

Modal verbs of speculation and deduction – present and past; Third conditional

1 Circle the correct alternative.

- 'Who's at the door?'
'I'm not sure, but it must/can't be the postman. He never comes before 10.'
- 'What's the weather like in Germany at the moment?'
'I don't know, but if it is cold here in Greece, it can't/must be freezing over there.'
- 'How old is Mr Jones?'
'Well, it's difficult to say – he could/mustn't be 40, but people say he looks younger than he actually is.'
- 'They've been talking about changing the school uniform.'
'Really? Well, I wouldn't mind, but some people can't/mightn't like the idea.'
- 'Did you know Freddie was into football?'
'Yes, and he must/may be quite good if he's playing in the school semi-finals.'
- 'Is it true that we're going to have a new head teacher?'
'Well, it can/could be true, but they haven't made any official statements.'

2 Rewrite the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Start with the words given.

- I'm 90% sure the last general election was four years ago.
The last general election must
- I don't think she recognised me after so many years.
She can't
- It's possible that the king escaped a dangerous conspiracy.
The king might
- Perhaps he wasn't a hero, but he did great things for his country.
He may not
- I'm quite sure his mother had a great influence on him.
His mother must

3 Circle the correct alternative.

- If we had looked/would have looked at the map, we hadn't got/wouldn't have got lost.
- If she had gone/would have gone to bed earlier, she wouldn't have been/hadn't been so tired.
- We would have gone/had gone skiing if the weather would have been/hadn't been so bad.
- If they had finished/would have finished their homework earlier, they would have come/had come to the cinema with us.
- If he had gone/would have gone to the party, he had met/would have met Laura.

- She had phoned/would have phoned me if she would have lost/hadn't lost her mobile phone.

4 Look at these situations and write sentences using the third conditional. Use the words given.

- You must have lived in the US for five years to apply for citizenship. So I didn't apply.
If I
- You must be a very good speaker if you want to become a class representative. He is not a good speaker.
If he
- It's easier for someone who is bilingual to learn other languages. I'm not bilingual.
If I
- Queen Elizabeth I probably never married because she was afraid of losing her power.
If Queen Elizabeth I

5 Choose the best answers to complete the text.

We all learn that Napoleon lost to the British in the Battle of Trafalgar, but what (1) if Lord Nelson had not led the Royal Navy? Alternative history tries to answer this kind of 'what if' question. Examples of the most popular questions include 'What if the Americans (2) the Revolutionary War?' 'What if the barbarians (3) Rome?' It (4) not be easy to make speculations about past events, but it's interesting. Let's take the question of the barbarian invasions. If they hadn't happened, the Romans who had been ruling England for nearly five centuries (5) to go back to Rome to fight their enemies. As a result, the Anglo-Saxon tribes (6) to England and the English language (7) at all. It (8) very hard to imagine a world where nobody speaks English. However, what language would have developed from the kind of Latin spoken in Britannia? Perhaps a language that might have sounded similar to Spanish or to Italian?

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| 1 | A had happened | B would have happen | C would have happened |
| 2 | A would lose | B had lost | C lost |
| 3 | A hadn't invaded | B hadn't invade | C wouldn't have invaded |
| 4 | A might | B must | C A or B |
| 5 | A wouldn't need | B would have needed | C wouldn't have needed |
| 6 | A wouldn't had moved | B wouldn't have moved | C hadn't moved |
| 7 | A wouldn't have started | B might have started | C must have started |
| 8 | A must have been | B mustn't be | C must be |