Modals of Deduction and Speculation Practice

Modals of deduction and speculation are used to express a degree of certainty about a particular situation. They are constructed as follows:

For present situations	For past situations
(modal + infinitive)	(modal + have + participle)
Mario drives a nice car. He **must be** rich.	Ali is tired. He **might have had** a late night.

A. Match the sentences and then label them 'past' or 'present' according to the structure they use.

.... 1. Pedro is sneezing a lot. ....

.... 2. Someone ate all the biscuits. ....

.... 3. That **can't** be Gino and Lola's car. ....

.... 4. Jan's hair looks a bit darker ....

.... 5. His coat isn't in the office. ....

.... 6. Little Anna is grumpy today. ....

.... 7. I can't find the file anywhere. ....

.... 8. The dog **must** be starving. ....

.... 9. The computer's doing strange things. ....

.... 10. It **can't** have been Lee that you saw. ....

a. He **must** have gone home.

b. He's on holiday in Spain.

c. I think she **might** be tired.

d. I **may** have deleted it.

e. I forgot to feed it this morning.

f. He **may** have an allergy.

g. I think she **might** have dyed it.

h. It **could** have been Tom.

i. Their car is blue.

j. It **could** have a virus.

B. Place the modal verbs from Exercise A in the table according to their function.

To express possibility that something is true	To express certainty that something is true	To express certainty that something isn't true

C. Underline the correct modal verb phrase in the sentences below.

1. You *can't be / can't have been* a grandmother. You look far too young.

2. He didn't come to the meeting. He *might have forgotten / might forget* about it.

3. Sid isn't answering his phone. He *might leave / might have left* it at home.

4. I never told him that. He *must have misunderstood / can't have misunderstood* me.

5. It *can't have been / may have been* Paolo that ate all the crisps. He hates salty food.

6. Sara didn't have any cake. She *could be / could been* on a diet.