

obligation, necessity, prohibition, advice

obligation and necessity

- 1 I **have to** fix the kitchen tap.
Do you **have to** do it yourself?
She **had to** buy new curtains.
- 2 You **must** be more careful.
Must I go to bed now?
You **must** pay him back as soon as possible.
- 3 I **need to** buy an extra tin of paint.
Did they need to ask someone to help them?

- 1 We use *have to* to talk about all kinds of obligation.
Have to can be used in all tenses.



have got to

We often use *have got to* instead of *have to*, e.g. I've got to phone him tomorrow.

- 2 We also use *must* to talk about obligation. The meaning is similar to *have to*, but *must* is usually used when the speaker sees something as a personal obligation.
Compare:
I have to start work at 9.00. (A general obligation, the company rule.)
I must remember to buy some batteries. (A personal obligation, one that the speaker imposes.)
- 3 We can use *need to* to talk about things that are necessary. *Need to* can be used in all tenses.

no obligation / no necessity

- 1 You **don't have to** pay me now.
- 2 She **won't need to** paint the bathroom – it looks fine.
- 3 You **needn't** hurry. We have plenty of time.

- 1 We use *(not) have to* when there is no obligation to do something.
- 2 We use *(not) need to* when it is not necessary to do something.
- 3 We can also use *needn't + infinitive without to* to say that it is not necessary to do something.

prohibition

You **mustn't** change the bulb with the electricity switched on.
You **mustn't** touch that door. The paint's wet.

We use *mustn't* when there is an obligation *not* to do something. *Mustn't* and *don't have to* are completely different.

Compare:

You **mustn't** come tomorrow. = *Don't come.* (An obligation not to do something.)
You **don't have to** come tomorrow. = *It's not necessary to come.* (No obligation.)

advice

- 1 You **should** sell your car.
They **shouldn't** pay him before he's done the work.
- 2 You **ought to** get a smartphone.
She **oughtn't to** spend so much on clothes.
- 3 If you feel really ill, you **must** go to the doctor's.
When you're in Venice, you **have to** have a coffee at Harry's Bar!

- 1 We use *should / shouldn't* to give someone advice, or to say what we think is the right thing for ourselves or for someone else to do.
- 2 We can also use *ought to / oughtn't to* to give advice.
The meaning is the same as *should*.
- 3 We can use *must* and *have to* to give strong advice when we think it's very important that someone does something.

- a Circle the correct form. Tick ✓ if both are possible.

She had to / must buy some tools last week.

- 1 They don't have to / mustn't drive. There's a bus that goes there.
- 2 You needn't / don't have to worry about getting a ticket in advance – you can pay on the train.
- 3 He shouldn't / doesn't have to put a nail in the wall. It'll leave a mark.
- 4 You'll have to / You'll need to read the instructions before you try to assemble the table.
- 5 We should / ought to turn off the electricity when we go.
- 6 I don't need to / mustn't leave yet. I have plenty of time.
- 7 You mustn't / don't have to spill anything on the sofa – it's leather.
- 8 She mustn't / didn't have to go to work yesterday.
- 9 They don't need to / needn't phone us unless their train is delayed.
- 10 You oughtn't to / don't have to arrive late on your first day at work.

- b Complete the sentences with one word.

I definitely think you should sell your house. It would be a really good idea.

- 1 You _____ remove light bulbs with wet hands. It's really dangerous.
- 2 Here's the form. You _____ to sign it at the bottom.
- 3 I think perhaps you _____ to buy a new table, and maybe you could get some chairs as well.
- 4 We _____ have to leave until 2.30. It'll only take an hour to get there.
- 5 She _____ come if she doesn't want to. Nobody will mind.
- 6 Our journey back was a nightmare. We _____ to wait hours for the bus.
- 7 You _____ read his new book! You'll love it.
- 8 You _____ to drink so much coffee. It's really not good for you.
- 9 Do I _____ to write a letter or can I just send an email?