

1 Choose the correct alternative. Sometimes both answers are possible.

- Jamie **could** / **must** be in his Spanish class but I'm not quite sure.
- Nobody knows why they got a loan last year. They **might** / **can't** have needed the money to pay off their debts.
- I can't believe you missed the bus. You must **wake** / **have woken** up too late.
- You **can't** / **mustn't** have met Joe. He joined our team in June when you weren't there.
- I think there **might** / **could** be a few spelling mistakes in your English essay. You need to check it again.
- I can't find my wallet! Someone **could steal** / **might have stolen** it while we were on the train or I **could** / **must** have left it at home.
- This bus doesn't go to the railway station. We **can't get** / **must have got** on the wrong bus.
- I don't believe Liz. Her brother Mike **must** / **can't** be on holiday in Austria because I saw him in the café yesterday.
- Freya **can't have** / **must have** lost her job in the factory. I heard her talking to her boss in the morning and she seemed happy.
- Don't walk along these cliffs at night. It **could** / **might** be dangerous.
- They've been playing basketball for three hours. They **must** / **can** be exhausted.
- There were a few difficult questions in the history test so I **might** / **could** not pass it.

2 Complete the text messages with the correct form of modals in the past and the verbs in brackets.

< chat

Amy, why aren't you at school yet? All OK?

Rough night! My mum and I woke up at 3 a.m. Our bedrooms aren't next to each other's, but we both heard some weird noises. We were certain they ¹ _____ (be) footsteps.

You ² _____ (hear) your brother or your dad. They ³ _____ (get up) to go to the bathroom or to the kitchen.

No, they weren't at home at that time. My dad was on a business trip and my brother was having a sleepover at his friend's house. For a moment, we thought Dad ⁴ _____ (come) back home early, but Mum called him and he was still in Bristol.

Did you check all the doors and windows? Someone ⁵ _____ (enter) the house.

We did! They were all closed. A burglar ⁶ _____ (not break) in. Our house is very safe. Actually, we suspect it ⁷ _____ (not be) a person.

That must have been so scary! 😱

It was! But I checked it online and a lot of people say animals in the attic make weird noises at night. We're waiting for a pest control professional to check the house. I'll text you later. 🙌

Hi. The pest control guy looked around the attic and found mice! 🐭 He claims they can be very loud at night. When they walk or jump around, it sounds like human footsteps. We ⁸ _____ (hear) them last night!

3 Work in pairs. Read the situations and ask and answer questions about what might have happened. Use modal verbs to speculate about the past.

Why is there glass on the floor?

Who might have dropped it?

What could have happened?

1 You see some broken glass on the kitchen floor.

4 It's 8 o'clock and there are only five students in the class.

7 A factory that produces plastic straws and cups has just closed down.

2 Last night, you were woken up by loud music.

5 You were in the shopping centre yesterday and today you can't find your debit card.

8 You did some online shopping yesterday and you've just checked your bank statement. There's a big sum of money missing.

3 Your friend has fallen asleep in class.

6 You can't find your English book.

9 The price of coffee in your favourite café increased by 20% last month.