

Modal Verbs 1

Unit 9

OBLIGATION

Must and Have to

- To talk about obligation, use **must**, **mustn't** or **have to**.
  Have to is not a modal verb. It is an ordinary verb and it can be used in any form.
  Must and **have to** are often interchangeable but there is sometimes a difference between them.

  Have to - the obligation is often external, it comes from the situation:
  We have to get up early tomorrow to catch the plane.
  (The time of the plane is the reason for the obligation.)

  Must - the obligation comes from the speaker or writer of the sentence. This may be an individual or some kind of authority:
  We must get up early tomorrow. We've got a lot to do.
  (We are imposing the obligation on ourselves.)
  Passengers must fasten their seat belts.
  (The obligation is imposed by the airline who wrote the notice.)
  Children must wear school uniform at all times when they are in school.
  You mustn't smoke in here.
  We'll have to get there before 5 o'clock because the shops close then.
  Do you have to pay for the tickets in advance?

- We can also use **have got to** to express obligation.
  Have got to is often interchangeable with **have to** but there is sometimes a difference.

  Have to can be used for habitual actions and single actions:
  I have to get the bus into work today.
  I have to get the bus into work every day.

  Have got to can only be used for single actions:
  I have got to get the bus into work today. (Not ~~I have got to get the bus into work every day~~)

- To express a negative obligation, use **mustn't**.
  Do not use **don't have to**. **Don't have to** means there is no obligation:
  You mustn't wait here. (You are not allowed to wait here.)
  You don't have to wait here. (It is not necessary for you to wait here but you can if you want to.)

- To express obligation in the past, use **had to**:
  I had to report the incident to the police.
  Did you have to get a visa?

Note: Must + perfect infinitive is not used to talk about past obligation. It is used to make deductions about the past: She must have left early.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Should

- When we are talking about the right thing to do, we use **should**:
  He should take more care when he's cycling. (= it's a good idea but he doesn't)
  I shouldn't spend so much time watching TV (= it's a bad idea but I still do)

- To talk about the past, we use **should have + past participle**:
  I should have told the truth. (= it was a good idea but I didn't)
  We shouldn't have lent her that honey. (= it was a bad idea but we still did)

- To give advice, use **should** or **ought to**. **Should** is used more frequently.
  Should/Ought to = that course of action would be a good idea; it would be the best thing to do. It can refer to present time or to future time:
  You should/ought to try and lose some weight.
  We should/ought to be leaving soon.
  You **shouldn't/oughtn't** to take any notice of him. He always upsets you. Should we/Ought we to tell Ann where we're going?

We often use **should/ought** to with I think ... /Do you think ...?/Don't you think ...?
Don't you think you should/ought to stop seeing him?
We sometimes use I should ... (NOT ~~I ought to~~) to give advice to someone else when there is an implied condition if I were you:
Everything's going to be all right. I should stop worrying about it. (if I were you)

NECESSITY

- We can use need like a normal main verb in all the tenses, but it can also be a modal verb in questions and in the negative:
  Need I come with you? (= Do I need to come with you?)
  I needn't come. (if I don't want to) (= I don't need to come./ I don't have to come.)
- In positive statements, we say:
  I need to come. (not I need come.)
- To talk about the past, we say:
  He needed to buy some food. (= it was necessary because he didn't have any)
  He didn't need to buy any food. (= he didn't buy any food as it wasn't necessary)

- **Needn't have has a different meaning:**
  He needn't have bought any food. (= he bought food but it wasn't necessary)

PRACTICE BANK

A. Fill in the gaps with the correct form of have to or must.

1. Most students in Britain have to pay at least part of their university fees.
2. Joe _____ get up early on Fridays as he has no lectures in the morning.
3. You _____ talk during the film because other people will get annoyed.
4. These library books are overdue so I _____ pay a fine when I return them.
5. Jeremy _____ drive to work because the bus gets there too late.
6. Because she could already play the piano, she _____ practise much when she learnt to play the organ.
7. You _____ borrow this video -you'll enjoy watching it.
8. _____ (you) work every Saturday in your new job?
9. Non-swimmers _____ go into the deep end of the pool.
10. You _____ come to the rehearsal tomorrow if you want to be in the play.
11. When I was a child, I _____ change schools seven times because my parents moved house a lot.
12. Every morning the children _____ feed their rabbit before school.
13. I _____ stop eating so much chocolate or none of my clothes will fit.
14. They've promised to lend me a tennis racket so I _____ take mine.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B. Match the beginnings and endings of these sentences.

