CAPITOLO

6

Solving Mysteries

A clue is just a fact that is waiting for the right question.

OBIETTIVI

1. I can talk about crime and mystery stories, describe people and objects from clues and use phrasal verbs with *out*.
2. I can use *must, might, may, could* and *can't* to make deductions about the present.
3. I can make deductions about the past with *must have, might have* and *can't have* + past participle.
4. I can describe a photo, speculate about it and say how sure I am.
5. I can write an article for a school magazine.
6. I can talk about Sherlock Holmes and detective fiction, and compare it with the Italian *giallo*.

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A trophy disappears from a locked room. A stranger looks at you and tells you where you have been. A muddy football lies on an office floor. Mysteries are everywhere, and solving them is a matter of language as much as of logic: we look at the clues and say what *must* be true, what *might* be true and what *can't* be true. In this unit Sam and Callum investigate a missing medal at Hillside, Giulia practises describing photos for her B1 exam, and you meet the most famous detective in English literature, Sherlock Holmes.

To reason from clues, English uses the **modals of deduction**: *It **must be** a Year 7 ball. Ryan **can't be** the thief. Mr Evans **might have** a key.* For conclusions about the past you add *have* + past participle: *Somebody **must have kicked** it.*

6.1 Vocabulary: Crime and Mystery

6.1.1 Crime and detective words

Tabella 6.1 collects the words you need to read and tell a mystery story. Watch the pronunciation: *clue* /kluː/, *evidence* /ˈevɪdəns/, *burglar* /ˈbɜːglə/. *Suspect* changes its stress: the noun is /ˈsʌspekt/ (stress on the first syllable), the verb is /səˈspekt/ (stress on the second): *The police **suspect** the **suspect**.*

Tabella 6.1 Crime and detective words

Word	Meaning	Example
detective	a person, often a police officer, whose job is to solve crimes	*The detective asked everyone where they had been.*
clue	a sign or an object that helps you to solve a mystery	*The muddy football was the most important clue.*
evidence	facts or objects that show that something is true (uncountable)	*There is no evidence against Ryan.*
witness	a person who saw a crime or an accident	*A witness saw a man running away.*
suspect	a person who may have committed a crime; (verb) to think that something is probably true	*The police have three suspects.*
alibi	proof that you were somewhere else when a crime happened	*Ryan has an alibi: he was at home.*
solve	find the answer to a problem or a mystery	*Holmes always solves the case.*

investigate	try to find out the truth about a crime or a problem	*The police are investigating the theft.*
steal (*stole, stolen*)	take something that is not yours	*Somebody has stolen my bike!*
burglar	a person who gets into a building to steal things	*The burglar came in through the kitchen window.*

Evidence is uncountable: ✓ *a piece of evidence, some evidence*, ✗ *an evidence*, ✗ *evidences*. Other useful words are the **crime scene** (the place where a crime happened), a **theft** (a crime where something is stolen) and the **thief** (pl. *thieves*), the person who steals. A **robber** steals from a bank or a shop, often with violence; a burglar gets into houses and other buildings.

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> *steal* e *rob* traducono entrambi "rubare", ma l'oggetto è diverso. Si **ruba una cosa**: *steal something (from somebody)*. Si **deruba una persona o un luogo**: *rob somebody / a bank*.
>
> ✗ *They robbed my phone.* → ✓ *They **stole** my phone.* · ✗ *A man stole the bank.* → ✓ *A man **robbed** the bank.* · ✓ *I was robbed on the bus.* (= mi hanno derubato)

6.1.2 Word formation: phrasal verbs with *out*

Many verbs about solving problems end in *out*. Here *out* gives the idea of bringing something into the light, or of removing it: you *find out* a fact, you *work out* an answer, you *rule out* a suspect. Tabella 6.2 shows the most useful ones; you will study how phrasal verbs work, and where the object goes, in Unit 12.

Tabella 6.2 Phrasal verbs with *out*

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Example
find out	discover a fact or a piece of information	*We soon found out who had come to the office.*
work out	understand something or solve it by thinking	*Callum worked out where the medal was.*
figure out (AmE, informal)	the same as *work out*	*I can't figure out this puzzle.*
rule out	decide that something is not possible, or that somebody is not guilty	*The locked door rules out Ryan.*
point out	tell somebody a fact they had not noticed	*Sam pointed out that the programmes were still on the floor.*

turn out	become known in the end (often *it turned out that…*)	*It turned out that nobody had stolen the medal.*

6.1.3 Describing from clues

Detectives describe people and objects very precisely, because every detail can be a clue. To describe an **object**, say what it is made of, its shape, size and colour, and what condition it is in: *a small, round, silver medal on a red ribbon*; *a muddy football*; *a torn ticket*; *a scratched phone*; *a wet umbrella*. To describe a **person** from clues, use appearance and clothes, and then say what they suggest: *He's got a sun tan and a stiff arm — he must have been abroad, and he might have hurt himself.*

Three verbs help you to say what something seems to be. *look* + adjective: *She **looks** tired. look like* + noun: *It **looks like** a coin. seem* + adjective or *to* + base form: *He **seems** nervous. He **seems to** know something. ✗ It looks a coin* is wrong in most English: use *looks like* before a noun.

6.2 Reading: The Missing Medal

Before you read. Look at the title and at the plan in Figura 6.1. What do you think has happened? Who could be the suspects? Read the story, stop at the star (★) and try to solve the mystery before Callum does. (*testo della redazione*)

The Missing Medal

At Hillside everybody knows the Founders' Medal. It is made of silver, it is more than seventy years old, and every November it is presented at the Sports Awards evening to the student with the best team spirit. For the rest of the year it sits on a red cushion in the trophy cabinet in the corridor outside the sports hall.

On the afternoon of the Sports Awards evening, at four o'clock, Mr Doyle, the PE teacher, took the medal out of the cabinet. He wanted to polish it before the ceremony. He put it on his desk in the PE office and opened the window a little, because the radiator was far too hot. Then he locked the office door, as he always does, and went to a meeting in the main building. Outside, on the playing field, the Year 7s were having football practice with their coach.

When he came back at half past four, the medal had disappeared.

"Somebody must have stolen it!" he told Sam and Callum, who were waiting in the corridor for basketball practice. "And it must be somebody who knew it was here."

Callum, who has read every Sherlock Holmes story at least twice, opened the notes on his phone. "Who came to the office while you were out, sir?"

