GRAMMAR WORKSHEET

MODALS of PROBABILITY (past)

- **Find the matching sentences below – Be careful: 5 circles don’t match!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>You</th>
<th>He</th>
<th>She</th>
<th>It</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>They</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>might</td>
<td>could</td>
<td>may</td>
<td>can’t</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>been at work. watched TV. taken the money. done the work. gone to bed. eaten the cookies. seen a ghost.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **must have** = 95% sure something was possible
- **might have** = maybe
- **could have** = maybe
- **may have** = maybe
- **can’t have** = 95% sure something was NOT possible

1. I saw my friend run quickly to school.
   - They **might** have walked to work.
   - She **might** have been late.

2. Hey! All the chocolates are gone!
   - John **must** have written it.
   - It **may** have begun already.

3. I think Steven drove to work today.
   - Sarah **may** have dropped it.
   - He **must** have been a robber.

4. The police shot a man in the bank.
   - He **can’t** have been very happy.
   - No, he **can’t** have driven!

5. Where did Rob and Kim go on holiday?
   - Tommy **might** have eaten them.
   - They **could** have flown to Poland.

6. Who broke the coffee cup yesterday?
   - They **could** have been at work.
   - She **might** have been there.
Language Focus  Modals of Probability (also called ‘Modals of Speculation’) for talking about the past

Level  Intermediate

ANSWER KEY

1. I saw my friend run quickly to school.
   She must have been late.
2. All the chocolates are gone!
   Tommy might have eaten them.
3. I think Steven drove to work today.
   No, he can’t have driven!
4. The police shot a man in the bank.
   He must have been a robber.
5. Where did Rob and Kim go on holiday?
   They could have flown to Poland.
6. Who broke the coffee cup yesterday?
   Sarah may have dropped it.

NOTE: We use ‘been’ with …

1) Nouns  Example: “It must have been a spider.”
2) Verbs + ‘ing’  Example: “She might have been sleeping.”
3) Adjectives  Example: “He could have been bored.”
4) Prepositions  Example: “It can’t have been in the kitchen.”

Here are some examples of modals of probability WITHOUT ‘been’ …

- “She must have studied in the morning.”
- “They can’t have slept well last night.”
- “He might have bought a new car.”

Notice that each modal + have is followed by a past participle verb.