1. I shouldn't _g_	a. wear a helmet when he's cycling on a busy road.
2. Need I ____	b. to take any money or is it free?
3. We don't need ____	c. to ask his boss before he leaves the office.
4. They needn't ____	d. take sandwiches with them because Jenny's cooking lunch.
5. He should ____	e. to send them our new address because they already have it.
6. Should you ____	f. fill in my application form now? I'm busy at the moment.
7. He needs ____	g. spend so much time playing computer games.
8. Do they need ____	h. carry that suitcase with your bad back?

C. Read this article about a pop star.

The diary column

Pop star Lee Divine travelled from London to New York yesterday by plane. Lee had visited his hairdresser before he went to the airport and wore his latest designer clothes, as he likes to look his best in photos. Press photographers usually follow him wherever he goes but the weather was very bad yesterday and, to Lee's obvious disappointment, there were no photographers at the airport. Because he is famous, he didn't stand in the queue and his bodyguard carried his luggage for him. Although most people have to walk from the car park, Lee has a driver who drove him right to the door. Even this did not seem to make him happy. Lee got angry with his driver on the way because he said she wasn't driving fast enough. Of course, they arrived at the airport in plenty of time.

Write six sentences about Lee Divine.

1. He needn't have visited his hairdresser
2. He needn't have _____
3. He didn't need to _____
4. He didn't need to _____
5. He didn't need to _____
6. He needn't have _____

D. Rewrite these sentences using the correct form of must, need, should or have to.

1. It's her fault that she's lost her watch because she didn't look after it.
She should have looked after her watch.
2. I don't expect you to phone me before you come.
You _____
3. It is essential for students to buy a good dictionary.
Students _____
4. It was wrong of you to take money from my purse without asking.
You _____
5. I was getting ready to drive to the station to pick up my sister when she arrived in a taxi.
I _____
6. It's not fair that I do the washing-up on my own.
You _____
7. Students aren't allowed to smoke in the canteen.
Students _____
8. She turned the music down to avoid disturbing her neighbours but they'd gone out.
She _____
9. I think she's wrong to make promises which she doesn't keep.
She _____
10. You can give the tour guide a tip but it is not necessary.
You _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

E. Complete the sentences using the modals should, ought to, must, need or the verb have to in the correct tense and form. Put the infinitive into the appropriate form.

1. We had to leave (leave) at 11 o'clock last night because the last bus went at 11.20.
2. I don't think you should/ought to offer (offer) to help him. You've got enough work to do yourself.
3. They _____ (not pay) to stay in a hotel. They can stay with us.
4. We've been staying in a hotel for the last two weeks so we _____ (not cook) our own meals.
5. You _____ (come round) for dinner one evening. We haven't had a good talk for a long time.
6. We _____ (run) all the way to the station because we were late for the train.
7. It's your own fault that you're so tired. You _____ (not go) to bed so late.
8. Why _____ the prisoners (be locked) in their cells all day?
9. Hurry up. You _____ (not have) a bath now. The taxi's coming in twenty minutes.
10. You _____ (not tell) him what happened. He would never forgive us.
11. You _____ (not allow) Max to walk home from school every day on his own. He's too young.
12. I don't like _____ (do) everything my boss tells me to do.
13. You _____ (go) to that new French restaurant in town. It's the best restaurant I've ever been to.
14. Tom _____ (not get up) early in the morning but everyone else in the house does.
15. If I fail any one of my exams, I _____ (take) all of them again in November.
16. You _____ (work) when I came into the room, not talking.
17. I _____ (tell) him what you really think of him next time you see him if I were you.
18. The wedding's been cancelled so I _____ (not buy) that new suit: it was a waste of money.
19. I _____ (take) the children to school every morning before I go to work.
20. You _____ (not eat) in the lecture halls: it's against the college regulations.
21. I'd like you to come to the meeting but you _____ (not come) if you don't want to.
22. This letter _____ (be hidden) where no-one will ever find it. Its contents _____ (remain) a secret for ever.
23. _____ (you/wear) a uniform at work?
24. Please don't say any more. I already know the truth so you _____ (not lie to me).
25. Employees _____ (follow) the safety regulations.

