

Can, could and be able to: talking about ability

A

We sometimes use **be able to** instead of **can** and **could** to talk about ability. However, we avoid **be able to** –

- ☆ when we talk about something that is happening as we speak:
 - Watch me, Mum; I **can** stand on one leg. (*not* ...I'm able to stand on one leg.)
- ☆ before passives:
 - CDs **can** now *be copied* easily. (*rather than* CDs are now able to be copied...)
- ☆ when the meaning is 'know how to':
 - **Can** you cook? (*rather than* Are you able to cook?)

B

If we talk about a single achievement, rather than a general ability in the past, we usually use **be able to** rather than **could**. Compare:

- Sue **could** play the flute quite well. (*or* ...**was able to**...; a general ability) *and*
- She swam strongly and **was able to** cross the river easily, even though it was swollen by the heavy rain. (*not* She swam strongly and **could** cross...; a specific achievement)

However, **could** is usually more natural –

- ☆ in negative sentences:
 - I tried to get up but I **couldn't** move. (*rather than* ...I wasn't able to move.)
- ☆ with verbs of the senses – e.g. **feel**, **hear**, **see**, **smell**, **taste** – and with verbs of 'thinking' – e.g. **believe**, **decide**, **remember**, **understand**:
 - I **could** *remember* the crash, but nothing after that. (*rather than* I was able to remember...)
- ☆ after the phrases **the only thing/place/time**, and after **all** when it means 'the only thing':
 - *All* we **could** see were his feet. (*rather than* All we were able to...)
- ☆ to suggest that something almost didn't happen, particularly with **almost**, **hardly**, **just**, **nearly**:
 - I **could** *nearly* touch the ceiling. (*rather than* I was nearly able to...)

Can and could: talking about possibility

C

To talk about the theoretical possibility of something happening we use **could**, not **can**. However, we use **can**, not **could**, to say that something is possible and actually happens. Compare:

- It **could** be expensive to keep a cat. (= if we had one, it could or it may not be expensive) *and*
- It **can** be expensive to keep a cat. (= it can be, and it sometimes is)

We use **can't**, not **couldn't**, to say that something is theoretically or actually impossible:

- There **can't** be many people in the world who haven't watched television.
- The doctor **can't** see you this morning; he's busy at the hospital.

D

We use **can** to indicate that there is a very real possibility of a future event happening. Using **could** suggests that something is less likely or that there is some doubt about it. Compare:

- We **can** stay with Jim in Oslo. (= we will be able to stay) *and*
- We **could** stay with Jim in Oslo. (= it's possible; if he's there)

Could and be allowed to: talking about permission

E

To say that in the past someone had *general* permission to do something – that is, to do it at any time – we can use either **could** or **was/were allowed to**. However, to talk about permission for one *particular* past action, we use **was/were allowed to**, but not **could**. Compare:

- Anyone **was allowed to** fish in the lake when the council owned it. (*or* ...**could** fish...) *and*
- Although he didn't have a ticket, Ken **was allowed to** come in. (*not* ...**could** come in.)

In negative sentences, we can use either **couldn't** or **wasn't/weren't allowed to** to say that permission was not given in general *or* particular situations:

- We **couldn't/weren't allowed to** open the presents until Christmas morning.

- 15.1 Underline the correct or more natural answer. If both answers are possible, underline them both. (A & B)
- 1 Valuables *can/ are able to* be left in the hotel safe. Please ask at the reception desk.
 - 2 We *could/ were able to* finish the football match before it started snowing too heavily.
 - 3 The rebels *could/ were able to* draw on the support of over 20,000 soldiers.
 - 4 *Could you/ Were you able to* understand Professor Larsen's lecture? I found it really difficult.
 - 5 'Do you want a game?' 'Sorry, I *can't/ 'm not able to* play chess.'
 - 6 Look at me, I *can/ 'm able to* ride my bike without any help.
 - 7 When the fire officers arrived they *could/ were able to* put out the flames in a couple of minutes.
 - 8 The air was so polluted in the city centre, I *could hardly/ was hardly able to* breathe.
 - 9 I knew John had been smoking. I *could/ was able to* smell the cigarettes when I came into the room.
 - 10 *Can you/ Are you able to* drive without your glasses?
 - 11 No changes *can/ are able to* be made to this rail ticket after purchase.
 - 12 He *could/ was able to* untie the ropes without the guards noticing.
 - 13 She looked all over the house, but *couldn't/ wasn't able to* find her keys anywhere.
 - 14 I was very busy at work, but I *could/ was able to* have a couple of days off last week.
- 15.2 Complete these texts with **can**, **could** and **be allowed to**. Use negative forms where necessary. Where two answers are possible, give them both. (A-E)

