



Presentation

Obligation

Use *had to* to express obligation in the past. It is the past of *must* (for obligation) and *have to*: *I had to wear a uniform when I was a waiter.*

Necessity

Use *needed to* + infinitive to say that it was necessary to do something: *I needed to move house because I got a new job in another city.*

Use *needn't have* + past participle to say that a past action turned out not to be necessary: *We needn't have printed a map. I have it on my phone.*

Use *didn't need to* or *didn't have to* to say that something wasn't necessary whether we did it or not: *I didn't need to invite her because she's away that weekend.*

Speculation

Use *must/might/may/could/can't* + *have* + past participle to speculate about past events.

- *must have* means you feel certain that something happened or was true: *They must have received their exam results by now.*
- *may, might, could* means you think it's possible something happened or was true: *They might have gone out for the evening.*
- *may not / might not have* means you think it's possible something didn't happen / wasn't true: *He may not have left yet.*

- *can't have / couldn't have* means you feel certain that something didn't happen: *We can't have missed the train. It's only three o'clock and it leaves at three-fifteen.*

Notice that the opposite of *must have done* for speculation is *can't / couldn't have done*.

Use *must have* and *can't have* when we know or believe something by logical deductions: *Her car is outside the house so she can't have left.*

Advisability

Use *should have* or *ought to have* + past participle to talk about the correct, advisable or morally right thing to do in a past situation. It is often used to express regret about our own actions or criticism of other people's:

I should have bought the newer version. (= but I didn't)

Other uses of past modals

Use *might have* and *could have* + past participle to criticize people for not doing things. *Might*, used in this way, is more formal than *could*: *You could have tidied up your rooms!*

You might have called me. I was so worried.

We can also use *should have* + past participle to talk about something that we expect to have happened: *We sent the package last week. It should have arrived by now.*

Exercises

1 Complete the sentences using the verbs in the box.

had to	might have (x2)	needed to	should have
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- 1 What a view! We _____ brought a camera.
- 2 I'm very disappointed. You _____ tidied your rooms before everyone arrived.
- 3 We forgot the meaning of the word, so we _____ look it up in a dictionary.
- 4 When I was young, school ended for most children at age 14 and they _____ start work.
- 5 They're an hour late. They _____ got lost.

2 Match the sentences in Exercise 1 to the use of the verb (a–e).

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| a To describe obligation _____ | c To speculate _____ | e To criticize _____ |
| b To describe necessity _____ | d To express regret _____ | |

3 Choose the correct options.

- 1 Nowadays seat belts are compulsory but only a few years ago, we *didn't have to / mustn't* wear them.
- 2 You *can't have / needn't have* worn that raincoat. It's going to be sunny all day.
- 3 A: Oh no! I forget to bring the tickets!
B: It's OK. You *needn't have / didn't need to* because I printed them out.
- 4 I really think you *ought to / may* have let them know you aren't going tonight. They'll be expecting you.
- 5 He *might have / must have* offered to pay for dinner. After all, I paid the last time we went out.
- 6 The plane *could have landed / should have landed* by now. I wonder why it's late.
- 7 The package *may not have arrived / can't have arrived* yet. I only sent it this morning.
- 8 They *must have called / should have called* because there's a message on my phone.

4 Rewrite the sentences using a past modal or verb form. In some sentences more than one verb is possible.

- 1 When I was in the army, it was the rule to get up at five and go for a ten-kilometre run.
When I was in the army, we _____ *had to get up at five* _____ and go for a ten-kilometre run.
- 2 It was necessary to move to Dubai for my job last year.
Last year, I _____ for my job.
- 3 I took a degree in economics, but it wasn't necessary for my job as a sports instructor.
I _____ a degree in economics for my job as a sports instructor.
- 4 The handle is broken. I definitely think someone broke in and stole the money.
The handle is broken. Someone _____ the money.
- 5 The window at the back is also broken. Maybe someone climbed in this way.
The window at the back is also broken. Someone _____ in this way.
- 6 There's no way they they'd forget the party is tonight!
They _____ that the party is tonight!
- 7 These old light bulbs don't last long. It's a better idea to buy modern LED bulbs.
These old light bulbs don't last long. You _____ a modern LED bulb.
- 8 I had a terrible journey. Why didn't you offer to collect me from the airport?
I had a terrible journey. You _____ me from the airport.