

OVERVIEW

For basic grammar information for modals, see Unit 3, Overview.

MAIN USES OF MODALS 2

Here is a list of uses dealt with in this Unit with examples. For other uses, see Unit 3, Overview.

Intention, willingness See Section 1

If you would step this way.

Shall I help, or can you manage?

I'll give you a hand with that.

I will finish this, I promise.

You couldn't give me a hand, could you?

The horse wouldn't jump the fence.

I'll resist their attempts to take over for as long as I have to.

Frequency, habit See Section 1

He will often stop to chat and see how we are.

When I was at university, I would sometimes work all night.

I used to love cooking, but I never get the time nowadays.

Ability See Section 2

Can you swim? I could if I tried.

They thought they could persuade me, but they can't.

Permission See Section 2

May I go? Yes, of course you can.

Could I possibly use your phone. I'm sorry, you can't.

Special uses of should See Section 3

I suggested they should try again later.

I should imagine we'll be home in time for dinner.

(For an alphabetical list of modals with their meanings, see pages 64–67.)

watch out!

Key difficulties with meanings:

- The same modal can express different meanings or perform different functions:
You must phone me as soon as you get back.
(= giving orders)
He's not here – he must have left. (= expressing certainty)
- Different modals can express similar meanings:
Shall I carry that for you? (= willingness)
Would you like me to carry that for you?
(= willingness)
- The exact meaning can change according to context or intonation:
Would you open the window for me, please?
(= polite request)
Would you stop making that noise immediately!
(= order)
- Modals can affect the level of formality and politeness (see Section 2):
'May I leave early today?' 'Of course you can.'
Could I possibly use your phone?
I wonder if I might have your attention for a moment.
- A sentence can have two possible meanings according to the way it is spoken, or the knowledge people have of the situation:
You might have told me. (= 'Perhaps you did, I can't remember' or: 'Why didn't you? You should have')



MEANINGS OF MODAL VERBS

Here is a quick reference to the meanings of modal verbs. For basic grammar information, see Unit 3, Overview; for key difficulties with meaning, see the Watch out!, Unit 4, p.63.

Modal	Meaning / Use	Example
can	ability theoretical possibility permission requests offers	<i>Can you play the piano?</i> <i>Anyone can make a mistake.</i> <i>Can I leave early, please?</i> <i>Can you give me a hand?</i> <i>Can I help you out?</i>
can't / cannot	inability possibility prohibition deduction	<i>I can't play the piano.</i> <i>Can't you come any earlier? (= isn't it possible)</i> <i>You can't leave until I say so.</i> <i>This bill can't be right.</i>
can't have	deduction	<i>She's gone to the wrong door – she can't have seen the sign.</i>
could	past ability possibility requests asking for permission permission in the past deduction idiomatic	<i>The shop had nothing that I could afford.</i> <i>There could be trouble if the government tries to force this measure through.</i> <i>Could you give me a hand?</i> <i>Could I leave a bit early today?</i> <i>When I was young, I could stay up late at weekends if I promised to be good.</i> <i>That could be John's car I can hear – he said he was coming.</i> <i>You could at least tell me what they said. (= I think you should...)</i>
couldn't	past inability impossibility requests prohibition in the past deduction idiomatic	<i>I couldn't walk until I was nearly two.</i> <i>I couldn't eat another thing!</i> <i>Couldn't you try again?</i> <i>My mum used to insist that we couldn't go out until we'd tidied our bedroom.</i> <i>It couldn't be Joe, could it? I thought he was away on business.</i> <i>I couldn't agree more! (= I strongly agree)</i>
could have	possibility in the past annoyance	<i>Your actions could have had serious consequences.</i> <i>You could have told me! (= I wish you had told me)</i> <i>I could have murdered him! (= I was very angry with him)</i>
couldn't have	impossibility in the past idiomatic	<i>He couldn't have taken your car by mistake because he didn't have the keys.</i> <i>It couldn't have been better. (= It was perfect)</i>
may	possibility expressing hopes permission offers concession	<i>We may go to France next year.</i> <i>May you both be very happy.</i> <i>You may go when you've finished.</i> <i>May I be of any assistance?</i> <i>They may live next door but we hardly ever see them.</i>
may not	possibility prohibition concession	<i>We may not go to France this year.</i> <i>You may not go until you've finished.</i> <i>I may not be very intelligent but I can work out the answer to that question.</i>
may have / may not have	possibility in the past concession	<i>They may not have left yet.</i> <i>He may have written books on the subject, but that doesn't mean he's a world expert.</i>

