

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

1 Complete these dialogues with *must*, *can't*, *may*, *might*, *could*, *may not* or *mightn't*. Sometimes, more than one answer is possible.

- 'Who's at the door?'
'I'm not sure, but it 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's cold here in Greece, it
..... be freezing over there.'
- 'How old is Mr Jones?'
'Well, it's difficult to say – he 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
..... like the idea.'
- 'Did you know Freddie played football?'
'Yes, and he 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 be true, but they haven't
made any official statements.'

2 Rewrite these sentences using the correct verb.

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

3 Complete these sentences in the third conditional form using these verbs. There are three extra verbs.

not be (x2) • come • finish • not get • go (x3) • know •
look • not lose • make • meet • phone • play

- If we at the map, we lost.
- If she to bed earlier, she
so tired.
- We skiing if the weather
so bad.
- If they their homework earlier, they
..... to the cinema with us.

- If he to the party, he Laura.
- She me if she her mobile
phone.

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

- You need to have lived in the US for five years to
apply for citizenship. So I didn't apply.
.....
- You must be a very good speaker if you want to become
a class representative. He is not a good speaker.
.....
- It's easier for someone who is bilingual to learn other
languages. I'm not bilingual.
.....
- The 'new world' was called the Americas after
Amerigo Vespucci, who travelled there in 1499.
.....
- Queen Elizabeth I probably never married because
she was afraid of losing her power.
.....

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 Army? 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) needed to go back to Rome to fight their enemies. As a result, the Anglo-Saxon tribes (6) to England and the English language (7) have started at all. It (8) very hard to imagine a world where nobody speaks English.

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|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 A had | B would | C would | D would |
| happened | have | have | happen |
| | happen | happened | |
| 2 A would | B had lost | C lost | D would |
| lose | | | have lost |
| 3 A hadn't | B hadn't | C have | D wouldn't |
| invaded | invade | invaded | invade |
| 4 A might | B must | C can't | D A and B |
| 5 A wouldn't | B would | C wouldn't | D hadn't |
| | have | have | |
| 6 A wouldn't | B wouldn't | C hadn't | D didn't |
| had | have | moved | move |
| moved | moved | | |
| 7 A wouldn't | B might | C must | D B and C |
| 8 A must | B mustn't | C must be | D mustn't |
| have been | be | | have been |