

# Tell me why

<p><b>Aims</b> Practice using past modals for speculating.</p>
<p><b>Language focus</b> <b>Grammar</b> Past modals for speculating</p>
<p><b>Set-up</b> Group work</p>
<p><b>Lesson link</b> For use after Unit 9, Lesson A</p>
<p><b>Time</b> 25 minutes</p>
<p><b>Preparation</b> Duplicate the worksheet and mount on construction paper. Cut the cards apart. Make one set of cards for each group of students.</p>

- As students are playing, walk around to monitor the activity and help as needed. Check that they are using past modals correctly. Remind them to use *must have* if they are quite certain of their answer and *might have* or *could have* if they are less certain. If students can't decide if an answer is correct or not, act as "judge."
- When pairs are finished, have them count their cards. The student in each group with the most cards is the winner.

## Procedure

- Tell students they are going to practice speculating about why things have happened by using past modals.
- Put students in groups of four or five and distribute the cards, one set of 16 cards for each group. Have students put the cards in a pile face down without looking at them.
- Model the activity for the class. Take a card from one group's pile and read the situation. For example, *Marla's boss left work early yesterday. She took two aspirins before she left.* Ask one of the students in the group to speculate about why the person left work early, for example: *She must / might have had a headache.* The "correct" answer is written in small letters on the same card. For this card the correct answer would be *She must / might have had a fever.*
- Have students play the game. Remind students that a correct answer must use a past modal and express the same idea as the one on the card. If a student answers correctly, the student keeps the card. If the answer is not correct, the card goes back to the bottom of the pile, and the next student takes a turn.

# Tell me why

Marla's boss left work early yesterday. She took two aspirins before she left.

Answer: She had a fever.

Steve was sneezing a lot. He was visiting a friend in the hospital.

Answer: There were some flowers in the room.

A woman was in a restaurant. She looked surprised and a little angry.

Answer: She found a hair in her soup.

A student was doing a complicated math problem with a pencil and paper.

Answer: His / Her calculator was broken.

Your dog suddenly looked out the window.

Answer: It heard a strange noise outside.

Your best friend went to a party last night, but she left after half an hour.

Answer: He / She was tired.

An office worker was sitting at his desk. He was looking at his watch.

Answer: He was late for a meeting.

Your friend got a good grade on her test.

Answer: She studied hard.

David drove home after a two-day conference at a hotel. Then he couldn't find his cell phone.

Answer: He forgot it at the hotel.

Jessica woke up at 3:00 a.m. in the morning.

Answer: She had a bad dream.

Peter's umbrella was broken. He was walking to work.

Answer: It was a windy day.

Dana was trying to get into her house, but she couldn't.

Answer: The door had a broken knob.

Suzanne was 20 minutes late for work.

Answer: There was a lot of traffic.

Craig was on his way to visit his parents. He called them from his car.

Answer: His car broke down.

Many buildings in a big city were destroyed.

Answer: There was an earthquake.

You've called Wendy on her cell phone several times, but she doesn't answer.

Answer: She left her phone at home today.