Modal	Meaning / Use	Example
might	We use might as the past form of <i>may</i> after Past tense verbs possibility suggestions requests annoyance concession	<i>He said he might come with us.</i> <i>This expedition might be quite dangerous.</i> <i>You might try phoning directory enquiries.</i> <i>Might I borrow some money?</i> <i>You might at least say you're sorry!</i> <i>He might seem rude, but he's not really.</i>
might not	We use might not as the past form of <i>may not</i> after Past tense verbs possibility concession	<i>He said he might not come with us</i> <i>You might not like it.</i> <i>He might not wear glasses, but his eyesight is not perfect either.</i>
might have	possibility in the past annoyance concession	<i>They might have been trying to contact us.</i> <i>You might have told me! (= I wish you'd told me)</i> <i>She might have worked hard, but you wouldn't know it from her results.</i>
might not have	possibility in the past concession	<i>They might not have noticed the sign.</i> <i>She might not have done all the work, but she certainly got good results.</i>
must	deduction obligation necessity	<i>What's that noise? It must be raining.</i> <i>You must take your shoes off in here.</i> <i>The wires must touch or it won't work.</i>
mustn't	prohibition	<i>You mustn't worry – you'll be fine.</i>
must have	deduction in the past necessity in the past	<i>I must have left my wallet in the car.</i> <i>In order to qualify for the job, you must have had several years' experience.</i>
mustn't have	necessity in the past	<i>You mustn't have had any driving convictions or you won't get the job.</i>
shall	prediction (<i>I</i> and <i>we</i>) intention (<i>I</i> and <i>we</i>) offers (<i>I</i> and <i>we</i>) official orders asking for advice	<i>I think we shall get back early next week.</i> <i>We shall give our final decision tomorrow.</i> <i>Shall I give you a hand?</i> <i>All the candidates shall remain in their seats until the end of the examination.</i> <i>What shall we do now?</i>
shan't	prediction intention	<i>We shan't get back much before ten.</i> <i>I shan't let him do that again.</i>
shall / shan't have	prediction	<i>We shall have finished by this evening. (= Future Perfect)</i> <i>We shan't have another opportunity if we don't win today.</i>

(continued)

Modal	Meaning / Use	Example
<i>should / ought to</i>	(those uses marked * are also appropriate to <i>ought to</i>) giving your opinion* expressing doubt advice* obligation* (duty) instructions conditional (see Unit 5, Section 3.4) with <i>that</i> -clauses after certain verbs with <i>that</i> -clauses after adjectives in purpose clauses expressing doubt	<i>The traffic should / ought to be lighter today.</i> <i>I should think it will rain today.</i> <i>You should / ought to go out more often.</i> <i>People should / ought to treat each other better.</i> <i>All visitors should report to reception.</i> <i>If anyone should phone / Should anyone phone, tell them I'll be back this afternoon.</i> <i>I suggested that he should take a break.</i> <i>It is essential that you should contact us.</i> <i>They spoke quietly so that nobody should hear what they were saying.</i>
<i>shouldn't / oughtn't to</i>	(those uses marked * are also appropriate to <i>oughtn't to</i>) advice* obligation* (duty) giving your opinion* with <i>that</i> -clauses after certain verbs expressing doubt	<i>You shouldn't / oughtn't to drive so fast.</i> <i>People shouldn't / oughtn't to be so aggressive.</i> <i>The traffic shouldn't / oughtn't to be too bad today.</i> <i>I suggested that he shouldn't work so hard.</i> <i>I shouldn't think he'd enjoy it.</i>
<i>should have / shouldn't have / ought to have / oughtn't to have</i>	advice in the past giving your opinion* about the past expressing doubt about the past obligation* (duty) in the past with <i>that</i> -clauses after certain verbs	<i>You should have told me before.</i> <i>The traffic should have / ought to have been lighter earlier today.</i> <i>I shouldn't have thought he'd have enjoyed it.</i> <i>You should have / ought to have been there hours ago.</i> <i>They shouldn't have driven so fast.</i> <i>I suggested that he should have taken a break.</i>
<i>will</i>	prediction predicting the present truths and facts obligation / orders habits annoying habits willingness intention	<i>They'll be here soon.</i> <i>They'll be there by now.</i> <i>This car will only run on unleaded petrol.</i> <i>All passengers will proceed to Gate 7 immediately.</i> <i>She'll always try to help you whenever she can.</i> <i>He will smoke when I'm trying to eat.</i> <i>I'll give you a hand if you like.</i> <i>I'll put the letter in the post this evening.</i>
<i>won't</i>	prediction predicting the present truths and facts refusal intention	<i>They won't be here for a while.</i> <i>They won't be there yet.</i> <i>This car won't start.</i> <i>He won't join in unless he's first.</i> <i>I won't come this evening, I'm afraid.</i>
<i>will have / won't have</i>	prediction predicting the past	<i>I won't have finished this book by this evening.</i> <i>They'll have easily got there by now.</i>

