

Grammar L3GLO2

Past Modals of Possibility and Speculation

Learning Outcome 2: Modals (*might have, could have*)

NOTICING A Read the sentences. Answer the questions below.

1. I thought I was right, but I could have made a mistake.
2. Going to the beach yesterday might have been fun.
3. Faisal couldn't have been at the library this morning because he's on vacation.
4. I don't know where my phone is. I might have left it at home.
5. Maryam might not have finished her exams yet. Maybe that's why she's studying today.

Which underlined word(s) do you use to ...

- a. say it's possible that something happened or was true in the past? _____ ,
_____ , _____
- b. say it's possible that something didn't happen or wasn't true in the past? _____
- c. say you're sure something didn't happen or wasn't true in the past? _____

Past Modals of Possibility and Speculation

You use *might/could have* + past participle to say it's possible that something happened in the past.

You use *might not have* + past participle to say it's possible that something didn't happen in the past.

You use *couldn't have* + past participle to say you're almost certain that something didn't happen in the past.

B Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.

1. I think I _____ (might / forget) to turn the air conditioning on. Can you check?
2. He _____ (couldn't / drive) to work because his car keys are still here.
3. Someone _____ (could / help) Reem and Noor with their project. I don't think they had enough time to do it on their own.
4. We thought we saw Ahmed yesterday, but it _____ (couldn't / be) him because he's on a business trip this week.
5. I _____ (might not / save) that document. I usually save every document, but I can't find that one anywhere.
6. The Human Resources Department _____ (couldn't / do) any interviews yesterday because it was a holiday.

C Read the list of situations below and write down a sentence with could/couldn't have + past participle or might/might not have + past participle for each one.

The library book isn't in my bag now. It was there earlier.	Sultan was in a meeting this morning, so he didn't do any work on the presentation then.	There's a pencil on the floor over there.
There's a sandwich on Heba's desk, but Heba isn't anywhere around.	The bread you put in the toaster is black.	Your ticket for the concert is wet and you don't know why.

D Work in pairs. Read your sentences from exercise C to your partner. He/She responds with a different possibility for each situation.