

Could have should have would have

Make the correct past modal form (use could have / would have / should have + past participle).

1) I _____ (buy) bread but I didn't know we needed it. (past possibility).

could have bought

Check

Show Answer

2) We _____ (invite) so many people to our party! I'm worried that we won't have enough room for everyone. (past negative advice / regret).

shouldn't have invited

Check

Show Answer

3) I _____ (start) saving money years ago! (past advice / regret).

should have started

Check

Show Answer

4) We _____ (join) you at the restaurant, but we couldn't get a babysitter. (past willingness).

would have joined

Check

Show Answer

5) The weather _____ (be) any worse! (past negative possibility).

could have been

Check

Show Answer

6) I _____ (arrive) on time, even if I'd left earlier. There were dreadful traffic jams all the way. (past negative possibility).

couldn't / wouldn't have arrived

Check

Show Answer

7) They _____ (win) the football match, but John hurt his ankle. (past possibility).

could have / would have won

Check

Show Answer

8) Amanda _____ (finish) the work, but she felt ill and had to go home. (past willingness).

would have finished

Check

Show Answer

9) Lucy _____ (leave) earlier. She missed her flight. (past advice / regret).

should have left

Check

Show Answer

10) We _____ (finish) the game, even if we'd wanted to. It was raining very hard and we had to stop. (past negative possibility).

couldn't have finished

Check

Show Answer

11) I _____ (eat) so much chocolate! I feel sick! (past negative advice / regret).

shouldn't have eaten

Check

Show Answer

12) Luke _____ (pass) the exam if he'd studied a bit more. (past possibility).

could / would have passed

Check

Show Answer

13) John _____ (call) Amy, but he didn't have her number. (past willingness).

would have called

Check

Show Answer

14) You _____ (be) rude to him. He's going to be really angry now. (past negative advice / regret).

shouldn't have been

Check

Show Answer

15) She _____ (come) to the restaurant if she'd left work earlier. (past possibility).

could have come

Check

Show Answer

16) You _____ (take) this job. I can see you're not enjoying it. (past negative advice / regret).

shouldn't have taken

Check

Show Answer

- 17) The race was really difficult. She (win) because she's not fit enough. (past negative possibility).
couldn't have won
Check
Show Answer
- 18) Our neighbours (cut) down the tree in their garden. It was a really beautiful tree. (past negative advice / regret).
shouldn't have cut
Check
Show Answer
- 19) The children (do) their homework last night. Then they wouldn't be panicking on the way to school. (past advice / regret).
should have done
Check
Show Answer
- 20) I'm really cold! I (bring) my coat. (past advice / regret).
should have brought
Check
Show Answer
- 21) I (come) to see you! I didn't know you were ill. (past willingness).
would have come
Check
Show Answer
- 22) Andrew (go) to Cambridge University, but he decided to travel instead. (past possibility).
could have gone
Check
Show Answer

Modal Verbs: follow up with the type of sentence indicated:

Ex. I didn't feel well yesterday. ---> past deduction: I must have eaten something fishy/bad/rotten. // It must have been because of the bad air in our office.

- 1 His parents are absolutely spoiling him. ---> permission

He can do whatever he wants

- 2 Call her now. ---> probability

She might be in.

- 3 It is going to be really hot today. ---> advice

You should dress lightly

- 4 I am useless at football, but ---> ability

I can play basketball well.

- 5 There is no ocean inside Europe ---> possibility

You can actually drive through the whole continent

- 6 Look at this lonely car in the empty parking ---> past probability/speculation

It (must)/might/may have been stolen

- 7 Two teenagers encounter a star in the street ---> permission (direct speech)

Can we take a picture with you?

- 8 It is so boring here. ---> suggestion

We could go swimming.

- 9 These are the three types of jeans we have ---> option (black, blue, grey)

You can choose any one of them

- 10 Listen, What I am going to tell you is a secret. ---> prohibition

You mustn't tell anyone

- 11 Let's go to another bar. ---> choice

I 'd rather go home

Modal Verbs Exercise 1

Fill the gaps and state which type of modal sentence it is.

Complete the sentences using the words listed in the box below, then click the "Check" button to check your answers. Don't forget to capitalize when necessary. Some gaps may have more than one correct answer.

can could have to must might should ought to may (+ / -)

1. Ted's flight from Amsterdam took more than 11 hours. He must be exhausted after such a long flight. He might prefer to stay in tonight and get some rest. *obl. spec.*
2. If you want to get a better feeling for how the city is laid out, you should/must walk downtown and explore the waterfront. *advice/sugg.*
3. Hiking the trail to the peak can/could/might be dangerous if you are not well prepared for dramatic weather changes. You must research the route a little more before you attempt the ascent. *prob. obl. should*
4. When you have a small child in the house, you mustn't leave small objects lying around. Such objects might/can be swallowed, causing serious injury or even death. *prob. adv. prob. shouldn't*
5. Dave: Could/Can you hold your breath for more than a minute? Nathan: No, I can't. *polite request*
6. Jenny's engagement ring is enormous! It must have cost a fortune. *pos f deduction*
7. Please make sure to water my plants while I am gone. If they don't get enough water, they might die. *prob.*
8. I could speak Arabic fluently when I was a child and we lived in Egypt. But after we moved back to Canada, I had very little exposure to the language and forgot almost everything I knew as a child. Now, I can just say a few things in the language. *capability ability*
9. The book is optional. My professor said we should read it if we needed extra credit. But we don't have to read it if we don't want to. *edu. (past) option*
10. Leo: Where is the spatula? It should be in this drawer but it's not here. *obl.*
11. Nancy: I just did a load of dishes last night and they're still in the dish washer. It must be in there. That's the only other place it could/can be. *ded. prob.*

weatherman on the news said there's a storm north of here and it ~~might~~ rain later on this afternoon. *prob.*

12. we pull over at the next rest stop? I really *have to / need to* use the bathroom and I don't know if I *can* hold it until we get to Chicago. *cap.*

13. Oh no! Frank's wallet is lying on the coffee table. He ~~must have~~ have *post* left it here last night. *ded.*

14. Ned: *May / Can / Could* I borrow your lighter for a minute? *prob. request*
Stephen: Sure, no problem. Actually, you *can* keep it if you *option* want to. I've given up smoking.

15. I *can't* believe he said that to Megan! *cap. / poss.*
She ~~shouldn't~~ *have insulted* insult her cooking in front of everyone at the party last *adv. (poss)* night. She ~~couldn't~~ *should* have just said she was full or had some salad if *adv.* she didn't like the meal.

16. Do you *have to* chew with your mouth open like that? Geez, it's *obv.* making me sick watching you eat that piece of pizza.

17. Mrs. Scarlett's body was found in the lounge just moments ago, and it's still warm! Nobody has left the mansion this evening, so the killer ~~must be~~ *be* *ded.* someone in this room. It *could* be any one of us!!! *prob.*

18. Ted: I don't know why Denise starting crying when I mentioned the wedding.
Pamela: It ~~must be~~ *(could)* have been what you said about her brother. Or, *ded. / spec.* perhaps she is just nervous. After all, the big day is tomorrow.

19. *(Do you have to) / Must* you always say the first thing that pops into your *obl.* head? *Could* you think once in a while before you speak? *cap. / prob. req.*

20. I was reading the book last night before I went to bed. I never took it out of this room. It *must* be lying around here somewhere. *ded.*
~~Where it be? be swallowed, causing serious injury or even death.~~