

# Modals in the past

GRAMMAR

LEVEL Advanced

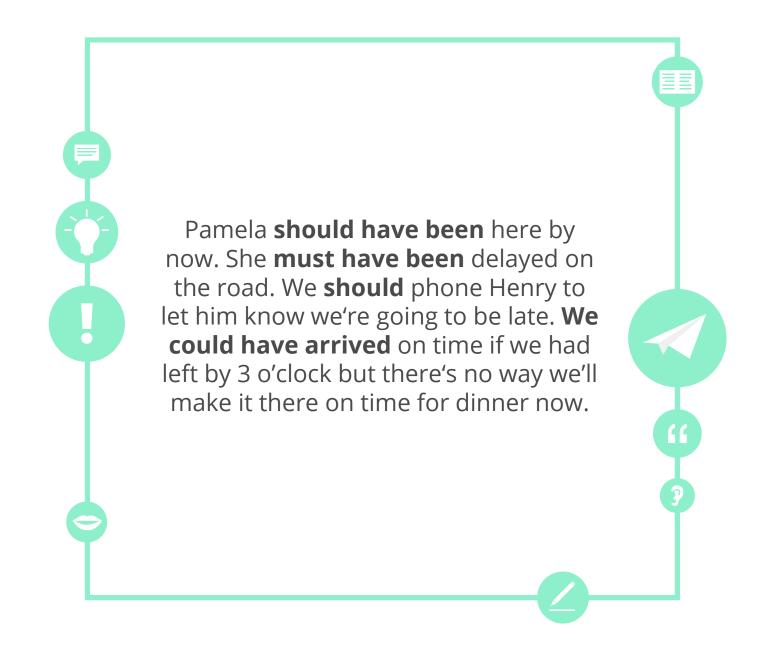
NUMBER C1\_1051G\_EN LANGUAGE English





- Can understand and explain the use of the perfective infinitive, including 'can't' and 'couldn't have'.
- Can form more complex sentences using modals of lost opportunity accurately.







#### **Modals in the past**

You'll already be familiar with using modal verbs in the present tense, but we also use modal verbs in a more advanced way – to speculate about the past.



Oh no! I **must have left** my passport on the plane, I can't find it anywhere in my bag.



#### **Quick review of modal verbs**

Before we look at modal verbs in the past, let's have a very quick reminder of modal verbs in English. You should already know how to use all of these. We use these verbs to express likelihood, ability, permission and obligation.

can	could
may	might
must	must
will	would
shall	should





#### Modals in the past and the perfect infinitive

- We also use modal verbs in a more advanced way to speculate about things which occurred in the past.
- In the present tense, modal verbs are followed by the infinitive form of a verb without *to*.
- When we use modal verbs to speculate about things in the past, the modal verb is followed by the perfect infinitive.
- The perfect infinitive is constructed with the verb **have + past participle**

■ The perfect infinitive

have tried

have pretended

have lost

have done

have finished



#### The perfect infinitive

You've got 3 minutes! Can you form the perfect infinitive with 20 different verbs? Here you can use any conjugation of have that you like.



#### Modals in the past: modals of lost opportunity

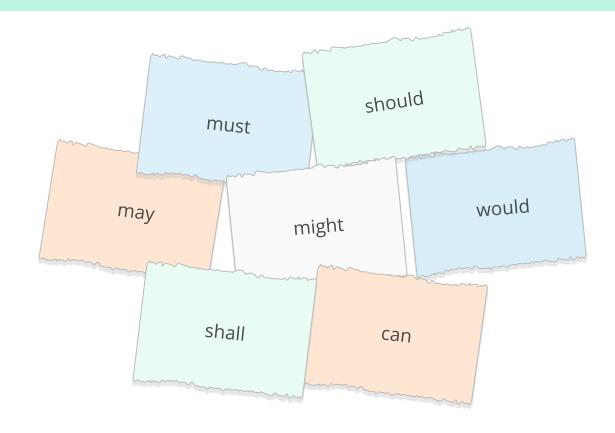
- Should have, could have and would have are often called **modals of lost opportunity**. When we use these modals in the past we are imagining a situation or situations where the past was different.
- To construct a modal of lost opportunity, add the perfect infinitive to your chosen modal verb.

Modal verb and its use	Modals of lost opportunity
would (used for results)	I <b>would have been</b> a tennis champion by now if I had practised every day.
could (used for possibilities)	l <b>could have won</b> Wimbledon.
should (used for recommendations)	I <b>should have followed</b> my coach's advice and taken the tennis scholarship I was offered.



#### **Quick review**

# Look at the modal verbs below. Can you make 3 sentences for each modal verb?





#### **Modals of lost opportunity**

These three women went to university together and are still good friends 10 years later. They are reminiscing about their university days. Imagine what they might say, using as many modals of lost opportunity as you can.





#### Can't with the perfect infinitive

■ We use can't with the perfect infinitive to express something we're sure didn't happen.