LIVEWORKSHEETS



Modal Verbs 2

Unit 9

ASKING FOR AND GIVING PERMISSION

We can ask for permission by saying: Can I? Could I? or May I?
Can I leave my bag here while I look round the museum? (= a simple request which expects the answer yes)
Could I borrow your car for a few days? (= more polite or a request which is less sure of the answer being yes)
May I sit here? (= a more formal request, particularly to a stranger)
We usually answer by saying:
Of course (you can)./ OK. / Certainly.
I'm afraid not. (= polite)/ No, you can't. (= not very polite)

May is often used in written notices to say what is or is not allowed:
You may borrow six books from the library.
You may not keep any book for longer than three weeks.

MAKING REQUESTS

We use Can you? and Will you? to ask someone else to do something:
Can you pass me the bread?
Will you get me some stamps from the post office?

To be more polite, we use Could you? and Would you?:
Could you tell me where the station is?
Would you lend me your camera?

We usually answer by saying:
Of course (I can/ will). or O.K.
I'm sorry I can't. (not ~~I won't~~, which sounds rude)

We never use May you? to ask someone to do something. (not ~~May you give me a lift?~~)

MAKING OFFERS

There are several ways of offering help to someone else:
Can I / we help you to cook dinner?
Shall I /we clean the car for you?
I can/ I could / I 'll lend you some money.
Why don't I carry that bag for you?

MAKING SUGGESTIONS

To make a suggestion, we can use all the following expressions:

Shall I/we
Why don't I/ we → **go** by bicycle today?
Let's
How about → **going** by bicycle today?
What about

LIVEWORKSHEETS

If we are less sure of what we are suggesting, we can say: We **could go** by bicycle today.

GIVING ORDERS AND ADVICE

To give orders and advice, we use:

must had better ought to/should could

strong → less strong

You really must start looking for a job. (= an order - I am telling you to do this, or this is my opinion which I feel very strongly about)
You'd better start looking for a job. (= advice - otherwise you may regret it)
You should/ ought to start looking for a job. (= advice)
You could start looking for a job. (= this is only a suggestion)

In the negative we use **had better not** and **oughtn't to/ shouldn't**:
You'd better not forget to post that application form.
You shouldn't / ought not to wear those clothes for the interview.
We don't use **mustn't** or **couldn't** when giving **advice**.
To talk about the past we say:
You should have / ought to have accepted that job. (= it was a good idea to accept but you didn't)
In the negative we say:
You shouldn't have / ought not to have worn those clothes. (= you wore them but it wasn't a good idea)
We can use all these verbs to talk about the right thing to do:
I must try harder not to be late.
She should / ought to be more thoughtful.
He'd better go and say sorry.
I'd better not upset her today.
They shouldn't / ought not to talk so much.
To talk about the right thing to do in the past we say:
They shouldn't have / ought not to have talked so much.

PRACTICE BANK

A. Fill in the gaps in these sentences.

1. I change traveller's cheques here?
2. I'm sorry to bother you ..... I look at your timetable, please?
3. ..... cycling to town today for a change? It will be good for us.
4. We ..... ask Paula if she'd like to come riding with us. What do you think? I know she'll enjoy it.
5. ..... you get that tin down from the shelf for me, Dad? I can't quite reach.
6. I ..... post your parcel on my way to work if you want.
7. We haven't got any plans this weekend so ..... we go sailing? The weather's going to be fine.
8. Excuse me, ... you tell me where the nearest tube station is?
A: '..... I take this bag onto the plane?'
B: 'No, I'm afraid not.'
10. ..... you turn that television down? I need to use the phone.

B. Daniel runs his own business. He isn't very tidy. Tomorrow an important client is coming to visit him in his office. Give him some advice, using at least four different structures and the words in the box.

coat - cups - ~~desk~~ – filing - cabinet - lampshade - telephone - wastepaper - bin - window

1. You'd better tidy your desk.
2. _____
3. _____

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4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

C. Write what to say using can, could, may, might, shall, must, would, would you like, would you mind. There may be several possible answers.