Modal	Meaning / Use	Example
would	prediction predicting the present describing imaginary situations (For would in conditionals and after wish , see Unit 5, Sections 3.3, 4.2.) habits in the past annoying habits in the past requests intention in the past (we use would as the past form of will , e.g. in reported speech) typical (annoying) behaviour advice	<i>They said they would be here soon. I thought they'd be there by now. You'd look better with your hair shorter.</i> <i>She would always try to help you. He would smoke when I was trying to eat. Would you open the door for me? He said he'd put the letter in the post later.</i> <i>It would start raining just as we went out. I'd talk to him about it if I were you.</i>
wouldn't	prediction predicting the present describing imaginary situations refusal in the past requests intention in the past (we use wouldn't as the past form of won't , e.g. in reported speech) advice	<i>They said they wouldn't be here for ages. I thought they wouldn't be here yet. You wouldn't say that if you'd met him. He wouldn't do what I asked. You wouldn't open the door for me, would you? He said he wouldn't be coming tonight.</i> <i>I wouldn't do that if I were you.</i>
would have / wouldn't have	events in the past which didn't happen or which did happen tentative thoughts deductions in the past (we use would / wouldn't have as the Past form of will / won't have , e.g. in reported speech after Past tense verbs)	<i>I'd have met you at the station if I'd known you were coming. I wouldn't have told you if I'd known you'd be so upset. I'd have thought he'd have jumped at the chance. I first went to Italy when I was at University; that would have been in 1982. He promised he would have posted it before five o'clock.</i>

SECTION I

Intention, willingness, frequency, habit

1 INTENTION AND REFUSAL

We use *will* and *would* (past or conditional) to express willingness or intention to do something.

The precise meaning varies according to the context:

I really will be good, I promise. (= promise) *I'll leave if you say that again.* (= threat) *I will get there in time if it's the last thing I do.* (= determination)

I won't be staying long. (= intention or promise not to) *'Lend me five pounds.'* *'No, I won't.'* (= refusal) *My father wouldn't help me out financially.* (= past refusal) *I'd give you a hand with the washing up if I wasn't rushed off my feet.* (conditional willingness)

- We occasionally use *shall* with *I* and *we*:
I told you I'd succeed and I shall! (= strong intention)
- We use *won't* and *wouldn't* to talk about machines 'refusing' to work properly:
This programme won't work with your computer.
My car wouldn't go this morning – I think it's the battery.

2 OFFERS AND REQUESTS

We can use *will* and *would* to offer to do something:

I'll do that for you – it's no problem. (= offer)
Markus said he would help me. (= past offer)

- We also use other modals to make offers:
Can I help?
Would you like a hand with your luggage?
Shall I carry that for you?
May I be of any assistance? (= formal)
- We can also ask if someone else is willing to do something by making requests:
You wouldn't mind giving me a hand, would you? (= tentative) *Would you mind giving me a hand?*
You couldn't give me a hand, could you? *Do you think you could give me a hand?* *Can you give me a hand?* *Give me a hand, would you?* (= more direct)
- Note that we don't use *May you...* or *Shall you...* to make requests.
- We can ask very politely or formally using:
Would you be so kind as to hold this for me?
Would you be kind enough to hold this for me?