They soon found out. Mr Evans, the school secretary, had brought two hundred programmes for the evening at ten past four. Ryan, a Year 9 student, had come at quarter past to look for his trainers in the lost property box. Both of them had found the door locked. Ryan had knocked, waited and gone home without his trainers.

"Ryan can't have taken it," said Sam. "He hasn't got a key."

"But Mr Evans might have one," said Callum. "He has keys to every room in the school."

"Look at the programmes, though." Sam pointed at a big pile of paper on the floor next to the door. "They're still in the corridor. He can't have gone in. Nobody leaves two hundred programmes on the floor when there's a big desk inside."

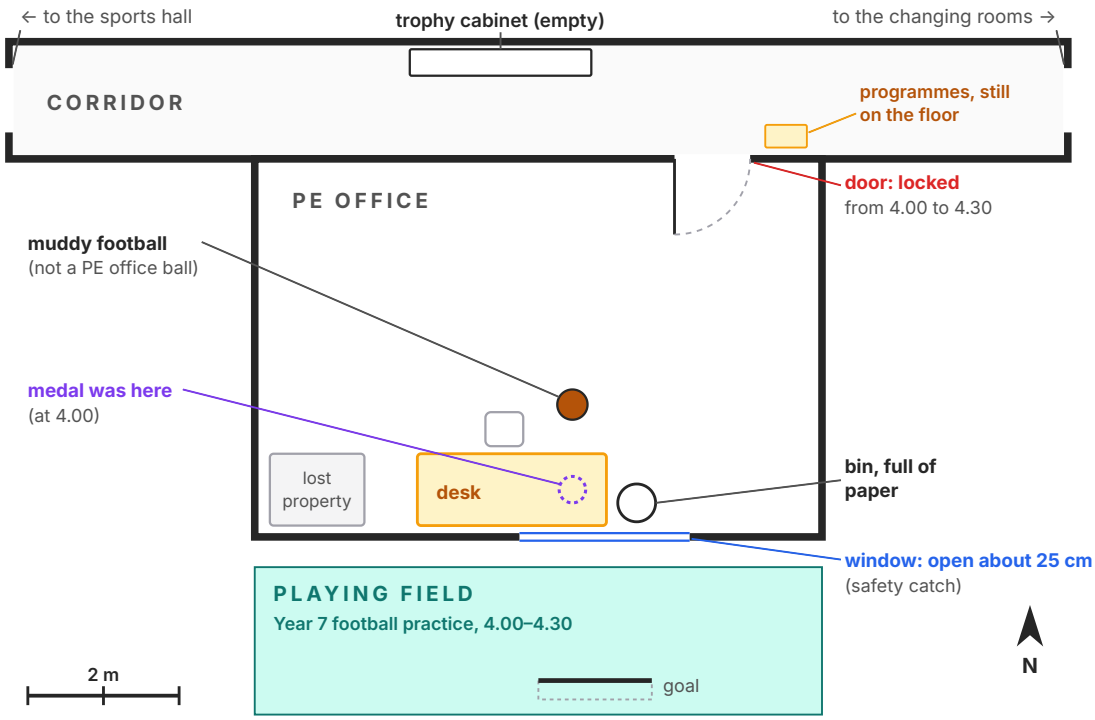


Figura 6.1 The "crime scene": a plan of the PE office and the corridor at 4.30, when Mr Doyle came back. The door was locked from 4.00 to 4.30; the window opens only about 25 cm.

Mr Doyle nodded. "And I've got the only key to this door. What about the window?"

Callum examined it. The window had a safety catch, and it opened only about twenty-five centimetres. "Nobody could climb through that gap, sir. Not even a small Year 7. So no person came in through the door, and no person came in through the window."

"Then it must have disappeared by magic," said Sam.

Callum wasn't listening. He was looking at the floor in front of the desk, where a football lay in a small pool of mud. There was mud on Mr Doyle's papers too, and his pen pot had fallen over.

"Is this your ball, sir?"

"No. All our balls are in the store room."

"Then it must be one of the Year 7s' balls. It must have flown in through the window — the gap is just wide enough for a football. And it must have knocked the medal off the desk."

They searched the floor under the desk, behind the chair and next to the radiator. Nothing.

"So where is it?" asked Sam. "It can't have flown back out of the window."

★ *Stop here and look at the plan in Figura 6.1. Where is the medal? Then read the end.*

Callum smiled. "Sherlock Holmes says that when you have ruled out the impossible, whatever remains must be the truth." He walked to the bin next to the desk, right under the window, and lifted out a pile of paper. At the bottom, on its red ribbon, lay the Founders' Medal.

"You might be a genius," said Sam.

"Or I might just read too many detective stories," said Callum.

That evening, before he presented the medal, Mr Doyle told the whole story — and his office window stayed firmly closed.

Language in context

Notice how the characters reason with modals. About the **present**: *it must be somebody who knew; it must be one of the Year 7s' balls; Mr Evans might have one* (a key). About the **past**: *somebody must have stolen it; Ryan can't have taken it; it must have flown in through the window; it can't have flown back out*. The narrative tenses of Unit 2 tell the story (*When he came back, the medal had disappeared*), and the phrasal verbs *find out* and *rule out* appear at key moments.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Work out new words from the context. When you meet an unknown word, don't stop reading at once. Be a detective and look for clues:

1. **What kind of word is it?** *He wanted to **polish** it*: after *to*, it must be a verb.
2. **What do the words around it say?** He wanted to polish the medal *before the ceremony*: it must mean something like "make it clean and shiny".
3. **Does it look like an Italian word?** *Ceremony* = *cerimonia*. But watch out for false friends: a *programme* for an evening is a printed list of the events, not only a *programma* on TV.
4. **Is it important?** If you can understand the sentence without it, read on and check it later in a dictionary.

Try it: what do you think *safety catch* and *pen pot* mean in the story? Which clues helped you?

6.3 Grammar: Modals of Deduction

When we make a **deduction**, we reach a conclusion from evidence. In English we show how sure we are with a modal verb. You already know *might* and *may* for possibility (*English 1*, Unit 12) and *must* for obligation (*English 1*, Unit 11). In this unit the same verbs have a new job: they say how certain a conclusion is.

6.3.1 Deduction about the present

The form is **modal + base form**, with no *to*, and it is the same for all persons. Figura 6.2 shows the modals on a certainty scale.

