

# MODAL-PERFECTS

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## Remember this

- should have + past participle: something was advisable or expected, but perhaps didn't happen.
- must have + past participle: a strong conclusion based on evidence.
- might have / could have + past participle: something was possible, but we are not certain.

## A. Read the evidence

Choose the best modal perfect to complete each conclusion. Use each expression at least once. One expression may be used more than once.

1. The office lights are on, but nobody answers the door. The staff _____ left through the back exit. a) must have b) should have c) might have

2. Leo missed his international flight because he arrived at the airport only 20 minutes before departure. He _____ checked the airline's recommended arrival time.
a) must have b) should have c) could have

3. Nina isn't answering her phone. She _____ left it at home, but we can't be sure.
a) must have b) might have c) should have

4. The report was due yesterday. You had all the information you needed, so you _____ finished it on time.
a) should have b) must have c) might have

## B. The investigation

A restaurant received a negative review. Read the facts and complete each statement with must have, might have, could have, or should have. Use the form that best matches the meaning.

5. The customer waited 90 minutes for a meal. The kitchen _____ forgotten the order. (strong deduction)

6. The waiter never checked whether the customer needed anything. He _____ visited the table more often. (criticism)

7. The restaurant was unusually busy. The delay _____ been caused by staff shortages. (possible explanation)

8. The manager offered a discount after the complaint. The restaurant _____ prevented the problem by explaining the delay earlier. (missed opportunity)

## C. What would you say?

Complete each response using a suitable modal perfect and the verb in brackets.

9. “I can't find my wallet anywhere.”
“You _____ it in the taxi.” (leave — possible explanation)

10. “I failed the exam. I barely studied.”
“You _____ more seriously.” (prepare — criticism)

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## Answer Key

1. a) must have
2. b) should have
3. b) might have
4. a) should have
5. must have
6. should have
7. might have / could have
8. could have
9. might have left / could have left
10. should have prepared

Note: In real communication, more than one answer can sometimes be grammatically possible. The clues in brackets indicate the intended meaning.

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