

## 13

## What might have been

- ▶ Suggest explanations and reasons
- ▶ Give opinions and advice about past situations

## 1 SNAPSHOT

## PET PEEVES

## IT DRIVES ME CRAZY WHEN . . .

- people push too close to me on the subway.
- someone borrows my things without asking.
- people keep interrupting me.
- a couple starts arguing in public.
- people don't pay for their share at a restaurant.
- a friend criticizes another friend.
- someone is late for no reason.
- people chew with their mouths open.
- a friend constantly asks me for favors.
- someone cuts in line in front of me.



Which of the pet peeves do you have about people you know? Which one is the worst?  
What other pet peeves do you have?  
Do you do any of these things? When and why?

## 2 CONVERSATION He might have gone out.

- ▶ A Listen and practice.

**Chris:** Didn't Tyler ask us to come at 7:30?

**Ava:** Yes, and it's almost 8:00 now. Why don't we ring the bell again? He must not have heard it.

**Chris:** That's impossible. We've been ringing the bell for more than 10 minutes.

**Ava:** He must have fallen asleep. You know Tyler has been working so hard on his new project.

**Chris:** Or he might have forgotten about our dinner and just gone out.

**Ava:** No, he couldn't have forgotten. I just talked to him about it this morning. Besides, the lights are on. He could have had an emergency. He might not have had time to call us.

**Chris:** Yeah, maybe. I'll call him and find out.

**Ava:** And?

**Chris:** He's not answering. . . Now I'm getting worried.

- ▶ B Listen to the rest of the conversation. What happened?



## 3 PRONUNCIATION Reduction in past modals

- ▶ A Listen and practice. Notice how **have** is reduced in these sentences.  
He may **həv** fallen asleep. She might **həv** gone out.
- ▶ B Listen and practice. Notice that **not** is not contracted or reduced in these sentences.  
He might **not** have had time to call us. She must **not** have heard the doorbell.

## 4 GRAMMAR FOCUS

- ▶ Past modals for degrees of certainty

## It's almost certain.

He **must have fallen** asleep.

He **must not have heard** the doorbell.

## It's not possible.

He **couldn't have forgotten** about it.

## It's possible.

He **may/might have gone out**.

He **may/might not have had** time to call us.

He **could have had** an emergency.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 144

- A Read each situation and choose the best explanation. Then practice with a partner.  
(Pay attention to the reduced forms in past modals.)

## Situation

1. Marcia seems very relaxed. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Claire is packing her things. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jeff got a bad grade on his test. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Rodrigo looks very tired today. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Julia didn't talk to her friends in the cafeteria. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Ahmed got a call and looked worried. \_\_\_\_\_

## Explanation

- a. She must have gotten fired.
- b. He might have worked late last night.
- c. She may have just come back from vacation.
- d. He couldn't have heard good news.
- e. He might not have studied very hard.
- f. She must not have seen them.

- B PAIR WORK Suggest different explanations for each situation in part A.

## 5 LISTENING What could have happened?

- A GROUP WORK Look at the pictures. What do you think happened?  
Offer an explanation for each event.



- ▶ B Listen to the explanations for the two events in part A and take notes.  
What *did* happen? How similar were your explanations?



## 6 SPEAKING What's your guess?

**A PAIR WORK** What do you think were the reasons for these events? Suggest two different explanations for each.

1. The bride didn't show up for her wedding. She sent a bunch of flowers to the groom with a note: "Thank you."
2. A man arrived at the airport with a suitcase and saw his brother. He grabbed a cab and went back home.
3. It was a hot, sunny day. A man arrived home. He was soaking wet.

**B GROUP WORK** Each student thinks of two situations like the ones in part A. Others suggest explanations.

**A:** A man went around town and bought all the copies of the latest issue of a specific magazine.

**B:** Well, the magazine might have had an article about him.



## 7 INTERCHANGE 13 Think of the possibilities!

What's your best explanation for some unusual events? Go to Interchange 13 on page 128.

