

TALKING ABOUT RULES

must / mustn't

We sometimes use *must(n't)* + infinitive (without *to*) to show it's essential (not) to do something, especially when you made the rule and / or have authority.

*You **must arrive** in class on time. I don't allow any students in the class if they are late.*

*You **mustn't use** these computers for personal use.*

Must(n't) sounds very strong so we usually replace it with other structures.

have to and be supposed to

We usually use *have to* + infinitive (without *to*) instead of *must* as it sounds less direct and rude. We also use it to ask about rules.

*I **have to wear** a stupid uniform at work. I hate it!*

***Do I have to attend** all the staff meetings?*

We also use *be supposed to* + infinitive (without *to*) to replace *must*, especially where a rule has just been broken or is often not followed.

*I'm **supposed to be** available to cover if anyone is off sick.*

*Hey, don't leave your dirty cup in the sink! You're **supposed to wash** them yourself.*

can't, be not allowed to, be not supposed to

We usually use *can't* or *be not allowed to* + infinitive (without *to*) instead of *mustn't*. They mean it's not possible to do something.

*We **can't work** from home in my company.*

*Sorry, but you're **not allowed to bring** dogs in here.*

We also use *be not supposed to* + infinitive (without *to*) to replace *mustn't*, especially where the rule has just been broken or is often not followed.

*You're **not supposed to use** this entrance into the building, but it's more convenient.*

can, be allowed to

We use *can* or *be allowed to* + infinitive (without *to*) to ask about rules, to show there is no rule or to say that a rule says it is OK to do something.

Can I use any of the computers in the building?

Are we allowed to work from home at all?

We are allowed to start to work late if we then work later in the evening to make up the time.

Exercise 1

Choose the correct option.

- 1 Sorry, *you're not allowed to / you have to* smoke in here.
Can you go outside please?
- 2 *Are you allowed to / Are you supposed to* wear jeans at work? I don't really have anything else to wear!
- 3 *I'm supposed to / I can* carry my ID at all times, but nobody ever asks me for it!
- 4 *Do you have to / Can you* ask your manager if you want to leave the office?
- 5 *We are allowed to / aren't supposed to* come out here on the roof of the building, but it's a really nice place to have a break!
- 6 *You can't / You're not really supposed to* eat or drink in the classroom, so please tidy everything up after you finish your coffee.
- 7 *We have to / are allowed to* belong to a trade union, but not many people are members.
- 8 *I can't / have to* start really early some days, but at least *I have to / I'm allowed to* go home early.

Complete the sentences with the pairs of verbs in the box.

should / turn off	not allow / drink	shouldn't / send
not suppose / leave	suppose / clear	allow / buy

- 1 Employees *are not allowed to drink* alcohol or smoke anywhere in the building.
- 2 We company products at a 10 per cent discount off the normal price.
- 3 All employees their tables when they have finished lunch.
- 4 I really personal mail from the post room, but it's OK just this once.
- 5 Visitors the building without signing out and returning their passes.
- 6 We really our computers at the end of each day, but sometimes I'm in a rush, so I leave mine on.