- We can also use *be willing to*, especially if there's the possibility that the intention won't be carried out:

✗ *I will help, but I don't have time.*

✓ *I'm willing to help, but I don't have time.*

- We use *may*, *might*, and *would* with *be willing to*, *be prepared to*, etc. to make very tentative offers:
I might be willing to make a few contacts for you, at a price.
- We can use *would* and *might* with *be willing to*, etc. to make requests:
Would / Might you be willing to do the job if I offered you another ten percent?

3 FREQUENCY

We use *will* to talk about habits and typical behaviour in the present:

They'll spend hours on the phone to each other every night. (= they often do)

- We use *would* to talk about past habits and typical behaviour in the past:
Every morning I would get up at the crack of dawn and take the dogs for a walk.
- When stressed, *will* and *would* express the speaker's annoyance at the habits:
She will play her music loudly when I'm trying to work. *They would keep talking when I just wanted to go home.*
- *Used to* is similar to *would*. Note that words such as *never*, *always*, etc. commonly change position:
My dad would always / always used to read me a story before I went to bed.
- But, we only use *used to*, not *would*, to talk about states:
✗ *I would be much slimmer when I was a young child.*
✓ *I used to be much slimmer when I was younger.*

? check

Write (I) next to any sentence which refers to intention or refusal, (O) next to any which contains offers or requests, and (F) next to any which refers to frequency.

- If all goes well, I'll be there just before six.
- Shall I open the window?
- Tomorrow, as always, I'll get up and do my homework before breakfast.
- This door simply won't open.
- Ian said he'd give us a hand to clear up.

Practice

1 Match the direct speech (1–6) with the report (e–f).

Example: O I'll give you a lift. g She offered to ...

You write: O g

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (0 I'll give you a lift.) | a He begged me to ... |
| 1 I'll write to you every day. | b They warned me not to ... |
| 2 No, I won't pay and that's that. | c She just asked me to ... |
| 3 I'll report you to the authorities! | d She promised to ... |
| 4 You'll be sorry if you touch that. | e He threatened to ... |
| 5 Could you take the other end of this for me? | f She refused to ... |
| 6 Couldn't you possibly for once turn a blind eye, please? | (g She offered to ...) |

2 In each item below one or two options may be possible to complete the sentence. Underline those that are possible.

Example: I may / might / will be willing to spare you half an hour this afternoon.

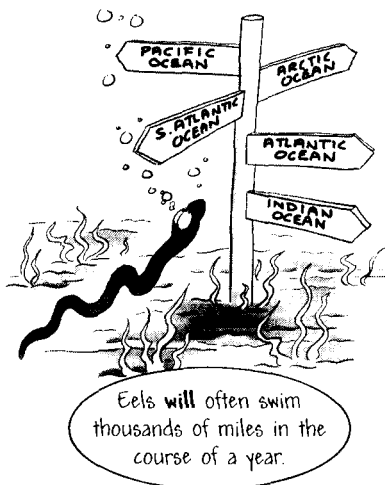
- a Might / Can / Would you mind lifting your feet for a moment while I Hoover?
- b May / Could / Would you be so kind as to give me some advice?
- c Shall / Will / Can I carry that rather heavy-looking case for you?
- d Will / Could / Can you possibly come back a little later?
- e May / Would / Might you be willing to refund the money we have already paid you?
- f Do you think you will / may / could stand a little further away?

3 Fill each of the blanks with the appropriate animal from the list. Write which use of will or would the sentences illustrate.

Example: Eels will often swim thousands of miles in the course of a year. *Typical behaviour*

(eels) pigeons bees whales rhinoceroses cats

- a Poachers will do almost anything to get hold of the horn of white
- b will usually lick their kittens almost non-stop in the early days of their lives.
- c Hundreds of years ago, passenger would blacken the skies of North America.
- d will occasionally be found beached on a shore, having lost the rest of the school.
- e There's a theory that will never sting you unless provoked.