1. Offer to open the door for a stranger. Shall I open the door for you?
2. Ask someone to answer the phone for you. Would you answer the phone for me, please?
3. Invite a friend to go far a swim this morning. _____
4. Offer to make someone a sandwich. _____
5. Request an appointment to see your bank manager, Ms Arnold.
_____
6. Give someone permission to use your phone. _____
7. Suggest going far a picnic this afternoon. _____
8. Ask someone to wait here for you. _____
9. Give your son permission to go out but tell him to be back before dark.
_____
10. You are in a train. Ask another passenger if you can open the window.
_____
11. You are the teacher. Give your students permission to work outside today but tell them not to talk too much. _____
12. Offer to answer the phone. _____
13. Ask a friend for a pen. _____

D. Fill in the gaps with the phrases in the box.

Can I do - ~~Can I help~~ - Could I see - I'm afraid - Shall I ask - Would you exchange - You can't have - You could give - You'd better not - You should ask - You shouldn't have done

Assistant: Can I help (1) you?
Laura: I'd like to have a refund on a CD which I was given as a present. _____ (2) that here?
Assistant: Yes you can. I'll do it for you. _____ (3) the receipt, please?
Laura: _____ (4) not. I haven't got one, you see, because it was a present.
Assistant: _____ (5) a refund without the receipt. Those are the rules, I'm afraid.
Laura: _____ (6) it for something else then?
Assistant: What CD is it? Oh, but you've taken it out of its wrapping.
_____ (7) that if you wanted to return it.
Laura: Christabel did it before she gave it to me.
Assistant: Did you say Christabel? Does she work here at weekends?
Laura: I don't know. She's got dark hair and glasses.
Assistant: _____ (8) her where she got this. She was probably given it free because it has no wrapping. _____ (9) the manager what he thinks?
Laura: _____ (10) do that. I don't want to get her into trouble.
Assistant: _____ (11) it to someone else for their birthday, I suppose.

LIVEWORKSHEETS



Modal Verbs 3



ABILITY

- **Can and be able to – present**
  We use **can** or **be able to** to say that someone has an ability:
  James can/is able to play chess but he can't/isn't able to ride a bicycle.

- **Can and be able to – past**
  We use **could** or **was able to** to say that someone had an ability in the past:
  He could/was able to read when he was three but he couldn't/wasn't able to catch a ball when he started school.

- **We do not use could to talk about one occasion in the past, but we can use couldn't:**
  She was able to (not ~~could~~) come to the meeting but she couldn't /wasn't able to stay for lunch.
  They were able to (not ~~could~~) see the match because they had a day off.

- **Be able to - other tenses**
  Can is only used in the present tense and could is only used in the past.
  In all other tenses we use **be able to**:
  I will be able to give you a lift on my way to college. (future)
  They haven't been able to contact Mary because of the storms. (present perfect)
  If you saved enough money, you would be able to visit me in New Zealand. (conditional)
  They hope to be able to visit me next year. (infinitive)

DEDUCTION: CERTAINTY AND POSSIBILITY

- TALKING ABOUT THE PRESENT
  - Certainty

We use:
must when we are sure something is **true**:
The letter must be from Steve because he is in Austria (= I am certain it is from Steve ...)
can't/ couldn't when we are sure something is **not true**:
It can't be/ couldn't be from. Steven because that's not his writing. (= I am certain it's not from Steve ...)

- Possibility

We use:
might / may / could when we think something is possibly true:
The letter might be/ may be/ could be from. Dad's friend, Tony, because he moved to Australia recently. (= I know Tony lives there and it is possible, not certain, that the letter is from him)
might not / may not when we think something is possibly not true:
It may not be/ might not be from anyone that we know. (= it is possible that it is not)

Present	True	Not true
Certainty	must + infinitive without to	can't/couldn't + infinitive without to
Possibility	might/may/could + infinitive without to	might not/may not + infinitive without to

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Notice that could means the same as might and may, but couldn't is different from might not and may not. All the verbs in the box above can also be followed by be + verb + -ing:
Steven might be travelling home at this moment.

