

GRAMMAR

# Mastering the modals of obligation and permission

**LEVEL**

Upper-Intermediate  
(B2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B2\_2052G

**LANGUAGE**

English

A woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a dark blue shirt and a colorful beaded necklace, is smiling and looking at a laptop. She is sitting at a desk with a lamp and some papers. The background is a blurred office or home workspace.

## Learning outcomes

- I can use modals of obligation to discuss rules and prohibitions
- I can identify and use ellipsis.



## Warm-up

***You should work  
to live, not live to  
work.***

**Do you agree?  
Why or why not?**



# Must and have to

- **Must** and **have to** are modals of obligation.
  - **Must** is sometimes used with *I* or *we* to express a **personal determination** to do something. For example: *We must get together soon.*
  - Sometimes, we use **must** with *you* to strongly urge someone to do or not do something.
  - **Must not** or **mustn't** is used to express prohibition.
- **Have to** is a law, rule, or obligation imposed by **someone else**.

## must

I **must** finish this project by the end of the day.

We **must** remember to call our supplier.

I **must not** (**mustn't**) drink too much coffee!

You **mustn't** be late for work.

## have to

My boss said I **have to** finish the project by the end of the day.

You told us that we **have to** call our supplier.

My doctor told me that I **have to** drink less coffee.

My boss told me that I **have to** be on time



# Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with **must**, **mustn't**, or **have to**.

- 1 My boss told me that I \_\_\_\_\_ finish the report by the end of the week.
- 2 I \_\_\_\_\_ pick up my children from school this afternoon.
- 3 We \_\_\_\_\_ make more of an effort to come together as a team.
- 4 My dentist told me that I \_\_\_\_\_ start flossing regularly.
- 5 You \_\_\_\_\_ answer your phone during an important meeting.

# Needn't and don't have to

- You **needn't/don't have to** wash the car = it's not necessary to wash the car (but you can if you want).
- Compare **needn't/don't have to** and **mustn't**:
  - You **needn't/don't have to** tell Susan = it is not necessary to tell Susan; I can tell her.
  - You **mustn't** tell Susan = don't tell Susan because I don't want her to know.

## **needn't / don't have to**

We have plenty to eat. We **needn't** order anything else.

= *it is not necessary to order any more food.*

Tim, you can stay here tonight. You **don't have to** look for a hotel.

= *it is not necessary for Tim to look for a hotel.*



# Matching

**Match** the sentences with a similar meaning.

**1** You must be very quiet.

**2** You needn't worry! Everything will be finished on time.

**3** You don't have to go to the supermarket. I've already been and bought some milk!

**4** You mustn't tell anyone about this.

**5** You needn't speak so quickly.

**a** You don't have to worry – we'll make the deadline.

**b** You must keep the information between us.

**c** Slow down! You don't have to rush.

**d** You mustn't make any sound.

**e** You don't have to worry about buying milk.





# Rules and prohibitions

**Complete** the prompt in the yellow box.

**Talk about the rules and prohibitions of each of the places below.**





# Should and ought to

1. **Read** the sentences. 2. Then **review** the information in the blue boxes below.

**You don't look well. You *should* see a doctor.**

**You *shouldn't* say that to your boss!**

**We *ought to* call and check on the delivery.**

**We *oughtn't to* assume that things will go as planned.**

- We use ***should*** and ***ought to*** to give advice or an opinion.

- The negative of ***ought to*** is formed by adding ***not*** after ***ought*** = ***ought not to***.
- We can contract this to ***oughtn't to***.
- The negative of ***ought to*** is not common. We usually use ***shouldn't*** or ***should not*** instead.



# What do you think?

1. **Read** the sentences on the left. 2. **Give advice** using *should*, *shouldn't*, *ought to*, *oughtn't to*.

1 Your best friend wants a pay rise.



They **should/ought to** talk with their boss.

2 Helen's room is a mess!



3 Dan's car is making strange noises.



4 It's extremely cold today.



5 Clarice doesn't know what to eat for dinner.



6 Barbara is burnt out at work.





# Discuss

In breakout rooms or together as a class, **answer** the questions below.

What should  
you do every  
six months?

What should  
you do once a  
year?

What should  
you do every  
day?

What should  
you do every  
month?





# Ellipsis

1. **Read** the sentences. 2. Then **review** the information in the blue boxes below.

**Are you ready?**



***You ready?***

**I'm ready.**



***Ready.***

**Are you there?**



***You there?***

- **Ellipsis** is when we leave out certain words from a phrase without changing its meaning.

- In the examples above, the **subject** and/or the **auxiliary verb** has been removed because they are obvious to both speaker and listener.

# Ellipsis with *and* or *but*

1. **Read** the sentences. 2. Then **review** the information in the blue box below.

