

May and might 2

A

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)

B

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.

C

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.

D

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.

- 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)

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

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

73/391

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.

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 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?

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

Exercises

Unit 31

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

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

31.2 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

- I'm not working tomorrow, so I don't have to get up early.
- Steve didn't know how to use the computer, so I had to show him.
- Excuse me a moment - I _____ a phone call. I won't be long.
- I'm not so busy. I have a few things to do, but I _____ them now.
- I couldn't find the street I wanted. I _____ somebody for directions.
- The car park is free. You _____ to park your car there.
- A man was injured in the accident, but he _____ to hospital because it wasn't serious.
- Sue has a senior position in the company. She _____ important decisions.
- When Patrick starts his new job next month, he _____ 50 miles to work every day.

31.3 In some of these sentences, **must** is wrong or unnatural. Correct the sentences where necessary.

- It's later than I thought. I must go. OK (have to is also correct)
- I must work every day from 8.30 to 5.30. I have to work
- You must come and see us again soon. _____
- Tom can't meet us tomorrow. He must work. _____
- I must work late yesterday evening. _____
- I must get up early tomorrow. I have lots to do. _____
- Julia wears glasses. She must wear glasses since she was very young. _____

31.4 Complete the sentences with **mustn't** or **don't/doesn't have to**.

- I don't want anyone to know about our plan. You mustn't tell anyone.
- Richard doesn't have to wear a suit to work, but he usually does.
- I can stay in bed tomorrow morning because I _____ go to work.
- Whatever you do, you _____ touch that switch. It's very dangerous.
- There's a lift in the building, so we _____ climb the stairs.
- You _____ forget what I told you. It's very important.
- Sue _____ get up early, but she usually does.
- Don't make so much noise. We _____ wake the children.
- I _____ eat too much. I'm supposed to be on a diet.
- You _____ be a good player to enjoy a game of tennis.