

1 Complete the sentences with the phrases below.

can't have could have might not have must have should have shouldn't have

- 1 I _____ used my satnav. This map is really old and now I'm completely lost.
- 2 Oh look, that's Jon's phone on the desk. He _____ forgotten it.
- 3 My computer isn't working. I'm not sure why, but I _____ downloaded some malware when I clicked on that link.
- 4 He _____ sent this text message. He hasn't got a phone.
- 5 I _____ tried to update my phone software. I did it last night and now my phone doesn't work at all.
- 6 You _____ deleted that document. Perhaps you saved it to a different folder.

2 Complete the text with the correct past modal form of the verbs in brackets.

Kim My laptop is missing! It's got all my homework on it!

Steve OK, don't panic. When did you last have it?

Kim Well, it was in my bag when I was on the train yesterday afternoon. But when I got off the train, it wasn't there.

Steve Someone on the train ¹_____ (must / steal) it! Who was sitting next to you?

Kim An elderly lady. But she ²_____ (can't / take) the laptop. She got off the train with me, and she didn't have any luggage.

Steve It ³_____ (might / fall) out of your bag. Was the bag closed?

Kim No, it wasn't.

Steve Well, that's not good. You ⁴_____ (shouldn't / leave) your bag open.

Kim Yes, well, I know that now.

Steve Have you called the train company? They ⁵_____ (could / find) it.

Kim No, I haven't called them yet.

Steve Well, you ⁶_____ (should / call) them first of all!

Kim Actually, I've just remembered something. I ⁷_____ (might / not / lose) my laptop. In fact, I ⁸_____ (may / forget) to put it in my bag before I got onto the train.

Steve So where is it?

Kim Well, I ⁹_____ (must / leave) it at my aunt's house. That's where I was yesterday morning.

Steve Mystery solved!

3 **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Read about these situations. Then talk about what might / could / can't / must have happened.

- Natasha was crying last night after a long phone call.
- Will was listening to his MP3 player on the beach yesterday. Now it doesn't work.
- Marie hasn't replied to any of her emails for over a week.
- George is missing and his laptop and phone have also disappeared.

Natasha must have had an argument with her boyfriend.

I think she might have heard some bad news about a relative.

5D Modals in the past

Aims: To review and practise the past modals: *must have*, *should / shouldn't have*, *may / may not have*, *might / might not have*, *could have* and *can't have*.

Time: 10–15 minutes

Materials: One handout for each student

Exercise 1

- Give each student a handout and ask them to do exercise 1. Tell them to read through the sentences carefully in order to understand the meaning, as this will help them to understand which past modal fits best.

KEY

- 1 should have
- 2 must have
- 3 could have
- 4 can't have
- 5 shouldn't have
- 6 might not have

Exercise 2

- Tell students to read through the whole dialogue first and ask them a few quick comprehension questions: *Why is Kim worried?* (because her laptop is missing) *Who was sitting next to her on the train?* (an elderly lady) *Has she called the train company?* (no) *Where was she yesterday morning?* (at her aunt's house) Students then complete the dialogue with the past modal form of the verbs in brackets. Ask two students to read out the completed dialogue to the rest of the class.

KEY

- 1 must have stolen
- 2 can't have taken
- 3 might have fallen
- 4 shouldn't have left
- 5 could have found
- 6 should have called
- 7 might not have lost
- 8 may have forgotten
- 9 must have left

Exercise 3

- Students work in pairs. Give them a minute to read the situations and think about possible reasons for each one. Then they discuss their ideas together, using past modals. Tell them to think of at least three suggestions for each situation. Encourage students to be inventive and humorous with their ideas.