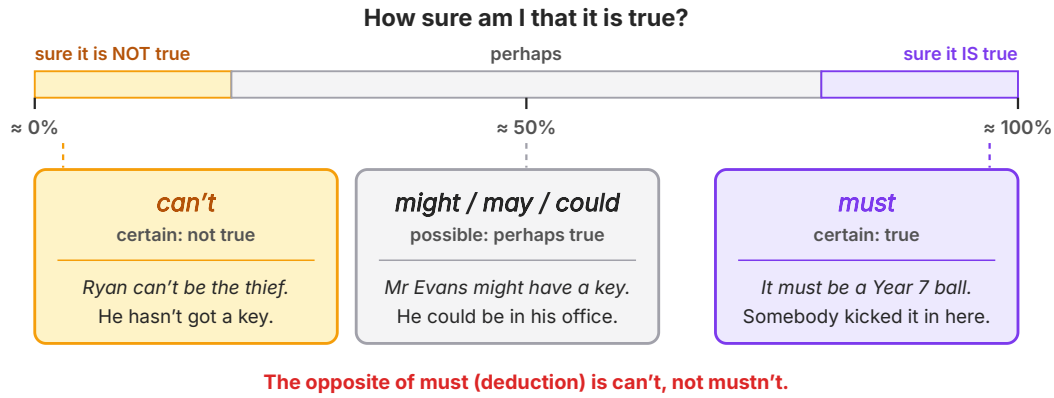


Figura 6.2 The modals of deduction on a certainty scale. *must*: I'm sure it is true; *might, may, could*: perhaps it is true; *can't*: I'm sure it isn't true.

Tabella 6.3 Modals of deduction: the present

Modal	How sure?	Example	Why?
must	I'm sure it's true.	*It **must be** one of the Year 7s' balls.*	It isn't ours, and they're playing outside.
might / may / could	It's possible: perhaps it's true.	*Mr Evans **might** (**may**, **could**) **have** a key.*	He has keys to many rooms.
might not / may not	It's possible that it isn't true.	*He **may not know** about the medal.*	Nobody told him.
can't	I'm sure it isn't true.	*Ryan **can't be** the thief.*	He hasn't got a key.

- **Continuous form.** To talk about an action in progress now, use **modal + *be* + *-ing***: *The phone is off. She **must be sleeping**. They **might be playing** football. He **can't be working** — it's Sunday.*
- ***could* in questions.** In questions we use *could* (or *can*), not *may* or *must*: ***Could** it be Mr Evans? Who **can** it be at this time of night?*
- ***couldn't = can't.*** *It **couldn't** be Ryan* means the same as *It can't be Ryan*. Be careful: *couldn't* is a strong negative, not the opposite of *could* "perhaps". For "perhaps not", use *might not* or *may not*.
- **Without a modal.** If you are completely sure, you don't need a modal: *The medal **is** in the bin.* The modal shows that you are deducing, not seeing.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Modals of deduction (verbi modali di deduzione) al presente. Modale + forma base: *must* = *deve* (sicuramente); *might / may / could* = *potrebbe*, *forse*; *can't* = *non può* (sicuramente no). *He must be at home* = Deve essere a casa / Sarà sicuramente a casa. *He can't be at home* = Non può essere a casa.

Confronto con l'italiano. In italiano *dovere* e *potere* hanno gli stessi due significati che hanno in inglese (obbligo e deduzione); spesso, per una deduzione, si usa anche il futuro: *Sarà stanco* = *He must be tired*. Ma la negazione è diversa: *non deve essere* in italiano può essere una deduzione, mentre in inglese *mustn't* esprime solo un divieto. La deduzione negativa è sempre *can't*.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *He mustn't be at home: the lights are off.* → ✓ *He* ***can't*** *be at home.* (*mustn't* = divieto: *You mustn't touch the cabinet.*)

✗ *She must to be tired.* → ✓ *She must* ***be*** *tired.* (dopo un modale, forma base senza *to*)

✗ *May it be a coin?* → ✓ ***Could*** *it be a coin?* (nelle domande di deduzione si usa *could*)

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

From clues to a deduction. Clue: *Marta isn't answering her phone, and it's 7.15 in the morning.*

1. **What do I know?** She usually answers at once. It is very early.
2. **How sure am I?** Not completely: there are other possibilities. → *might / may / could*.
3. **Is the action in progress now?** Yes, so I use the continuous form: *She* ***might be sleeping***.
4. **Can I rule anything out?** She posted a photo of her breakfast two minutes ago. → *She* ***can't be*** *asleep. She* ***must be having*** *breakfast.*

6.3.2 Deduction about the past

To make a deduction about something that happened **before now**, use **modal + *have* + past participle**. The evidence is in the present, but the conclusion is about the past, as Figura 6.3 shows. This is an introduction: you will meet *should have* in Unit 11.

Tabella 6.4 Modals of deduction: the past (modal + *have* + past participle)

Modal	How sure?	Example
must have + past participle	I'm sure it happened.	*The ball* ***must have come*** *in through the window.*

might / may / could have + past participle	Perhaps it happened.	*Someone **might have kicked** it by mistake.*
might not / may not have + past participle	Perhaps it didn't happen.	*The coach **may not have seen** it.*
can't / couldn't have + past participle	I'm sure it didn't happen.	*Ryan **can't have taken** it. He hasn't got a key.*

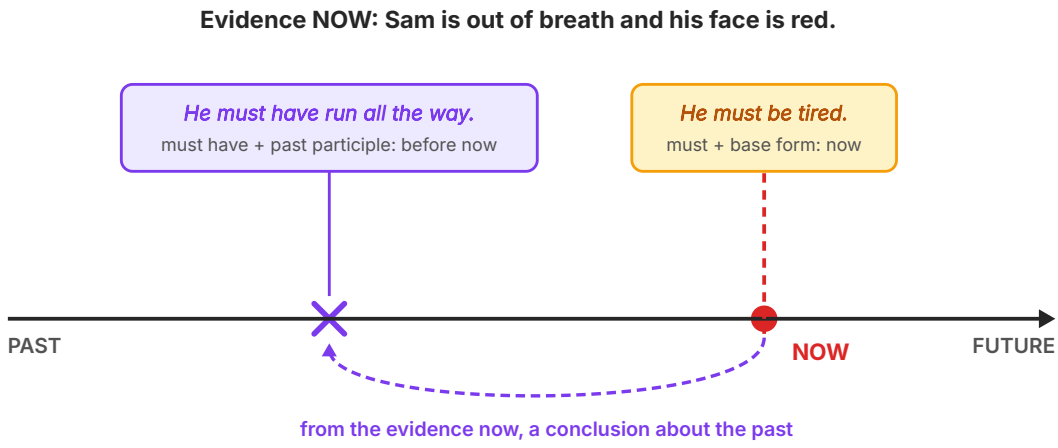


Figura 6.3 From evidence in the present (red dot) we can draw a conclusion about now (amber: *must* + base form) or about an earlier action (violet: *must have* + past participle).

