



Modals of Deduction (Past)

Modals of deduction in the past tense are used to speculate about what might have happened based on available evidence. Here are the main modal verbs used for past deductions, along with examples:

Must Have

- **Usage:** Used when you are sure that something happened.
- **Example:** "She must have left early because her car is not in the driveway."

Might Have / May Have / Could Have

- **Usage:** Used when you think it's possible that something happened.
- **Example:** "He might have missed the bus, which is why he's late."

Can't Have / Couldn't Have

- **Usage:** Used when you are sure that something did not happen.
- **Example:** "They can't have gone far; their bags are still here."

Structure:

modal + have + past participle.

Examples in Context:

1. Must Have

- Evidence: The office is empty and the lights are off.
- Deduction: "They must have closed the office early."

2. Might Have / May Have / Could Have

- Evidence: The keys are not on the hook where they usually are.
- Deduction: "She might have taken the keys with her."

3. Can't Have / Couldn't Have

- Evidence: The cookies are untouched, and John hates sweets.
- Deduction: "John can't have eaten the cookies."



Practice Sentences:

1. The ground is wet. It must have rained last night.
2. She is not answering her phone. She might have gone out.
3. They didn't know about the meeting. They couldn't have received the email.

Using modals of deduction in the past tense helps convey certainty or possibility about past events, enhancing clarity in communication.

Here's a reading text that incorporates modals of deduction:

The Mystery of the Missing Necklace

Lady Beatrice's diamond necklace went missing during a dinner at Riverton Manor. Inspector Harris was called to investigate.

"Where did you last see your necklace?" asked Inspector Harris.

"I was wearing it during dinner. It must have disappeared between the dining hall and the garden," Lady Beatrice replied.

"It could not have just vanished. Someone must have taken it," Inspector Harris said.

The butler, Mr. Thompson, mentioned a possible commotion in the garden. "Someone might have been there," he suggested.

Lady Margaret, sitting next to Lady Beatrice during dinner, said, "The necklace must have been stolen during dessert. I saw it then."

Inspector Harris found a torn piece of fabric in the garden. "This must belong to the thief," he deduced.

Mr. Smith, looking pale, admitted, "It might be mine. I was in the garden for a phone call, but I didn't see the necklace."

"It can't be Mr. Smith then," Lady Beatrice said. "He wouldn't steal from me."

Inspector Harris found the necklace hidden behind a curtain in the drawing-room. "The thief must have panicked and hidden it here," he concluded.

Lady Beatrice was overjoyed. "Thank you, Inspector Harris. It must have been a difficult case."

"It wasn't easy, but with a bit of deduction, we solved the mystery," Inspector Harris said with a smile.