



GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Should Have in Exam Reflection

Education and School Life | Regret and past criticism | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner. You may already use this grammar without noticing it.

No.	Question
1	What might a student say after revising too late?
2	What should someone have done before an exam?
3	What mistake might a student regret after a speaking test?
4	How can reflection help students prepare better next time?

2. Grammar in context

Read the text. The bold phrases show the grammar used in a natural topic context.

Learning From Exam Mistakes

After the mock exam, I realised that I **should have revised** vocabulary earlier instead of leaving it until the night before.

My friend said she **should have read** the writing task more carefully because she answered only part of the question.

In the speaking test, some students felt they **could have given** fuller answers. Our teacher said we **shouldn't have ignored** the planning advice.

3. Notice the pattern

Use **should have + past participle** to talk about a past mistake or a better action that did not happen.

Use	Form / signal	Example
Regret	should have + past participle	I should have revised earlier.
Negative criticism	shouldn't have + past participle	We shouldn't have ignored the advice.
Past possibility	could have + past participle	She could have given more detail.
Reflection	learn from past action	They should have planned their answer.

4. Build accurate sentences

Complete each sentence using the grammar focus. Then write two examples of your own.

No.	Prompt	Use	Your answer
1	I / revise / vocabulary earlier.	should have	
2	She / read / the task more carefully.	should have	
3	Students / ignore / the planning advice.	shouldn't have	
4	He / give / fuller answers.	could have	

1. _____

2. _____

5. Use it in exam answers

Complete the tasks using the grammar focus naturally.

Task	What to do
Speaking	Reflect on a study mistake and explain what you should have done differently.
Writing	Write advice for students after an exam using should have and shouldn't have.
Reading	Underline should have/could have forms in the context text.

6. Common mistakes

Correct the mistakes.

No.	Mistake	Your correction
1	I should revised earlier.	
2	She should have readeed the task.	
3	Students shouldn't ignored the advice.	
4	He could gave more detail.	

7. Topic discussion questions

Use these for pair work, small-group discussion, or speaking-test warm-up practice.

1. What should students do before an exam?
2. What do students often regret after tests?
3. Is it useful to reflect on mistakes?
4. What advice would you give to someone before a speaking test?

Should Have in Exam Reflection

4. Build accurate sentences

1. I should have revised vocabulary earlier.
2. She should have read the task more carefully.
3. Students shouldn't have ignored the planning advice.
4. He could have given fuller answers.

Own answers will vary. Check that the grammar focus is accurate and natural.

6. Common mistakes

1. I should have revised earlier.
2. She should have read the task.
3. Students shouldn't have ignored the advice.
4. He could have given more detail.

Notes for checking

1. Regret: should have + past participle - I should have revised earlier.
2. Negative criticism: shouldn't have + past participle - We shouldn't have ignored the advice.
3. Past possibility: could have + past participle - She could have given more detail.
4. Reflection: learn from past action - They should have planned their answer.