**He went to the shop and (he) bought some bread.**

**They arrived at the shop but (they) forgot what they had gone for.**

**The travel agent will call and (they will) send an email.**

- We often leave out the **subject** and the **auxiliary verb** after ***and*** or ***but***.
- Read the sentences *with* the words in parentheses and then *without*.
- **Why** do you think we use ellipsis in these examples?

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# Ellipsis with verbs and adjectives

- We also use ellipsis with **verbs** and **adjectives**.

Have you read the report?

Yes, I have.

Did you find the report interesting?

Yes, I did. Jenny didn't.

Have you ever been to Canada?

No, I haven't.





Hey Tom! Are you going out tonight?

Nope.

**Nope** is an informal way of saying **no**.



# Matching

**Match** the question with the answer.

**1** Can you please get in touch with our client?

**2** Where are you?

**3** What time does the conference finish?

**4** Do you have a lighter?

**5** Did you enjoy the conference?

**a** Here!

**b** Yes, really enjoyed it.

**c** Yes, I can.

**d** No idea, sorry.

**e** Sorry, I don't.



# Speaking

1. **Shorten** these questions.
2. Then **elicit** short answers from your classmates.



Do you fancy going to the concert later?

Do you need a lift tomorrow?

Do you want tea or coffee?

Do you need any help moving on Saturday?



# End of the lesson

Idiom

***All good? All good.***

**Meaning:** Is everything okay? Yes, everything is okay.

**Example:** Hey Sarah. All good?  
All good, thanks.



# Additional practice





# What do you think?

1. **Read** the sentences on the left. 2. **Give advice** using *should*, *shouldn't*, *ought to*, *oughtn't to*.

1 Your colleague doesn't feel well today.



They **should/ought to** go home and rest.

2 Tom's flatmate hasn't paid their part of the rent.



3 Tonya's phone keeps ringing during the meeting.



4 Diana has lost her car keys, again!



5 Clarice doesn't like what she's ordered at the restaurant.



6 Frank doesn't know if he should spend his money on a new pair of shoes or on textbooks he needs for school.

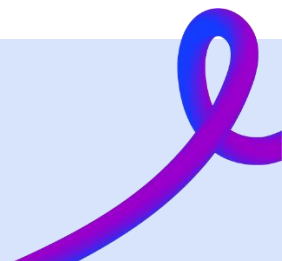




# Fill in the gaps

**Fill in the gaps** with a modal verb to make the sentences true about your country.

- 1 When writing a letter of complaint, you \_\_\_\_\_ include your name and contact details.
- 2 When giving a presentation, you \_\_\_\_\_ simply read off a script without looking up at all.
- 3 When writing a letter of complaint, you \_\_\_\_\_ be rude or sarcastic.
- 4 When giving a presentation, you \_\_\_\_\_ speak clearly and concisely.
- 5 When writing a letter of complaint, you \_\_\_\_\_ clearly state the problem and what should be done about it.





# Writing

What are 5 social rules that people should be aware of when visiting your country?

1. Take **3-5 minutes** to **write** them down.
- 2, **Share** them with the rest of the class.

*You must...*

*You ought to...*

*You shouldn't...*



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# Answer key

**P.4:** 1.) have to 2.) must 3.) must 4.) have to 5.) mustn't

**P.7:** 1.) d 2.) a 3.) e 4.) b 5.) c

**P.16:** 1.) c 2.) a 3.) d 4.) e 5.) b



# Summary

## **Must and have to:**

- *Must* is sometimes used with *I* or *we* to express **determination** to do something, e.g. *We must get together soon*. Sometimes, we use *must* with *you* to **urge** someone to do or not do something.
- *Must not* is used to express **prohibition**. *Have to* is a **law or obligation** imposed by someone else, e.g. *I must finish this today*. – *My boss said I have to finish this today*.

## **Needn't and don't have to:**

- You **needn't/don't have to** wash the car = it's not necessary to wash the car (but you can if you want).
- *You needn't/don't have to tell Susan* = it is not necessary to tell Susan; I can tell her.
- *You mustn't tell Susan* = don't tell Susan because I don't want her to know.

## **Should and ought to:**

- We use **should** and **ought to** to give advice or an opinion.
- The **negative** of *ought to* is formed by adding **not** after *ought* = *ought not to*, or *oughtn't to*. The negative of *ought to* is not common. We usually use *shouldn't* or *should not* instead.
- *We ought not to assume he will help*. – *We shouldn't assume he will help*.

## **Ellipsis:**

- **Ellipsis** is when we leave out certain words from a phrase without changing its meaning.
- Leave out the **subject** and the **auxiliary verb** after **and** or **but**, e.g. *He went to the shop and bought some bread*, or if they are obvious to the speaker and listener, e.g. *You ready?* – *Ready!*
- Use ellipsis with **verbs** and **adjectives**, e.g. *Have you read the report?* – *Yes, I have*.



# Vocabulary

supplier

to floss

plenty

burnt out

nope