a

We went camping in the north of Spain last July. As you probably know, it (1) rain a lot on the coast, even in mid-summer, and the day we arrived we (2) believe how heavy the rain was. Eventually we found a place to camp, in a field next to a beach. We had a new tent – the advertisement for it said, 'This tent (3) be assembled in two minutes with no previous experience.' What a joke! Now, there (4) be many people who haven't had difficulty putting up a tent at some time, but it took us more than two hours. And then, just as it was finished, a man came along and said that we (5) camp there – it was private property. So we had to take the tent down again. Then Sue just said, 'Well, we (6) stay here all night. Let's go to that hotel in the last village we drove through.' Unfortunately, when we got there they were full. But they were very kind and we (7) camp at the end of their garden!

b

It is often said that sports coaches (1) be strict, but athlete Peter Black's was incredibly hard on him in the year before the Olympic Games. For instance, Peter (2) stay up later than 9.00, although on his birthday he (3) watch television until 10.00 as it was a special occasion! Of course, all Peter (4) think of was going out with his friends in the evening, and he (5) hardly wait for the Games to finish and get back to a normal life. When he complained, his coach just said, 'Trust me and you'll win gold – you (6) lose!' And his coach was right. He won a gold medal in the 400 metres in a world record time. And on the night of his victory Peter (7) celebrate – by staying up until 11 o'clock! 'But no later,' said his coach. 'The World Championships are only two years away.'

will, would and used to

We can use **will** (for the present) and **would** (for the past) to talk about characteristic behaviour or habits:

- Every day Dan **will** come home from work and turn on the TV.
- At school she **would** always sit quietly and pay attention.

and about things that are or were always true:

- Cold weather **will** kill certain plants.
- During the war, people **would** eat all kinds of things that we don't eat now.

(For the use of **will** to talk about the future, see Unit 9.)

We don't use **will** or **would** in this way to talk about a *particular* occasion. Compare:

- Each time I gave him a problem he **would solve** it for me. *and*
- Last night I gave him a problem and he **solved** it for me. (*not* Last night I gave him a problem and he **would solve** it for me.)

However, we can use **will not** (**won't**) and **would not** (**wouldn't**) in either case. Compare:

- He **would/wouldn't** walk the 5 miles to his place of work. (characteristic behaviour) *and*
- She **wouldn't** say what was wrong when I asked her.

B In speech, we can stress **will** or **would** to criticise people's characteristic behaviour or habits. It often suggests that criticisms have been made before but ignored:

- She just **won't** do the washing up when I ask her.
- I was happy when Sam left. He **would** talk about people behind their backs.

We can also criticise a person directly or express disapproval of something they have done or do regularly using **will**:

- 'I feel sick.' 'Well, if you **will** eat so much, I'm not surprised.' (indicating disapproval)

C We can use **will** to draw conclusions or state assumptions about things that are the case now (see also Unit 9B):

- Jack **will** be at home by now. Let's go and see him.
- You **will** know that John and Sandra are engaged. (= I believe you already know)

D When we talk about repeated events in the past that don't happen now we can use either **would** or **used to + infinitive**. However, we can use **would** only if the time reference is clear. Compare:

- We **used to play** in the garden. (*not* We **would play**...; time reference not given) *and*
- Whenever we went to my uncle's house, we **would/used to play** in the garden.

We can use **used to** but not **would** when we talk about past states that have changed:

- The factory **used to** be over there.
- Didn't you **use to** smoke at university?

