

NUANCES: MODAL VERBS EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Fill-in-the-Blank

Fill in the gaps with the most appropriate **modal verb**. Consider the **subtle meaning**: advice, deduction, speculation, or criticism.

1. He _____ have taken the earlier train if he wanted to arrive on time, but he chose not to.
2. You _____ be joking — there's no way they approved that budget!
3. I suppose she _____ have misunderstood the instructions, though it seems unlikely.
4. You really _____ have told me you were running late — I waited for over an hour.
5. He _____ be working from home today; that would explain why his car is still here.
6. They _____ not have known about the meeting; otherwise, they would have attended.
7. You _____ try restarting the device before calling support.
8. She _____ have passed the exam; she studied so hard for it.
9. That _____ have been Sarah on the phone; she's abroad this week.
10. We _____ have overreacted slightly — it wasn't as serious as we thought.

Exercise 2: Rewrite the Sentence

Rewrite each sentence using **advanced modal verbs** to express the **same meaning more naturally or subtly**.

1. It's possible that they didn't understand the instructions.
2. I advise you to speak to her before making a decision.
3. It's impossible that he made that mistake; he's too careful.
4. I regret not calling them sooner.
5. Maybe they've already left for the airport.
6. There's a strong chance he lied about his experience.
7. It wasn't necessary for you to buy all this food.
8. I think it's better if you check with legal before proceeding.
9. It's certain that they've reached a verdict by now.

Exercise 3: Multiple Choice

Choose the modal verb that **best conveys the speaker's attitude**.

1. He _____ have forgotten the meeting time; he's always very punctual.
 - a) must
 - b) can't
 - c) might
2. You _____ have double-checked the figures before sending the report.
 - a) should
 - b) must
 - c) might
3. That email _____ have come from John; it had his usual sign-off.
 - a) can't
 - b) could
 - c) must
4. They _____ be home by now — it's nearly midnight.
 - a) might
 - b) should
 - c) must
5. She _____ have accepted the offer if it had been more generous.
 - a) must
 - b) might
 - c) should
6. I think you _____ reconsider your decision before finalizing it.
 - a) might
 - b) must
 - c) should
7. He _____ be the person we're looking for; the description doesn't match.
 - a) must
 - b) can't
 - c) could

8. You _____ have helped them earlier — now it's too late.
a) should
b) must
c) might
9. They _____ be annoyed if we cancel last minute, so let's call first.
a) might
b) must
c) can't
10. This _____ have been prevented with better planning.
a) must
b) could
c) can't

Exercise 4: Mini Dialogues

Choose the modal verb that best fits **natural, nuanced usage**.

1. A: Where's Alice?
B: She _____ be in the library. She spends hours there.
2. A: Do you think they forgot about the deadline?
B: No, they _____ have forgotten — we just spoke about it yesterday.
3. A: The report's full of errors.
B: You _____ have proofread it more carefully.
4. A: He didn't come to the meeting.
B: He _____ have been stuck in traffic.
5. A: This coffee tastes odd.
B: It _____ be stale — I opened the packet last week.
6. A: My presentation didn't go well.
B: You _____ have rehearsed more.

7. A: I heard strange noises last night.
B: It _____ have been the wind — it was really strong.
8. A: I didn't like her presentation.
B: She _____ have done a better job.
9. A: The project failed.
B: We _____ have allocated more time for testing.
10. A: Why is the door open?
B: Someone _____ have left it ajar by mistake.
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Exercise 5: Matching

Match each **scenario (A–J)** with the most appropriate **modal sentence (1–10)**.

Scenarios:

- A. You regret missing the opportunity to invest early.
B. Someone strongly denies that a claim is possible.
C. You give polite advice about revising.
D. You're guessing he missed the train because it's snowing.
E. You deduce that the work is finished because there are no lights on.
F. A person made an avoidable mistake.
G. You speculate about the cause of a smell.
H. You're certain about a past event.
I. You advise someone to be more careful next time.
J. You blame someone because you forgot an appointment.

Modal Sentences:

1. You might want to review those notes again before the exam.
2. That can't be true — he wasn't even in the country.
3. She must have called while we were out.
4. You should have reminded me — I completely forgot.
5. It could be the milk; it smells sour.
6. He might have missed the train due to the snowstorm.
7. You could have double-checked the numbers, that was a silly error.
8. You should be more attentive in future meetings.
9. They must have finished already — the lights are off.
10. I should have invested when the stock was cheap.

NUANCES: MODAL VERBS SOLUTIONS

Exercise 1: Fill-in-the-Blank

1. **could** have taken
 2. **must** be joking
 3. **might** have misunderstood
 4. **should** have told
 5. **might** be working
 6. **may** not have known
 7. **could** try
 8. **must** have passed
 9. **can't** have been
 10. **may** have overreacted
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Exercise 2: Rewrite the Sentence

1. They **might not have understood** the instructions.
 2. You **should speak** to her before making a decision.
 3. He **can't have made** that mistake.
 4. I **should have called** them sooner.
 5. They **might have already left** for the airport.
 6. He **must have lied** about his experience.
 7. You **needn't have bought** all this food.
 8. You **should check** with legal before proceeding.
 9. They **must have reached** a verdict by now.
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Exercise 3: Multiple Choice

1. b) can't
2. a) should
3. c) must
4. b) should
5. b) might
6. c) should

7. b) can't
 8. a) should
 9. a) might
 10. b) could
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Exercise 4: Mini Dialogues

1. might
 2. can't
 3. should
 4. must
 5. could
 6. should
 7. might
 8. could
 9. should
 10. must
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Exercise 5: Matching

- A – 10
B – 2
C – 1
D – 6
E – 9
F – 7
G – 5
H – 3
I – 8
J – 4

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