

# Need, needn't, needn't have

- 1 We use the verb **need** to talk about things that we must do. We use **to + infinitive** (e.g. **to do, to go**) after need:

**I need** **to + INFINITIVE**  
**to go** **to the dentist's.**

After he/she/it we use **needs**:

**Mary/She needs to buy some white paint.**

We make negatives, questions and short answers with a form of **do**:

**You don't need to go to the doctor's.**

**Mary doesn't need to buy any green paint.**

**A: Do you need to go to the dentist's?**

**B: Yes, I do./No, I don't.**

**A: Does Mary need to buy any brushes?**

**B: Yes, she does./No, she doesn't.**

- 2 We can also use **need** to talk about things that we must get. Here we use an object after need:

**Mary needs**  
**I don't need**  
**Does Peter need**

**OBJECT**  
**some white paint.**  
**a new car.**  
**any help?**

- 3 To talk about what we do not need to do, we can use **needn't**. We use an infinitive (e.g. **go, buy**) after **needn't**. **Needn't** has the same meaning as **don't/doesn't need to**:

**INFINITIVE**  
**You needn't go to the shops. We have enough food.**

(OR **You don't need to go to the shops.**)

**Mary needn't buy any paint.**

(OR **Mary doesn't need to buy any paint.**)

We cannot use **needn't** before an object (e.g. **your coat**); we must use **don't need**:

**You don't need your coat. It's not cold outside.**  
(NOT **You needn't your coat.**)

- 4 We can use **needed to** for past time:

**They needed to clean everything before they started to paint.**

The negative past simple form is **didn't need to**.

**The room wasn't dirty so they didn't need to clean it before they started to paint it.**  
(= It was not necessary to clean the room so we didn't clean it.)

We use **needn't have + past participle** to talk about something that was done although it wasn't necessary:

**We needn't have lit the fire, because it was a warm evening.** (= We lit the fire, but it was not necessary to light it.)

**You needn't have bought any bread, Jim.**

**There is plenty in the cupboard.**

(= You bought some bread, but it was not necessary.)

## Practice

- A From the statements in brackets ( ), make a question and a short answer, like those in the examples.

► (Tom needs to take some warm clothes.) **Does Tom need to take.....  
some warm clothes.....**

? ~ Yes, **he does.....**

► (She doesn't need to study hard.) **Does she need to study hard.....**

? ~ No, **she doesn't.....**

1 (Fred needs a ladder.) **.....**

? ~ Yes, **.....**

2 (We don't need to go to the shops.) **.....**

? ~ No, **.....**

3 (John doesn't need to leave before lunch.) **.....**

? ~ No, **.....**

4 (They need to check the train times.) **.....**

? ~ Yes, **.....**

**B** Change each sentence in brackets ( ) into a negative sentence with *needn't*, where possible. If not possible, write a negative sentence with *doesn't/don't need*.

- (Jane needs to pay Jim today.) Jane *needn't* pay Jim today.....
- (The car needs new tyres.) The car *doesn't* need new tyres.....
- 1 (We need a lot of red paper.) .....
- 2 (Mark needs to get everything ready today.) .....
- 3 (Mary needs to leave at six o'clock.) .....
- 4 (Ann needs a new bag.) .....

**C** When there are exams or competitions at Brightside School, the school provides certain things for all the students, but there are other things that the school does not provide. Look at the table.

Examinations	The school provides:	The school doesn't provide:
art exams	paint	brushes
maths exams	rubbers	pens and pencils
drawing exams	paper	rulers and pencils
tennis competitions	balls	racquets
football competitions	shirts	shorts and boots

Use the information in the table to write sentences with *need to bring* or *needn't bring*.

- (art exams/paint) For art exams, students *needn't* bring paint.....
- (tennis competitions/racquets) For tennis competitions, students *need to* bring racquets.....
- 1 (maths exams/pens and pencils) .....
- 2 (football competitions/shirts) .....
- 3 (drawing exams/paper) .....
- 4 (art exams/brushes) .....
- 5 (tennis competitions/balls) .....
- 6 (football competitions/shorts and boots) .....
- 7 (maths exams/rubbers) .....
- 8 (drawing exams/rulers and pencils) .....

**D** Rewrite the sentences using *didn't need* or *needn't have* + the correct form.

- The programmes didn't cost us anything. We didn't pay for them.  
We *didn't have to pay*..... for the programmes.
  - You took your umbrella yesterday but it didn't rain.  
You *needn't have taken*..... your umbrella yesterday.
- 1 Jill paid for her holiday in advance, but it wasn't necessary.  
Jill ..... for her holiday in advance.
  - 2 My sister spoke to Sally yesterday, so I didn't phone her.  
I ..... Sally because my sister had spoken to her.
  - 3 We bought extra food but now John and Mary can't come.  
We ..... extra food because John and Mary can't come.
  - 4 Why did you work during the weekend? We don't have to finish until next week.  
You ..... during the weekend.
  - 5 I didn't take my passport with me because an identity card was enough.  
I ..... my passport with me.