

Can, could and (be) able to

We use **can** to say that something is possible or allowed, or that somebody has the ability to do something. We use **can + infinitive** (**can do / can see** etc.):

- ☐ We **can** see the lake from our bedroom window.
- ☐ 'I haven't got a pen.' 'You **can** use mine.'
- ☐ **Can** you **speak** any foreign languages?
- ☐ I **can** **come** and see you tomorrow if you like.
- ☐ The word 'play' **can** **be** a noun or a verb.

The negative is **can't** (= **cannot**):

- ☐ I'm afraid I **can't** come to the party on Friday.

You can say that somebody is **able to** do something, but **can** is more usual:

- ☐ We **are** **able to** see the lake from our bedroom window.

But **can** has only two forms: **can** (*present*) and **could** (*past*). So sometimes it is necessary to use **(be) able to**. Compare:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't sleep. | <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been able to sleep recently. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tom can come tomorrow. | <input type="checkbox"/> Tom might be able to come tomorrow. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maria can speak French, Spanish and English. | <input type="checkbox"/> Applicants for the job must be able to speak two foreign languages. |

Could

Sometimes **could** is the past of **can**. We use **could** especially with:

see hear smell taste feel remember understand

- ☐ We had a lovely room in the hotel. We **could** see the lake.
- ☐ As soon as I walked into the room, I **could** smell gas.
- ☐ I was sitting at the back of the theatre and **couldn't** hear very well.

We also use **could** to say that somebody had the general ability or permission to do something:

- ☐ My grandfather **could** speak five languages.
- ☐ We were totally free. We **could** do what we wanted. (= we were allowed to do)

Could and was able to

We use **could** for *general* ability. But if you want to say that somebody did something in a specific situation, use **was/were able to** or **managed to** (*not could*):

- ☐ The fire spread through the building very quickly, but fortunately everybody **was able to escape / managed to escape**. (*not could escape*)
- ☐ We **didn't** know where David was, but we **managed to find / were able to find** him in the end. (*not could find*)

Compare:

- ☐ Mike was an excellent tennis player when he was younger. He **could** beat anybody. (= he had the general ability to beat anybody)

but Mike and Pete played tennis yesterday. Pete played very well, but Mike **managed to** beat him. (= he managed to beat him in this particular game)

The negative **couldn't** (**could not**) is possible in all situations:

- ☐ My grandfather **couldn't** swim.
- ☐ We looked for David everywhere, but we **couldn't** find him.
- ☐ Pete played well, but he **couldn't** beat Mike.

- ☐ We didn't know where David was, but we **managed to find** / **were able to find** him in the end. (*not could find*)

Compare:

- ☐ Mike was an excellent tennis player when he was younger. He **could beat** anybody.
(= he had the general ability to beat anybody)

but Mike and Pete played tennis yesterday. Pete played very well, but Mike **managed to beat** him. (= he managed to beat him in this particular game)

The negative **couldn't** (**could not**) is possible in all situations:

- ☐ My grandfather **couldn't swim**.
☐ We looked for David everywhere, but we **couldn't find** him.
☐ Pete played well, but he **couldn't beat** Mike.

Could (do) and could have (done) → [Unit 27](#) **Must and can't** → [Unit 28](#) **Can/could you ... ?** → [Unit 37](#)

Exercises

Unit 26

Complete the sentences using **can** or **(be) able to**. Use **can** if possible; otherwise use **(be) able to**.

- Gary has travelled a lot. He can speak five languages.
I haven't been able to sleep very well recently.
Nicole drive, but she hasn't got a car.
I used to stand on my head, but I can't do it now.
I can't understand Martin. I've never understand him.
I can't see you on Friday, but I meet you on Saturday morning.
Ask Catherine about your problem. She might help you.

Write sentences about yourself using the ideas in brackets.

(something you used to be able to do)

I used to be able to sing well.

(something you used to be able to do)

I used

(something you would like to be able to do)

I'd

We also use **could** (*not can*) for actions which are not realistic. For example:

- ☐ I'm so tired, I **could** sleep for a week. (*not I can sleep for a week*)

Compare **can** and **could**:

- ☐ I **can** stay with Julia when I go to Paris. (*realistic*)
- ☐ Maybe I **could** stay with Julia when I go to Paris. (*possible, but less sure*)
- ☐ This is a wonderful place. I **could** stay here for ever. (*unrealistic*)

We also use **could** (*not can*) to say that something is possible now or in the future. The meaning is similar to **might** or **may** (see Unit 29):

- ☐ The story **could** be true, but I don't think it is. (*not can be true*)
- ☐ I don't know what time Liz is coming. She **could** get here at any time.

We use **could have** (*done*) to talk about the past. Compare:

- ☐ I'm so tired, I **could** sleep for a week. (*now*)
I was so tired, I **could have** slept for a week. (*past*)
- ☐ The situation is bad, but it **could** be worse. (*now*)
The situation was bad, but it **could have been** worse. (*past*)

Something **could have** happened = it was possible but did *not* happen:

- ☐ Why did you stay at a hotel when you were in Paris? You **could have** stayed with Julia. (*you didn't stay with her*)
- ☐ I didn't know that you wanted to go to the concert. I **could have** got you a ticket. (*I didn't get you a ticket*)
- ☐ Dave was lucky. He **could have** hurt himself when he fell, but he's OK.

