



Modals of Deduction — B2 exercises

Printable worksheet · 23 questions · answer key with explanations on the last page
virtuousenglishacademy.com/grammar/b2/advanced-modals-deduction-exercises

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 23

A. Multiple choice

10 questions

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- Her coat is still on the hook, so she ____ have gone far.
A) mustn't B) shouldn't C) wouldn't D) can't
- There are three missed calls from the same number — it ____ have been urgent.
A) can't B) should C) must D) need
- She never replied. She ____ have received the message at all.
A) might not B) mustn't C) can't D) shouldn't
- The parcel ____ have arrived by now; it was dispatched on Monday.
A) must B) can't C) may not D) should
- Which sentence means the speaker is nearly certain something did NOT happen?
A) He mustn't have seen the email. B) He can't have seen the email.
C) He might not have seen the email. D) He needn't have seen the email.
- You ____ told me the deadline had moved. I sat up all night for nothing.
A) should have B) must have C) can't have D) might have
- The discrepancy ____ have been a simple rounding error, though we cannot be sure.
A) must B) can't C) should D) could
- They ____ be in a meeting — the door is shut and the blinds are down.
A) must B) can't C) mustn't D) need
- Which sentence is INCORRECT?
A) She must have forgotten. B) She can't have forgotten.
C) She might have forgotten. D) She mustn't have forgotten.
- He looks exhausted. He ____ sleeping properly.
A) can't have been B) mustn't be C) shouldn't be D) needn't have been

B. Fill in the blank

8 questions

Write the missing word or words in the gap.

- Her bag is still under the desk, so she _____ have gone home yet.
- The bins are out already — the neighbours _____ have got up early.

3. He hasn't answered, so he _____ not have seen the message.
4. The delivery _____ have arrived on Tuesday, but the courier's system says otherwise.
5. You _____ have warned me the road was closed — I lost forty minutes.
6. Nobody _____ have predicted a result like that, so stop blaming yourself.
7. That _____ be the postman; he came an hour ago.
8. The alarm is going off, so somebody _____ be in the building.

C. Sentence building

5 questions

Put the words in the correct order and write the sentence on the line.

1. have / last / missed / the / She / train. / must

Draw a confident conclusion about the past.

2. about / known / changes. / have / the / He / can't

Deny a past possibility with near-certainty.

3. might / room. / the / book / They / forgotten / have / to

Suggest a possible explanation without committing to it.

4. parcel / The / have / Thursday. / on / should / arrived

Express an expectation about something already due.

5. delay. / told / have / me / You / about / should / the

Criticise something that was not done.

Answer key

Every answer carries the reason behind it. Read the reason for the questions you got right as well — that is where you find out whether you were right for the right reason.

A. Multiple choice

1. **D) can't** — The negative of a confident deduction is can't have, never mustn't have.
2. **C) must** — Must have expresses a near-certain conclusion drawn from clear evidence.
3. **A) might not** — Might not have leaves the possibility open, which is what never replied allows.
4. **D) should** — Should have expresses an expectation that may or may not have been met.
5. **B) He can't have seen the email.** — Can't have is the negative counterpart of must have; mustn't means prohibited.
6. **A) should have** — Should have plus a participle is the standard way of criticising something not done.
7. **D) could** — Could have hedges a claim, presenting one possible explanation among several.
8. **A) must** — Present deduction with strong evidence takes must plus the bare infinitive.
9. **D) She mustn't have forgotten.** — Mustn't expresses prohibition and cannot be used to deny a deduction.
10. **A) can't have been** — Can't have been plus -ing denies an ongoing past situation on the basis of present evidence.

B. Fill in the blank

1. **can't** — A confident negative deduction uses this modal rather than the prohibition one.
2. **must** — Strong evidence for a completed past action takes this modal plus have.
3. **may** — This modal keeps the possibility genuinely open rather than settling it.
4. **should** — This modal expresses an expectation that has apparently been disappointed.
5. **should** — This modal plus have criticises something that was not done but ought to have been.
6. **could** — Could have in the negative denies that the ability or possibility ever existed.
7. **can't** — Present negative deduction uses this modal with a bare infinitive.
8. **must** — Present positive deduction from clear evidence uses this modal.

C. Sentence building

1. **She must have missed the last train.**
2. **He can't have known about the changes.**
3. **They might have forgotten to book the room.**
4. **The parcel should have arrived on Thursday.**
5. **You should have told me about the delay.**