We don't use either **used to** or **would** when we say exactly how many times in total something happened, how long something took, or that a single event happened at a given past time:

- We **visited** Switzerland four times during the 1970s. (*not* We **would/used to visit**...)
- She **went** to Jamaica last month. (*not* She **would/used to go** to Jamaica last month.)

E To talk about an *unreal past* situation – that is, an imaginary situation or a situation that might have happened in the past, but didn't – we use **would have + past participle**:

- I **would have been** happy to see him, but I didn't have time.
- My grandmother **wouldn't have approved** of the exhibition.

However, when we want to indicate that we think a past situation actually happened, we prefer **will have + past participle**:

- As you **will have noticed**, he's got new glasses. (*rather than* ...would have noticed...)
- Most people **won't have seen** last night's lunar eclipse. (*rather than* ...wouldn't have seen...)

- 16.1 If possible, complete these sentences with **will** (or **won't**) or **would** (or **wouldn't**) followed by one of these verbs. If it is not possible to use **will** or **would**, use a verb in the past simple. (A & C)
- come decide eat help invite keep remember
- Amy works really hard. Every afternoon she home from school at 4.15 and do an hour of piano practice.
 - Richard phoned yesterday and me out for dinner.
 - When Dominic was young he any green vegetables.
 - The creaking noises in the old house me awake until I became accustomed to them.
 - I'm sure that many people seeing Sarah Thomas on television in the 1980s.
 - Whenever I had a problem with my maths homework, Sam me.
 - After standing on the bathroom scales, I that I needed to lose some weight.
- 16.2 If necessary, correct these sentences using **would** or **used to**. If neither **would** nor **used to** is correct, use a past simple verb form. (D)
- I would enjoy studying Latin when I was at school.
 - Orwell would spend winters in Spain and summers in England.
 - We would live in a bungalow on the south coast, and then we moved to a flat in London.
 - You used to teach at Halston University, didn't you?
 - On Saturdays and Sundays the ferry used to take tourists across to the island.
 - The committee would meet four times last week, but still no decision has been reached.
- 16.3 Complete these sentences with **will have** or **would have** and the past participle of one of these verbs. (E)
- buy hear hurt notice prefer say record
- 'I wanted to watch *The Simpsons* last night, but I missed it.' 'I'm certain Derek it. We can go over to his place to see it.'
 - Don't accept lifts from strangers – as my mother
 - I don't think the dog anyone, but I was still glad when the owner took it away.
 - I'm sure by now you about yesterday's robbery at the supermarket.
 - My parents weren't very affectionate towards me. I always thought they a daughter.
 - Sampras's rivals the difficulties he had with his shoulder in the tournament last week.
 - 'Did you like the present Joan gave you for your birthday?' 'Well, an umbrella stand isn't something I myself, but I suppose it might be useful.'
- 16.4 Suggest completions to these responses as in the last example of B. Show that you are criticising or expressing disapproval. (B)
- 'I think I'm putting on weight.' 'Well, if you will
- 'I've got a headache.' 'Well, if you will
- 'I'm really hot.' 'Well, if you will

May and might: possibility

A **May** and **might** often have a similar meaning when we talk about possibility. However, we prefer **may** in academic or formal language to talk about the characteristics or behaviour of something:

- The seeds from the plant **may** grow up to 20 centimetres in length.

and in speech we prefer **might** to say what we will possibly do in the future:

- I **might** paint the kitchen purple.

B We don't use **may** to ask questions about the possibility of something happening. Instead we use, for example, **could(n't)** or the phrase **be likely**:

- Could** it be that you don't want to leave? (*not* May it be that you ...?)
- Are you likely** to be in Spain again this summer? (*not* May you be in Spain...?)

It is possible to use **might** in this type of question, but it is rather formal:

- Might** they be persuaded to change their minds?

Note that we can use **may** in formally asking for permission and offering help:

- May** I leave now? **May** I help you?

C **Might** (not 'may') + **bare infinitive** is sometimes used to talk about what was *typically* the case in the past. This is a formal or literary use:

- During the war, the police **might** *arrest* you for criticising the king.
- Years ago children **might** *be sent* down mines at the age of six. (passive form)

We can also use **could** + **bare infinitive** in examples like this to talk about past ability (see Unit 15). For example, 'During the war, the police **could** arrest you...' means that the police were legally able to arrest you.