We use **couldn't** to say that something would not be possible now:

- ☐ I **couldn't** live in a big city. I'd hate it. (= it wouldn't be possible for me)
- ☐ Everything is fine right now. Things **couldn't** be better.

For the past we use **couldn't have** (*done*):

- ☐ We had a really good holiday. It **couldn't have** been better.
- ☐ The trip was cancelled last week. Paul **couldn't have** gone anyway because he was ill. (= it would not have been possible for him to go)

Couldn't have (done) → Unit 28B **Could and might** → Unit 29C **Could I/you ... ?** → Unit 37

Could with if → Units 38C, 39E, 40D **Modal verbs (can/could/will/would etc.)** → Appendix 4

Exercises

Unit 27

Answer the questions with a suggestion. Use **could**.

Where shall we go for our holidays?
What shall we have for dinner tonight?
When shall I phone Angela?
What shall I give Ann for her birthday?
Where shall we hang this picture?

(to Scotland) We could go to Scotland.
(fish) We
(now) You
(a book)
(in the kitchen)

□ Dave was lucky. He **could have hurt** himself when he fell, but he's OK.

E

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For the past we use **couldn't have** (done):

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- The trip was cancelled last week. Paul **couldn't have gone** anyway because he was ill.
(= it would not have been possible for him to go)

Couldn't have (done) → Unit 28B **Could and might** → Unit 29C **Could I/you ... ?** → Unit 37
Could with if → Units 38C, 39E, 40D **Modal verbs (can/could/will/would etc.)** → Appendix 4

Exercises

Unit 27

27.1 Answer the questions with a suggestion. Use **could**.

- 1 Where shall we go for our holidays?
- 2 What shall we have for dinner tonight?
- 3 When shall I phone Angela?
- 4 What shall I give Ann for her birthday?
- 5 Where shall we hang this picture?

- (to Scotland) We could go to Scotland.
(fish) We
(now) You
(a book)
(in the kitchen)

27.2 In some of these sentences, you need **could** (not **can**). Change the sentences where necessary.

- 1 The story can be true, but I don't think it is.
- 2 It's a nice day. We can go for a walk.
- 3 I'm so angry with him. I can kill him!
- 4 If you're hungry, we can have dinner now.
- 5 It's so nice here. I can stay here all day. but

could be true

OK (could go is also possible)

Must and can't

Study this example:



You can use **must** to say that you believe something is certain:

- ☐ You've been travelling all day. You **must be** tired. (Travelling is tiring and you've been travelling all day, so you **must be** tired.)
- ☐ 'Jim is a hard worker.' 'Jim? You **must be** joking. He doesn't do anything.'
- ☐ Carol **must get** very bored in her job. She does the same thing every day.
- ☐ I'm sure Sally gave me her phone number. I **must have** it somewhere.

You can use **can't** to say that you believe something is not possible:

- ☐ You've just had lunch. You **can't be** hungry already. (People are not normally hungry just after eating a meal. You've just eaten, so you **can't be** hungry.)
- ☐ They haven't lived here for very long. They **can't know** many people.

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	must can't	be (tired / hungry / at work etc.) be (doing / going / joking etc.) do / get / know / have etc.
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For the past we use **must have (done)** and **can't have (done)**.

Study this example:



Martin and Lucy are standing at the door of their friends' house.

They have rung the doorbell twice, but nobody has answered. Lucy says:

They **must have** gone out.

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	must can't	have	been (asleep / at work etc.) been (doing / looking etc.) gone / got / known etc.
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You can use **couldn't have** instead of **can't have**:

- ☐ Sue **couldn't have** got my message.
- ☐ Tom **couldn't have** been looking where he was going.

Can't ('I can't swim' etc.) → [Unit 26](#) **Must** ('I must go' etc.) → [Units 31–32](#)
Modal verbs (can/could/will/would etc.) → [Appendix 4](#) **American English** → [Appendix 7](#)

rcises

Unit 28

ut in **must** or **can't**.

You've been travelling all day. You must be tired.
That restaurant be very good. It's always full of people.
That restaurant be very good. It's always empty.
I'm sure I gave you the key. You have it. Have you looked in your bag?
You're going on holiday next week. You be looking forward to it.
It rained every day during their holiday, so they have had a very nice time.
Congratulations on passing your exam. You be very pleased.
You got here very quickly. You have walked very fast.
Bill and Sue always travel business class, so they be short of money.

omplete each sentence with a verb (one or two words) in the correct form.

I've lost one of my gloves. I must have dropped it somewhere.
They haven't lived here for very long. They can't know many people.
Ted isn't at work today. He must ill.
Ted wasn't at work last week. He must ill.
(the doorbell rings) I wonder who that is. It can't Mary. She's still at work at this time.
Sarah knows a lot about films. She must to the cinema a lot.
Look. James is putting on his hat and coat. He must out.
I left my bike outside the house last night and now it has gone. Somebody must it.
Amy was in a very difficult situation when she lost her job. It can't easy for her.
There is a man walking behind us. He has been walking behind us for the last twenty minutes. He must us.

ead the situations and use the words in brackets to write sentences with **must have** and **can't have**.

