MODAL VERBS + PERFECT INFINITIVE (PI)

Form: MODAL + HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE

(jistotní modalita; epistemic modality)

- modal verbs + PI are often used:
 - to refer to the past
 - to refer to unreal situations
 - to show that the activity was different from what we wanted
 - to say how confident we are that something has happened
- 1. MUST + PI: expresses deduction, a logical conclusion, probability:

It is very cold; it must have snowed in the mountains.

I saw him leaving; he must have killed him.

X He had to kill him.

2. CAN'T/COULDN'T + PI: expresses negative deduction:

She can't have passed such a difficult exam.

CAN + **PI**: expresses impossibility or disbelief:

The boy can't have given a better answer than this one.

X He couldn't give..., X He wasn't able to give...

She can't have missed the bus.

3. COULD + PI:

You could have done it. (past reference: didn't do it)

X You could do it. (future reference: possibility)

4. MAY + PI: expresses the possibility that an action took place in the past:

The little girl may have lost the key. (It is possible that she lost the key.)

(with may - action is more probable than with might)

5. MIGHT + PI: expresses a past possibility

Our neighbours might have heard some noises when our car was stolen.

MIGHT + **PI** continuous: expresses a possible action wh. was continuing at a certain moment in the past:

The kids might have been watching a cartoon at that time.

6. **NEEDN'T + PI**: expresses an unnecessary action, which was, nevertheless, performed:

I needn't have knocked at the door since, in this way, I awoke the baby. (but I knocked) You needn't have bought the flowers.

X didn't need to: show that the action was not necessary but it wasn't performed either:

I didn't need to knock at the door since it was open. (so I didn't knock)

- 7. **SHOULD** + **PI**: indicates that the past obligation was not fulfilled or carried out: You should have locked the door before leaving the house. (But you didn't lock it.)
- 8. OUGHT TO + PI: expresses an unfulfilled duty or obligation:

Paul ought to have waited until the lights were green before he crossed the street. (But he didn't wait.)

9. **WOULD** + **PI**: 3rd conditional *I would have gone to university if my parents had had more money.* (The speaker didn't go to university.)

PERFECT INFINITIVE + MODAL VERBS - SENTENCES:

- 1. A: I saw a ghost last night.
 - B: You (not see) a ghost; there aren't any ghosts. You (dream) it.
- 2. It is possible that a child broke the window.
- 3. A: I've had a toothache for two days.
 - B: You (go) to the dentist when it started.
- 4. A: As I was standing in the hall your dog bit me.
 - B: It (not be) my dog; he was with me all day. It (be) my brother's dog.
- 5. A: I wonder why he didn't answer?
 - B: Possibly he didn't understand the question.
- 6. I gave him a tip, which was not necessary.
- 7. A: The plane is late; I wonder what has happened?
 - B: Possibly it was delayed by fog.
- 8. A: I waited from 8.00 to 8.30 under the clock and he says he waited from 8.00 to 8.30 under the clock, and we didn't see each other!
 - B: You (wait) under different clocks! There are two in the station, you know.
- 9. We (start) yesterday (this was the plan); but the flight was cancelled because of the fog, so we're still here, as you see.
- 10. A: I left my car here under the NO Parking sign; and now it's gone. It (be) stolen!
 - B: Not necessarily. The police (drive) it away.
- 11. A: We've run out of petrol!
 - B: I'm not surprised. I noticed that the tank was nearly empty wshen we left home.
 - A: You (tell) me! WE (get) petrol at the last village. Now we've got a 10-mile walk!
- 12. A: Look at this beautiful painting! Only a very great artist (paint) such a picture!
 - B: Nonsense! A child of five (paint) it with his eyes shut.
- 13. A: You don't think it (be started) deliberately?
 - B: Well, I suppose it (be). (*It is possible*.) But who would do a thing like that?
- 14. There is only one set of footprints, so the kidnapper (carry) his prisoner out. He not (do) it in daylight or he (be) seen. He (wait) till dark.