



# How Can Teachers Use a Murder Mystery to Teach Past Modals?

S06E13 | For teachers to adapt to their learners

## Purpose

Give learners a fictional mystery and a set of clues, then ask them to discuss what might, could or must have happened. In S06E13, Gav and Em use the evidence to practise past-modal deductions while deciding which explanations are possible.

## Try this in your next lesson

Show two fictional clues and ask for one possible explanation with might have and one stronger deduction with must have. Ask what evidence supports each.

## Our suggested routine

- ☐ Give learners a fictional mystery and a few clear clues.
- ☐ Display useful forms such as might have , could have and must have .
- ☐ Ask learners to justify each theory with evidence.
- ☐ Add a new clue and let them revise their ideas.
- ☐ Keep the language reasoning more important than guessing the “right” ending.

## A classroom example

Our new classroom scenario can use a missing trophy instead of a death if that suits the group better. A window is open, the trophy is gone and a caretaker moved some boxes. Learners suggest explanations, then learn that the trophy has been taken away for cleaning. There is no need for one winning detective. Ask learners to explain which earlier theories remain possible and why they would change the strength of a claim.

## After the attempt

What worked? What needs another model or a smaller step? Note one change for next time.

Read the full explanation and examples:  
[howtoenglishpod.com](https://howtoenglishpod.com) - S06E13 article