

Beginner

The Use of May and Might

RULES AND EXAMPLES

1. We use may or might to say that something is a possibility. Usually you can use may or might, so you can say:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1. It may be true. | or | It might be true. |
| 2. She might know. | or | She may know. |

The negative forms are may not and might not (or mightn't):

1. It may not be true. (= perhaps it isn't true)
2. She might not work here anymore. (= perhaps she doesn't work here)

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Examples.

1. A: I wonder why Kate didn't answer the phone.
B: She may have been sleep. (= perhaps she was asleep)
2. A: I can't find my bag anywhere.
B: You might have left it in the shop. (= perhaps you left it in the shop)
3. A: I was surprised that Kate wasn't at the meeting yesterday.
B: She might not have known about it. (= perhaps she didn't know)
4. A: I wonder why David was in such a bad mood yesterday.
B: He may not have been feeling well. (= perhaps he wasn't feeling well)

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Study the structure:

I /you/he (etc.)	may	(not) have	been (asleep / at home etc.)
	Might		been (doing / working / feeling etc.)
			known / had / wanted / left etc.

3. Could is similar to may and might:

Example:

1. It's a strange story, but it could be true. (= it may/might be true)
2. You could have left your bag in the shop. (= you may/might have left it)

But couldn't (negative) is different from may not and might not. Compare:

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Example: Perhaps Helen is in her office.

Answer : Helen / She might be in her office.

Start here:

1. Perhaps Helen is busy.
2. Perhaps she is working.
3. Perhaps she wants to be alone.
4. Perhaps she was ill yesterday.
5. Perhaps she went home early.
6. Perhaps she had to go home early.
7. Perhaps she was working yesterday.