

# Should have vs. Could have

## Should have + past participle

We should have talked to Riley before creating the slide deck.

In the example above, people are identifying something they don't like about the slide deck.

They know Riley would have been helpful in creating the slide deck but they didn't talk to him first.

Should indicates an obligation. In the past, should is used to indicate regret.

*We should have considered a budget before we bought all of the supplies.*

*The company shouldn't have hired people with limited technical skills.*

Could indicates a possibility. In the past, could is used to indicate a past option or possibility.

*They could have continued to work from home but they decided to return to the office.*

*She couldn't have gotten the job there. She didn't have the right qualifications.*

## Could have + past participle

We could have asked Riley to help us with the slide deck.

In the example above, people are discussing their work on a slide deck. They didn't work with Riley on this project

but they recognize that it was an option and they think that would have been a good idea.

### Practice assignment:

- Review the note card for *should have*. Then say what the sentences in the grey box (to the right) mean.
- Review the note card for *could have*. Then say what the sentences in the blue box (to the left) mean.
- Say 5 things you/your company could have done last year.
- Say 5 things you/your company should have done last year.

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