

should 1

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 schools.
- A: **Should we invite** Stephanie to the party?
B: Yes, I think we **should**.
- The man on the motorbike **should be wearing** a helmet.



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

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

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

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

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 We use **should** when something is not right or what we 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.

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 a good 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 been** here long ago.

You **shouldn't have done** something = you did it, but it wasn't a good 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**. (= You **should have come**)

Exercises

33.1 For each situation, write a sentence with **should** or **shouldn't** + one of the following:

go away for a few days	stay up so late	look for another job
put some pictures on the walls	take a picture	worry so much

- Anna needs a change. *She should go away for a few days.*
- Your salary is very low. You
- Jack always finds it hard to get up. He
- What a beautiful view! You
- Laura is always anxious. She
- Dan's room isn't very nice.

33.2 Complete the sentences. Choose from:

should solve	should be working OK	shouldn't cost more	shouldn't take long
should receive	should pass the exam	should be much warmer	should be here soon

- Helen has been studying hard, so she *should pass the exam*.
- Joe hasn't arrived yet, but he
- The TV has been repaired. It now.
- It to get to the hotel. About 20 minutes.
- I sent the documents to you today, so you them tomorrow.
- The weather is unusually cold. It at this time of year.
- The best way to get to the airport is by taxi. It than ten pounds.
- If you have a problem with the computer, try restarting it. That the problem.

33.3 Complete the sentences. Use **should ...** or **should have ...** + the verb in brackets.

- You look tired. You *should go* to bed. (go)
- You missed a great party last night. *You should have come* (come)
- I'm in a difficult position. What do you think I now? (do)
- I'm sorry that I didn't take your advice. I what you said. (do)
- We lost the game, but we were the better team. We (win)
- We don't see you enough. You and see us more often. (come)
- We went the wrong way and got lost. We right, not left. (turn)
- My exam results weren't good. I better. (do)

33.4 Read the situations and write sentences with **should** / **should have** / **shouldn't** / **shouldn't have**.

- I'm feeling sick. I ate too much.
...! shouldn't have eaten so much.
- When we got to the restaurant, there were no free tables. We hadn't reserved one.
We
- Laura told me her address, but I didn't write it down. Now I can't remember the house number.
I
- The shop is open every day from 8.30. It is 9 o'clock now, but the shop isn't open yet.
.....
- I was looking at my phone. I wasn't looking where I was going. I walked into a wall.
.....
- Kate is driving. The speed limit is 30 miles an hour, but Kate is doing 50.
She
- I wasn't feeling well yesterday, but I went to work. That was a mistake. Now I feel worse.
.....
- Tomorrow there is a football match between Team A and Team B. Team A are much better.
.....
- I was driving. The car in front stopped suddenly and I drove into it. It wasn't my fault.
The driver in front

A You can use **should** after:

insist demand recommend suggest propose

- I **insisted** that he **should apologise**.
- Doctors **recommend** that everyone **should eat** plenty of fruit.
- What do you **suggest** we **should do**?
- Many people are **demanding** that something **should be done** about the problem.

also

It's important/vital/necessary/essential that ... **should** ...:

- It's essential** that everyone **should be** here on time.

B You can also leave out **should** in the sentences in section A. So you can say:

- It's essential** that everyone **be** here on time. (= ... that everyone **should be** here ...)
- I **insisted** that he **apologise**. (= ... that he **should apologise**)
- What do you **suggest** we **do**?
- Many people are **demanding** that something **be done** about the problem.

This form (**be/do/apologise** etc.) is called the *subjunctive*. It is the same as the *infinitive* (without **to**).

You can also use normal present and past forms:

- It's **essential** that everyone **is** here on time.
- I **insisted** that he **apologised**.

C We do not use **to** ... with **suggest**. You can say:

- What do you **suggest we should do**?

or What do you **suggest we do**? (*but not* What do you suggest us to do?)

- Jane won the lottery.

I **suggested** that she **should buy** a car with the money she won.

or I **suggested** that she **buy** a car.

or I **suggested** that she **bought** a car. (*but not* I suggested her to buy)

You can also use **-ing** after **suggest** (What do you **suggest doing**?). See Unit 53.

D You can use **should** after some adjectives, especially:

strange odd funny typical natural interesting surprised surprising

- It's **strange** that he **should be** late. He's usually on time.
- I was **surprised** that he **should say** such a thing.

E You can say **'if something should happen ...'**. For example:

- We have no jobs at present, but **if the situation should change**, we will contact you.

You can also begin with **should** (**Should** something happen ...):

- Should** the situation **change**, we will contact you.

This means the same as **'if the situation changes, ...'**. With **should**, the speaker feels that the possibility is smaller.

F You can use **I should ... / I shouldn't ...** to give advice. For example:

- 'Shall I leave now?' 'No, **I should wait** a bit.' (= I advise you to wait)

Here, **I should ...** = 'I would ... if I were you', 'I advise you to ...'. Two more examples:

- 'I'm going out now. Is it cold outside?' 'Yes, **I should wear** a coat.'
- I shouldn't stay** up too late. You have to be up early tomorrow.

Exercises

34.1 Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.

- 'It would be a good idea to eat more fruit,' the doctor said to me.
The doctor recommended that I should eat more fruit.
- 'You really must stay a little longer,' she said to me.
She insisted that I
- 'Why don't you visit the museum after lunch?' I said to them.
I suggested that
- 'You must pay the rent by Friday,' the landlord said to us.
The landlord demanded that
- 'Let's go to the cinema,' Chris said to me.
Chris suggested that

34.2 Two of these sentences are not correct. Change the two that are not correct.

- Tom suggested that I look for another job. OK
- I called Tina and suggested that we meet for coffee.
- What do you suggest me to do?
- What sort of car do you suggest I should buy?
- I suggest you to read this book.
- I suggested that Anna learn to drive.

34.3 Complete the sentences using **should** + verb. Choose from:

ask be be done leave say vote worry

- It's strange that he should be late. He's usually on time.
- It's funny that you that. I was thinking the same thing.
- It's only natural that parents about their children.
- Isn't it typical of Joe that he without saying goodbye to anybody?
- I was surprised that they me for advice. What advice could I give them?
- This is a democratic election, and it's important that you
- The bridge needs to be repaired. It's essential that the work as soon as possible.

34.4 Complete the sentences using **if ... should ...**. Choose from:

anyone / ask the situation / change it / rain there / any problems

- We have no jobs at present. If the situation should change, we'll let you know.
- I've hung out the washing to dry on the balcony. If, can you bring it inside?
- I think everything will be OK., I'm sure we'll be able to solve them.
- I don't want anyone to know where I'm going., say you don't know.

Now complete the same sentences beginning with **Should ...**.

- Should the situation change, we'll let you know.
-, can you bring the washing inside?
-, I'm sure we'll be able to solve them.
- where I'm going, say you don't know.

34.5 Complete the sentences using **I should**. Choose from:

call get keep wait

- 'Shall I leave now?' 'No, I should wait a bit.'
- 'Shall I throw these things away?' 'No, them. You may need them.'
- 'Shall I go and see Paul?' 'Yes, but him first.'
- 'Is it worth getting this computer repaired?' 'No, a new one.'