

0.7 Modal verbs for obligation and permission

To express obligation or necessity, we use:

- **must**, especially when we refer to something the speaker feels is necessary or important:
*I **must** call Mom.*
- **have to**, especially when we refer to something that is necessary because of a rule or law, or because someone else says so:
*We **have to** wear a uniform in school.*
- **need to**:
*Ana often **needs to** take care of her younger sister.*

To express lack of obligation or necessity, we use:

- **don't have to**:
*My dad **doesn't have to** wake up early. He starts work at twelve.*
- **don't need to**:
*You **don't need to** go to college this year.*

To express permission, we use:

- **can**:
*You **can** invite some friends if you want.*
- **be allowed to**:
*Students **are allowed to** work part-time.*

To express lack of permission or prohibition, we use:

- **can't**:
*You **can't** leave the classroom without permission from your teacher.*
- **mustn't**:
*You **mustn't** play loud music after 10 p.m.*
- **not be allowed to**:
*You **aren't allowed to** speak during the exam.*

1 Complete the sentences with the verbs in the box.

are allowed to can't doesn't have to
don't have to have to is allowed to
must needs to

- 1 Elena _____ stay at home today because she was in the office on Saturday.
- 2 Richard _____ walk his dog now – his dad has already done it.
- 3 I'm afraid you _____ use a dictionary during the test. Please put it back on the shelf.
- 4 I _____ go now – my friends are waiting for me.
- 5 It was great to see you, Alex. We _____ get together more often.
- 6 My sister is a student, but she still _____ call my parents every day.
- 7 Ally and Mike _____ get home until midnight on Saturdays, so they usually stay out until 10 or 11 p.m.
- 8 My younger brothers _____ play video games for only an hour a day, but they would like to spend more time playing them.

2 Choose the correct options.

- 1 John *is allowed to / can't / must* go on vacation by himself – he's too young.
- 2 Students *don't have to / mustn't / can* call their teachers by their first names – it's a very modern school.
- 3 You *can't / mustn't / need to be* by the school gate at 3 o'clock. Don't be late!
- 4 We *are allowed to / have to / mustn't* stand up when the principal enters the room – he's very formal.
- 5 Teenagers *have to / mustn't / can't* study hard for their exams if they want to get into college.
- 6 He *has to / is allowed to / mustn't* call them when he is going to be home late or they get worried.
- 7 You *must / need to / don't have to* bring any food. My aunt is going to prepare everything.
- 8 Victor *isn't allowed to / has to / can* go out during the week. His parents are very strict.

3 Complete the sentences with *must* or *have/has to*.

- 1 We _____ go to school this Saturday – we're having a rehearsal for a new play.
- 2 I've heard it's a great novel. I _____ read it!
- 3 All students _____ wear uniforms in my school.
- 4 Does Amy _____ work in the restaurant three times a week?
- 5 I'm really tired. I _____ go to bed early tonight.
- 6 I don't think Jo has heard the news yet. You _____ text her as soon as possible.
- 7 Visitors _____ switch off their cell phones here.
- 8 What do we _____ prepare for our next English class?