

Tell me why

Aims

Practice using past modals for speculating.

Language focus

Grammar

Past modals for speculating

Set-up

Group work

Lesson link

For use after Unit 9, Lesson A

Time

25 minutes

Preparation

Duplicate the worksheet and mount on construction paper. Cut the cards apart. Make one set of cards for each group of students.

5. As students are playing, walk around to monitor the activity and help as needed. Check that they are using past modals correctly. Remind them to use *must have* if they are quite certain of their answer and *might have* or *could have* if they are less certain. If students can't decide if an answer is correct or not, act as "judge."
6. When pairs are finished, have them count their cards. The student in each group with the most cards is the winner.

Procedure

1. Tell students they are going to practice speculating about why things have happened by using past modals.
2. Put students in groups of four or five and distribute the cards, one set of 16 cards for each group. Have students put the cards in a pile face down without looking at them.
3. Model the activity for the class. Take a card from one group's pile and read the situation. For example, *Marla's boss left work early yesterday. She took two aspirins before she left.* Ask one of the students in the group to speculate about why the person left work early, for example: *She must / might have had a headache.* The "correct" answer is written in small letters on the same card. For this card the correct answer would be *She must / might have had a fever.*
4. Have students play the game. Remind students that a correct answer must use a past modal and express the same idea as the one on the card. If a student answers correctly, the student keeps the card. If the answer is not correct, the card goes back to the bottom of the pile, and the next student takes a turn.

Tell me why

<p>Marla's boss left work early yesterday. She took two aspirins before she left.</p> <p>Answer: She had a fever.</p>	<p>Steve was sneezing a lot. He was visiting a friend in the hospital.</p> <p>Answer: There were some flowers in the room.</p>	<p>A woman was in a restaurant. She looked surprised and a little angry.</p> <p>Answer: She found a hair in her soup.</p>	<p>A student was doing a complicated math problem with a pencil and paper.</p> <p>Answer: His / Her calculator was broken.</p>
<p>Your dog suddenly looked out the window.</p> <p>Answer: It heard a strange noise outside.</p>	<p>Your best friend went to a party last night, but she left after half an hour.</p> <p>Answer: He / She was tired.</p>	<p>An office worker was sitting at his desk. He was looking at his watch.</p> <p>Answer: He was late for a meeting.</p>	<p>Your friend got a good grade on her test.</p> <p>Answer: She studied hard.</p>
<p>David drove home after a two-day conference at a hotel. Then he couldn't find his cell phone.</p> <p>Answer: He forgot it at the hotel.</p>	<p>Jessica woke up at 3:00 a.m. in the morning.</p> <p>Answer: She had a bad dream.</p>	<p>Peter's umbrella was broken. He was walking to work.</p> <p>Answer: It was a windy day.</p>	<p>Dana was trying to get into her house, but she couldn't.</p> <p>Answer: The door had a broken knob.</p>
<p>Suzanne was 20 minutes late for work.</p> <p>Answer: There was a lot of traffic.</p>	<p>Craig was on his way to visit his parents. He called them from his car.</p> <p>Answer: His car broke down.</p>	<p>Many buildings in a big city were destroyed.</p> <p>Answer: There was an earthquake.</p>	<p>You've called Wendy on her cell phone several times, but she doesn't answer.</p> <p>Answer: She left her phone at home today.</p>