



Presentation

Use *should have* and *could have* to comment on past situations.

The dog	should	have	stayed	with its owner.
It	could	have	got	killed.

should have

Use *should (not) have* + past participle to:

- criticize other people's past actions: *They shouldn't have let the dog go.*
- say something was the right thing to do, but you didn't do it: *I should have stopped the dog running across the road.*
- say when something was wrong but we did it anyway: *I shouldn't have brought the dog with me (but I did).*

could have

Use *could (not) have* + past participle to say:

- when something was possible but didn't happen: *The dog could have got killed.*
- when something was impossible and it didn't happen:
We couldn't have stopped the accident because we weren't there.
- when something was possible but we aren't sure if it happened: *The dog could have run away.*

Exercises

1 Complete the sentences with *could have* or *should have*.

- 1 That was a silly thing to do. You been more careful.
- 2 If she'd entered the race, she won it.
- 3 In my opinion, you remained silent and not got involved in the argument.
- 4 I'm not sure where Peter is. He gone out with friends but he didn't say anything.
- 5 He stopped the car when the lights turned red. Why didn't he?
- 6 That was irresponsible. Someone got hurt.
- 7 Sue become a lawyer but she decided to be a doctor. I think it was the right choice.
- 8 Have you come on your own? You brought the whole family with you. We have enough food and it would have been nice to see everyone.

2 Complete the sentences using the verbs in brackets.

- 1 You should have told (should / tell) me you were coming!
- 2 Never play with matches again! You (could / burn) yourself!
- 3 I (should / stay) late to help everyone but I was tired.
- 4 They (couldn't / buy) anything because the shops are all closed today.
- 5 The children (shouldn't / go) near the motorway. I've told them not to so many times.
- 6 I don't know where I left my keys. I (could / leave) them at work I suppose.
- 7 She (should / apply) for the job. I'm sure she would have got it.

3 Complete the three conversations with *could have*, *couldn't have*, *should have* or *shouldn't have* and the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 A: You missed a really good concert last night. You (go).
B: But I was there!
A: You (be) there. If you'd been there I would have seen you.
- 2 A: You (close) the front door behind you. The dogs have run off.
B: But the door was already open when I came home.
A: Maybe you're right. I came home carrying some heavy shopping so I (forget) to close it then, I suppose.
- 3 A: I've got you a present. Here you are.
B: Oh, you (buy) me anything. You really didn't need to.
A: It's to say thank you for all your help. I (finish) all this work without you.