

Should / ought to / must have + past participle

The structure should / must / ought to have + past participle is used to say what one thinks was essential.

You should have locked the door before leaving the house. (= You did not lock the door before leaving the house, though that was very important.)

They should not have raised the price of essential articles. (= They raised the price of essential articles. That was not right.)

He must have been more careful. (= He wasn't careful though that was absolutely necessary.)

He ought to have finished the job last week. (= It was absolutely necessary for him to finish the job last week, but he failed to do so.)

Read the following statements. The first is a statement. The second is a response to it.

I didn't thank him.

You should have thanked him.

He didn't ask me before borrowing my car.

He should have asked you before borrowing your car.

I told him a lie.

You ought not to have told him a lie.

She behaved rather rudely.

She ought not to have behaved rudely.

He forgot to bring his passport.

He should not have forgotten to bring his passport.

The man was under the influence of alcohol.

The man should not have been under the influence of alcohol.

The boy was rude to the old man.

The boy must not have been rude to the old man.

He did not prepare for the test.

He ought to have prepared for the test.

She took the matter too seriously.

She should not have taken the matter too seriously.

Notes

Must is stronger than should. Ought to is similar to should. It is not as strong as must.