

# Modals of Necessity & Obligation

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## Quick and Handy Grammar Review

### MODALS OF NECESSITY & OBLIGATION: MUST, HAVE TO & HAVE GOT TO

#### A. Introduction

Modals come before a main verb and give it extra meaning (*ability, advice, necessity, possibility, etc.*) Modals of necessity/obligation are used for expressing rules or strong advice.

**Modal Pattern:** Modal + Base Verb

In English, modals are always followed by a base verb. A base verb is a verb with **no ending** (*-s, -ed, -ing, etc.*) attached to it.

#### B. Modals and Modal Expressions

In English, there are three common ways to express necessity and obligation in the present or future: **must**, **have to**, and **have got to**. *Must* is a true modal, while *have to* and *have got to* are modal expressions made up of two or three words. Modals never change form (there is no subject-verb agreement to worry about), whereas modal expressions must agree with the subject.

- You **must** take the test.
- She **must** take the test.
- You **have to** take the test.
- She **has to** take the test.
- You **have got to** take the test.
- She **has got to** take the test.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
<b>MODAL</b>	<b>must</b>	<b>must not</b>	<b>must</b>
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must pass the test.</li> <li>• He must exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must not fail.</li> <li>• He must not smoke.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must I take the test?</li> <li>• Must he exercise?</li> </ul>
<b>USAGE</b>	common	common	not common
<b>CONTRACTION</b>	no	yes, but not common <b>(mustn't)</b>	no
<b>STRENGTH</b>	strong	strong	strong
<b>FORMALITY</b>	formal	formal	very formal and old-fashioned

## Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

### MODALS OF NECESSITY & OBLIGATION: MUST, HAVE TO & HAVE GOT TO

#### B. Modals and Modal Expressions cont.

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
<b>MODAL</b>	<b>have to</b>	<b>do not have to</b>	<b>have to</b>
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have to pass the test.</li> <li>He has to exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You do not have to take the test.</li> <li>He does not have to exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do I have to take the test?</li> <li>Does he have to exercise?</li> </ul>
<b>USAGE</b>	common	common	common
<b>CONTRACTION</b>	no	yes ( <b>don't have to / doesn't have to</b> )	no
<b>STRENGTH</b>	strong	weak*	strong
<b>FORMALITY</b>	formal and informal	formal and informal	formal and informal

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	QUESTION
<b>MODAL</b>	<b>have got to</b>	—	—
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have got to take the test.</li> <li>He has got to exercise.</li> </ul>	—	—
<b>USAGE</b>	common (speaking more than writing)	—	—
<b>CONTRACTION</b>	yes ( <b>'ve got to / 's got to</b> )	—	—
<b>STRENGTH</b>	slightly less strong	—	—
<b>FORMALITY</b>	informal	—	—

## Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

### MODALS OF NECESSITY & OBLIGATION: MUST, HAVE TO & HAVE GOT TO

#### C. Grammar Notes

##### \*DON'T HAVE TO

Be careful! *Don't have to* and *must not* have very different meanings in English. *Must not* expresses strong obligation—you cannot do something. *Don't have to* means you can choose not to do something, but *you can do it if you want to*.

##### CAN'T

*Can / cannot / can't* are modals of ability and permission, but in the negative, *cannot / can't* can also express that something is forbidden or must not be done. We can call *cannot / can't* a modal of necessity/obligation with a very similar meaning to *must not*.

##### HAVE GOT TO

Why is there a present (have) and past (got) verb together in this expression? *Have got to* is a very old expression in English that is still commonly used nowadays. Just remember that, like the other modals of necessity, it is used to express obligation in the *present or future*.

#### D. Pronunciation Notes

When speaking at a natural speed, English speakers often reduce modals. Remember that while these reductions are very common in informal speaking, we *never* write them.

Modal	Reduction	Example (Spoken Only)
have to	hafta	I hafta meet my friend after class.
has to	hasta	She hasta redo her assignment this weekend.
have got to	have gotta	We've gotta try harder in school.
has got to	has gotta	He's gotta go to his appointment now.

## Exercise 1

Rewrite the sentences below using *must* or *have to*.

1. We must arrive to class on time.

We have to arrive to class on time.

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2. I have to start concentrating harder in class.

