

modals (1): obligation, recommendation, ability

must

Use *must*

- for a necessary action.
- to give someone an order.
- to describe a duty.
- to make a strong recommendation.
- to emphasize an intention.
- for formal questions (*must I, you etc*).

*You **must keep** this door locked.*

*You **must be** more careful!*

*Everyone **must** recycle as much as possible.*

*You really **must** go and see The History Boys.*

*I **must** lend you this book.*

***Must you** go?*

Have to is more commonly used for questions in spoken English. ***Do you have to go?***

have to / has to

Use *have to / has to*

- for a necessary action. *We **have to be** there by six.*

- for a rule. *We **have to wear** a uniform at our school.*

- In most contexts, *must* or *have to* are both possible. Some speakers may use *have to* because it is longer and allows more emphasis.

*You **have to be** more careful!*

*Everyone **has to** recycle as much as possible.*

- *Have to* is the more commonly used question form. ***Do you have to go?***

- *Have / has got to* can be used informally instead of *have to*.

*We've **got to be** there by six.*

must not, do not have to

- *Must not* describes what is not allowed.

*You **mustn't start** until I tell you.*

- *Do not have to* or *have / has not got to* describes what is not necessary.

*Tony **doesn't have to go** to college this afternoon.*

*Tony **hasn't got to go** to college this afternoon.*

had to, didn't have to

- We use *had to* as a past form of *must*.

*Sorry I'm late. I **had to stay** on at work.*

*I **didn't have to pay** to take my bike onto the train.*

should, shouldn't (ought to, ought not to)

Use *should, shouldn't (ought to, ought not to)*

- to make a recommendation, when we say what we think is a good idea.

*You **should come** to work on your bike. It would be much quicker.*

- to say what we think is the right thing to do.

*I think you **ought to go** to the doctor. You look terrible.*

- to say that something is correct or incorrect.

*You **shouldn't write** your name at the top of the letter.*

*The answer **ought to be** a whole number.*

- in formal writing; *should* can be used with a similar meaning to *must*, but is more polite.

*All students **should report** to the examination room by 8.30.*

should have, shouldn't have (ought to have, ought not to have)

- Use to say that we think someone has made a mistake or done something wrong.
*You **shouldn't have put** in so much salt.*
*You **ought not to have written** your name at the top of the letter.*

had better (not)

- Use to make a recommendation, when we say what we think is the right thing to do. Note that this is often contracted to *you'd better* etc.
*I think **you'd better** go to the doctor. You look terrible.*

be to

- This is a formal way of saying *must* in instructions.
*You **are to leave** here at once! All students **are to report** at 9.00.*

need, need to

- *Need* is a modal verb, with no 3rd person form. It is used mainly in questions and negatives. The meaning is similar to *have to*.
***Need** you ask? The Prime Minister **need** not worry.*
- *Need to* is a normal verb.
*Sarah **needs to** be more careful. You **don't need to** worry.*
***Do I need to** fill in this form?*

didn't need to, needn't have (done)

- *Didn't need to* describes a past situation, where something was not necessary, so it was not done.
*Kate looked after the children, so **we didn't need to take** them to the nursery.*
- *Needn't have done* describes a past situation, where something happened or was done, but it was not necessary.
***I needn't have gone** so early to the office. The meeting was cancelled.*

be able to, can, could

- *Be able to* emphasizes that a difficulty has been overcome.
*Harry **can't** speak, but **he is able to communicate** with sign language.*
It is also possible to use *can* in this context.
- We use tense forms of *be able to* to make the description of ability more definite than *can*, or for time references not covered by *can* / *could*.
***I'll be able to** finish this tomorrow. (= I can and will)*
***I haven't been able to** find the answer yet.*
- *Could* describes a general past ability.
*Jane **could swim** 200 metres when she was nine.*
- *Was / were able to* describes having the ability and doing something successfully.
*Maria **was able to swim** to the rocks and rescue the child.*
In this context, using *could* might suggest an unfulfilled possibility.
*She **could swim** to the rocks, but she decided not to.*
- In negative sentences, *couldn't* has both meanings.
*However, she **couldn't** / **wasn't able to** rescue the pet dog.*

Note that modals have more than one meaning (see Units 14, 15).

