MODALS (PAST DEDUCTION)

Verbs: modals of past probability

You must have been an effective teacher.

When we know that something happened in the past, we use a normal past tense. (He did it, I saw them, etc.) If we are not completely sure, we use a modal (must, may, might, could + have). The choice of modal depends on the degree of certainty, as in the following table.

Probability	Verb	Example
100% almost certain quite likely 50% (possible) possible but unlikely highly unlikely 0%	past simple must have may have could have might have can't/couldn't have past simple negative } + Past Participle	She knew. We must have arrived. He may have missed the train. She could have forgotten. We might have made a mistake. You can't have lost it. He didn't know.

Use modal perfects to make guesses (deductions) about things in the past. The modal perfect is formed with a modal verb (e.g must, can, should) + have + past participle.

Use should have to say something was a good idea, but it didn't happen.
To join the online meeting on time they should have asked about the meeting information beforehand.

Use shouldn't have to say something wasn't a good idea, but it happened.
She shouldn't have drunk five cups of coffee. She doesn't feel alright.

Use might have to say that it is possible, but not certain, that something happened.
He might have jumped the fence to enter his aunt's house.

Use must have to say it is logically certain that something happened.
There's bear footprints in the yard so it must have been there first.

Use couldn't have to say that it is not possible that something happened.
The German football team couldn't have won the game because their famous forward was injured.