have never changes: ✓ *She must have left*, ✗ *She must has left*. Remember the past participles of irregular verbs (see the appendix, Tabella A.1): *must have **gone**, might have **forgotten**, can't have **seen**.*

DA RICORDARE

In speech *have* is weak: *must have* sounds like /ˈmʌstəv/, *might have* like /ˈmaɪtəv/, *can't have* like /ˈkɑːntəv/. In informal writing you can see *must've, might've*. Because of this sound, even native speakers sometimes write ✗ *must of* — but the word is always *have*.

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Deduzioni sul passato. Modale + *have* + participio passato. *She must have left* = Deve essere uscita / Sarà uscita. *She might have left* = Potrebbe essere uscita / Forse è uscita. *She can't have left* = Non può essere uscita.

Confronto con l'italiano. In italiano il tempo passato va sull'infinito (*dev'essere* ***uscita***) o sul futuro anteriore (*sarà uscita*); in inglese il modale non cambia e il passato è dato da *have* + participio. Attenzione: *must have done* è **solo** deduzione; l'obbligo nel passato si esprime con *had to* (*English 1*, Unit 11).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *Yesterday I must have studied for the test, so I didn't go out.* → ✓ *Yesterday I* ***had to*** *study…* (obbligo nel passato: *had to*; *must have studied* vuol dire "devo aver studiato", una deduzione)

✗ *He must have went home.* → ✓ *He must have* ***gone*** *home.* (participio passato, non past simple)

✗ *She mustn't have heard the bell.* → ✓ *She* ***can't have*** *heard the bell.*

6.4 Listening and Speaking: Speculating about a Photo

When you **speculate**, you make guesses about something you cannot know for sure — for example, about the people in a photo. In many B1 speaking tests you have to describe a photo for about a minute and say what you think is happening.

Listening 1. On a Link video call, Sam plays a game with Giulia and Marta: he shows close-up photos of things in his house, and they guess what they are. Listen to your classmates reading the script (books closed): what is in the two photos?

Tabella 6.5 Listening script — What's in the photo?

Sam	OK, photo number one. It's something in our bathroom. Any ideas?
Marta	It's round and silver, with lots of little holes. It might be a speaker.
Giulia	In a bathroom? It can't be a speaker. It looks like part of the shower.
Marta	Oh, of course! It must be the shower head.
Sam	Correct! One point to Marta. Photo number two. This one's harder.
Giulia	Hmm. It's brown and soft… It could be a hat. Or a cushion?
Marta	A cushion with a nose? Look, there's a pink nose in the corner. It must be an animal.
Giulia	A dog? No, wait — you haven't got a dog. It must be Biscuit!

Sam	Yes! Lily's rabbit. And look at the floor next to him.
Marta	There are little pieces of paper everywhere. Sam, what's that paper?
Sam	That was my maths homework.
Giulia	No way! He must have eaten it. Poor Sam!
Sam	Poor Sam? Poor Biscuit! He can't have enjoyed it — it was all algebra.
Marta	Your teacher might not believe you, though. "The rabbit ate my homework" sounds like an old excuse.
Sam	That's why I took the photo. Evidence!
Giulia	Very clever, detective. Now hide the rest of your homework!

Listening 2. Giulia is preparing for her B1 exam. Prof.ssa Rossi gives her a photo and asks her to describe it for one minute. Listen (books closed): where are the people, and what does Giulia think is happening?

Tabella 6.6 Listening script — Describe the photo

Prof.ssa Rossi	Here's your photo, Giulia. Please tell me what you can see. You have about one minute.
Giulia	OK. In this photo I can see a railway station. It looks like a big station in a city, because there are a lot of platforms. In the foreground there's a young man. He's standing next to a suitcase and he's holding some flowers. He keeps looking at his watch, so he must be waiting for somebody. It might be his girlfriend, or maybe his mother — I can't be sure.
Giulia	In the background there's a board with the train times. Next to one of the trains it says "delayed", so the train he's waiting for must be late. On the left there are some people sitting on a bench. They look tired and a bit bored. They might be waiting for the same train.
Giulia	Everyone is wearing a coat and a scarf, so it can't be summer. It must be winter, or maybe late autumn. And the man's hair is wet, so it must have been raining outside.
Prof.ssa Rossi	Very good, Giulia. You used *must*, *might* and *can't*, and you gave reasons. Next time, try to say how the people feel at the start, too.

Useful language. Tabella 6.7 collects the phrases you need to describe a photo and to say how sure you are.

Tabella 6.7 Useful language — speculating about a photo

Function	Phrases
saying where things are	*In the* **foreground** *… · In the* **background** *… · On the left / right … · In the middle …*
saying what you see	*In this photo I can see… · There's / There are… · He's wearing… · She's holding…*
saying how things look	*It looks like + noun… · They look + adjective… · He seems to be…*
expressing certainty	*It must be… · He must have… · I'm sure (that)… · It's definitely…*
expressing possibility	*It might / may / could be… · Maybe / Perhaps… · It's probably…*
expressing doubt	*It can't be… · I'm not sure, but… · I doubt (that)… · It's hard to say.*
giving a reason	*…, so it must be… · …, because… · I think so because…*

Speaking tasks

1. **Describe a photo.** Find a photo with people in a newspaper, a magazine or on the internet, and bring it to class. In pairs, describe your photo for one minute. Say where the people are, what they are doing and how they feel, and give a reason for every guess. Your partner listens and counts the modals you use.
2. **Who owns this bag?** Your teacher found a bag on the bus with these things inside: a return ticket to Edinburgh, a chess magazine, a broken umbrella, a birthday card in Italian and a bar of chocolate with one piece missing. In groups, make deductions about the owner: *He / She must…, might…, can't…, must have…*
3. **Mystery object.** Think of an object in your house. Describe it to your partner with three clues (material, shape, what it is used for), one clue at a time. Your partner speculates after each clue: *It might be… It can't be…*

6.5 Writing: An Article for a School Magazine

An **article** for a magazine is written to interest and entertain readers, not only to inform them. After the story of the medal, *Hillside Voice* asked Callum to write an article for the next issue. Here it is.