D When we say that a person or thing compensates to some extent for a limitation or weakness by having another characteristic, we can use a pattern with **may/might not + bare infinitive ...but...** or **may/might not have + past participle...but...:**

- The painting **may not** *be* a masterpiece, **but** you've got to admit that the colours are striking.
- She **might not** *have danced* very gracefully, **but** she had a lot of energy and enthusiasm.

E We use **may/might** (not 'can') + **have + past participle** and **may/might** (not 'can') + **be + -ing** to talk about possible events in the past, present and future:

- Do you think Jean **may/might** *have completed* the report by now? (past)
- His maths **may/might** *have improved* by the time the exam comes round. (future)
- Malcolm isn't in his office. He **may/might** *be working* at home today. (present)
- When I go to Vienna I **may/might** *be staying* with Richard, but I'm not sure yet. (future)

Note that **could** can be used in the same patterns instead of **may** or **might**:

- Do you think Jean **could** *have completed* the report by now?

We can use **may/might have been + -ing** to talk about possible situations or activities that went on over a period of past time:

- David didn't know where the ball was, but he thought his sister **might have been** *playing* with it before she left for school.

F We can use **might/could + have + past participle** to criticise someone because they didn't do something we think they should have:

- She's gone without us. She **might/could** *have waited*!
- You **might/could** *have done* the ironing instead of leaving it all to me.

We usually stress **might** or **could** in sentences like this.

17.1 Complete the sentences with either **may** or **might**, whichever is more likely. If neither is possible, suggest an alternative completion. (A & B)

- 1 We go to Majorca for our holiday this summer.
- 2 The planet Venus be seen clearly in the night sky during this month.
- 3 you see Becky this weekend?
- 4 I feel really sore after playing tennis. I think I have a bath.
- 5 'Someone's left their coat.' '..... it be Ken's?'
- 6 Exceeding the stated dose cause drowsiness.

17.2 Complete the sentences with **may** or **might** followed by one of the following forms of the verb in brackets: **be + past participle**, **have + past participle**, **be + -ing**, **have been + -ing**. If both **may** and **might** are possible, indicate this. (C & E)

- 1 There's a man lying down on the pavement over there. Do you think he himself? (*hurt*)
- 2 I you this before. I can't remember. (*tell*)
- 3 Is that John's car that just stopped? He for us. (*wait*)
- 4 In the early 19th century a person to Australia for stealing as little as a loaf of bread. (*send*)
- 5 'Ann looks exhausted.' 'I suppose she' (*run*)
- 6 I've heard that the newsagent's is losing a lot of money and it down. (*close*)
- 7 Real Madrid started well and an early lead when Figo hit the post, but Barcelona scored first after 20 minutes. (*take*)
- 8 As little as 50 years ago a worker still for being ill. (*dismiss*)
- 9 'When will the painting be ready?' 'Well, I it by this evening.' (*finish*)
- 10 The race had to be stopped because the oil on the track an accident. (*cause*)

17.3 Complete these sentences in any appropriate way. (D)

- 1 He may not be the best singer in the world, but
- 2 Hugh's old car might not be terribly comfortable, but
- 3 Her English grammar may not be very accurate, but

Now expand these notes to complete the sentences.

sound/ exciting agree/ him express/ feelings openly ~~work/ quickly~~



- 4 He may/might not work very quickly , but at least he's very reliable.
- 5 , but his opinions on architecture certainly make you think.
- 6 , but the new museum of fishing is actually very good.
- 7 , but she is really very fond of you.

Must and have (got) to

A

We use **must** and **must not** in formal rules and regulations and in warnings:

- Bookings **must** be made at least seven days before departure.
- The government **must not** be allowed to appoint judges.

In spoken English we often use **must** and **mustn't** (= must not) to propose a future arrangement, such as a meeting or social event, without making detailed plans:

- We **must** get together more often.
- We **mustn't** leave it so long next time.