The phone rang, but I didn't hear it. (I / asleep)
I must have been asleep.
Sue hasn't contacted me. (she / get / my message)
She can't have got my message.
The jacket you bought is very good quality. (it / very expensive)
.....
I haven't seen the people next door for ages. (they / go away)
.....
I can't find my umbrella. (I / leave / it in the restaurant last night)
.....
Dave, who is usually very friendly, walked past me without speaking. (he / see / me)
.....
There was a man standing outside the café. (he / wait / for somebody)
.....
Liz did the opposite of what I asked her to do. (she / understand / what I said)
.....
When I got back to my car, the door was unlocked. (I / forget / to lock it)
.....
I was woken up in the night by the noise next door. (the neighbours / have / a party)
.....
The light was red, but the car didn't stop. (the driver / see / the red light)
.....

Study this example situation:

You are looking for Bob. Nobody is sure where he is, but you get some suggestions.

Where's Bob?	He may be in his office.	(= perhaps he is in his office)
	He might be having lunch.	(= perhaps he is having lunch)
	Ask Ann. She might know.	(= perhaps she knows)

We use **may** or **might** to say that something is a possibility. Usually you can use **may** or **might**, so you can say:

- ☐ It **may** be true. or It **might** be true. (= perhaps it is true)
- ☐ She **might** know. or She **may** know.

The negative forms are **may not** and **might not** (or **mightn't**):

- ☐ It **may not** be true. (= perhaps it isn't true)
- ☐ She **might not** work here any more. (= perhaps she doesn't work here)

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	may might	(not)	be (true / in his office etc.) be (doing / working / having etc.) know / work / want etc.
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For the past we use **may have (done)** or **might have (done)**:

- ☐ A: I wonder why Kate didn't answer the phone.
B: She **may have been** asleep. (= perhaps she was asleep)
- ☐ A: I can't find my bag anywhere.
B: You **might have left** it in the shop. (= perhaps you left it in the shop)
- ☐ A: I was surprised that Kate wasn't at the meeting yesterday.
B: She **might not have known** about it. (= perhaps she didn't know)
- ☐ A: I wonder why David was in such a bad mood yesterday.
B: He **may not have been feeling** well. (= perhaps he wasn't feeling well)

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	may might	(not) have	been (asleep / at home etc.) been (doing / working / feeling etc.) known / had / wanted / left etc.
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Could is similar to **may** and **might**:

- ☐ It's a strange story, but it **could** be true. (= it may/might be true)
- ☐ You **could have left** your bag in the shop. (= you may/might have left it)

But **couldn't** (negative) is different from **may not** and **might not**. Compare:

- ☐ Sarah **couldn't have** got my message. Otherwise she would have replied.
(= it is not possible that she got my message)
- ☐ I wonder why Sarah hasn't replied to my message. I suppose she **might not have** got it.
(= perhaps she didn't get it, and perhaps she did)

- ☐ You could have left your bag in the shop. (= you may/might have left it)

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Could → Unit 27 May/might 2 → Unit 30 May I ... ? → Unit 37C Might with if → Units 30B, 38C, 40D
Modal verbs (can/could/will/would etc.) → Appendix 4

Exercises

Unit 29

29.1 Write these sentences in a different way using **might**.

- 1 Perhaps Helen is in her office. She might be in her office.
- 2 Perhaps Helen is busy.
- 3 Perhaps she is working.
- 4 Perhaps she wants to be alone.
- 5 Perhaps she was ill yesterday.
- 6 Perhaps she went home early.
- 7 Perhaps she had to go home early.
- 8 Perhaps she was working yesterday.

In sentences 9–11 use **might not**.

- 9 Perhaps she doesn't want to see me.
- 10 Perhaps she isn't working today.
- 11 Perhaps she wasn't feeling well yesterday.

29.2 Complete each sentence with a verb in the correct form.

- 1 'Where's Sam?' 'I'm not sure. He might be having lunch.'
- 2 'Who is that man with Emily?' 'I'm not sure. It might her brother.'
- 3 A: Who was the man we saw with Anna yesterday?
B: I'm not sure. It may her brother.
- 4 A: What are those people doing by the side of the road?
B: I don't know. They might for a bus.
- 5 'Do you have a stamp?' 'No, but ask Simon. He may one.'