Tabella 6.8 Model text — an article for a school magazine

Could YOU Be a Detective?
Have you ever watched a detective series and solved the mystery before the end? Then you might have the brain of a detective! But are you ready for the real thing? Try this test.

Imagine you walk into a classroom at lunchtime. The window is open, there are small wet prints on the desk and the teacher's sandwich has disappeared. What happened? A good detective doesn't guess. First, look at the clues: the prints are tiny and have three toes, so the thief can't be a student. Then ask questions: what could get in through a window? What loves sandwiches? (The answer is at the bottom of the page.)

Real detectives need three things. Firstly, sharp eyes: they notice details that other people miss, like mud on a shoe or a ticket in a pocket. Secondly, patience: they rule out the impossible explanations one by one. Finally, an open mind, because the answer might surprise them.

So next time something goes missing at home, don't panic. Grab a notebook, look for clues and work it out. Who knows? You might be the next Sherlock Holmes.

Answer: a seagull. In Bristol, they're everywhere!

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Analyse the model.

1. **Title**: short and catchy, a question that speaks directly to the reader (*Could YOU…?*).
2. **Opening**: questions to the reader (*Have you ever…?*) to catch their attention at once.
3. **Body**: an example the reader can imagine (the missing sandwich) and three pieces of advice, with linkers (*Firstly, Secondly, Finally*).
4. **Ending**: advice and a final thought that goes back to the title (*You might be the next Sherlock Holmes*).
5. **Register**: friendly and lively — *you*, contractions (*doesn't, can't*), imperatives (*Try this test*), exclamation marks; but no slang.
6. **Language of the unit**: modals of deduction (*might have, can't be, could get in*) and *rule out, work out*.

Checklist. Before you hand in an article, check that: (1) the title is short and makes people want to read; (2) the first paragraph speaks to the reader, for example with a question; (3) each paragraph has one main idea and an example; (4) the ending gives a final thought or a piece of advice; (5) the register is friendly but correct; (6) you are within the word limit.

Your task. Write an article (140–180 words) for your school magazine with one of these titles: *The Strangest Day at Our School* · *Why We Love Mystery Stories* · *How to Find Anything You Have Lost*. Use at least three modals of deduction.

6.6 Culture: Sherlock Holmes and Detective Fiction

Sherlock Holmes is probably the most famous detective in the world. He has appeared in hundreds of films, plays and TV series, and many people know his name without having read a single story. His creator, Arthur Conan Doyle, was not a full-time writer at first: he was a doctor. Figura 6.4 shows his life and the most famous Holmes stories.

6.6.1 A doctor from Edinburgh

Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh in 1859, and from 1876 to 1881 he studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh. One of his teachers there was the surgeon **Joseph Bell**. Bell taught his students that careful observation is the key to a correct diagnosis, and he liked to show them how much he could tell about a stranger — a patient's job, or where he had been — just by looking at him. Years later, Conan Doyle gave the same gift to his detective. In a letter to Bell in 1892, he wrote that it was to Bell that he owed Sherlock Holmes.

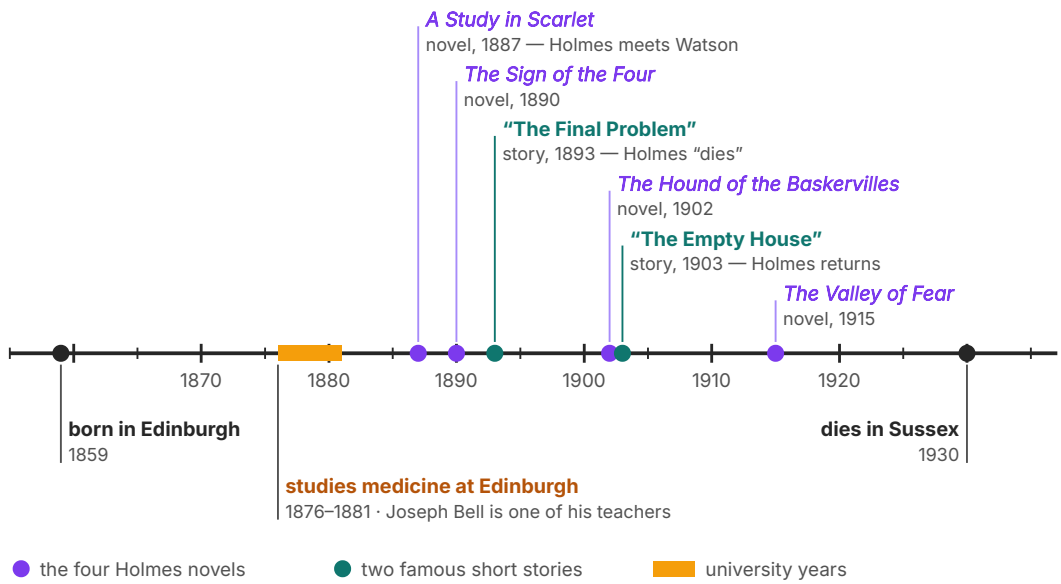


Figura 6.4 Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) and the Sherlock Holmes stories, on a proportional time axis: the four novels (violet) and two famous short stories (teal).

6.6.2 221B Baker Street

Holmes first appeared in the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887. In it he meets **Dr John Watson**, an army doctor who has just come back from Afghanistan, and the two men share rooms at **221B Baker Street**, London. Watson tells most of the stories. When they were written, the numbers in Baker Street did not go as high as 221, so the address was imaginary. Conan Doyle wrote four novels and fifty-six short stories about Holmes.

By 1893 Conan Doyle was tired of his detective and wanted to write other books. So in the short story "The Final Problem" Holmes falls into the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, during

a fight with his great enemy, Professor Moriarty. But readers wanted their detective back, and in 1903, in "The Adventure of the Empty House", Holmes returned: he had not died at all.

