

STORY-BASED ACTIVITY

Modal Perfect in Context

Name: _____ Date: _____

Before you read

Look at these clues. What do you think happened? Write your guess below.



A key left in the door



An empty office desk



15 missed calls

My guess: The person might have _____

The story

Read the story carefully. Underline any modal perfect forms you find.

The Empty Office

When Clara arrived at work on Monday morning, something was immediately wrong. The lights on the third floor were all off, which was unusual — someone must have forgotten to turn them back on after the weekend. Or had they?

She walked down the corridor and noticed that Daniel's office was empty. His computer was gone, his personal photos had disappeared from the shelf, and there was a half-drunk cup of coffee sitting cold on the desk. He should have told someone he was leaving. They were supposed to present together that afternoon.

Clara checked her phone. Fifteen missed calls — all from their manager, Ms. Torres. She might have been trying to reach her all morning. Clara felt her stomach drop. Why hadn't she answered?

She called back immediately. "I've been trying to reach you for hours," said Ms. Torres, her voice calm but serious. "Daniel resigned last night. He could have given us more notice, but he didn't. You're going to have to present on your own."

Clara stood in the empty office for a moment. If she had known, she would have prepared differently. But there was no time for that now. She picked up Daniel's old notebook from the floor — he must have dropped it on his way out — and walked towards the conference room.

Part 1 — Comprehension questions

Answer in full sentences.

1. Why was Clara surprised when she arrived at work?

2. What did Daniel leave behind on his desk? What does this suggest?

3. Why did Clara feel her stomach drop?

4. What problem does Clara have to solve by the end of the story?

Part 2 — Grammar focus

Find the 6 modal perfect sentences in the story and complete the table.

Sentence from the story	Modal used	Meaning / Function

Part 3 — Think and discuss

Answer these questions. There are no wrong answers!

1. Why do you think Daniel resigned so suddenly? Use modal perfect to speculate.

He might have _____

He could have _____

2. What should Daniel have done differently? What should Clara have done differently?

3. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought "I should have done that differently"? What happened?

Extension: Rewrite the ending

What if Clara had answered her phone earlier? Rewrite the last paragraph of the story using at least 3 modal perfect forms.

Great work!  Prepared with Claude — claude.ai