29.3 Read the situation and make sentences from the words in brackets. Use **might**.

- 1 I can't find Jeff anywhere. I wonder where he is.
a (he / go / shopping) He might have gone shopping.
b (he / play / tennis) He might be playing tennis.
- 2 I'm looking for Sarah. Do you know where she is?
a (she / watch / TV / in her room)
b (she / go / out)
- 3 I can't find my umbrella. Have you seen it?
a (it / be / in the car)
b (you / leave / in the restaurant last night)
- 4 Why didn't Dave answer the doorbell? I'm sure he was at home at the time.
a (he / go / to bed early)
b (he / not / hear / the doorbell)
c (he / be / in the shower)

29.4 Complete the sentences using **might not have ...** or **couldn't have ...**.

- 1 A: Do you think Sarah got the message we sent her?
B: No, she would have contacted us. She couldn't have got it.
- 2 A: I was surprised Kate wasn't at the meeting. Perhaps she didn't know about it.
B: That's possible. She might not have known about it.
- 3 A: I wonder why they never replied to our letter. Do you think they received it?
B: Maybe not. They
- 4 A: I wonder how the fire started. Was it an accident?
B: No, the police say it
- 5 A: Mike says he needs to see you. He tried to find you yesterday.
B: Well, he very hard. I was in my office all day.
- 6 A: The man you spoke to – are you sure he was American?
B: No, I'm not sure. He

May and might 2

We use **may** and **might** to talk about possible actions or happenings in the future:

- ☐ I haven't decided yet where to go for my holidays. I **may** go to Ireland. (= perhaps I will go there)
- ☐ Take an umbrella with you. It **might** rain later. (= perhaps it will rain)
- ☐ The bus isn't always on time. We **might** have to wait a few minutes. (= perhaps we will have to wait)

The negative forms are **may not** and **might not (mightn't)**:

- ☐ Liz **may not** go out tonight. She isn't feeling well. (= perhaps she will not go out)
- ☐ There **might not** be enough time to discuss everything at the meeting. (= perhaps there will not be enough time)

Compare **will** and **may/might**:

- ☐ I'll be late this evening. (for sure)
- ☐ I **may/might** be late this evening. (possible)

Usually you can use **may** or **might**. So you can say:

- ☐ I **may** go to Ireland. or I **might** go to Ireland.
- ☐ Jane **might** be able to help you. or Jane **may** be able to help you.

But we use only **might** (*not may*) when the situation is *not real*:

- ☐ If I were in Tom's position, I **might** look for another job.

The situation here is not real because I am *not* in Tom's position (so I'm not going to look for another job). **May** is not possible in this example.

There is also a continuous form: **may/might be -ing**. Compare this with **will be -ing**:

- ☐ Don't phone at 8.30. I'll be **watching** the film on television.
- ☐ Don't phone at 8.30. I **might be watching** (or I **may be watching**) the film on television. (= perhaps I'll be watching it)

We also use **may/might be -ing** for possible plans. Compare:

- ☐ I'm **going** to Ireland in July. (for sure)
- ☐ I **may be going** (or I **might be going**) to Ireland in July. (possible)

But you can also say 'I **may go** (or I **might go**) ...' with little difference in meaning.

Might as well

Rose and Clare have just missed the bus. The buses run every hour.

What shall we do? Shall we walk?

We **might as well**. It's a nice day and I don't want to wait here for an hour.

We **might as well** do something = We should do it because there is no better alternative. There is no reason not to do it.

May as well is also possible.



We **might** as well do something = We should do it because there is no better alternative. There is no reason not to do it.

May as well is also possible.

- A: What time are you going out?
B: Well, I'm ready, so I **might as well** go now.
□ Buses are so expensive these days, you **may as well** get a taxi. (= taxis are as good, no more expensive)

I don't want to wait here for an hour.



Will be -ing → Unit 24 May/might 1 → Unit 29 May I ... ? → Unit 37 Might with if → Units 38C, 40D

Exercises

Unit 30

30.1 Write sentences with **might**.

- Where are you going for your holidays? (to Ireland???)
I haven't decided yet. I might go to Ireland.
- What sort of car are you going to buy? (a Mercedes???)
I'm not sure yet. I
- What are you doing this weekend? (go to London???)
I haven't decided yet.
- When is Tom coming to see us? (on Saturday???)
He hasn't said yet.
- Where are you going to hang that picture? (in the dining room???)
I haven't made up my mind yet.
- What is Julia going to do when she leaves school? (go to university???)
She's still thinking about it.

30.2 Complete the sentences using **might** + the following:

bite break need ~~rain~~ slip wake

- Take an umbrella with you when you go out. It might rain later.
- Don't make too much noise. You the baby.
- Be careful of that dog. It you.
- I don't think we should throw that letter away. We it later.
- Be careful. The footpath is very icy. You
- Don't let the children play in this room. They something.

30.3 Complete the sentences using **might be able to** or **might have to** + a suitable verb.

- I can't help you, but why don't you ask Jane? She might be able to help you.
- I can't meet you this evening, but I you tomorrow.
- I'm not working on Saturday, but I on Sunday.
- I can come to the meeting, but I before the end.

30.4 Write sentences with **might not**.

- I'm not sure that Liz will come to the party.
Liz might not come to the party.
- I'm not sure that I'll go out this evening.
I
- I'm not sure that we'll get tickets for the concert.
We
- I'm not sure that Sue will be able to come out with us this evening.
.....