We can also use **I must...** to remind ourselves to do something:

- I **must** phone Steve when I get home. I said I'd call him last night, but I forgot.

B

To draw a conclusion about –

☆ something that happened in the past we use **must + have + past participle**:

- That's not Kate's car. She **must have borrowed** it from her parents.

☆ something happening at or around the time of speaking we use **must be + -ing**:

- I can't hear anyone moving around upstairs. You **must be imagining** things.

☆ something that is likely to happen in the future we use **must be going to** or **must be + -ing**:

- 'What are all those workmen doing?' 'I think they **must be going to** dig up the road.'
- I was wrong about the meeting being today. It **must be happening** next Friday.

☆ a present situation we use **must be**, or **have (got) to be** in informal speech:

- Their goalkeeper **has got to be** at least two metres tall! (or ...**must be**...)

We can use **must have to** to say that we conclude something based on what we know about a present situation and **must have had to** to conclude something about a past situation:

- I can't start the computer. You **must have to know** a password. (= a password is necessary)
- John wasn't at home when I went round. He **must have had to go** out unexpectedly.

Note that we can't say 'must've to' or 'must have got to/ must've got to' (but we can say **must've had to**).

C

In questions that hope for or expect a negative answer we prefer **have (got) to**, although in formal contexts **must** is sometimes used:

- Do we have to** answer all the questions? (or **Have we got to...?**; **Must we...?** is also possible but rather formal)

We use **have to** in questions that imply a criticism. **Must** can also be used, although some people think this is rather old-fashioned. We usually stress **have** and **must** in sentences like this:

- Do you have to** play your trumpet here? It's deafening me! (or *more formally* **Must** you play...?)

D

Sometimes we can use either **have to** or **have got to**. However –

☆ we use **have to** with frequency adverbs such as **always**, **never**, **normally**, **rarely**, **sometimes**, etc:

- I *often* **have to** work at the weekend to get everything done.

☆ with the past simple we use **had to** especially in questions and negative sentences:

- When **did you have to** give it back? (*not* When had you got to give it back?)
- We **didn't have to** wait too long for an answer. (*not* We hadn't got to wait too long...)

☆ if **have** is contracted (e.g. I've, He's, It'd) then we must include **got**:

- The experiment has failed twice before, so it's **got to** work this time. (*not* ...so it's to work this time.)

☆ we don't use **have got to** with other modal verbs:

- Employees *will* **have to** accept the new conditions or be dismissed. (*not* Employees will have got to accept...)

Notice also that **have got to** is often preferred in informal speech.

18.1 Complete these sentences with one of these forms: **must have + past participle**; **must + bare infinitive**; **must be + -ing**; or **must have (had) to**. Use the verbs given. (B)

- 1 When I left my laptop on the train I thought I'd never see it again. But someone it and handed it in to the lost property office. (*find*)
- 2 Janine owns a big car and a yacht. She incredibly rich. (*be*)
- 3 'Everyone's going into the hall.' 'The meeting soon. Let's go.' (*start*)
- 4 Without things like washing machines and dishwashers our grandparents much harder in the kitchen than we do today. (*work*)
- 5 'Where's the camera?' 'If it's not in the cupboard, Ken it. He said he was going to take some photos of the city centre today.' (*use*)
- 6 The children are putting balloons outside their house. They a party. (*have*)
- 7 I didn't think Bob was coming to the meeting. He his mind. (*change*)
- 8 'I wonder how you get permission to go into the building.' 'I suppose you some form of identification.' (*show*)
- 9 'I thought Paul would be home.' 'He Jenny to work. He said he would.' (*take*)
- 10 Look at all those birds. There at least a thousand of them. (*be*)

18.2 Write new sentences with a similar meaning. Use **have/has got to** where it is possible or preferable; otherwise use **have/has to**. (D)

- 1 It is necessary to do all of this photocopying before lunchtime. All of this photocopying has got to be done/has to be done before lunchtime.
- 2 It is rarely necessary to ask Suzanne to tidy her room. Suzanne
- 3 Is it necessary for us to hand in the homework tomorrow? Have
- 4 It wasn't necessary for me to go to the hospital after all. I
- 5 Was it necessary for Ben to go alone? Did
- 6 It is sometimes necessary for Don to start work at 6.30. Don
- 7 It is necessary to extend the college to accommodate the growing number of students. The college
- 8 It may be necessary for us to cancel our holiday because my mother is ill. We

18.3 Where necessary, make corrections in the underlined parts of this email message. (A-D)

From: wendys@nex.net.uk
To: marge@ex.com.uk
Subject: A break in!

