

Modal verbs for advice

Functions	Examples
We use SHOULD to give advice or to say we think something is good.	You shouldn't bite your nails. We should be using only solar and wind energy. The UNO should expel Russia from the Security Council.
We can use OUGHT TO instead of SHOULD .	You ought to put more attention when you are doing your homework. They ought to manufacture more solar panels in Europe. We oughtn't to buy any more gas from Russia.
We can use HAD BETTER for a more insistent advice or a warning , especially when there is danger or a serious problem.	You had better not touch that wire! We'd better do something to stop climate change.
We can also use MUST for insistent advice.	You mustn't worry about the money, it is more important to get some work experience. You really must stop smoking, it's going to kill you.

We can add **HAVE** after SHOULD and OUGHT TO to talk about a **past** action or situation, or to express **regret** about past actions.

We **should have** taken a taxi, the bus is taking forever to come!

The electricity companies **should have** invested more on renewable energies.

They **ought to have** stopped Putin when he invaded Georgia in 1992.

I'm getting soaked! We **should have** taken an umbrella.

I **ought to have** done my homework yesterday, I'm really busy today.

Exercises:

a) **Select ALL** the correct options to fill in each gap:

1. It's a bit cold, isn't it? I think we _____ turn the heating on.

shouldn't **ought to** **mustn't** **had better**

2. I'm getting hungry, we _____ start cooking dinner.

should **shouldn't** **must** **ought to**

3. Do you think we _____ buy an electric car?

ought **ought to** **must** **oughtn't to**

4. We _____ fight climate change at all levels.

should **must** **ought to** **had better**

5. You _____ be careful: that machine can be very dangerous if you don't know what you're doing.
should must ought to had better

b) Fill in the gaps using a suitable modal verb from the chart (when two options are correct, write one only) :

should / ought to / must / had better
shouldn't / oughtn't to / mustn't
should have / ought to have
shouldn't have / oughtn't to have

Remember to check the correct spelling of **mustn't** !

1. I really _____ turn off Whatsapp while I'm working, it is very distracting.
2. You _____ take a torch with you, it is totally dark in the cave.
3. You _____ lie in the sun without putting on some sunscreen lotion first.
4. They _____ plant some more trees in this park, there's very little shade to sit in.
5. If you have faith in God, you _____ worry when your plans don't come out as you intended.
6. You _____ use drugs, they can destroy your life and also your family's.
7. I _____ write more examples, but I don't have much time at the moment!