30.5 Read the situations and make sentences with **might as well**.

- You and a friend have just missed the bus. The buses run every hour.
You say: We'll have to wait an hour for the next bus. We might as well walk.
- You have a free ticket for a concert. You're not very keen on the concert, but you decide to go.
You say: I to the concert. It's a pity to waste a free ticket.
- You've just painted your kitchen. You still have a lot of paint, so why not paint the bathroom too?
You say: We There's plenty of paint left.
- You and a friend are at home. You're bored. There's a film on TV starting in a few minutes.
You say: There's nothing else to do.

Have to and must

I **have to** do something = it is necessary to do it, I am obliged to do it:

- ☐ You can't turn right here. You **have to** turn left.
- ☐ I **have to** wear glasses for reading.
- ☐ George can't come out with us this evening. He **has to** work late.
- ☐ Last week Tina broke her arm and **had to** go to hospital.
- ☐ I haven't **had to** go to the doctor for ages.

You have to turn left here.



We use **do/does/did** in questions and negative sentences (for the present and past simple):

- ☐ What **do** I **have to** do to get a new driving licence? (*not* What have I to do?)
- ☐ Karen **doesn't** **have to** work Saturdays. (*not* Karen hasn't to)
- ☐ Why **did** you **have to** leave early?

You can use **have to** with **will** and **might/may**:

- ☐ If the pain gets worse, you'll **have to** go to the doctor.
- ☐ I **might** **have to** work late tomorrow evening. *or* I **may** **have to** work ... (= it's possible that I will have to)

Must is similar to **have to**:

- ☐ It's later than I thought. I **must** go. *or* I **have to** go.

You can use **must** to give your own opinion (for example, to say what *you* think is necessary, or to recommend someone to do something). **Have to** is also possible:

- ☐ I haven't spoken to Sue for ages. I **must** phone her. (= I say this is necessary)
- ☐ Mark is a really nice person. You **must** meet him. (I recommend this)

We use **have to** (*not must*) to say what someone is *obliged* to do. The speaker is not giving his/her own opinion:

- ☐ I **have to** work from 8.30 to 5.30 every day. (a fact, not an opinion)
- ☐ Jane **has to** travel a lot for her work.

But **must** is often used in written rules and instructions:

- ☐ Applications for the job **must be** received by 18 May.
- ☐ (*exam instruction*) You **must** write your answers in ink.

You cannot use **must** to talk about the past:

- ☐ We **had to** leave early. (*not* we **must**)

Mustn't and **don't have to** are completely different:

You **mustn't** do something = it is necessary that you do *not* do it (so don't do it):

- ☐ You **must** keep it a secret. You **mustn't** tell anyone. (= don't tell anyone)
- ☐ I promised I would be on time. I **mustn't** be late. (= I must be on time)

You **don't have to** do something = you don't need to do it (but you can if you want):

- ☐ You **don't have to** tell him, but you can if you want to.
- ☐ I **don't have to** be at the meeting, but I think I'll go anyway.

You **mustn't** do something = it is necessary that you do *not* do it (so don't do it):

- ☐ You **must** keep it a secret. You **mustn't** tell anyone. (= don't tell anyone)
- ☐ I promised I would be on time.
I **mustn't** be late. (= I must be on time)

You don't have to do something = you don't need to do it (but you can if you want):

- ☐ You **don't have to** tell him, but you can if you want to.
- ☐ I **don't have to** be at the meeting, but I think I'll go anyway.

You can use *have got to* instead of *have to*. So you can say:

- ☐ I've got to work tomorrow. *or* I have to work tomorrow.
☐ When has Liz got to go? *or* When does Liz have to go?

Must ('You must be tired') → [Unit 28](#) **Must/mustn't/needn't** → [Unit 32](#)

Exercises

Unit 31

Complete the sentences with **have to** / **has to** / **had to**.

- 1 Bill starts work at 5 a.m. at four. (he / get up)
2 'I broke my arm last week.' '..... to hospital?' (you / go)
3 There was a lot of noise from the street. the window.
(we / close)
4 Karen can't stay for the whole meeting. early. (she / leave)
5 How old to drive in your country? (you / be)
6 I don't have much time. (I / hurry)
7 How is Paul enjoying his new job? a lot? (he / travel)
8 'I'm afraid I can't stay long.' 'What time ?' (you / go)
9 'The bus was late again.' 'How long ?' (you / wait)
0 There was nobody to help me. I everything by myself. (I / do)

Complete the sentences using **have to** + the verbs in the list. Some sentences are positive (I **have to** ... etc.) and some are negative (I **don't have to** ... etc.):

ask do drive ~~get up~~ go make make pay ~~show~~

- 1 I'm not working tomorrow, so I don't have to get up early.
2 Steve didn't know how to use the computer, so I had to show him.
3 Excuse me a moment – I a phone call. I won't be long.
4 I'm not so busy. I have a few things to do, but I them now.
5 I couldn't find the street I wanted. I somebody for directions.
6 The car park is free. You to park your car there.

Must mustn't needn't

Must mustn't needn't

You **must** do something = it is necessary that you do it:

- ☐ Don't tell anybody what I said. You **must** keep it a secret.
- ☐ We haven't got much time. We **must** hurry.