Attachments: none

Hello Marge

Sorry I haven't been in touch for a while. You (1) must have been wondering what's been happening. Well, I must admit I've had a pretty awful week. When I got home from work last Monday, the front door was wide open. The door's very stiff, and I (2) always have got to pull it very hard to shut it. My neighbour's always saying, "(3) Have you to bang the door so hard?" When I went in I found that the house had been burgled. They (4) must have climbed over the fence in the back garden. None of the windows and doors were damaged, so someone very small (5) must have to squeeze through the tiny window in the kitchen. I suppose I (6) must leave it open, but I didn't expect anyone to be able to get in. Then they (7) must have come through the house and opened the front door for the others. Of course, the first thing I did was to call the police and I (8) mustn't wait very long for them to get here. Fortunately, the only thing that was taken was my television. I think the burglars (9) must be disturbed, perhaps when the postman came. So now (10) I've to get a new lock for the front door and replace the television, and I (11) must put some locks on the windows. I suppose I (12) may must get a burglar alarm, too. I must say I've never really wanted one, but needs must! Anyway, (13) I've to go. Hope the family is well. Julie (14) must get ready to go back to university. And you (15) must be busy with the new school year just about to start. When you have time, we (16) have to get together for a weekend.

All the best for now,
Wendy

Can you find three other common expressions with **must**?

Need(n't), don't need to and don't have to

A We can use **need** as an ordinary verb or as a modal verb (followed by a bare infinitive). As a modal verb it doesn't change its tense and doesn't add '-s' for the third person singular.

Compare:

- I **needed** to leave early. *or* She's thirsty. She **needs** a drink. (= ordinary verb) *and*
- You **needn't** *speak* so loudly. (= modal verb)

When it is a modal verb **need** is most commonly used in negative sentences, often with verbs like **bother**, **concern**, **fear**, **panic**, **worry**:

- I've already cleaned the car so you **needn't** *bother* to do it.
- Judges in England **need not** *retire* until they are 75.
- I was very nervous before the interview, but I **needn't** *have worried*. Everyone was very friendly and I got the job.

It is sometimes used in questions, but we prefer to use **need** as an ordinary verb or **have to**:

- Need** you **go** so soon? (= modal verb; less common and rather formal)
- Do** you **need to go** so soon? (= ordinary verb) *or* **Do** you **have to go** so soon?

It is rarely used in affirmative sentences (that is, not questions or negatives), but is sometimes found in written English, particularly in fiction:

- We **need** *have* no fear for Nicole, she can take care of herself.

In other styles of formal written English it is used in this way with negative words such as **hardly**, **never**, **nobody/no-one**, and **only**:

- The changes **need** *only* be small to make the proposals acceptable. (*less formally* The changes only need to be...)
- Nobody* ever **need** know about the money. (*less formally* Nobody ever needs to know...)
- 'I don't want my parents to know.' 'They **need** *never* find out.' (*less formally* They never need to find out.)

B To give permission not to do something we can use either **needn't** or **don't need to**:

- You **needn't** cut the grass, I'll do it later. (*or* You **don't need to** cut the grass...)

To talk about a general necessity, we prefer **don't need to**:

- You **don't need to be** over 18 to get into a disco. (*rather than* You needn't be...)

C We can often use either **needn't** or **don't have to** with little difference in meaning to say that it is unnecessary to do something:

- You **needn't** whisper. Nobody can hear us. (*or* You **don't have to**...)

However, some people prefer **needn't** when it is the speaker who decides the lack of necessity, and **don't have to** when external rules or somebody else's actions make something unnecessary.