## 8 PERSPECTIVES I'm going nuts!

- A** Listen to a person complaining about her family members. Check (✓) the response you think is best for each problem.

*Last night, my sister borrowed my car without asking. She did call me a couple of times, but I was in a meeting and couldn't answer the phone. We had a big fight, and now we're not speaking.*

- ☐ She shouldn't have used your car without permission, no matter what.  
☐ You could have been more understanding. After all, she tried to call you first.

*My nephew is so inconsiderate. He called me at 3:00 in the morning to talk about his problems with his best friend, and I had to get up very early to work. I was really mad.*

- ☐ You could have told him that you had to get up early the next day.  
☐ Your nephew is always doing that. You shouldn't have answered his call.

*My brother came over for the weekend with his wife and three kids. They made such a mess of the apartment! I'll never invite them over again.*

- ☐ I would have asked them to help clean up the place.  
☐ I wouldn't have invited them to spend the weekend. Having overnight guests can be really stressful.



**B** Do you talk about pet peeves with your friends? Do they give you advice?

## 9 GRAMMAR FOCUS

### Past modals for judgments and suggestions

#### Judging past actions

You **should have asked** your sister to help.

He **shouldn't have used** your car.

#### Suggesting alternative past actions

You **could have told** her that you had to get up early.

I **would have asked** them to help clean up the place.

I **wouldn't have invited** them to spend the weekend.

GRAMMAR PLUS see page 144

**A** Complete the conversations using past modals with the verbs given. Then practice with a partner.

1. **A:** My boss asked me to help her choose a gift for her husband, and I ended up spending all day at the mall.

**B:** You \_\_\_\_\_ (make up) an excuse not to help her. She \_\_\_\_\_ (not ask) for such a personal favor in the first place.

2. **A:** I lent my sister-in-law some money a year ago, and she never paid it back.

**B:** She \_\_\_\_\_ (pay) it back already! Well, I \_\_\_\_\_ (not lend) money to her anyway. I never lend money to relatives.

3. **A:** Austin invited me out to dinner, but when the check came, he said he was broke!

**B:** I \_\_\_\_\_ (not pay) for him. I \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) him to wash the dishes. He \_\_\_\_\_ (not invite) you if he didn't have enough money.

4. **A:** I can't believe my cousin came over and stayed until 1:00 in the morning!

**B:** He \_\_\_\_\_ (not stay) so late. You \_\_\_\_\_ (start) yawning. Maybe he would have gotten the hint!



**B PAIR WORK** Think of another suggestion or comment for each situation above.

## 10 WORD POWER Reactions

**A** Helena's boyfriend forgot their anniversary. How does she react? Match each reaction with the best example.

#### Reaction

1. an assumption \_\_\_\_\_
2. a criticism \_\_\_\_\_
3. a demand \_\_\_\_\_
4. an excuse \_\_\_\_\_
5. a prediction \_\_\_\_\_
6. a suggestion \_\_\_\_\_
7. a suspicion \_\_\_\_\_
8. a warning \_\_\_\_\_

#### Example

- a. "Sometimes you're so selfish."
- b. "You could take me out to dinner."
- c. "You must have wanted to break up with me."
- d. "I bet you went out with your friends."
- e. "Now you'll have to get me a really nice gift."
- f. "I know you've been busy lately. It just slipped your mind."
- g. "If you ever forget another important date, I'll never talk to you again."
- h. "You'll probably forget my birthday, too!"

**B GROUP WORK** Imagine that someone was late for class, or choose another situation. Give an example of each reaction in the list above.



## 11 LISTENING What should they have done?

**A** Listen to descriptions of three situations. What would have been the best thing to do in each situation? Check (✓) the best suggestion.

