

(13) CERTAINTY AND SPECULATION

ACTIVITY 1: Read the box and write two sentences about each situation, using present or past modals and the words in brackets.

You use *must* or *can't* to talk about something which you are certain about (often because you have evidence).

He must be from Scotland. I recognize his accent from my holidays there.

There can't be a match on today. Otherwise there would be long queues outside the stadium.

You use *may*, *might* or *could* to speculate about something you are not certain about.

Jill could be on holiday.

She might be hurt about what you said yesterday.

You use the modal verbs + *have* + past participle to express certainty or to speculate about the past.

She's looks so relaxed. She must have had a good holiday.

He may have met her at work, I'm not sure.

You can also use the main verb in its continuous form.

They must have been waiting for a long time.

1. A lot of people are waiting on the train platform. (angry) (train/delay)

2. He is very brown. (a hot country) (sunbathing)

3. Her bedroom light is off. (asleep) (go out)

4. They have packed their swimming costumes. (seaside) (decide / pool)

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5. I keep phoning Mary but there's no reply. (holiday) (phone/out of order)

6. Sophie looks so happy. (in love) (pass / exam)

ACTIVITY 2: Make guesses about the people in these photographs. Write sentences using modals of certainty or speculation.



ACTIVITY 3: Match the sentences in list A with the appropriate responses in list B.

LIST A	LIST B
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1. He is wearing a ring.	A) He might be a basketball player.
2. He is tall and very athletic.	B) They must have been on holiday.
3. She refused to eat cake and ice-cream.	C) She can't be your twin sister.
4. Next door they are playing music and dancing.	D) He must be a genius.
5. They look suntanned and very relaxed.	E) He could be Austrian.
6. He was able to play the piano when he was five.	F) He could be a married man.
7. All the lights are switched off in their house.	G) They must be having a party.
8. She looks completely different from you.	H) He must have lived abroad for a few years.
9. He is tall, has blond hair and speaks German.	I) She must be on a diet.
10. He has a slightly foreign accent.	J) They must have gone to bed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10