4 Put a tick (✓) beside the sentences in which would could replace used to. Put a cross (✗) beside the others.

Example: Switzerland used to be part of Austria. ✗

In the past several families used to live in the same house. ✓

- a Family values used to be quite different in those days.
- b It used to be quite normal for cousins to marry.
- c Generally speaking, these marriages used to succeed as well as any others.
- d People used to have different ideas about family relationships then.
- e The father used to farm and hunt and the mother used to look after the home.

5 Rewrite each of the following sentences using the two prompt words printed underneath it.

Example: I'd like to help but unfortunately it's not possible.
wish / I

I wish I could help but unfortunately I can't.

- a Could you possibly help me with the dishes?
possible / hand
- b Our previous cat would only go out if the door was opened specially for him.
used / unless
- c He threatened to tell my wife unless I admitted to everything.
said / if
- d Shall I pay by cheque or would you rather I paid cash?
like / prefer
- e I'd be very grateful if you could forward any letters to the above address.
appreciate / kind

SECTION 2

Ability, permission

1 ABILITY IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

Can is the most common modal we use to talk about ability:

*I can give you a lift this evening if you like.
Can you pick up spiders?*

CAN OR BE ABLE TO?

We sometimes use *be able to* with the same meaning as *can*:

I can't / am not able to give you an answer at the moment.

- We use modals like *will* with *be able to* as a future form of *can*:
One day people will be able to go for a holiday on the moon. I might be able to help you.
- We also use *be able to* in the infinitive and *-ing* form. We sometimes use verbs like *feel* and *seem* instead of *be*:
I'd like to be able to write as well as that. I like being able to do exactly what I please. I don't seem able to find the energy for playing football these days.
- We commonly use *can*, not *be able to*, with the meaning 'know how to', and with verbs related to the senses like *see*, *hear*:
Can you read music? I can smell something burning.
- *Could*, and sometimes *would be able to*, are common in conditional sentences. *Could* is more tentative than *can*:
I could come a bit earlier if that would be helpful.

2 THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY

Rather than expressing ability, we sometimes use *can* to say that something is possible in theory:

Speaking in public can be quite traumatic for many people. It can still be very hot in Egypt in September.

3 ABILITY IN THE PAST

Could

We often use *could* as a past form of *can*:

I could hear a noise and went outside.

Could have or was able to?

We use *could have* to say we were able to do something, but in fact we didn't:

He could have helped me, if he'd tried. (= but he didn't)

- For general ability in the past we also use *was able to*, though *could* is more common:
I could / was able to swim when I was five years old.
- For a specific event showing success after trying, we use *was / were able to*, *managed to* or *succeeded in*, but not *could*:
I was able to / managed to solve her problems for her.
- We can also express conditional past ability with *would have been able to*:
I wouldn't have been able to find her in that crowd even if I'd known she was there.

Couldn't have

We use *couldn't have* to say we were not able to do something so we didn't:

He couldn't have helped me anyway. (= he didn't)

4 PERMISSION

We use *can* and *could* as well as other modals to give and ask for permission:

*Can I go now? No, you can't. I won't let you.
They asked if they could go.*

5 POLITENESS AND FORMALITY

When giving or asking for permission, or making requests or offers, the degree of politeness or formality depends strongly on the situation, stress and intonation, and who is speaking to whom. As an approximate guide, *may* and *might* are more polite and formal; *could* and *would* are more polite than *can* and *will*:

'Can I leave early today?' 'Of course you may.'

Could I possibly use your phone?

Visitors to the college may not enter private rooms.

- We often use *might* with *wonder*:
I wonder if I might have your attention for a moment.
- However, because *may* and *might* are formal, they can sound aggressive or sarcastic:
Might I suggest that you talk to the manager about it? And where have you been, may I ask?

? check

Which of these sentences does not express ability, theoretical possibility or permission?

- You may leave the room when you have finished.
- May I be of any assistance?
- I can't open this door: it's stuck.
- I could have told him last week if he'd asked me.
- Believe it or not, crocodiles can make good pets.

Practice

1 Rewrite the following sentences using a modal. More than one modal may be possible.

Example: Is there any chance of me borrowing your Walkman tomorrow afternoon?

Can/ Could/ May I borrow your Walkman tomorrow afternoon?

