

MODAL VERBS

SHOULD/SHOULDN'T



To give and ask for advice and recommendations.

Affirmative:

- You should drink plenty of water every day.

Negative:

- You shouldn't eat too much junk food.

Question Form:

- Should I go to the doctor if I feel unwell?

Short Answer: Yes, you should.

ought to/ought not to is very similar to should, but slightly stronger and formal.

HAD BETTER ('d better)



To give strong advice or a warning about a possible bad consequence.

Affirmative:

- You had better take an umbrella; it's going to rain.

Negative:

- You had better not forget your passport.

Question Form: **Extremely formal! Use "should" instead!**

HAVE TO/DON'T HAVE TO



For obligation, necessity or the lack of it.

Affirmative:

- You have to wear your uniform (written rule)
- You have to brush your teeth (non written rule).

Negative (lack of need):

- You don't have to eat all your food if you are full.

Question Form:

- Do I have to take medicine if I have a headache?

Short Answer: No, you **don't have to**.

MUST/MUSTN'T



Strong obligation or necessity

Negative form: Prohibition.

Affirmative:

- You must wear a seatbelt while driving
- (if you don't brush your teeth you survive, if you don't wear your seatbelt you die. That is the big difference).

Negative:

- You mustn't smoke in this area.

Question Form:

- Must I finish this assignment by tomorrow?

Short Answer: Yes, you must.

Doesn't
have a past
tense.
Instead we
say "had
to"

CAN/CAN'T

To express ability, permission, or possibility; to talk about prohibitions

Affirmative:

- You can swim very well. (**Ability**)

Negative:

- I can't do a flip (**lack of ability**)
- In Singapore, you can't vote until your 21st bday.
(**Talk about Prohibition: it's not universal, you can in Spain**)

Question Form:

- Can I leave early today? (**Permission**)

Fill in the gaps with "should/shouldn't," "have/don't have to," "must/mustn't", "can/can't":

- You _____ smoke cigarettes if you want to stay healthy.
- Doctor Mike says we _____ at least 30 minutes of exercise every day.
- If you have a fever, you _____ go to work. It's important to rest.
- At what age _____ you drive a car in Spain?
- You _____ eat too much junk food. It's not good for your health.
- According to Doctor Mike, we _____ our hands regularly to prevent the spread of germs.
- In Spain, you _____ vote if you are under 18.
- If you're feeling unwell, you _____ push yourself too hard. Take it easy and rest.
- You _____ worry too much about a runny nose. Just treat yourself kindly.
- If you're allergic to peanuts, you _____ eat foods that contain them.
- Doctor Mike recommends that we _____ get enough sleep each night to maintain our health.
- If you have a cut, you _____ keep it clean and covered to prevent infection.

Choose between "had better/had better not" and "should/shouldn't" to complete the sentences.

- You _____ start studying the day before
- _____ I study a week earlier then? I have other subjects!
- You _____ have something to eat before your driving test. I don't want you to feel ill.
- I _____ take so much to answer my mum's texts, she might get worried.