Compare:

- As you worked late yesterday you **needn't** come in until 10.00 tomorrow morning. (the speaker's decision) *and*
- We've been told that we **don't have to** be at work until 10.00 tomorrow. (reporting someone else's decision.)

D We can use **needn't** (*or* **don't have to**) to say that something is not necessarily true. We don't use **mustn't** in this way (see also Unit 18C):

- Volcanoes **needn't** erupt constantly to be classified as 'active'. (*or* Volcanoes **don't have to** erupt...; *not* Volcanoes **mustn't** erupt...)
- Nowadays it **needn't** cost a fortune to own a powerful computer. (*or* Nowadays it **doesn't have to** cost...; *not* Nowadays it **mustn't** cost...)

19.1 Match the sentence beginnings and ends. Join them with **needn't** and the bare infinitive of one of the following verbs. (A)

bother change concern panic worry

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 I'll give you a lift to the station so you... | ...the details on the form. |
| 2 The questions are in the book so you... | ...yourself with his safety. |
| 3 All the windows have screens so you... | ...to copy them down. |
| 4 Your son is being looked after by friends so you... | ...about booking a taxi. |
| 5 The new tax laws don't come into force until next year so you... | ...about being bitten by mosquitoes. |

19.2 Rewrite the following in a formal style using **need**. (A)

- It is hardly necessary for us to remind you that the money is now due.
We need hardly remind you that the money is now due.
- It is only necessary for us to look at the population projections to see the seriousness of the problem.
.....
- With such a lead in the opinion polls it is hardly necessary for the Democrats to bother campaigning before the election.
.....
- It is not necessary for anyone to know who paid the ransom to the kidnappers.
.....
- After such a huge lottery win, it is not necessary for him to work again.
.....

19.3 Underline the more likely answer. If they are equally likely, underline them both. (B)

- In most developed countries, people *needn't/ don't need* to boil water before they drink it.
- You *needn't/ don't need* to walk. I'll give you a lift.
- There'll be a handout at the end of the lecture so you *needn't/ don't need* to take notes.
- You *needn't/ don't need* to have a university degree to become a police officer.
- You *needn't/ don't need* to buy me a birthday present.
- In most cities you *needn't/ don't need* to pay to get into the galleries and museums.

19.4 Here are some extracts from a speech made by the managing director of a company to her employees. Correct any mistakes. (A-D)

- You needn't to worry about losing your jobs.
- Need we make any changes in company policy? We are always happy to hear your views.
- Changes in technology mustn't be a problem, but could be seen as a great opportunity.
- I don't have to remind you that we are competing with two other companies.
- I need hardly to tell you how important it is that we get this order.
- You don't have to cancel your holiday plans.
- We mustn't allow our speed of production to drop.
- The present financial difficulties mustn't mean that people will lose their jobs.

Should, ought to and had better

A We can often use either **should** or **ought to** to talk about obligations and recommendations (e.g. You **should/ought to** finish your homework before you go out) and probability (e.g. It **should/ought to** be ready by now) although in general **should** is used more frequently. **Ought to** is used particularly in speech and most often to talk about obligation rather than probability.

Notice also the following details –

- ☆ we prefer **should** when we say what an outside authority recommends:
 - The manual says that the computer **should** be disconnected from the power supply before the cover is removed. (*rather than ...ought to be disconnected...*)
- ☆ we use **should** (or **would**), not **ought to**, when we give advice with I...:
 - I **should** leave early tomorrow, if I were you. (*or I would leave...; or I'd leave...*)
- ☆ we prefer **should** in questions, particularly *wh*-questions:
 - What **should** I do if I have any problems? □ **Should** I ring you at home?
 Some people might use 'What ought I to do...?' and 'Ought I to...?', but this is rather formal.

Note that when we conclude, on the basis of some evidence we have, that something is certain or very likely we can use **must** (see Unit 18) but not **should/ought to**:

- It's the third time she's been skating this week. She **must** really enjoy it.

B We use **should/ought to + have + past participle** to talk about something that didn't happen in the past and we are sorry that it didn't:

- We **should/ought to have waited** for the rain to stop. (I'm sorry we didn't)

We often use this pattern to indicate some regret or criticism and the negative forms **shouldn't/oughtn't to have** are almost always used in this way.