You **mustn't** do something = it is necessary that you do *not* do it (so don't do it):

- ☐ You **must** keep it a secret. You **mustn't** tell anybody else. (= don't tell anybody else)
- ☐ We **must** be very quiet. We **mustn't** make any noise.

You **needn't** do something = you don't need to do it (but you can if you like):

- ☐ You can come with me if you like, but you **needn't** come if you don't want to. (= it is not necessary for you to come)
- ☐ We've got plenty of time. We **needn't** hurry. (= it is not necessary to hurry)

Instead of **needn't**, you can use **don't/doesn't need to**. So you can say:

- ☐ We **needn't** hurry. or We **don't need to** hurry.

Remember that we say **don't need to do**, but **needn't do** (*without to*).

Needn't have (done)

Study this example situation:



Paul had to go out. He thought it was going to rain, so he took the umbrella.

He **needn't have taken** the umbrella = He took the umbrella, but this was not necessary.

later



But it didn't rain, so the umbrella was not necessary. So he **needn't have taken** it.

Didn't need to (do) and needn't have (done)

I didn't need to ... = it was not necessary for me to ... (and I knew this at the time):

- I didn't need to get up early, so I didn't.
- I didn't need to get up early, but it was a lovely morning, so I did.

I didn't have to ... is also possible in these examples.

I needn't have done something = I did it, but *now I know* that it was not necessary:

- I got up very early because I had to get ready to go away. But in fact it didn't take me long to get ready. So, I **needn't have got up** so early. I could have stayed in bed longer.

Must ('You must be tired') → Unit 28 Have to and must → Unit 31
Modal verbs (can/could/will/would etc.) → Appendix 4 American English → Appendix 7

ercises

Unit 32

Complete the sentences using **needn't** + the following verbs:

ask come explain ~~leave~~ tell walk

- 1 We've got plenty of time. We needn't leave yet.
- 2 I can manage the shopping alone. You with me.
- 3 We all the way home. We can get a taxi.
- 4 Just help yourself if you'd like more to eat. You first.
- 5 We can keep this a secret between ourselves. We anybody else.
- 6 I understand the situation perfectly. You further.

Complete the sentences with **must**, **mustn't** or **needn't**.

- 1 We haven't got much time. We must hurry.
- 2 We've got plenty of time. We needn't hurry.
- 3 We have enough food at home, so we go shopping today.
- 4 Gary gave me a letter to post. I remember to post it.
- 5 Gary gave me a letter to post. I forget to post it.
- 6 There's plenty of time for you to make up your mind. You decide now.
- 7 You wash those tomatoes. They've already been washed.
- 8 This is a valuable book. You look after it carefully and you lose it.
- A: What sort of house do you want to buy? Something big?
- B: Well, it be big – that's not so important. But it have a nice garden – that's essential.

Read the situations and make sentences with **needn't have**.

- 1 Paul went out. He took an umbrella because he thought it was going to rain. But it didn't rain.
He needn't have taken an umbrella.
- 2 Linda bought some eggs when she went shopping. When she got home, she found that she already had plenty of eggs. She
- 3 A colleague got angry with you at work. He shouted at you, which you think was unnecessary. Later you say to him: You
- 4 Brian had money problems, so he sold his car. A few days later he won some money in a lottery. He
- 5 We took a camcorder with us on holiday, but we didn't use it in the end.
We
- 6 I thought I was going to miss my train, so I rushed to the station. But the train was late and in the end I had to wait twenty minutes.

Write two sentences for each situation. Use **needn't have** in the first sentence and **could have** in the second (as in the example). For **could have**, see Unit 27.

- 1 Why did you rush? Why didn't you take your time?
You needn't have rushed. You could have taken your time.
- 2 Why did you walk home? Why didn't you take a taxi?
.....
- 3 Why did you stay at a hotel? Why didn't you stay with us?
.....
- 4 Why did she phone me in the middle of the night? Why didn't she wait until the morning?
.....

A

You **should** do something = it is a good thing to do or the right thing to do. You can use **should** to give advice or to give an opinion:

- ☐ You look tired. You **should** go to bed.
- ☐ The government **should** do more to reduce crime.
- ☐ 'Should we invite Susan to the party?' 'Yes, I think we **should**.'

We often use **should** with I think / I don't think / Do you think ... ?:

- ☐ I **think** the government **should** do more to reduce crime.
- ☐ I **don't think** you **should** work so hard.
- ☐ 'Do you think I **should** apply for this job?' 'Yes, I **think** you **should**.'

You **shouldn't** do something = it isn't a good thing to do:

- ☐ You **shouldn't** believe everything you read in the newspapers.

Should is not as strong as **must** or **have to**:

- ☐ You **should** apologise. (= it would be a good thing to do)
- ☐ You **must** apologise. / You **have to** apologise. (= you have no alternative)

B

You can use **should** when something is not right or what you expect:

- ☐ I wonder where Tina is. She **should** be here by now.
(= she isn't here yet, and this is not normal)
- ☐ The price on this packet is wrong. It **should** be £2.50, not £3.50.
- ☐ That man on the motorbike **should** be wearing a helmet.



