

LearnEnglish Select Upper Intermediate

6.2 Giving and reacting to bad news

Useful language

Breaking bad news

There's something we need to discuss
Unfortunately (we're going to have to come up with a change of plan).
I'm sorry to drop this on you
I need to talk to you urgently
I'm sorry to have to say that ...
I was hoping that ... but ...

Reacting to bad news

It's very good of you to let me know.
I appreciate you telling me.
I'll have to talk to [my manager], but
I'm sure we'll be able to sort/work something out ...
It must have been a very difficult ...
Oh no, ...
I'm sorry to hear that.
Try not to worry.
It's/That's a shame ...
This is unfortunate.
This isn't what I was expecting.

Phrasal verbs / expressions with 'put'

put something off
put someone in the picture
put our heads together
I don't know how to put this
put a lot of effort into something

Grammar

Modal verbs in the past

We use **modal verbs** such as *can, can't, could, might, must, should, would, will, need not* in many ways:

*I **could** come back later if you want?* (suggestion/offer)
We'll need to discuss this with them. (necessity)
*I'm sure we **can** work it out.* (possibility/probability/ability)
*I thought you **would** appreciate an update.* (suggestion/offer)
*He **should** change the design.* (advice/suggestion/duty)

When we use modal verbs to talk about the past, we use the following form:
modal verb + *have* + the past participle of main verb

This form is used to talk about what possibly happened or how things could have been different:

*You **might have told** me earlier.*
*I **could have done** something about it.*

Check my progress

Are these statements true for you? If not, go back and do some activities from the unit again.

I can react to and suggest a change of plan.
I can announce bad news appropriately.
I can react to bad news positively.

Yes

☐
☐
☐

No

☐
☐
☐