6.6.3 Literature: Sherlock Holmes

In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes shakes hands with Watson for the first time and says:

"You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive." — *Arthur Conan Doyle,* A Study in Scarlet*, Part I, chapter 1*

How did he know? (*testo della redazione*) Watson is amazed, and later Holmes explains his reasoning. Watson looks like a doctor, but he stands like a soldier: so he must be an army doctor. His face is dark, but his wrists are pale: so he must have come back from a hot country. His face is thin and tired: he must have been ill. He holds his left arm in a stiff way: he must have been wounded. Where could an English army doctor have suffered all this? Only in Afghanistan, where the British army was fighting at that time. The whole chain of thoughts took Holmes less than a second.

In *The Sign of the Four* (1890), Holmes explains the rule that guides all his work:

"How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth?" — *Arthur Conan Doyle,* The Sign of the Four*, chapter 6*

To perceive (formal) means to notice or understand. *To eliminate* means to remove, or to rule out; *improbable* means unlikely. The italics are in the original text: Holmes stresses *however improbable*.

1. Holmes's first sentence to Watson uses the present perfect (*You have been*). Why is this tense correct here? (*English 1*, Unit 13)
2. Find the modal in the second quotation. Is it about obligation or deduction? Why does Holmes choose it, and not *might*?
3. Rewrite Holmes's reasoning about Watson with *must have* and *can't have*, in your own words.
4. Callum quotes Holmes in "The Missing Medal". Which part of the story shows Holmes's rule in action?

APPROFONDIMENTO

Elementary, my dear Watson? It is the most famous line of Sherlock Holmes — and he never says it in any of Conan Doyle's sixty stories. Holmes sometimes calls a deduction "elementary", and he often says "my dear Watson", but never the two together in that form. The famous phrase was made popular later, by other writers, by actors on stage and in films.

COLLEGAMENTI

Science: fingerprints. The skin on our fingertips has patterns of tiny ridges — loops, whorls and arches — which form before we are born and stay the same all our lives. No two people have ever been found with the same fingerprints: even identical twins, who have the same DNA, have different ones. In 1901 London's Metropolitan Police (Scotland Yard) set up a Fingerprint Bureau, and fingerprints soon became one of the most important kinds of evidence in British courts.

Maths and logic: deduction and induction. In a **deduction**, if the starting facts (the premises) are true, the conclusion must be true: *The door was locked. Only Mr Doyle had the key. So nobody else came in through the door.* A proof in geometry is a deduction. In an **induction**, we look at many cases and reach a general rule that is only probable: *Every swan I have seen is white, so all swans are white* — a rule that fails in Australia, where black swans live. Holmes calls his method "the science of deduction", but many of his conclusions are really the most probable explanation of the clues. That is why, in everyday English, *must* often means "I'm almost sure", not "it's 100% certain".

Compare with Italy

Holmes was not the first fictional detective. In 1841 the American writer Edgar Allan Poe published "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", often called the first modern detective story, with the detective Auguste Dupin — and in *A Study in Scarlet* Watson himself compares Holmes to Dupin. After Holmes came many others, like Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple; Christie (1890–1976) is one of the best-selling writers of all time.

In Italian, a detective story is called a *giallo*. The name comes from the yellow covers of *I Libri Gialli*, a series of detective novels that the publisher Mondadori started in 1929; the series was so successful that "yellow" became the name of the whole genre. English has no colour for it: a giallo is a **detective story**, a **crime novel** or, informally, a **whodunit** (from *Who done it?*, a non-standard form of *Who did it?*).

Discuss. Which detectives do you know from Italian books, films or TV series? Are they like Holmes, or different? Why do you think detective stories are so popular all over the world?

SINTESI

- Crime words: *detective, clue, evidence* (uncountable), *witness, suspect* (noun /ˈsʌspekt/, verb /səˈspekt/), *alibi, solve, investigate, burglar, thief*.
- *steal* something; *rob* a person or a place.
- Describing from clues: *look* + adjective, *look like* + noun, *seem* + adjective / *to* + base form.
- Phrasal verbs with *out*: *find out, work out, figure out* (AmE), *rule out, point out, turn out*.
- Deduction about the present: *must* (sure it's true), *might / may / could* (perhaps), *can't* (sure it isn't true) + base form: *Ryan can't be the thief.*
- Continuous form for actions in progress: *She must be sleeping.* In questions: *Could it be…?*
- The negative of deduction *must* is *can't*, never *mustn't*.
- Deduction about the past: modal + *have* + past participle: *It must have come in through the window. He can't have taken it.*
- *must have done* = deduction; past obligation = *had to*.
- To describe a photo: say where things are (*in the foreground / background, on the left*), speculate and give reasons.
- An article for a magazine: a catchy title, questions to the reader, examples, a friendly register and a final thought.
- Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930), an Edinburgh doctor inspired by Joseph Bell, created Sherlock Holmes in *A Study in Scarlet* (1887); in Italian a detective story is a *giallo*, from Mondadori's yellow covers (1929).

ESERCIZI

Vocabulary

1. ● Match the words (1–6) with the definitions (a–f). 1 witness · 2 clue · 3 alibi · 4 burglar · 5 suspect · 6 evidence — a a person who gets into a building to steal things · b proof that you were somewhere else · c a person who saw a crime · d facts or objects that show that something is true · e a sign that helps you to solve a mystery · f a person who may have committed a crime

2. ● The police found the thief's fingerprints on the window, so now they have some _____ against him.

   A. clues
   B. evidence
   C. evidences
   D. witness

3. ● Two men _____ the bank in the high street yesterday.

   A. robbed
   B. stole
   C. took
   D. stolen

4. ● Complete with *steal* or *rob* in the correct form. a Somebody has _____ my bike! b He was _____ on his way home. c The thieves _____ a famous painting from the museum. d They planned to _____ a train.

5. ●● Complete with *find out, work out, figure out, rule out, point out* or *turn out* in the correct form. Use each one once. a Can you help me? I can't _____ the answer to this puzzle. (AmE) b We'll never _____ who sent the message. c Ryan was at home, so the police _____ him _____. d It _____ that the medal was in the bin. e Sam _____ that the programmes were still on the floor. f It took Callum ten minutes to _____ where the medal was.

6. ●● Complete with *look, look like* or *seem* in the correct form. a That cloud _____ a dragon! b You _____ tired. Did you sleep badly? c He _____ to know the answer, but he isn't sure. d This medal _____ very old. e Those footprints _____ a cat's.

