

Must or have to

We can use 'must' to show that we are certain something is true. We are making a logical deduction based upon some clear evidence or reason.

- There's no heating on. You must be freezing.
- You must be worried that she is so late coming home.
- I can't remember what I did with it. I must be getting old.
- It must be nice to live in Florida.

We also use 'must' to express a strong obligation. When we use 'must' this usually means that some personal circumstance makes the obligation necessary (and the speaker almost certainly agrees with the obligation.)

- I must go to bed earlier.
- They must do something about it.
- You must come and see us some time.
- I must say, I don't think you were very nice to him.

We can also use 'have to' to express a strong obligation. When we use 'have to' this usually means that some external circumstance makes the obligation necessary.

- I have to arrive at work at 9 sharp. My boss is very strict.
- We have to give him our answer today or lose out on the contract.
- You have to pass your exams or the university will not accept you.
- I have to send a report to Head Office every week.

As you can see, the differences between the present forms are sometimes very small and very subtle. However, there is a huge difference in the negative forms.

- We use 'mustn't' to express strong obligations NOT to do something.
- We mustn't talk about it. It's confidential.
- I mustn't eat chocolate. It's bad for me.
- You mustn't phone me at work. We aren't allowed personal calls.
- They mustn't see us talking or they'll suspect something.

We use 'don't have to' to state that there is NO obligation or necessity.

- We don't have to get there on time. The boss is away today.
- I don't have to listen to this. I'm leaving.
- You don't have to come if you don't want to.
- He doesn't have to sign anything if he doesn't want to at this stage.

Exercise 1:

Match the pairs of sentences with the best meanings.

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|--|---|
| A/ I must do my homework. | 1/ Tomorrow I have an important test. r |
| B/ I have to do my homework. | 2/ I'm telling myself it's important. r |
| A/ I must wear this new shirt for the party. | 1/ I will look smarter. r |
| B/ I have to wear a shirt and a tie to go in. | 2/ It's the rule. r |
| A/ I must have a drink of water. | 1/ The doctor told me so. r |
| B/ I have to drink lots of water. | 2/ I'm really thirsty. r |
| A/ We must go to London sometime. | 1/ It's another business trip. r |
| B/ I have to go to London. | 2/ It would be really nice r |
| A/ I must go and see the doctor. | 1/ I have an appointment. r |
| B/ I have to go to the doctor's. | 2/ My back hurts now and then. R |

Exercise 2:

Choose HAVE TO or MUST.

1. I'm tired. I have to / must go to bed early tonight.
2. This is a very good film. You have to / must see it.
3. Children have to / must go to school until the age of 15 .
4. Mr Johnson has to / must stop smoking. The doctor said so !

Exercise 3:

Complete with the correct form of HAVE TO or MUST.

1. I _____ be home at one o' clock. Otherwise, my mother will kill me.
2. "You _____ help me", said the mysterious woman to the detective.
3. The teacher said: "You _____ do all exercises on page 20 in your *Student's book*."
4. I _____ help my little brother more. My father said so.
5. Sonia _____ take these medicines. The doctor said so!
6. They _____ write lines as a punishment because they threw stones at my neighbour's cat.
7. I _____ be at the meeting by 10:00. I will probably take a taxi if I want to be on time.
8. He _____ clean the classroom because he had been throwing papers on the ground.
9. You _____ fill out the application form completely. If it has not been completely filled out you will be rejected and you will not be able to reapply at a later date.
10. "The rules _____ be obeyed at all times!" shouted the headmaster.
11. "I _____ go. Otherwise I'll miss my train."
12. Sorry, I can't come. I _____ clean my room. I can't live in such a mess anymore.
13. While hiking in Alaska, you _____ keep an eye out for bears. If you see one, don't approach it. They are beautiful animals; however, they are wild and unpredictable in nature.

mustn't / don't have to

- 1.-It is forbidden. You _____ do that.
- 2.-You _____ ask my permission. You can do what you want.
- 3.-You _____ speak to the driver when the bus is moving. It's dangerous.
- 4.-Help yourself to anything you want. You _____ ask.
- 5.-You _____ park here. There is a double yellow line.
- 6.-Pay me back when you can. You _____ do it immediately.
- 7.-It's optional. We _____ to go if you don't want to.
- 8.-I'll tell you a secret. You _____ tell anybody else. Promise?
- 9.-Whatever you do, you _____ click with the right mouse button or the program will crash.
- 10.-Be on time. You _____ be late or we will leave without you.
- 11.-He's a millionaire. He _____ work but he does because he enjoys it.
- 12.-I like Saturdays because I _____ go to work.
This is very important. You _____ forget what I said.
- 13.-It's very informal here. You _____ wear a tie unless you want to.
- 14.-The train is direct. You _____ change trains.
- 15.-In boxing, you _____ hit your opponent below the belt.
- 16.-I _____ wear a suit at work on Fridays. It's 'dressing down day'.
- 17.-In athletics, you _____ start before the gun is fired.
- 18.-In bridge, you _____ look at other people's cards.
- 19.-You _____ be mad to work here but it helps.