

Present and past speculation

1 Choose the correct option, A, B or C.

- 1 Maria and Ben: 'Which street is Joan's house in?' 'I'm not sure. It __ be this one.'
A could **B** must **C** can
- 2 Maria and Ben: 'Listen! Can you hear music?' 'Yes, I can. Someone __ in the house.'
A can't be **B** must be **C** might have been
- 3 Maria and Ben: 'Maybe Joan sent a text.' 'Let me see ... Oh no! I __ have left my phone at home.'
A could **B** can't **C** must
- 4 Joan: 'They __ lost! Maria's been here before.'
A can't get **B** can't have got **C** mustn't get
- 5 Joan: 'Maria couldn't __ about our picnic. We talked about it last night!'
A have forgotten **B** forgot **C** have forgot
- 6 The family: 'Those strange people in our garden __ be vegetarian. They've got sausages.'
A may not **B** must **C** can't

2 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use the word in capitals.

- 1 I'm sure they didn't have an accident. **CAN'T**
They _____ an accident.
- 2 Perhaps she went to the beach. **MAY**
She _____ to the beach.
- 3 I'm certain Joan knew we were coming! **MUST**
Joan _____ we were coming!
- 4 Maybe this is the way to her house. **COULD**
This _____ the way to her house.
- 5 What if Joan doesn't want to see us? **MIGHT**
Joan _____ to see us.
- 6 I'm sure they didn't lose the address. **COULDN'T**
They _____ the address.
- 7 I'm certain the GPS is wrong! **CAN'T**
The GPS _____ right!
- 8 I'm certain Joan forgot we were coming. **MUST**
Joan _____ we were coming.

3 Write five sentences making speculations about people you know. Use present and past modal forms.

Answer key

1

1 A

2 B

3 C

4 B

5 A

6 C

2

1 can't have had

2 may have gone

3 must have known

4 could be

5 might not want

6 couldn't have lost

7 can't be

8 must have forgotten

3

Model answers

1 My friend may be at the shops now.

2 My teacher wasn't at school yesterday – he might have been sick.

3 My mum can't be at home now – her car isn't there.

4 My dad isn't at home. He could be at work.

5 My sister couldn't have got an A on her test – she isn't a good student!

6 My brother didn't study for his History test yesterday – he must have forgotten about it!