We also use **should** to say that we expect something to happen:

- ☐ She's been studying hard for the exam, so she **should** pass. (= I expect her to pass)
- ☐ There are plenty of hotels in the town. It **shouldn't** be difficult to find somewhere to stay.
(= I don't expect it to be difficult)

C

You **should have done** something = you didn't do it, but it would have been the right thing to do:

- ☐ You missed a great party last night. You **should have come**. Why didn't you?
(= you didn't come, but it would have been good to come)
- ☐ I wonder why they're so late. They **should have arrived** long ago.

You **shouldn't have done** something = you did it, but it was the wrong thing to do:

- ☐ I'm feeling sick. I **shouldn't have eaten** so much. (= I ate too much)
- ☐ She **shouldn't have been listening** to our conversation. It was private.
(= she was listening)

Compare **should** (do) and **should have** (done):

- ☐ You look tired. You **should** go to bed now.
- ☐ You went to bed very late last night. You **should have gone** to bed earlier.

D

Ought to ...

You can use **ought to** instead of **should** in the sentences on this page. We say 'ought to do' (with to):

- ☐ Do you think I **ought to** apply for this job? (= Do you think I **should** apply ... ?)
- ☐ Jack **ought not to** go to bed so late. (= Jack **shouldn't** go ...)
- ☐ It was a great party last night. You **ought to have come**.
- ☐ She's been studying hard for the exam, so she **ought to pass**.

- ☐ You look tired. You **should** go to bed now.
☐ You went to bed very late last night. You **should have gone** to bed earlier.

D Ought to ...

You can use **ought to** instead of **should** in the sentences on this page. We say 'ought to do' (with **to**):

- ☐ Do you think I **ought to** apply for this job? (= Do you think I **should** apply ... ?)
☐ Jack **ought not to** go to bed so late. (= Jack **shouldn't** go ...)
☐ It was a great party last night. You **ought to have come**.
☐ She's been studying hard for the exam, so she **ought to pass**.

Exercises

Unit 33

33.1 For each situation, write a sentence with **should** or **shouldn't** + the following:

~~go away for a few days~~

go to bed so late

look for another job

put some pictures on the walls

take a photograph

use her car so much

- 1 Liz needs a change. She should go away for a few days.
 2 Your salary is very low. You
 3 Jack always has difficulty getting up. He
 4 What a beautiful view! You
 5 Sue drives everywhere. She never walks. She
 6 Bill's room isn't very interesting.

33.2 Read the situations and write sentences with **I think/I don't think ... should ...**

- 1 Peter and Cathy are planning to get married. You think it's a bad idea.
I don't think they should get married.
 2 Jane has a bad cold but plans to go out this evening. You don't think this is a good idea. You say to her:
 3 Peter needs a job. He's just seen an advertisement for a job which you think would be ideal for him, but he's not sure whether to apply or not. You say to him:
 I think
 4 The government wants to increase taxes, but you don't think this is a good idea.

33.3 Complete the sentences with **should (have) + the verb in brackets**.

- 1 Diane should pass the exam. She's been studying very hard. (pass)
 2 You missed a great party last night. You should have come. (come)
 3 We don't see you enough. You and see us more often. (come)
 4 I'm in a difficult position. What do you think I ? (do)
 5 I'm sorry that I didn't take your advice. I what you said. (do)
 6 I'm playing tennis with Jane tomorrow. She – she's much better than me. (win)
 7 We lost the match, but we We were the better team. (win)
 8 'Is Mike here yet?' 'Not yet, but he here soon.' (be)
 9 I posted the letter three days ago, so it by now. (arrive)

33.4 Read the situations and write sentences with **should/shouldn't**. Some of the sentences are past and some are present.

- 1 I'm feeling sick. I ate too much. I shouldn't have eaten so much.
 2 That man on the motorbike isn't wearing a helmet. That's dangerous.
 He should be wearing a helmet.
 3 When we got to the restaurant, there were no free tables. We hadn't reserved one.
 We
 4 The notice says that the shop is open every day from 8.30. It is 9 o'clock now, but the shop isn't open yet.
 5 The speed limit is 30 miles an hour, but Kate is doing 50.
 She
 6 Laura gave me her address, but I didn't write it down. Now I can't remember it.
 I
 7 I was driving behind another car. Suddenly, the driver in front stopped without warning and I drove into the back of his car. It wasn't my fault.
 The driver in front
 8 I walked into a wall. I was looking behind me. I wasn't looking where I was going.

You can use **should** after a number of verbs, especially:

demand insist propose recommend suggest

- ☐ They **insisted** that we **should** have dinner with them.
- ☐ I **demanded** that he **should** apologise.
- ☐ What do you **suggest** I **should** do?
- ☐ I **insist** that something **should** be done about the problem.

We also say 'It's important/vital/necessary/essential that ... **should** ...':

- ☐ It's **essential** that everyone **should** be here on time.

