

COULD + SIMPLE INFINITIVE

and

COULD + PERFECT INFINITIVE

(I could do *and* I could have done)

 **Look at these examples:**

1. What we have seen **could be** a UFO, but it looks like a plane.
(i.e. There is the weak possibility that what we have seen is a UFO.)
2. One of the prisoners escaped; he **could be** anywhere by now.
(i.e. He may be anywhere by now.)

We use **COULD** + **SIMPLE INFINITIVE** to indicate **what is possible or likely.**

COULD is here similar to **MAY**. But with **COULD** the possibility is smaller.

Now study the following examples:

(Situation: Mr. Brown didn't know there was going to be a sale. He had bought a lot of clothes the week before. When he found out about the sale, he was disappointed and he thought about the things he could have done.)

1. Mr. Brown said to himself, "I **could have waited** another week."
2. Mr. Brown **could have saved** a lot of money.

The past of **COULD (DO)** is **COULD HAVE (DONE)**. We use **COULD HAVE (DONE)** to say that we had the ability or the opportunity to do something but we did **not** do it.

Exercise 24

Complete the following sentences, using COULD followed by the correct form of infinitive:

1. Who knows? A dream (come) true some day.
2. There (be) another rise in prices in Europe soon.
3. He was lucky when he fell off the ladder. He (hurt) himself.
4. The coat Mr. X bought was S.R. 300. He (buy) it on sale for S.R. 240. (But he didn't know there was going to be a sale.)
5. If Mr. Brown had bought the clothes on sale at 30 percent off, he (save) S.R. 120.
6. Why didn't you apply for the job? You (get) it.
7. I (lend) you the money. Why didn't you ask me?
8. The money has disappeared! Who (take) it?
9. This boy is only twelve years old; I suppose he has not learnt five languages. He (not acquire) so many languages at such an age.
10. Most of the students have passed the exam and done very well on it. The exam (not be) difficult.