A

You **should do** something = it is a good thing to do or the right thing to do. You can use **should** to give advice or to give an opinion:

- ◯ You look tired. You **should go** to bed.
- ◯ The government **should do** more to improve education.
- ◯ '**Should** we **invite** Stephanie to the party?' 'Yes, I think we **should**.'

We often use **should** with **I think / I don't think / Do you think** ... ?:

- ◯ **I think** the government **should do** more to improve education.
- ◯ **I don't think** you **should work** so hard.
- ◯ '**Do you think** I **should apply** for this job?' 'Yes, **I think you should**.'

You **shouldn't** do something = it isn't a good thing to do:

- ◯ You **shouldn't believe** everything you read in the newspapers.

Should is not as strong as **must** or **have to**:

- ◯ You **should** apologise. (= it would be a good thing to do)
- ◯ You **must** apologise. / You **have to** apologise. (= you have no alternative)

B

You can use **should** when something is not right or what you expect:

- ◯ Where's Tina? She **should be** here by now.
  (= she isn't here yet, and this is not normal)
- ◯ The price on this packet is wrong. It **should be** £2.50, not £3.50.
- ◯ That man on the motorbike **should be wearing** a helmet.

He **should be wearing** a helmet.

We also use **should** to say that we expect something to happen:

- ◯ Helen has been studying hard for the exam, so she **should pass**.
  (= I expect her to pass)
- ◯ There are plenty of hotels in the town. It **shouldn't be** hard to find a place to stay.
  (= I don't expect it to be hard)

C

You **should have done** something = you didn't do it, but it would have been the right thing to do:

- ◯ You missed a great party last night. You **should have come**. Why didn't you?
  (= you didn't come, but it would have been good to come)
- ◯ I wonder why they're so late. They **should have got** here long ago.

You **shouldn't have done** something = you did it, but it was the wrong thing to do:

- ◯ I'm feeling sick. I **shouldn't have eaten** so much. (= I ate too much)
- ◯ She **shouldn't have been listening** to our conversation. It was private.
  (= she was listening)

Compare **should** (do) and **should have** (done):

- ◯ You look tired. You **should go** to bed now.
- ◯ You went to bed very late last night. You **should have gone** to bed earlier.

D

Ought to ...

You can use **ought to** instead of **should** in the sentences on this page. We say 'ought **to** do' (with **to**):

- ◯ Do you think I **ought to apply** for this job? (= Do you think I **should apply** ... ?)
- ◯ Jack **ought not to go** to bed so late. (= Jack **shouldn't go** ...)
- ◯ It was a great party last night. You **ought to have come**.
- ◯ Helen has been studying hard for the exam, so she **ought to pass**.