

What are Modal Perfects?

Worksheet

Modal perfects use 'could have,' 'might have,' 'should have,' or 'must have' plus past participle to express past possibilities, regrets, or certainty. Each expresses a different relationship to a past action: 'could have' = was possible, 'should have' = was recommended, 'must have' = almost certain.

Questions

1. 'I could have called you.' This means:
A) I definitely called you.
B) It was possible to call, but I didn't.
C) I should have called you.
D) You must have called me.
2. Which modal perfect expresses regret?
A) could have
B) must have
C) should have
D) might have
3. 'He must have forgotten.' What does this indicate?
A) obligation
B) past possibility
C) logical deduction
D) regret
4. Complete: 'She might _____ the train.'
A) have missed
B) missed
C) has missed
D) miss
5. I could have gone to the party, but I was tired.
6. You should have studied harder for the exam.
7. She must have received the email; she replied immediately.
8. Define: What is a modal perfect?
9. Define: What does 'could have' mean?
10. Define: What does 'should have' express?

Answer Key

1. B) It was possible to call, but I didn't. — 'Could have' expresses a past possibility that did not materialize.
2. C) should have — 'Should have' expresses that something was recommended or expected but did not happen—expressing regret.
3. C) logical deduction — 'Must have' indicates the speaker is logically certain he forgot based on evidence.
4. A) have missed — Modal perfects use 'have + past participle': 'might have missed.'
5. 'Could have gone' expresses a past possibility—going was possible, but the speaker chose not to. It shows an alternative that existed.
6. 'Should have studied' expresses past regret or unfulfilled obligation—studying harder was the recommended action, but it did not happen.
7. 'Must have received' expresses logical deduction about the past—based on her quick reply, the speaker deduces she definitely got the email.
8. A modal verb + 'have' + past participle to express past possibilities, regrets, or certainty.
9. A past possibility—something was possible but did not happen.
10. Past regret or unfulfilled obligation—something was recommended but did not happen.

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