

PRESENT AND PAST MODALS FOR DEDUCTION AND SPECULATION

Present	Past	Degree of certainty	Example
must + base form	must have + past participle	almost sure something is/was true or happened (90% - 99% sure)	<i>I must have left my phone at Anna's. I definitely remember having it there</i>
may/might + base form	may/might (not) have + past participle	something is/was possibly true/happened, but you are not that sure (50% - 89% sure)	<i>Somebody might have stolen your wallet when you were getting off the train</i>
can't + base form	can't/couldn't have + past participle	almost sure something isn't/wasn't true or didn't happen. This is the opposite of must/must have (90% - 99% sure)	<i>She couldn't have gone to bed. It's only ten o'clock!</i>
	should have + past participle	Someone made a mistake/did something wrong. Used to express regret/criticism	<i>It's my fault. I should have told you earlier that my friend was coming</i>