- ☐ Simon should have kept the ring for himself.  
☐ He should have called the police.  
☐ He did the right thing.
- ☐ Jana shouldn't have mentioned her last job at all in her application.  
☐ She should have been honest in her application and admitted she made a mistake.  
☐ She did the right thing.
- ☐ Martin should have reported what his boss did as soon as he found out.  
☐ He should have withdrawn more money and blamed it on his boss.  
☐ He did the right thing.

**B PAIR WORK** What would you have done in each situation in part A?

## 12 DISCUSSION How would you have reacted?

**GROUP WORK** Read each situation. Say what the person could have or should have done, and what you would have done.

- "It was my friend's birthday, and he had invited a few close friends out to celebrate. I forgot all about it, so I called him the next day and pretended I'd had to take my mother to the hospital." –Warren
- "My sister got a new haircut, and I thought it looked a little dated. I didn't want to hurt her feelings, so I told her I liked it." –Sonia
- "I didn't have any money to buy my cousin a birthday present, so I gave her something I had received previously as a gift. My brother told my cousin about my regifting, and now she's mad at me." –Chase
- "I went to my in-laws' house for dinner last night. My husband thinks his mother is a great cook, but the food was awful! I didn't know what else to do, so I ate it." –Fay

**A:** Warren should have told his friend the truth.

**B:** I agree. He could have taken his friend out to make up for it.

**C:** I think I would have . . .

## 13 WRITING A tricky problem

**A** Think of a complicated situation from your own experience. Write a paragraph describing the situation, but don't explain how you resolved it.

I have a close friend who doesn't get along with my other friends. He's a nice guy, friendly and funny, but every time we all go out, he makes a fuss over how much everyone should pay. Last week, my friends were going to dinner, and he wanted to come along. I didn't want to hurt his feelings . . .

**B PAIR WORK** Exchange papers. Write a short paragraph about how you would have resolved your partner's situation.

**C PAIR WORK** Read your partner's resolution to your situation. Tell your partner how you resolved it. Whose resolution was better?

## 14 READING

**A** Skim the article. What do the two unexplained events have in common?

Messages from **Outer Space**, or a Leaking Pipe?

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**Even though we know so much about the world around us, unexplained events still take place. Read about these two events. What do you think may have happened?**

Since 2008, people around the world have been reporting a mysterious sound that seems to come from the sky. Some people say it sounds like trumpets playing. Others say it is like sound effects from sci-fi movies. The phenomenon has caused both fear and fascination, and many people have been looking for explanations. One popular idea is that the sound is an announcement of the end of the world, and another

suggests that it's the sound of spaceships. But there may be a more scientific explanation. It involves flares from the sun and energy from the center of the earth. Which explanation do you think might be right?

Of course, there are some strange events that still baffle both the general public and experts. Take the high-pitched noise that has been driving people crazy in Forest Grove, Oregon. To some people, it sounds like a giant flute being played very badly, and to others, it sounds like a train slowing down or truck brakes squealing. The sound is coming from under the street, but gas, water, and sewer inspectors have said there is nothing wrong down there. One resident was so sure it was a serious gas leak that he was ready to flee. However, experts say that a leak would make a different sound, and people would definitely smell gas. How would you explain this mysterious and annoying event?




**B** Read the article. Then answer the questions.

- To what two things have people compared the first sound?
- What non-scientific explanations have been offered?
- What sort of sound are people in Forest Grove hearing?
- What explanation has been proven untrue?
- If there had been a gas leak, what would be different?

**C** Which of these statements are facts? Which are opinions? Check (✓) Fact or Opinion.

- |  | Fact                     | Opinion                  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Science has not explained everything that happens.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Some sounds mean the end of the world is coming.              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The first sound is caused by energy from planets.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The sound in Forest Grove is very annoying.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The Forest Grove sound comes from under the street.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Gas lines and other systems in Forest Grove have no problems. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. No local problems can explain the Forest Grove noise.         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**D PAIR WORK** Which explanations of the events in the article do you think are the most likely? least likely? Can you think of any other possible explanations?