- a Is it all right if I miss the first few minutes of tomorrow's meeting?
- b I wish my writing in English was better.
- c One day soon, Internet access is sure to be available to every schoolchild.
- d I knew how to swim before I was three.
- e A wasp sting was sometimes a cause of death in those days.
- f These photocopiers have proved to be quite temperamental.
- g The journey here took us twice as long as it needed to.
- h Even if they'd wanted to land at Heathrow, it was impossible because of the fog.
- i And what is this baby doing sitting on my desk, if you don't mind my asking?

2 Arrange each of the following comments using *can't* into five groups according to their basic meaning. One group will have five comments, the others two each. Two have been given as examples.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| (I can't believe it.) | d I can't get over it. | j I can't put it out |
| (I can't take it in.) | e I can't stop myself. | of my mind. |
| a I can't understand | f I can't work it out. | k I can't stand it. |
| it. | g I can't bear it. | l I can't face it. |
| b I can't manage. | h I can't cope. | m I can't put up |
| c I can't help it. | i I can't take it. | with it. |

1	2	3	4	5
I can't believe it.				
I can't take it in.				

3 Fill each of the gaps with a form of *be able to* followed by an appropriate verb.

Example: I don't think I *will be able to drive* you to the airport.

- a I never out the difference between a PC and a Mac.
- b I would really love myself more interestingly on paper.
- c You him on this number, but I have my doubts.
- d They just the drowning man to safety, thank goodness.
- e If you don't feel a contribution, just say so.

4 The outgoing President is in bullish mood. Complete his claims with *could, was / were able to, have been able to or could have* plus an appropriate verb.

Example: No one *could have done* more than I have to increase this country's standing in the world.

- a In my first term of office I this country back on its feet after my predecessor's mistakes.
- b In this second term I in the most exciting new legislation this country's seen for decades.
- c With anyone else in power, there economic chaos.
- d I my head up high throughout my presidency.
- e I any allegations you care to make against me.
- f I new measures which will eventually make the world a far better place.

5 Rewrite the sentences twice using the words given.

Example: He was only able to throw a tantrum like that because he was the boss.

couldn't wouldn't
 He *couldn't have thrown a tantrum like that if he hadn't been the boss.*
 He *wouldn't have been able to throw a tantrum like that if he hadn't been the boss.*

- a I hope one day we can meet again in more favourable circumstances.
possible able
- b Some supermarket beef tends to be rather tough.
can tendency
- c Would you be so kind as to send this out to all your major clients?
enough wonder
- d Maybe I could have helped you.
able possible
- e In the end we were able to communicate with sign language.
managed succeeded

SECTION 3

Special uses of *should*; modals in the past

1 SPECIAL USES OF SHOULD

We often use *should* in *that*-clauses after verbs connected with suggestions, requests or orders:

*I suggested that he **should** take a break.*

*They insisted I **should** take a pay cut.*

- Other verbs we often use with *should* include:
*demand propose urge require
recommend decide maintain warn*

In more formal English, we can omit *should* in *that*-clauses. (See Unit 5, Section 1.1)

- We also use *should* in *that*-clauses after adjectives connected with importance, e.g. *It is important that...*, or personal reactions, e.g. *I was surprised that...*. We use *should have* to talk about the past:
*It's essential that you **should** contact us as soon as you have any information.*

*He found it astonishing that anyone **should have** wanted to buy such an ugly present.*

- Other adjectives we commonly use with *should* in this way include:

*important necessary surprising normal
sorry horrified interesting worried*

Again, we can omit *should*.

- We sometimes use *should* in purpose clauses (see Unit 6, Section 2) after conjunctions like *so that*, *in order that*, *in case*, *for fear that*, *lest*:

*They spoke quietly **so that** nobody **should** hear what they were saying. He disguised himself **lest** he **should** be recognised.*

- We also use *should* before certain verbs, e.g. *imagine*, *think*, *say*, *hope*, to express concepts about which we are not certain:

*I **should imagine** we'll be home for dinner.*

(See Unit 5, Section 1.1 for Present subjunctive and alternative *should*.)

