

Must mustn't needn't

A

Must and mustn't

You **must** do something = it is necessary that you do it:

- ☐ Don't tell anybody what I said. You **must** keep it a secret.
- ☐ We haven't got much time. We **must** hurry.

You **mustn't** do something = it is necessary that you do *not* do it (so don't do it):

- ☐ You **must** keep it a secret. You **mustn't** tell anyone. (= don't tell anyone)
- ☐ We **must** be very quiet. We **mustn't** make any noise.

B

Needn't and don't need to

You **needn't** do something = it's not necessary to do it (but you can if you like):

- ☐ We've got plenty of time. We **needn't** hurry. (= it is not necessary to hurry)
- ☐ Joe can stay here. He **needn't** come with us. (= it is not necessary for him to come)

You can also use **don't/doesn't need to**:

- ☐ We **don't need to** hurry.

Remember that we say **don't need to do / doesn't need to do**, but **needn't do** (*without to*).

C

Needn't have (done)

Study this example situation:



Paul and Sue decided to go to a restaurant.
They reserved a table.

later



But the restaurant was almost empty.
So they **needn't have reserved** a table.

They **needn't have reserved** a table. = They reserved a table, but this was not necessary.

Compare **needn't** (do) and **needn't have** (done):

- ☐ Everything will be OK. You **needn't** worry. (it is not necessary)
- ☐ Everything was OK. You **needn't have** worried. (you worried, but it was not necessary)

D

Needn't have (done) and didn't need to (do)

He **needn't have done** something = he did it, but now we know that it was not necessary:

- ☐ Why did he get up at 5 o'clock? He **needn't have got** up so early. He could have stayed in bed longer.

He **didn't need to** do something = it was not necessary to do it. It doesn't matter whether he did it or not:

- ☐ He **didn't need to** get up early, so he didn't.
- ☐ He **didn't need to** get up early, but it was a beautiful morning, so he did.

He **didn't have to** ... is also possible in these examples.