---

---

---

3. She has to give the book back to the teacher.

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4. My friend must get more sleep at night.

---

---

---

5. Our teacher must prepare us for the standardized test.

---

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6. My classmates have to participate in the conversation class.

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7. Mr. Jones has to start exercising.

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8. Yuka must take vitamins every day.

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9. He must learn not to interrupt the teacher.

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10. They must finish their report on time.

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## Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with *must not* or *don't have to* and the verb.

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ *must not forget* \_\_\_\_\_ to lock up when I leave.  
(forget)
2. My father \_\_\_\_\_ junk food every day because it's bad for his heart.  
(eat)
3. You \_\_\_\_\_ the entire article if you don't want to.  
(read)
4. She's lucky. She \_\_\_\_\_ her homework before going out tonight.  
(finish)
5. We \_\_\_\_\_ our trip right now. We can wait for another time.  
(plan)
6. The CEO \_\_\_\_\_ to the shareholders. They will soon realize that profits have fallen.  
(lie)
7. We \_\_\_\_\_ late for the morning meeting.  
(be)
8. You \_\_\_\_\_ . It wasn't your fault.  
(apologize)

## Exercise 3

Fill in the missing short answers and questions below.

### A. Short Answers

1. Does she have to register for the course beforehand? **(yes)**

*Yes, she does.*

2. Do we have to bring food to the party? **(no)**

3. Do children have to be careful near a swimming pool? **(yes)**

4. Does my friend have to finish her homework before going out? **(yes)**

5. Does he have to give a speech at the conference? **(no)**

### B. Questions

1. Does she have to buy a new dress for the party?

No, she doesn't. (She doesn't have to buy a new dress for the party.)

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, they do. (They have to remind the kids about the field trip.)

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, he does. (He has to tell his boss when he's finished the report.)

4. \_\_\_\_\_

No, you don't. (You don't have to create an account in order to access the website.)

5. \_\_\_\_\_

No, you don't. (You don't have to buy them a gift.)

## Exercise 4

### A. Writing Practice

An employee is at an orientation for his/her new job. Unscramble the sentences. Write the rules the employer gives to the new employee using *must*, *have to*, and *have got to*. Use contractions whenever possible.

1. wear / must / business attire / at the office

*You must wear business attire at the office.*

---



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5. to get / clients / have got to / remember / a temporary visitor's pass
- 
- 

2. the schedule / every morning / have to / check
- 
- 

6. do not have to / your computer / shut down / every night
- 
- 

3. familiarize / yourself / with the procedure manual / must
- 
- 

7. clean up / have got to / your work station / before you leave
- 
- 

4. to the Human Resources department / have to / send / this form
- 
- 

8. your computer / home / at night / cannot / take
- 
- 

### B. Speaking Practice

Now take turns being the employer and the new employee. Using the information in Part A, ask questions and state the company's rules in your responses. Use pronunciation reductions whenever possible.

**Example:**

Employee: *Do I have to wear business attire at the office?*

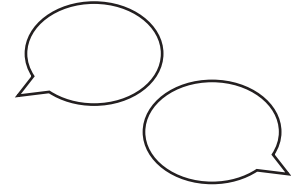
Employer: *Yes, you must wear business attire. OR Yes, you hafta wear business attire.*



## Exercise 5

### A. Speaking

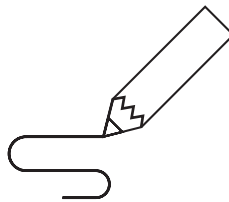
Ask your partner about traditions in his/her country. You must use the following modals at least once each in your discussion: *must*, *must not*, *can't*, *have to*, *don't have to*, and *have got to*. If you and your partner are from the same country, talk about your family traditions or household rules instead. Practice using contractions and reduced pronunciation.



### B. Writing

Now write five sentences about your partner's country (or family).

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Exercise 6

Rewrite each of these school rules by using a modal of necessity of your choice.