You can also leave out **should** in all the sentences in Section A:

- ☐ It's **essential** that everyone **be** here on time. (= that everyone **should be** here)
- ☐ I **demanded** that he **apologise**. (= that he **should apologise**)
- ☐ What do you **suggest** I **do**?
- ☐ I **insist** that something **be** done about the problem.

This form (**be/do/have/apologise** etc.) is sometimes called the *subjunctive*. It is the same as the *infinitive* (without **to**).

You can also use normal present and past tenses:

- ☐ It's **essential** that everyone **is** here on time.
- ☐ I **demanded** that he **apologised**.

After **suggest**, you cannot use **to ...** ('to do / to buy' etc.). You can say:

- ☐ What do you **suggest** we **should** do?

or What do you **suggest** we **do**? (*but not* What do you **suggest** us **to** do?)

- ☐ Jane **suggested** that I (**should**) **buy** a car.

or Jane **suggested** that I **bought** a car. (*but not* Jane **suggested** me **to** buy)

You can also use **-ing** after **suggest**: What do you **suggest** **doing**? See Unit 53.

You can use **should** after a number of adjectives, especially:

strange odd funny typical natural interesting surprised surprising

- ☐ It's **strange** that he **should** be late. He's usually on time.
- ☐ I was **surprised** that he **should** say such a thing.

If ... should ...

You can say 'If something **should** happen ...'. For example:

- ☐ If Tom **should** **phone** while I'm out, tell him I'll call him back later.

'If Tom **should** **phone**' is similar to 'If Tom **phones**'. With **should**, the speaker feels that the possibility is smaller. Another example:

- ☐ We have no jobs at present. But if the situation **should** **change**, we'll let you know.

You can also begin these sentences with **should** (**Should** something happen ...):

- ☐ **Should** Tom **phone**, tell him I'll call him back later.

You can use **I should ... / I shouldn't ...** to give somebody advice. For example:

- ☐ 'Shall I leave now?' 'No, I **should** wait a bit longer.'

Here, **I should wait** = I would wait if I were you, I advise you to wait.

Two more examples:

- ☐ 'I'm going out now. Is it cold?' 'Yes, I **should** wear a coat.'
- ☐ I **shouldn't** stay up too late. You'll be tired tomorrow.

□ We have no jobs at present. But if the situation **should change**, we'll let you know.

You can also begin these sentences with **should** (Should something happen ...):

□ **Should Tom phone**, tell him I'll call him back later.

E You can use **I should ... / I shouldn't ...** to give somebody advice. For example:

□ 'Shall I leave now?' 'No, **I should wait** a bit longer.'

Here, **I should wait** = I would wait if I were you, I advise you to wait.

Two more examples:

□ 'I'm going out now. Is it cold?' 'Yes, **I should wear** a coat.'

□ **I shouldn't stay** up too late. You'll be tired tomorrow.

Should 1 → Unit 33 American English → Appendix 7

Exercises

Unit 34

34.1 Write a sentence (beginning in the way shown) that means the same as the first sentence.

1 'I think it would be a good idea to see a specialist,' the doctor said to me.

The doctor recommended that I should see a specialist.

2 'You really must stay a little longer,' she said to me.

She insisted that I

3 'Why don't you visit the museum after lunch?' I said to them.

I suggested that

4 'You must pay the rent by Friday,' the landlord said to us.

The landlord demanded that

5 'Why don't you go away for a few days?' Jack said to me.

Jack suggested that

34.2 Are these sentences right or wrong?

1 a Tom suggested that I should look for another job. OK

b Tom suggested that I look for another job.

c Tom suggested that I looked for another job.

d Tom suggested me to look for another job.

2 a Where do you suggest I go for my holiday?

b Where do you suggest me to go for my holiday?

c Where do you suggest I should go for my holiday?

34.3 Complete the sentences using **should** + the following:

ask ~~be~~ leave listen say worry

1 It's strange that he should be late. He's usually on time.

2 It's funny that you that. I was going to say the same thing.

3 It's only natural that parents about their children.

4 Isn't it typical of Joe that he without saying goodbye to anybody?

5 I was surprised that they me for advice. What advice could I give them?

6 I'm going to give you all some essential information, so it's important that everybody
..... very carefully.

34.4 Use the words in brackets to complete these sentences. Use **If ... should ...**.

1 I'm going out now. If Tom should phone, tell him I'll call him back this evening.
(Tom / phone)

2 I've hung the washing out to dry on the balcony. ,
can you bring the washing in, please? (it / rain)

3 I think everything will be OK. any problems,
I'm sure we'll be able to solve them. (there / be)

4 I don't want anyone to know where I'm going. ,
just say that you don't know. (anyone / ask)

Write sentences 3 and 4 again, this time beginning with **Should**.

5 (3) Should, I'm sure we'll be able to solve them.

6 (4), just say that you don't know.

34.5 (Section E) Complete the sentences using **I should** + the following:

buy keep phone ~~wait~~

1 'Shall I leave now?' 'No, I should wait a bit longer.'

2 'Shall I throw these things away?' 'No, them. You may need them.'

3 'Shall I go and see Paul?' 'Yes, but him first.'

4 'Is it worth repairing this TV set?' 'No, a new one.'