



Possibility (may/might/could): Past Speculation: May Have, Might Have & Could Have + Past Participle

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. She didn't come to the party. She ____ about it.
a) might not have known
b) might not know
c) might have not known
d) might didn't know
2. The ground is wet. It ____ last night.
a) may rained
b) may have rained
c) may has rained
d) may have rain
3. I can't find my wallet. I ____ it at the restaurant.
a) could left
b) could have leave
c) could have left
d) could has left
4. He failed the test. He ____ enough.
a) might not studied
b) might have not studied
c) might not have studied
d) might didn't study
5. The window is broken. Someone ____ a ball at it.
a) could have throw
b) could thrown
c) could has thrown
d) could have thrown
6. She ____ the email yet. She only got to work five minutes ago.
a) may not read
b) may have not read
c) may didn't read
d) may not have read
7. He ran a marathon in under three hours! He ____ incredibly hard.
a) must have trained
b) might have trained
c) should have trained
d) may have trained
8. I didn't see Emma at the meeting. She ____ home early.
a) might gone
b) might have went
c) might have gone
d) might has gone
9. The cake is delicious! You ____ hours baking it.
a) may have spent
b) would have spent
c) might have spent
d) must have spent
10. Tom looks really sunburnt. He ____ sunscreen at the beach.
a) might not worn
b) might not have worn
c) might have not worn
d) might didn't wear



Answers

1. a) might not have known
2. b) may have rained
3. c) could have left
4. c) might not have studied
5. d) could have thrown
6. d) may not have read
7. a) must have trained
8. c) might have gone
9. d) must have spent
10. b) might not have worn
11. c) couldn't have
12. a) may not have been telling
13. b) could have been
14. c) might have forgotten
15. a) can't have run
16. b) may have put
17. d) could have closed
18. a) might have taken
19. b) may not have received
20. d) could have seen



Explanations

1. “might not have known” (a)

'Might not have known' speculates that it is possible she did not know about the party. The structure is: might + not + have + past participle.

2. “may have rained” (b)

'May have rained' speculates about a past event. The wet ground is evidence, but we are not certain. Structure: may + have + past participle.

3. “could have left” (c)

'Could have left' speculates about a possible past action. The speaker thinks the restaurant is one possible place the wallet might be.

4. “might not have studied” (c)

'Might not have studied' suggests a possible reason for the failure. The negative form is: might + not + have + past participle.

5. “could have thrown” (d)

'Could have thrown' speculates about what possibly caused the damage. It's one possible explanation.

6. “may not have read” (d)

'May not have read' speculates that she possibly has not read the email. Structure: may + not + have + past participle.

7. “must have trained” (a)

'Must have trained' is a logical conclusion — running a marathon in under three hours requires serious training. This is near-certainty, not just a possibility. 'Should have trained' would express regret or criticism about the past, not a deduction.

8. “might have gone” (c)

'Might have gone' speculates about a past action. Note: the past participle of 'go' is 'gone', not 'went'.

9. “must have spent” (d)

'Must have spent' is a confident deduction. The excellent result makes the speaker almost certain that a lot of time was invested. 'Would have spent' expresses a hypothetical result requiring a condition, not a deduction based on evidence.

10. “might not have worn” (b)

'Might not have worn' speculates about a possible past omission. The sunburn suggests this is possible but not certain.

11. “couldn't have” (c)

'Couldn't have cheated' means it is impossible that she cheated — the speaker is certain based on the evidence. 'Wouldn't have' means she would not have chosen to cheat, which is about willingness, not impossibility. 'Might not have' or 'may not have' would only express uncertainty.

12. “may not have been telling” (a)

'May not have been telling' speculates about a past ongoing action. The evidence (his car elsewhere) suggests he was possibly lying.

13. “could have been” (b)

'Could have been asleep' speculates about a past state. The unanswered calls suggest sleep as one possible explanation.

14. “might have forgotten” (c)

'Might have forgotten' speculates about a possible past omission. The dead plants suggest the cleaner possibly forgot to water them. Structure: might + have + past participle.

15. “can't have run” (a)

'Can't have run' means it seems impossible — someone who ran a full marathon would not be full of energy. The speaker is very sure he did not run the whole distance.

16. “may have put” (b)

'May have put' speculates about a past action. The past participle of 'put' is 'put' (irregular — it does not change).

17. “could have closed” (d)

'Could have closed' speculates about a possible reason the shop is shut. The holiday is one possible explanation.

18. “might have taken” (a)

'Might have taken' speculates about a past mistake. Note: the past participle of 'take' is 'taken', not 'took'.

19. “may not have received” (b)

'May not have received' speculates that the message possibly did not reach him. The wrong email address makes this likely.

20. “could have seen” (d)

'Could have seen' speculates about a possible past event — perhaps she had access to the questions before the test.