

GOLD

experience

B2+

Pre-Advanced

Unit 5 - modals in the past

Modal verbs can also be called *attitude* verbs because that's what they show. We can also use modal verbs in the past.

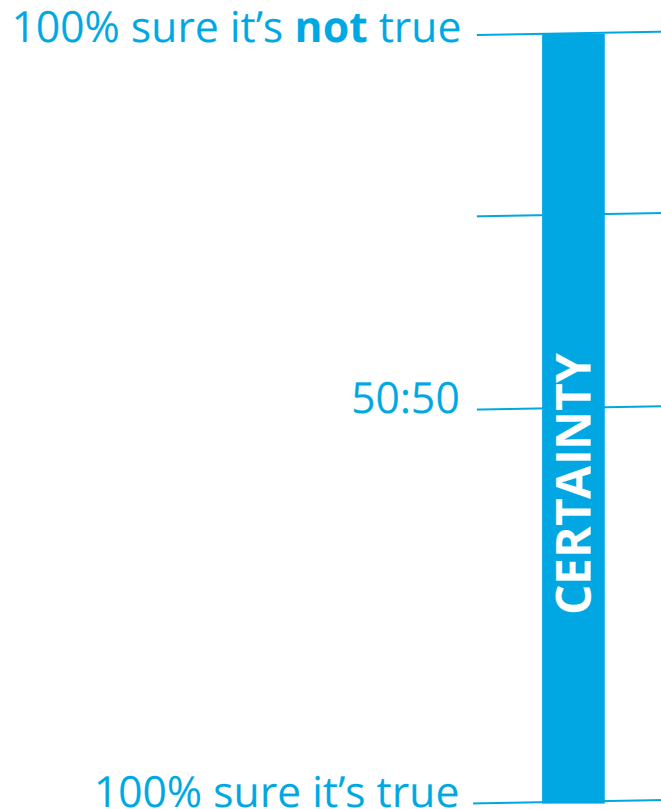
Let's look at:

1. When we use past modal verbs and what *attitude* they show.
 - a) Past modals of deduction
 - b) *Needn't have*
 - c) Modal verbs in the continuous form
1. How to create sentences using past modal verbs.

Modals of deduction:
when do we use them?

Function: modals of deduction

We use past modals of deduction to speculate or make deductions about certainty.



Sophie wasn't at work today.



Put the responses on the cline of certainty

She **might/may have** gone on holiday.

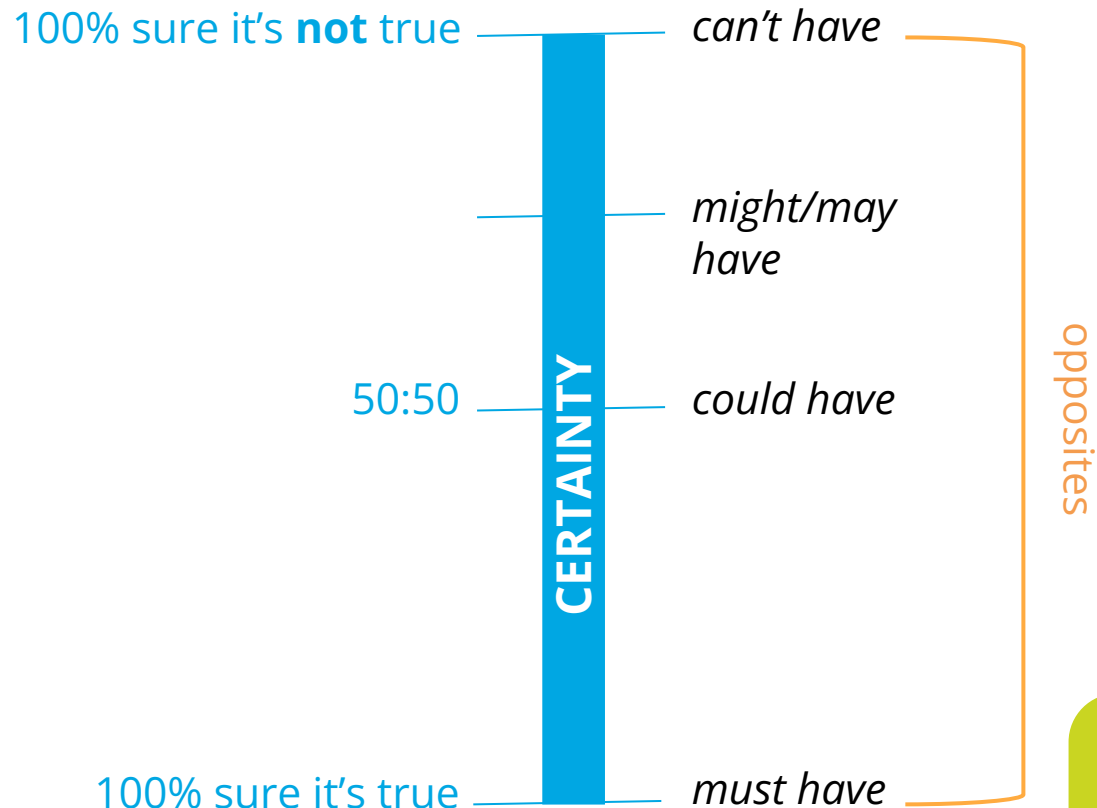
She **must have gone on holiday** (because her calendar says she's away for the full week).

