



**can - could - may - will - would**  
**must - have to - need (to) - can't** |||

## Grammar

**Can, could, may, will, would, must, need, etc.** are **modal verbs** and:

- they do not form all the tenses.
- they are the same in all persons, singular and plural.
- they form the interrogative and the negative without auxiliary verbs (**do/did**).
- they are followed by the **base form of a verb, without to**.

### **a** can/could/may/will/would

We use **Can I..?, Could I..?, May I..?:**

- to ask for, give or refuse **permission**.  
*Can/Could/May I go to the park, Mum?*  
*Yes, you can/may. No, you can't/may not.*
- to make polite requests and offer help.  
*Can/Could/May I have some more tea?*  
*Can/Could/May I get you some coffee?*

We use **Can/Could/Will/Would you...?:**

- to make polite requests or ask for a **favour**.  
**Could** and **Would** are more polite.  
*Can/Could/Will/Would you give me a lift?*



## **b** must / have to / can't

### We use **must**:

- in the affirmative and interrogative to express **obligation** in the present and future.  
*I must give James a call. Must we go so soon?*
- in the negative to express **prohibition**.  
*You mustn't use more than 15 GBs a month.*

### We use **have to**:

- in the affirmative and interrogative to express **obligation** in the present and future.  
*You have to wear a uniform. Do you have to work on Saturdays?*
- in the negative to express **absence of obligation**.  
*She doesn't have to pick up if she doesn't recognise the telephone number.*

### **NOTE:**

- **Must** expresses an obligation that the speaker imposes on himself/herself or others.  
**Have to** expresses an obligation that is imposed by somebody or something else.
- **Must** and **have to** form the Past with **had to/didn't have to** and the Future with **will have to/won't have to**. The affirmative expresses obligation and the negative absence of obligation in the past or the future respectively.  
*Kate didn't have to go to school yesterday because she was ill.  
You must prepare your presentation tonight because you will have to give it at 9 a.m. tomorrow.*
- To express prohibition, we can also use **can't**.  
*You can't use your mobile phone in the hospital.*



## **C** need (to)

We use **need**:

- as a **main verb** in all tenses in the affirmative, interrogative and negative. It is followed by a **full infinitive** and forms the interrogative and negative with **auxiliary verbs** (do/does, did etc.)
- as a **modal verb** in the interrogative and negative of the **Present Simple** only. It is followed by a **bare infinitive** and forms the interrogative and negative without **auxiliary verbs**.

Affirmative	Negative	Questions
I need to go	I don't need to go I needn't go	Do I need to go? Need I go?
He/She/It needs to go	He/She/It doesn't need to go He/She/It needn't go	Does he/she/it need to go? Need he/she/it go?
We/You/They need to go	We/You/They don't need to go We/You/They needn't go	Do we/you/they need to go? Need we/you/they go?

### We use **need**:

- in the affirmative and interrogative to express **necessity**.  
*I need to talk to Jane.*
- in the negative to express **absence of necessity**.  
*You don't need to buy anything.*  
*She needn't catch the bus. She can take the underground instead.*



# Activities



## A. Circle the correct words.

1. **Could / May** you get me a newspaper when you go out?  
**B:** No, you **won't / can't** . You've got lots of homework to do.
2. **A:** **Will / Can** I go shopping with my friends, Mum?  
**B:** No, you **won't / can't** . You've got lots of homework to do.
3. **A:** Please remember that you **must / need** be here by 2 p.m.  
**B:** OK. I'll **must / have to** leave work earlier.
4. **A:** **Would / May** you mind teaching me how to drive?  
**B:** I'm sorry, I **may not / can't** . You're too young to drive.
5. **A:** **Could / May** you leave a message, please?  
**B:** Sure. Please, tell Mr Smith that his car is ready.
6. **A:** Excuse me, **may / would** I take this bag with me on the plane?  
**B:** Of course you **would / may** , sir.
7. **A:** Jenny, when can I borrow your camera? I really **need / need to** it.  
**B:** I **must / can** give it to you on Monday, and you **don't have to / mustn't** give it back for another week or so.
8. **A:** **Do I need / Need I** wash the car today?  
**B:** Yes! It's very dirty!
9. **A:** **Can / Will** I give you a lift?  
**B:** Thanks, Harry.



**B. Complete the dialogues using the words in the box.**



would    need    have to

1. **A:** I \_\_\_\_\_ some help. \_\_\_\_\_ you mind helping me?  
**B:** Oh, I'm sorry, I'm too busy. I \_\_\_\_\_ finish this project in two hours.



need to    can't    could    can

2. **A:** I \_\_\_\_\_ drive you home if you like.  
**B:** That's very kind of you, but I \_\_\_\_\_ buy some things from the supermarket. \_\_\_\_\_ you drive me there first?  
**A:** I'm afraid I \_\_\_\_\_. I'm in a hurry.

**C. Circle the correct words.**

1. Maria **has to** / **needs** be home by midnight.
2. You **mustn't** / **don't have to** eat if you aren't hungry.
3. You've got all day tomorrow to return Betty's call. You **mustn't** / **don't need** to talk to her tonight.
4. Sheila **must** / **have to** take her medicine.
5. You **needn't** / **don't have** cook tonight. We're eating out.
6. We **need** / **must** to buy our bus tickets.
7. The office is closed tomorrow so I **mustn't** / **don't have to** get up early.
8. Thanks a lot for the present, but you **had to** / **didn't have to** buy me anything.
9. You **mustn't** / **don't have to** go for the 128rX mobile phone. It's much too expensive.