We also use **should/ought to + have + past participle** to talk about an expectation that something happened, has happened, or will happen:

- If the flight was on time, he **should/ought to have arrived** in Jakarta early this morning.
- The builders **should/ought to have finished** by the end of the week.

C We can use **should** in questions that are offers or that request confirmation or advice:

- **Should** I phone for a taxi for you? □ Who **should** I pass the message to?

Note that in sentences like these we can also use **shall** with a very similar meaning, and **ought to** is also used in questions, although less commonly.

Compare the use of **shall** and **should** in sentences such as the following, where 'I shall' means 'I intend to' and 'I should' means 'I ought to':

- I **shall** read the script on the train tomorrow. (*or I'll read...*)
- I **should** read the script on the train tomorrow but I know that I'll be too tired.

D We can use **had better** instead of **should/ought to**, especially in spoken English, to say that we think it is a good idea to do something:

- If you're not well, you'd **better** ask Ann to go instead. (*or... you should/ought to...*)

although we don't use it to talk about the past or to make general comments:

- You **should/ought to** have caught a later train. (*not* You had better have caught...)
- I don't think parents **should/ought to** give their children sweets. (*not* I don't think parents had better give their children sweets.)

We prefer **had better** if we want to express particular urgency and in demands and threats:

- There's someone moving about downsrs. We'd **better** call the police, quickly.

Notice that the negative form is **had better not**. In question forms the subject comes after **had**, although many people avoid questions with **had better**:

- He'd **better not** be late again or he'll be in trouble.
- **Hadn't** we better get a taxi? (*or Shouldn't we get...?*)

20.1 Complete these sentences with **should/ought to + infinitive (active)**, **should/ought to be + past participle (passive)**, or **should/ought to have + past participle** using each of these verbs once only. (A & B)

answer arrive be go put remove resign send take visit wear win

- 1 He is running so well at the moment that Thomas the 800 metres easily.
- 2 Where I the cheese? In the fridge?
- 3 The tickets a couple of weeks before we go on holiday.
- 4 Payment for the full amount with this application form.
- 5 You really the exhibition before it closes. There are some wonderful paintings.
- 6 Don told us not to take this road. We his advice.
- 7 All packaging before switching on the printer for the first time.
- 8 It's important to look smart at the interview. You a suit.
- 9 There are many people who think the President years ago.
- 10 we the questions in English or in French?
- 11 If you want my advice, I by train rather than car.
- 12 I can't imagine what's happened to Kathy. She here by now.

20.2 In which sentences can you use **should** or **must** and in which can you only use **must**? Where both are possible, consider the difference between **should** and **must**. (A)

- 1 A timetable be set for withdrawing the army.
- 2 Les isn't home yet. He have been held up at work.
- 3 'I wonder how old Mike is?' 'Well, he went to school with my mother, so he be well over 50.'
- 4 If you smell gas, you phone the emergency number.
- 5 You try to visit Nepal – it's a beautiful country.
- 6 'I know I'm always complaining that my house is small, but it's very convenient for work.'
'Yes, it be handy living so close to your office.'

20.3 Where necessary correct these sentences using **should/ought to**, **must**, **shall**, or **had better**, or write ✓. (A, C & D)

- 1 Cyclists had better not be allowed to ride on pavements, even where roads are very busy.
- 2 'There's something wrong with David's computer yet again.' 'He should wish he'd never bought it.'
- 3 The concert starts at 7.45. I'd better make a note of that.
- 4 I shall take my library books back today, but I don't think I'll have time.
- 5 'The children from next door have been throwing stones at our windows.' 'Well, they shouldn't do it again, otherwise I'll call the police.'
- 6 'I'm freezing.' 'You'd better have worn a thicker coat.'
- 7 We have to be in Bristol by 4.00. I think we'd better get started.
- 8 I should phone Gary this evening, but it will probably be too late by the time I get home.
- 9 'I've looked all over the house and can't find the car keys.' 'Well, if they're not here, they must still be in the car.'
- 10 We believe that parents had better pay grandparents to look after their children.