She **could have** gone on holiday.

She **can't have** gone on holiday (because I saw her yesterday).

Function: modals of deduction

We use past modals of deduction to **speculate** or make **deductions** about **certainty**.



Careful here. The opposite of *must have* is *can't have* **not** *mustn't have*.



Look at this example...

She **should/ought to have** told us if she was going away!

We use **should have** or **ought to have** to express that we think it was a good idea (or bad idea if it's in the negative) to do something in the past (but the opposite occurred). E.g. *It was a good idea to tell us, but she didn't.*



needn't have and the continuous form...

Function: *needn't have* & the continuous form

Look at the conversation and answer the questions.



In the end, the teacher gave us another week for our essay, so I **needn't have finished** it yesterday!

You finished it last night?! You **must have been working** on it all night!



Look at what the girl says. Did she finish the essay?

Yes

Was it necessary?

No

Look at what the boy says. What is he 100% sure of?

Was this action ongoing or in progress for a period of time?

Yes: *all night*

That she was *working all night*

Function: *needn't have* & the continuous form

1. *needn't have*: For a thing **we did**, but **later** realised **wasn't necessary**.

I needn't have finished it yesterday!

2. The continuous form: To show an action was **ongoing or interrupted**.

You finished it last night?! You **must have been working on it all night!**



Notice this is the opposite of *don't need to* in the present for something we **won't do** because we realise **it isn't necessary**.
E.g. I don't need to finish my essay today (so I haven't done it).

How do we make sentences using past modals?

Form: past modals

Complete the table with the correct boxes.

Subject			
She	must	have	gone out.
Angie and Tim	ought to	have	called.
I	needn't	have	eaten.
Maxi	can't	have	finished.
Laura	might	visit.	

Infinitive aux. *have*

Modal verb

Past participle

Infinitive



Notice how with present modals, the main verb is in the infinitive.

What changes if the modal is in the continuous form?

We add:
Modal verb +
have + been + verb-ing

Form: past modals

Ought to and *needn't* are what we call *semi-modals*. They are not pure modals, but function in the same way.

Simple

Subject	Modal verb	Infinitive aux. have	Past participle
She	must	have	gone out.
Angie and Tim	ought to	have	called.
I	needn't	have	eaten.
Maxi	can't	have	finished.

Continuous

Subject	Modal verb	Infinitive aux. have	been	Verb-ing
Emma	could	have	been	having a shower.
It	might	have	been	raining.

Practice activities

Complete the sentences using a past modal structure. Use the part in bold to help you.

1. A: I cleaned all the house after the party yesterday. B: **That wasn't necessary!** I have a cleaner!

You **needn't have cleaned** all the house after the party! I have a cleaner!

2. A: The man who was sitting next to you at the hospital had a white coat on. B: I know. **I'm certain he was Mary's doctor.**

The man in the white coat **must have been** Mary's doctor.

3. A: Jane seemed distracted on the phone. B: I heard water running. **It's quite possible she was having a shower.**

Jane **might/may have been having a shower** because I heard water running.

4. A: Phil isn't coming away with us. I think he spent all the wage already. B: **That's impossible.** He was only paid yesterday!

Phil **can't have spent** all his wage already because he was only paid yesterday.

5. **It wasn't a good idea** to fly first class, Timmy! The flight is very short, so it was a waste of money!

You **shouldn't/ought not to have flown** first class, Timmy! The flight is very short!