**PERFECT MODAL VERBS**

English has several modal verbs, including: **can, could, will, would, may, might, must,** and**should.**We normally use modal verbs to describe the **present** and **future,**but we can also use it for **past** actions and situations.

To use modal verbs in the past:

**(+) Subject + modal + have + past participle.**

**(-) Subject + modal + have + not + past participle.**

**(?) Modal + subject + have + past participle?**

**Meaning of Perfect Modals**

We use them to make guesses or deductions about an action in the past that we believe has definitely happened, has definitely not happened or possibly happened, based on our knowledge, information or evidence or lack of it.

* I **could have gone** with my friends to Europe if I had saved more money. We **would have had**a great time!
  + Use **could have / would have** for unrealistic past possibilities.
  + This grammar is called the **third conditional.**
* You **might have seen**me in the streets, but you don’t know me. You **may have met**my friends, but you still don’t know me!
  + Use **may have / might have**for realistic past possibilities.
* I feel so sick right now! I **shouldn’t have eaten** that smelly sushi! We **should have gone** to the pizza restuarant.
  + Use **should have** to express regrets.
* The diamond ring is beautiful! It **must have cost** you a fortune!
  + Use **must have** to make logical deductions.
  + Unlike **might have / might have**, use **must have** if you are 100% certain about a situation based on facts, evidence or logic.

Let’s not forget about **WILL**

* My friend has been in school for a very long time. I don’t know if she will graduate in the summer, but she **will have certainly graduated** by December.
* I moved to Minnesota in 2000. Now is 2019. (By 2020, I will have lived in Minnesota for 20 years.)
  + Use **will have** to discuss an expected completed action in the future.
  + This grammar is also called the **future perfect**.

**Examples**

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|  | The lights are off. They **must have gone** out. *(Las luces están apagadas. Se deben haber ido.)* |

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|  | I never see John and Claire together anymore. They **must have separated**. *(Ya nunca veo a John y Claire juntos. Se deben haber separado.)*   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | I think it **may have worked**, but we gave up too soon. *(Creo que podría haber funcionado, pero nos rendimos demasiado pronto.)* |  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | They **might have won** if their star player hadn’t been injured. *(Ellos podrían haber ganado si su mejor jugador no se hubiera lesionado.)* | |  | Frank failed the exam. He **can’t have been paying** attention in class. *(Frank suspendió el examen. No debió haber estado atento en la clase.)* |  |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | They had a lot of work to do and little time. They **can’t have finished** everything. *(Tenían mucho trabajo que hacer y poco tiempo. No podrían haber terminado todo.)*  *.* Frank failed the exam. He **couldn’t have been** paying attention in class. (Frank suspendió el examen. No debió haber estado atento en la clase.)  . We **could have bought** a new car, but we decided to use the money to go on vacation. (Podríamos haber comprado un coche nuevo, pero decidimos usar el dinero para ir de vacaciones.)  . I think it **could have worked**, but we gave up too soon. (Creo que podría haber funcionado, pero nos rendimos demasiado pronto.)  *.* She **would** **have liked** to go to university if she had been able to afford it (A ella le habría gustado ir a la universidad si hubiera sido capaz de costearla) | |