- TALKING ABOUT THE PAST
  - Certainty

We use:
must have when we are sure something is true:
Steven must have arrived in Perth by now. (= I am certain he has arrived ...)
can't / couldn't have when we are sure something is not true:
He can't / couldn't have got there yet because it will take at least two weeks. (= I am certain he hasn't got there ...)

- Possibility

We use:
might have / may have / could have when we think something is possibly true:
He might / may / could have stopped for a few days on the way. (= it is possible)
might not have / may not have when we think something is possibly not true:
He might / may not have had time to do everything he wanted. (= it is possible he didn't)

Past	True	Not true
Certainty	must have + past participle	can't have/couldn't have +past participle
Possibility	might have/may have/could have +past participle	might not have/may not have +past participle

Notice that could have means the same as might have and may have, but couldn't have is different from might not have and may not have.

- TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

We also use might (not), may (not) and could when we are not certain about the future:
James might go out to see Steven in Australia next month.

EXPECTATIONS

When we expect something will happen, we use **should (not) + infinitive** without to:
Steven should write to us soon. (= I expect he will write ...)
It shouldn't be too long before we hear from Steven. (= I expect it will not be too long ...)

We also use **should** when we discover that a situation is **not as** we **expected**:
This letter is from Melbourne. Steven should be in Sydney. (= he is in Melbourne but I'm surprised because I expected him to be in Sydney)

When we talk about a **past situation**, we use **should (not) have + past participle**:
He should have left Alice Springs several days ago. (= I expect he left Alice Springs ...)
He shouldn't have had any trouble finding places to stay.
(= I expect he didn't have any trouble ...)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

PRACTICE BANK

A. Fill in the gaps with can('t), could(n't), or the correct form of be able to. Sometimes there are two possible answers.

The maths genius

Ryan Kennedy speaks to Nick Evans about his amazing talent.

'One day when I was four years old, my father was telling my mother how much money he'd spent and while he was talking I added it all up. They didn't believe that I could/was able to (1) do that because I _____ (2) read or write. I' m now at university and I _____ (3) still add up complicated sums in my head. I did a maths exam once which I finished so quickly I _____ (4) eat a meal in the canteen before the others had finished. Next year we have to write essays and I'm not sure whether I _____ (5) do that because I _____ (never) (6) spell very well.

I would like _____ (7) use my mathematical skill in a job but I haven't decided what yet. I _____ (8) be a maths teacher- I'd enjoy the maths but I'm not sure about the children! I entered a maths quiz show on TV once but when they asked me the questions I _____ (9) think of the answers because I was just too nervous. So I _____ (10) imagine myself as a TV star. I _____ (11) always get work in the supermarket when the tills break down, I suppose!'

B. Read about what has happened on a camping trip.

Two boys are camping with their families near a lake. One day they find an old boat and decide to row out to an uninhabited island. They explore the island until suddenly they realise it's getting dark. They run to find the boat, but it's gone.

Here are some of the things their families say when they don't come back.

1. There can't be much to eat on the island.
2. Someone may have noticed them rowing across the lake.
3. They could be stuck there for days.
4. A fishing boat might see them.
5. They must have forgotten how late it was.
6. They must be getting scared.
7. There may be a cave or hut they can shelter in.
8. The boat could have sunk.
9. Someone may have taken the boat.
10. They can't have tied the boat up properly.

Write the number of the sentences with their meanings, a or b.

a. I feel certain about this. 1
b. I think this is possible. _____

C. Fill in the gaps with a modal verb and the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Jenny's brother can't be (be) a doctor because he's only 18.
2. Samantha said she'd go for a swim as soon as she reached the seaside so she ..... (swim) in the sea right now.
3. I don't seem to have my wallet. I ..... (leave) it at home because I paid for my train ticket.
4. A: I left Camilla a message on her answerphone but she hasn't rung yet.
   B: She ..... (not listen) to it yet. She usually has a shower as soon as she gets home from work.
5. A: I found this watch in the changing rooms.
   B: It ..... (be) Peter's. I think he's got one like that.