1. Get to school on time.

*You have to get to school on time.*

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2. Don't speak your native language in class.
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- 
- 

3. Do your homework every night.
- 
- 
- 

4. Interrupting the teacher will not be tolerated.
- 
- 
- 

5. Ask questions when you don't understand something.
- 
- 
- 

6. Don't run in the hallways.
- 
- 
- 

7. Participating in an after-school sport is optional.
- 
- 
- 

8. Eating in the classroom is only allowed during the lunch hour.
- 
- 
- 

9. Don't text your friends in class.
- 
- 
- 

10. Attending the after-school study sessions is optional.
- 
- 
-

## Exercise 7

Get into small groups. Imagine that you are on your city's planning committee for a new community center. Come up with ten rules for the new center. Use positive and negative modals of necessity.

**Examples:**

- You must not smoke on the premises.
- You have to register for courses a week in advance.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 8

### QUIZ

Circle the correct answer.

1. If you don't want your dessert, you \_\_\_\_\_ eat it.
  - a) must not
  - b) don't have to
2. You \_\_\_\_\_ run at the swimming pool.
  - a) can't
  - b) don't have to
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ to register for classes.
  - a) has
  - b) must
4. Doctors \_\_\_\_\_ wear a mask when they perform surgery.
  - a) can
  - b) have to
5. She \_\_\_\_\_ take a math class if she doesn't want to.
  - a) must not
  - b) doesn't have to
6. I \_\_\_\_\_ renew my driver's license before it expires.
  - a) have got to
  - b) mustn't
7. David \_\_\_\_\_ watch his little sister when his parents go out.
  - a) have to
  - b) has to
8. The teacher said we \_\_\_\_\_ do the homework if we don't have time.
  - a) mustn't
  - b) don't have to
9. You \_\_\_\_\_ tell the doctor the truth or she won't be able to help you.
  - a) must
  - b) can
10. Does Henry have to give a presentation at the meeting?
  - a) Yes, he has.
  - b) Yes, he does.

## Answer Key

### Exercise 1

1. We have to arrive to class on time.
2. I must start concentrating harder in class.
3. She must give the book back to the teacher.
4. My friend has to get more sleep at night.
5. Our teacher has to prepare us for the standardized test.
6. My classmates must participate in the conversation class.
7. Mr. Jones must start exercising.
8. Yuka has to take vitamins every day.
9. He has to learn not to interrupt the teacher.
10. They have to finish their report on time.

### Exercise 2

- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. must not forget        | 5. don't have to plan      |
| 2. must not eat           | 6. must not lie            |
| 3. don't have to read     | 7. must not be             |
| 4. doesn't have to finish | 8. don't have to apologize |

### Exercise 3

#### A. SHORT ANSWERS

1. Yes, she does.
2. No, we don't.
3. Yes, they do.
4. Yes, she does.
5. No, he doesn't.

#### B. QUESTIONS

1. Does she have to buy a new dress for the party?
2. Do they have to remind the kids about the field trip?
3. Does he have to tell his boss when he's finished the report?
4. Do I have to create an account in order to access the website?
5. Do I have to buy them a gift?

### Exercise 4

#### A. WRITING PRACTICE

Written answers may vary slightly.

1. You must wear business attire at the office.
2. You have to check the schedule every morning.
3. You must familiarize yourself with the procedure manual.
4. You have to send this form to the Human Resources department.
5. You've got to remember to get clients a temporary visitor's pass.
6. You don't have to shut down your computer every night.
7. You've got to clean up your work station before you leave.
8. You can't take your computer home at night.

#### B. SPEAKING PRACTICE

During the speaking portion of the exercise, encourage your students to expand on their responses. E.g., "Yes, you must wear business attire. You have to wear business suits, and you can't wear jeans."

### Exercise 5

Answers will vary.

*(continued on the next page...)*

## Answer Key cont.

### Exercise 6

Answers may vary.

1. You must/have to/have got to get to school on time.
2. You must not/can't speak your native language in class.
3. You must/have to/have got to do your homework every night.
4. You must not/can't interrupt the teacher.
5. You must/have to/have got to ask questions when you don't understand something.
6. You must not/can't run in the hallways.
7. You don't have to participate in an after-school sport.
8. You must/have to/have got to eat in the classroom only during the lunch hour.
9. You must not/can't text your friends in class.
10. You don't have to attend the after-school study sessions.

### Exercise 7

Answers will vary.

### Exercise 8

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. b | 7. b | 9. a  |
| 2. a | 4. b | 6. a | 8. b | 10. b |

### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Center*, *License*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Centre*, *Licence*, and *Practise* (as a verb; *Practice* as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.