2 MODALS IN THE PAST

Could, would, might

Could and *would* are the only two modals we commonly use on their own to refer to the past:

*I **could** drive a tractor before I knew how to drive a car.
(= ability) We **couldn't** leave the building during the lunch break. (= permission)*

*Every morning I **would** get up early and feed the chickens. (= habitual behaviour) I **wouldn't** do what I was told. (= refusal)*

- We also use *might* occasionally:
*In those days, they came for lunch and **might stay** on for supper. (= possibility)*

Modal Perfects

Other modals may refer to the past when used with the Perfect (*have* + *-ed*). We use modal Perfects in three ways:

- to speculate about events, or imagine the opposite had happened:

*I **would have talked** to him but I didn't have time.*

*You **should have told** me you were coming.*

*They **ought to have informed** us of the change.*

*We were lucky – the whole thing **could have ended** in disaster.*

*You **needn't have gone** to so much trouble.*

*You **might have warned** me.*

- to talk about past events when we are not sure whether they happened or not:

*I **can't find** my diary anywhere – I suppose I **could have left** it at home. (= it's possible) She **may have phoned** my office after I left. (= it's possible)*

*She **can't have left** already! (= I don't think she has)*

*She **must have given** it to someone else. (= I'm almost certain) They **might have gone** home by now. (= it's possible) They **should have got** there by now. (= I think so)*

- to talk about possibility in the present and future. This is a form of the Future Perfect (see Unit 1, Section 2.2):

*You **should have already gone** through immigration by the time I get to the airport.*

? check

Identify these uses of *should* in the following sentences. Write the appropriate number.

1 after adjectives 2 after a verb 3 after conjunctions
4 referring to the past 5 before a verb

- For fear that they should ask him again, he pretended to be deaf.
- I'm worried that they should think I've not been telling the truth.
- I maintain we should continue for the time being.
- I should think it gets quite cold at night here, doesn't it?
- I should have known you'd be involved somehow.

Practice

1 Rewrite each of the following sentences in each pair (a–b) using *should* and one of the words listed. You may want to change the form of verbs.

Example: **incredible**

a The new trainer wants to hand in his notice already? I just don't believe it.
It's incredible that the new trainer should want to hand in his notice already.

1 **important normal**

a Some students tend to feel a little homesick in their first week here. I can understand that.
 b Children must be taught the difference between right and wrong. I believe that strongly.

2 **odd bewildering**

a Why has he complained now, right at the end of his course? I just can't work it out.
 b I wonder why she left without saying anything. I'd really like to know.

3 **insisted warned**

a 'Don't let your feelings run away with you, will you?' said the youth club leader.
 b 'We simply must go to the police about this latest attack,' said a bystander.

2 Match each of the half-sentences (1–6) with (a–f) and connect them using one of the following conjunctions.

Example: 0 *so that* g

lest so that in case

(0 Many people want to be pop stars)
 1 But the Spice Boys don disguise when they go out
 2 One group singer goes around in a Mickey Mouse mask
 3 They always lock their bedroom doors at night
 4 They never announce their immediate plans
 5 Girlfriends are out of the question
 6 They're not allowed to read the papers



a ... female fans should become jealous.
 b ... someone should try to come in.
 c ... fans should recognise them.
 d ... nobody should be able to guess who he is.
 e ... no one should know where they're heading.
 f ... they should read a bad review.
 (g ... people will recognise them in the street.)

3 Rewrite each of the following sentences using the two prompt words given.

Example: He promised to be here by ten o'clock without fail.
said / definitely
He said he would definitely be here by ten o'clock.

- a Don't you regret reacting in the way you did?
think / should
- b I bet she felt a bit of a fool when she realised who she had been speaking to.
must / dawned
- c I expect you'll be at Heathrow before me.
should / do
- d Do you think I should have given her a set of keys?
ought / left
- e Our stubborn young son always refused to treat visitors to the house with respect.
would / respectfully
- f It's possible that she put those goods in her bag accidentally.
may / mistake

4 Fill each of the gaps with a suitable word or phrase.

- a It shouldn't us more than half an hour to get to the airport.
 b Last night's match could into a complete fiasco.
 c The chairman insisted that all shareholders should of the board's decision in writing.
 d She just mind despite all our pleas, would she?
 e You should that into account before you went and spent all your money.