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6. I can't make the video recorder work. I ..... (do) something wrong. Where are the instructions?
7. I can't think what's happened to Annie. She left home hours ago so she ..... (be) here by now.
8. These football boots don't fit me any more. My feet ..... (grow).
9. He remembers when there were fields here instead of houses so he ..... (be) very old.
10. A: I don't really like James. Why did you invite him?
    B: Don't worry. He ..... (not come) anyway. He said he wasn't sure what his plans were.

D. Read this police report about a stolen painting.

A very small but valuable painting has been stolen from Sidcombe art gallery. We know it was stolen between 6.00 and 7.30 on Friday evening.
There are several suspects. They all have keys to the art gallery:

The caretaker, Sam Willis Sam, who has worked at the gallery for 32 years, locked up at 6.30 as usual after the cleaners had left.	**A student, Daniel Foreman** When the gallery shut at 5.30 Daniel begged the caretaker to let him stay a bit longer to finish his work. The caretaker saw him coming out of the toilets at 6.30 and told him to leave. He bought an expensive car on Saturday.
A cleaner, Sandra Thompson Sandra cleaned the offices and the galleries with two other cleaners. They finished at 6.00 and had a chat in the cloakroom before leaving together at 6.15. She says the picture was still there at 6.00.	**The shop manager, Sophie Christie** Sophie closed the museum shop at 5.30 but had to stay and wait for a delivery. The driver got delayed in the traffic and arrived at 6.05. He left straight away and Sophie said she left at about 6.15 but nobody saw her leave the building.
The Director, William Rees William was on the phone in his office between 6.00 and 7.00. He says he left the gallery at 7.15 but nobody saw him leave.	**The cloakroom attendant, Josie McCartney** The cloakroom closed at 5.30 and Josie tidied up. She was just leaving when the cleaners arrived and she stopped to have a chat with them. They all left together at 6.15.

Who had the opportunity to steal the painting? Complete these sentences using must have, can't have, couldn't have, might have, may have and could have. Use each structure once.

1. Sam Willis might have stolen the painting because he was there until 6.30.
2. Sandra Thompson _____ the painting because _____.
3. William Rees _____ the painting because _____.
4. Daniel Foreman _____ the painting because _____.
5. Sophie Christie _____ the painting because _____.
6. Josie McCartney _____ the painting because _____.

E. Complete the sentences with can, could, may, might, will, should, ought to or must and an infinitive in the appropriate form.

1. Kerry's rather late. She must have missed (miss) the train.
2. Travellers' cheques can/ may be exchanged (be exchanged) at most banks.
3. They're not answering the phone so they _____ (be) out.
4. Don't phone her now. It _____ (be) the middle of the night in Australia.
5. They _____ (not move) house yet. I saw them in town this morning.

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6. I haven't seen Molly this week. I think she _____ (visit) her parents but I'm not sure.
7. Her exam results are coming out soon. She worked very hard so she _____ (do) well.
8. That woman's just fallen over. Let's go and see her: she _____ (be) hurt.
9. I don't know where she is. She _____ (not still play) tennis: it's been dark far the last hour.
10. I sent the letter two days ago so he _____ (get) it by now, but you can never be sure.
11. The encyclopaedias _____ (be found) on the second floor of the library.
12. Jim's been very quiet since his girlfriend went away. He _____ (miss) her.
13. I _____ (come) and visit you at the weekend. Anyway, I'll give you a ring to let you know.
14. She was with a man I didn't recognize. It _____ (be) her brother because he looked a bit like her.
15. The roads are fairly quiet today so we _____ (have) a good journey.
16. 'Do you think Josephine _____ at home now?'
No, she _____. She _____ (have) a swim. She always does at this time in the morning.'
17. 'Why do you think Tricia was in such a hurry?'
'I don't know. She _____ (run) to catch the bus.'
18. These glasses _____ (be) Tim's: they look a bit like his.
19. It _____ (not rain): the ground's completely dry.
20. I _____ (join) the sports club in the summer but I haven't decided yet.
21. What a terrible thing to have happened. You _____ (be) terrified.
22. I told her you were coming so she _____ (expect) you.
23. They've just rung the bell so the children _____ (be) out of the classrooms in a minute.
24. That looks like Jack but it _____ (not be) him. He went to live in Australia last year.
25. I've got a stomachache this morning. I _____ (eat) too much last night or I _____ (have) some sort of virus.

LIVEWORKSHEETS