7. ●● Odd one out. Which word does not belong? Say why. a detective · witness · suspect · evidence · b steal · rob · investigate · burgle · c find out · work out · figure out · take out · d clue · fingerprint · alibi · trophy

Grammar

8. ● Complete with *must*, *might* or *can't*. a Callum has read every Holmes story twice. He _____ love detective stories. b Ryan _____ be the thief: he hasn't got a key. c I'm not sure where Marta is. She _____ be at the library. d Lily is only four. She _____ be in Year 11! e The lights are on, so somebody _____ be at home. f Take an umbrella. It _____ rain later.

9. ● Sam's phone is switched off. He _____ be at football practice.

   A. must to
   B. mustn't
   C. might
   D. can't to

10. ● That _____ be Aoife's handwriting. She always writes in green ink, and this is in black.

A. must
B. can't
C. mustn't
D. might not to

11. ● "Who's at the door?" "I don't know. _____ it be the postman?"

A. Must
B. May
C. Can't
D. Could

12. ● Giulia passed her B1 exam with top marks! She _____ studied a lot.

A. must have
B. can't have
C. must
D. had to have

13. ●● Complete with the continuous form (modal + *be* + *-ing*). a There's music coming from Josh's room. He _____ (must / listen) to his playlist. b Aoife isn't answering. She _____ (might / have) a lesson. c Marco _____ (can't / study): his books are all here on the table. d Listen to all that noise outside! The Year 7s _____ (must / play) football.

14. ●● Complete with *must have, might have* or *can't have* and the past participle of the verb in brackets. a The street is wet. It _____ (rain) in the night. b I'm not sure where my keys are. I _____ (leave) them at school. c Sam _____ (eat) the cake: he was in Dublin all weekend. d Biscuit's hutch is open. He _____ (escape) again! e Callum looks very happy. He _____ (pass) his maths test — or maybe he's just got a new bike. f Lily _____ (write) this letter: she can't write yet.

15. ●● Rewrite the sentences with a modal of deduction. Keep the meaning. a I'm sure he's Marta's brother: they look the same. b Perhaps she's in the canteen. c I'm sure it isn't true. d I'm sure they forgot about the meeting. e Perhaps the train left early. f I'm sure Mr Doyle didn't take the medal home.

16. ●● Find the mistakes and correct them. a ✗ He mustn't be at school today: it's Saturday. b ✗ She must to be very tired after the match. c ✗ They must have went home already. d ✗ It can't has been Ryan. e ✗ May it be a coin? f ✗ Yesterday I must have walked to school because the bus didn't come.

17. ●●● Look at each situation and write two deductions: one about now and one about the past. a Your friend is yawning and has dark circles under her eyes. b The kitchen floor is covered in flour and Lily's face is white. c Your neighbour's car isn't outside his house, and his suitcases have gone.

18. ●●● Translate into English. a Non può essere Sam: è a Dublino. b Dev'essere uscita presto, perché la sua bici non c'è. c Forse hanno perso il treno.

Reading and Listening

19. ● Read "The Missing Medal" again. True (T), false (F) or doesn't say (DS)? a The medal is given every November. b Mr Doyle took the medal out of the cabinet because he wanted to polish it. c Mr Evans brought the programmes at quarter past four. d Ryan went into the office to look for his trainers. e The Year 7s had lost a ball. f The medal was under the desk.

20. ●● Answer the questions. a Why did Mr Doyle open the window? b How do Sam and Callum rule out Ryan and Mr Evans? c Why couldn't a person get in through the window? d How did the medal end up in the bin? Use Figura 6.1.

21. ●● Listening 1 (Tabella 6.5). What has happened to Sam's homework?

    A. He has lost it in the bathroom.
    B. Biscuit has eaten it.
    C. Lily has drawn on it.
    D. Giulia has done it for him.

22. ●● Listening 2 (Tabella 6.6). Complete Giulia's deductions and give her reasons. a The man must be waiting for somebody, because… b The train must be late, because… c It can't be summer, because… d It must have been raining, because…

23. ●●● Literature. a In the second Holmes quotation, which words mean "not likely"? b Which modal does Holmes use, and is it about obligation or deduction? c How does Callum change Holmes's sentence in the story?

Writing and Speaking

24. ●● Write five sentences about people or things around you now: two with *must*, one with *might*, one with *can't* and one with *must have*. Give a reason for each one. Example: *My teacher must like music: she has a guitar on her bag.*

25. ●● Write an article (140–180 words) for your school magazine: *Why We Love Mystery Stories*. Use the model, the analysis and the checklist.

26. ●●● Speaking. In pairs, Student A describes a photo of people (from a magazine or the internet) for one minute, without showing it; Student B asks two questions and then draws a quick sketch of the scene. Then swap. Use the phrases in Tabella 6.7.

Towards B1

27. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the correct word (A, B, C or D) for each gap. *Last night someone (1) ___ into the school canteen. The head teacher (2) ___ out about it this morning, when the cook found the back door open. Nothing valuable has been taken, so it (3) ___ have been a professional thief. The police are still (4) ___ , but there is one strange (5) ___ : all the chocolate biscuits have gone. "It (6) ___ have been a very hungry burglar," said the cook.* 1 A stole B broke C robbed D took · 2 A found B worked C ruled D pointed · 3 A mustn't B can't C must D might · 4 A solving B investigating C stealing D witnessing · 5 A evidence B suspect C clue D alibi · 6 A must B can't C had to D mustn't

28. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap. *Where (1) ___ my glasses be? I'm sure I had them this morning, so I must (2) ___ left them somewhere at school. They (3) ___ be in the library — I was there for an hour — or they might be in the gym. They can't (4) ___ in the canteen, because I didn't go there today. I'll ask Mr Evans: someone might (5) ___ taken them to the lost property box. I need to find them (6) ___ the maths test!*

29. ●●● Sentence transformation. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first. Use between two and five words. a I'm sure that Callum is at home. → Callum _____ at home. b Perhaps Giulia forgot about the call. → Giulia _____ about the call. c I'm sure the thief didn't come in through the window. → The thief _____ in through the window. d It's possible that they are watching a film. → They _____ a film. e We discovered who had taken the medal. → We _____ who had taken the medal.

30. ●● Short message. You have lost your school bag. Write a message to your English friend (35–45 words): say where you think you might have left it, where it can't be and why, and ask your friend to help you look for it.

31. ●●● Story. Your English teacher has asked you to write a story (about 100 words) that begins with this sentence: *When I opened the door, I knew at once that something was wrong.*

PER APPROFONDIRE

- SWA
- EGU
- RED
- OAL

Glossario del capitolo

Alibi
alibi — proof that you were somewhere else

Burglar
ladro, scassinatore — a person who gets into a building to steal

Can't (deduction)
non può, sicuramente no — Ryan can't be the thief.