They **can't have sold** their house yet, the for sale sign is still in the front garden.





#### Can't and couldn't with the perfect infinitive



- When **can't have** and **couldn't have** are being used to express the impossibility of something, they have a similar meaning.
- Remember that couldn't/could not have is more commonly found in written texts.

- The brave sailor **could not have known** how dreadful the weather was going to turn that evening, or he would have never set sail that day.
- Charlotte **couldn't have seen** the mess in the kitchen, or she would never have left the house.
- They couldn't have made a quick getaway since the road has been blocked all day.



#### **Imagine the story**

Look at the pictures below. Make a sentence using **can't + perfect infinitive** in response to each picture.











Can you make 7 sentences, each starting with can't + perfect infinitive? Try to use a different verb each time.



#### Two sides to every story

Imagine two parties involved in a minor car crash. One party is clearly at fault but reluctant to admit guilt while the other party correctly assumes they were not to blame. Imagine and role play the conversation between the two. Use **could**, **would**, **should**, and **can't + perfect infinitive**.





#### **Must + perfect infinitive**

We use **must + perfect infinitive** to express something **we are sure of**.

- You **must have been** so happy to finally see the finish line when you were at the end of the marathon!
- Oh no! We **must have forgotten** Peter's birthday, it was definitely some time in July and now we are in August!
- She **must have received** the invitation by now, I wonder why she hasn't replied yet.



#### Must vs can and can't



- Remember! Most of the time, we only use must in **affirmative** sentences.
- Instead of **must**, use **can** and **can't** in **questions** and **negatives**.



You **can't** have met our new colleague Joe yet, he only started last week when you were on holiday.

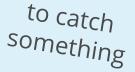


#### What can you deduce?

Look at the pictures below. What can you deduce about what happened in the past from what you can see in each photo? Use must + perfect infinitive. Use your imagination! There are a couple of words below to help you.









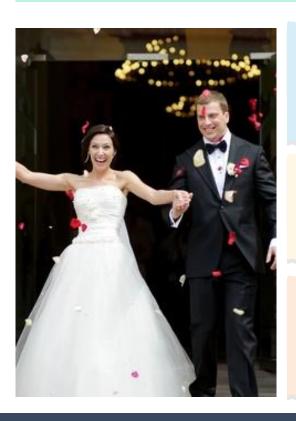


to dream



#### Over to you

## Look at the words below. For each word, make as many sentences as you can using must + perfect infinitive.



wedding

birthday

new job

lost keys

son

competition

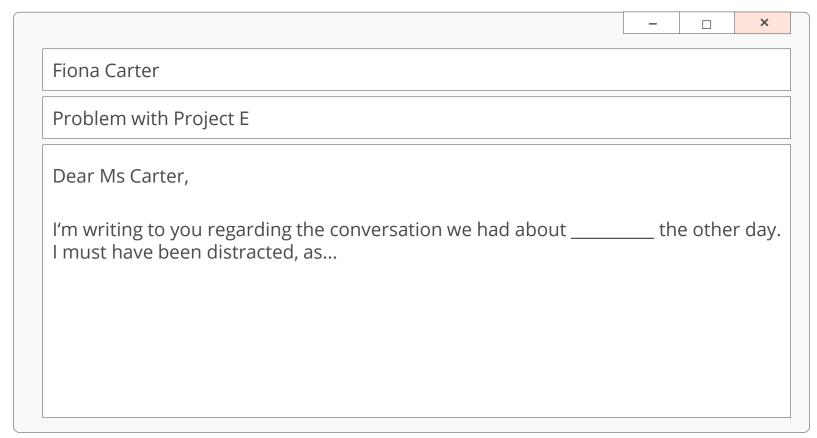
dog

guitar

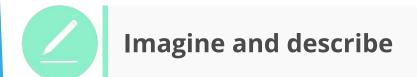
Brazil



#### Write an e-mail



Imagine you have just realised you made a mistake at work the other day. Write your boss an apologetic email explaining yourself using as many modals in the past as you can.

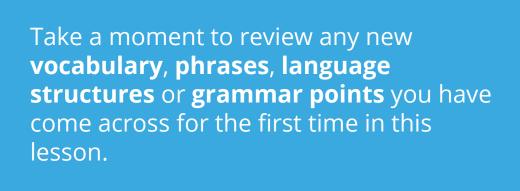


Describe how you think life must have been 100 years ago.

Use *must* and the perfect infinitive in your description.



#### Reflect on the lesson



Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!







## **Practice writing**

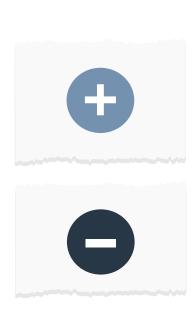
Look over this lesson again. Write five sentences with the perfect infinitive using each of the modals could, would, should, can't and must.

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### Reflect and evaluate

Look back over the lesson. What do you think were the most difficult parts and which were the easiest? What else would you have liked to have done in this class?



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26



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