.
3. “They must have left.”
  - A. He claimed they had to leave.
  - B. He said they left.
  - C. He assumed they must have left.
4. “She can’t be serious.”
  - A. I reported she can’t be serious.
  - B. I thought she couldn’t have been serious.
  - C. I said she might be serious.

5. "He might be lying."

- A. They believed he might have been lying.
- B. They believed he may be lied.
- C. They believed he might be lie.

6. "She's acting weird."

- A. They claimed she acted weird.
- B. They claimed she had been acting weird.
- C. They claimed she is acting weird.

7. "I guess he forgot."

- A. I thought he forgot.
- B. I guessed he had forgotten.
- C. I guess he had forgotten.

8. "She looks like she's crying."

- A. They said she looked like she had been crying.
- B. They said she looks like crying.
- C. They said she cries.

9. "He may have failed the test."

- A. She assumed he may have failed the test.
- B. She assumed he might fail the test.
- C. She assumed he may failed.

10. "She must be angry."

- A. They thought she was must angry.
- B. They believed she must have been angry.
- C. They believed she was angry must.

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