

## Modals – exercises and more

<https://www.english-at-home.com/lessons/grammar-exercise-past-modals/>

**Language checkpoint: Unit 2**

**Grammar reference**

**Modal verbs of obligation, prohibition, permission, criticism and advice – Present**

We use:

- **have to** to talk about things which are obligatory or necessary. It often describes obligations imposed on us by other people and authorities.
- **don't have to** to talk about things which are not obligatory or necessary.
- **must** to talk about rules, regulations and obligations. It often describes obligations that come internally, from ourselves.
- **mustn't** to talk about prohibitions.
- **need to** to talk about things which are obligatory or necessary.
- **don't need to** or **needn't** to talk about things which are not obligatory or necessary. With **needn't** we do not use **to** before the infinitive.
- **can't** to refuse permission.
- **should, shouldn't, ought to, had ('d) better (not)** to give and ask for advice and recommendations. **Had better** is especially for when we think we should do something because it's a good idea. **Ought to** and **had ('d) better** are slightly less common in negative and question form.
- **be allowed to** to talk about things that we have permission to do.
- **be supposed to** when somebody is expected to behave in a particular way, especially according to someone in authority.

**Modal verbs of obligation, prohibition, criticism and advice – Past**

We use:

- **had to** to talk about things which were obligatory or necessary.
- **didn't have to** to talk about things which were not obligatory or necessary. We do not use **to** before the infinitive.
- **needn't have + past participle** to talk about things that were not obligatory or necessary, but we did them.

**Modal verbs of obligation, prohibition, criticism and advice – Past**

We use:

- **had to** to talk about things which were obligatory or necessary.
- **didn't have to** to talk about things which were not obligatory or necessary.
- **needed to** to talk about things which were obligatory or necessary.
- **didn't need to** to talk about things which were not obligatory or necessary, and so we didn't do them.
- **needn't have + past participle** to talk about things that were not obligatory or necessary, but we did them.
- **wasn't/weren't allowed to** to talk about past prohibitions.
- **couldn't** to talk about things that were prohibited or not possible.
- **should/ought to have, shouldn't have + past participle** to criticise past actions or to say that they were a mistake.

**Modal verbs of speculation, deduction, possibility and probability – Present and future**

We use:

- **must** when we are 90% certain that something is true.
- **may, might, could, may not, mightn't** when there is a 50% possibility that something is true (or not). We can add **well** after **may, might** and **could** in the affirmative to say that there is a stronger possibility.
- **can't** when we are 90% certain that something is not true.
- When we are 100% certain that something is or isn't true, we do not use modal verbs of speculation and deduction.

**Modal verbs of speculation, deduction, possibility and probability – Past**

We use:

- **must have** when we are 90% certain that something was true.
- **can't have** when we are 90% certain that something was not true.
- **may have, might have, could have, may not have, mightn't have** when there is a 50% possibility that something was true (or not). We can add **well** after **may, might** and **could** in the affirmative to say that there is a stronger possibility.

**Vocabulary**



the meaning?

2 Look at these sentences. Do they have the same meaning? If not, explain the difference.

- 1a I didn't need to go to school yesterday.
- 1b I needn't have gone to school yesterday.
- 2a You don't have to eat everything on the plate.
- 2b You mustn't eat everything on the plate.
- 3a We ought to leave now if we want be on time.
- 3b We'd better leave now if we want be on time.
- 4a You have to use a pencil in this part of the exam.
- 4b You've got to use a pencil in this part of the exam.
- 5a When I was small, I wasn't allowed to stay up late.
- 5b When I was small, I may not have stayed up late.
- 6a I must have worn a school uniform in primary school.
- 6b I had to wear a school uniform in primary school.
- 7a You shouldn't wake her up yet.
- 7b You aren't supposed to wake her up yet.
- 8a Must you make noise while I'm working?
- 8b Do you have to make noise while I'm working?

Complete the sentences with an appropriate modal verb and the correct form of the verb given.

- 5a When I was small, I wasn't allowed to stay up late.
- 5b When I was small, I may not have stayed up late.
- 6a I must have worn a school uniform in primary school.
- 6b I had to wear a school uniform in primary school.
- 7a You shouldn't wake her up yet.
- 7b You aren't supposed to wake her up yet.
- 8a Must you make noise while I'm working?
- 8b Do you have to make noise while I'm working?

3 Complete the sentences with an appropriate modal verb and the correct form of the verbs given. There may be more than one possible answer.

- 1 You ..... texts while you're driving. (send)
- 2 When I was small, we ..... everywhere because we didn't have a car or a bike. (walk)
- 3 You ..... with a red pen in the exam yesterday because the teacher gets annoyed. (write)
- 4 You ..... early this morning because it's Sunday. Why did you do it? (get up)
- 5 My dad ..... jeans at school. They had a special rule against it. (wear)
- 6 If you really want to buy a car next year, I think you ..... a job and start saving. (find)

4 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

- 1 It would have been better if I'd told you the truth.  
I ..... the truth. **HAVE**
- 2 He said we mustn't go without him.  
He said we ..... without him. **TO**
- 3 We must buy tickets from the driver.  
We ..... tickets from the driver. **GOT**
- 4 It was a bad idea for us to drive in the snow.  
We ..... in the snow. **HAVE**
- 5 It was stupid of me to worry about the exam.  
I ..... the exam. **NEEDN'T**
- 6 I'm annoyed you went to the party without me.  
You ..... without me. **GONE**
- 7 It would have been better for them to get a taxi.  
They ..... a taxi. **OUGHT**

5 SPEAKING Work in a group. Talk about these

- c prohibition
- 10 I **have to return** the car to my dad before six or he'll kill me.  
a advice  
c permission
- b obligation

2 Find and correct the mistakes in the sentences. One sentence is correct.

- 1 I needn't have gone to the bank because Mum lent me some money yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 We don't have to get the train to school today because Dad's giving us a lift. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 They mustn't have put that pedestrian crossing there because it's much too dangerous. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 It's going to rain soon so you've got to bring your books in from the garden. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 We mustn't finish this project on traffic congestion until the end of the week. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 According to the sign we may not have driven through the town centre yesterday, so we took a different route. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 You hadn't better hand in your essay before you've checked it. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 In the driving test I ought to have answered a lot of questions about road signs, which were really hard. \_\_\_\_\_