Clue
indizio — The muddy football was an important clue.

Deduction
deduzione — a conclusion reached from evidence

Evidence
prove (sostantivo non numerabile) — facts or objects that show that something is true

Figure out
capire (AmE, informale) — the same as *work out*

Foreground / background
primo piano / sfondo — In the background there's a board.

Investigate
indagare — try to find out the truth about a crime

Must (deduction)
deve, sicuramente — It must be a Year 7 ball.

Must have + past participle
deve aver... — Somebody must have kicked it.

Rule out
escludere — decide that something is not possible

Speculate
fare ipotesi — guess about something you cannot know for sure

Steal / rob
rubare / derubare, rapinare — steal a thing; *rob* a person or a place

Suspect
sospettato; sospettare — noun /ˈsʌspekt/, verb /səˈspekt/

Whodunit
giallo (informale) — a detective story: who did the crime?

Witness
testimone — a person who saw a crime or an accident

Work out
capire, risolvere — understand or solve something by thinking

Soluzioni

1. 1 c · 2 e · 3 b · 4 a · 5 f · 6 d

2. B — *evidence* is uncountable: ✗ *evidences*

3. A — *rob* a place or a person; *steal* a thing

4. a stolen · b robbed · c stole · d rob

5. a figure out · b find out · c ruled … out · d turned out · e pointed out · f work out

6. a looks like · b look · c seems · d looks (or seems) · e look like

7. a *evidence* (not a person) · b *investigate* (not a crime) · c *take out* (not about understanding or discovering) · d *trophy* (not connected with solving a crime)

8. a must · b can't · c might · d can't · e must · f might (a possibility, not a deduction from evidence)

9. C — possibility; after a modal, no *to*

10. B — *can't* = sure it isn't true; never *mustn't*

11. D — in questions of deduction we use *could*

12. A — deduction about the past: *must have* + past participle

13. a must be listening · b might be having · c can't be studying · d must be playing

14. a must have rained · b might have left · c can't have eaten · d must have escaped · e might have passed · f can't have written

15. a He must be Marta's brother. · b She might / may / could be in the canteen. · c It can't be true. · d They must have forgotten about the meeting. · e The train might / may / could have left early. · f Mr Doyle can't (couldn't) have taken the medal home.

16. a He can't be at school · b She must be · c They must have gone · d It can't have been · e Could it be a coin? · f I had to walk to school (past obligation, not deduction)

17. Possible answers: a She must be tired. She can't have slept well. / She might have stayed up late. · b She must be trying to help in the kitchen / She must be in trouble. She must have dropped the bag of flour. · c He can't be at home. He must have gone on holiday / He might have left for the airport.

18. a It can't be Sam: he's in Dublin. · b She must have gone out early, because her bike isn't here (has gone). · c They might / may / could have missed the train.

19. a T · b T · c F (at ten past four; Ryan came at quarter past) · d F (the door was locked) · e DS (we deduce it, but the story doesn't say it) · f F (it was in the bin)

20. a Because the radiator was far too hot. · b Ryan hasn't got a key and found the door locked; Mr Evans left the programmes on the floor in the corridor, so he can't have gone in. · c Because it had a safety catch and opened only about 25 cm. · d A Year 7 must have kicked a ball through the window; the ball knocked the medal off the desk, and it fell into the bin next to the desk, under the window.

21. B — *He must have eaten it.*

22. a he keeps looking at his watch (and he's holding flowers) · b the board says "delayed" next to one of the trains · c everyone is wearing a coat and a scarf · d the man's hair is wet

23. a *however improbable* · b *must*: deduction — when all the other explanations are impossible, the last one is logically certain · c He uses *ruled out* instead of *eliminated*, and he leaves out *however improbable* (and he doesn't quote it exactly: he reports what Holmes says).

24. Model answer: *My desk partner must be hungry: she keeps looking at the clock. Paolo must be cold, because he's wearing his coat. The head teacher might be in a meeting: her door is closed. It can't be eleven o'clock yet — the bell hasn't rung. Somebody must have opened the window: the room is freezing.*

25. Model answer: *Why We Love Mystery Stories — Do you stay up late to finish a detective story? You aren't alone! Mysteries are some of the most popular books and series in the world. But why? Firstly, a mystery is a game. The writer hides clues, and we try to work out the answer before the detective. When we get it right, we feel like geniuses; when we get it wrong, we can't wait to find out what we missed. Secondly, mysteries are exciting. Every chapter ends with a question: who was the stranger? Where can the money be? Finally, in a good mystery story the truth always comes out in the end — something that doesn't always happen in real life. So next time you can't sleep, pick up a giallo. Who knows? You might find out something about yourself, too.* (≈ 150 words) Check: catchy title, questions to the reader, linkers, modals, a final thought.

26. Model (A): *In the foreground there's an old woman sitting on a bench. She's holding a newspaper, but she isn't reading it: she must be waiting for someone. On the left there's a dog; it might be hers. In the background there are some trees without leaves, so it can't be summer.* B: *Is she smiling? Does she look worried?* Check: where things are, speculation with reasons, a range of modals.

27. 1 B broke (*break into*) · 2 A found (*find out*) · 3 B can't · 4 B investigating · 5 C clue (*evidence* is uncountable: ✗ *an evidence*) · 6 A must

28. 1 can (or could) · 2 have · 3 might / may / could · 4 be · 5 have · 6 before

29. a must be · b might / may / could have forgotten · c can't / couldn't have come · d might / may / could be watching · e found out

30. Model answer: *Hi Callum! I can't find my school bag anywhere. I must have left it in the gym after PE, or I might have left it on the bus. It can't be in the classroom — I've already looked there. Can you check the gym for me? Thanks!* (≈ 45 words)

31. Model answer: *When I opened the door, I knew at once that something was wrong. The kitchen window was open, there were feathers on the floor and my sandwich had disappeared from the table. "Someone must have climbed in," I thought. But the window was too small for a person, and the feathers were grey and white. Then I heard a noise on the roof. I looked up and saw a huge seagull, with half of my sandwich in its beak. It must have flown in while I was in the garden. Since then, I always keep that window closed.* (≈ 100 words) Check: narrative tenses, modals of deduction, a clear ending.