1 Underline the correct form.

- a You mustn't / *don't have to* conduct any chemistry experiments unless you are wearing safety glasses.
- b There are a lot of books which Anna *did not have to read* / *need not have read* as part of her university course, but which she decided to read out of interest.
- c *We don't have to* / *We'd better not* talk for too long. These calls are expensive.
- d I went to see the dentist yesterday, but luckily *I didn't need to have* / *I needn't have had* any painful treatment!
- e You *didn't have to tell me* / *shouldn't have told me* about the party. Now it's not a surprise!
- f Some people believe that the government *does not have to* / *should not allow* genetically modified crops to be grown on a large scale, as they could spread out of control.
- g These books are on the wrong shelf. They *shouldn't* / *mustn't* be here.
- h The report concluded that the rescuers *should not have attempted* / *didn't have to attempt* to move the injured passengers before medical help arrived.
- i Please put the paper cups and plates in the bin. We *mustn't* / *don't have to leave* the room in a mess.
- j There is plenty of time. We *mustn't be* / *don't have to be* at the cinema until 8.00.

2 Complete the sentence using one word in each gap.

- a In the early years of motoring, drivers didn't have to take a driving test.
- b You sign the application form at the end of the page, or it will not be accepted.
- c Hurry up. We to get to the airport by 9.30.
- d I think we had stop and ask someone the way.
- e This bus is going to take ages. We have taken a taxi.
- f Important notice. All new arrivals to report to the reception desk.
- g Thanks for coming. I'm glad you make it.
- h You look really tired. You take a few days off and have a holiday.
- i Sorry I'm a bit late. I to pick up the children from school.
- j You not decide immediately whether to join the class.

3 Write a new sentence with the same meaning, beginning as shown.

- a If I were you, I'd take an umbrella.
I think you'd better take an umbrella.
- b Is Saturday morning school compulsory in your country?
Do students
- c In the third week, students must hand in a typed copy of their first lab report.
In the third week, students are
- d Sheila changed the battery in her camera, but it wasn't necessary.
Sheila the battery in her camera.
- e You look really ill. If I were you, I'd stay at home today.
You look really ill. I to stay at home today.
- f It was a bad idea to leave the windows open while it was raining.
You

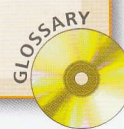
- g The theatre tickets were free, so there was no need for us to pay.
The theatre tickets were free, so we
- h I can stay here until 10.00.
I leave until 10.00.
- i Helen managed to stop the car before it crashed into a wall.
Helen was
- j Steve's laptop had a wireless Internet connection, so there was no need for him to connect it to a phone line.
Steve's laptop had a wireless Internet connection, so he

4 Complete the text with one word in each gap.



Rubbish – or **refuse** as we **a** *should* really call it – is big news at the moment. For many years, people in Britain **b** had to pay a **local** tax (*council tax*) which includes a charge for refuse collection. In many parts of the country people have also been **c** to ask their local council to remove unwanted household items, such as furniture and electrical **appliances**. However, in recent years, as a result of EU legislation, councils have **d** to reconsider how they collect rubbish, and

what they do with it. In the past, householders simply **e** to put out their dustbins once a week, and the council collected the rubbish. Now the emphasis is on recycling, and householders **f** to separate recyclable waste (paper, plastic, cans and bottles) from organic waste (food and garden waste) and other items. 'Really we **g** have started doing this years ago,' explained Karen Graham from recycling consultants WasteNot. 'We **h** to stop filling up holes in the ground with rubbish and look at what other countries have **i** able to do.' One likely change is that soon householders **j** have to pay for their rubbish collections. 'People **k** pay according to how much rubbish they produce, and we **l** to reward people who recycle and **consume** less. People in Belgium, for example, **m** had to get used to this system – and it seems to have worked.' And if you think that weighing your rubbish is a strange idea, you had **n** get used to it. Before long, an electronic **chip** in your dustbin will be weighing the bin and **calculating** how much you **o** to pay.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- A Make a list of:
- things you have to do in your job, or in your studies
 - things you think you ought to do
 - things in the past you should not have done