



Modal Verbs

“Need” and “Ought to”

Grammar > Intermediate 5



Exercise 1 – Learning

'Need' and 'Ought to' are semi-modal verbs because in some ways they serve as a modal verb and in other ways, they serve as a main verb.

Need as a modal verb

We use 'need' to talk about a necessity:

- Nobody **need** think that we are rich.
- **Need** you make so much noise?

To negate 'need', put 'not' behind it. The short form is 'needn't':

- She **need not** (**needn't**) arrive so early.
- He **need not** (**needn't**) cook dinner.

Tip: 'Need' is mostly used in the negative form 'needn't' to indicate that there is no obligation or necessity to do something. Also, 'need to' is used to express something that is less urgent, if something is more urgent we use 'have to' instead.



Need as a main verb

Main verb '**need**' is followed by '**to**' and it changes with person, number and tense:

- I, you, we, they – **need to**
- She, he, it – **needs to**
- I, you, she, he, it, we, they – **needed to**

'**Need to**' as a main verb expresses that something is necessary:

- I **need to** talk to you about something.
- I **don't need to** be told that I should lose weight.
- **Do you need to** use the bathroom?



Ought to

We use '**ought to**' to talk about things which are desired or ideal:

- They **ought to** have more parks in the city.
- We **ought to** eat lots of fruit.

To negate '**ought to**', put '**not**' in-between '**ought**' and '**to**':

- They **ought not to** carry so much money.
- You **ought not to** smoke so much.

Tip: '**Ought to**', unlike modal verbs, is followed by '**to**'. However, like modal verbs, it does not change form. The negative of '**ought to**' is not common. We usually use '**shouldn't**' or '**should not**' instead.



Exercise 2 – Ordering

Put the words into the correct order.

Example: You to need her find. → You need to find her.

Content:

1. It ought be to easy now.
2. needn't You take off your shoes.
3. I call to ought my parents.
4. I need don't to listen to you.
5. There to be ought some good films at cinema the.
6. ought be to There more street lights here.
7. We spend much needn't time on this.
8. need you Do to call me?



Exercise 3 – Sentence Construction

Use what you learned in class to create sentences with your tutor.

Example: buy books. → I need to/ought to buy books.

Content:

1. travel more.
2. spend so much money.
3. go out more.
4. get a pet.
5. see a movie.
6. find a boyfriend.