Modal verbs of obligation: have to, must, should

Modal verbs of obligation, including **"have to," "must,"** and **"should,"** are used to express different levels of necessity or obligation in English.

Have to: "Have to" is used to express **a general obligation or necessity**. It implies that some external factor, rule, or circumstance requires a certain action to be taken. It's often used in the present tense and can be conjugated for different subjects. In terms of formality, "have to" is less strong than "must."

Examples:

- She **has to** submit her report by Friday. **(affirmative)**
- They **don't have to** wear uniforms. **(negative)**
- Do you **have to** take that course? **(question)**

Must: "Must" is a stronger form of obligation compared to "have to." It expresses **a strong necessity or requirement**. "Must" often implies that the obligation comes from the speaker's own judgement or a clear rule or law. However, "must" can sound more formal and can sometimes sound too strong in casual conversation.

- You **must** arrive on time for the interview. **(affirmative)**
- We **mustn't** forget to lock the door. **(negative)**
- **Must** I complete all the exercises? **(question)** - Not common in everyday English

Should: "Should" is used to indicate a **recommendation**, **advice**, or **something that is considered the right thing to do**. It's not as strong as "must" or "have to," and it leaves more room for discretion. It's often used to suggest a course of action that would be beneficial or appropriate.

- We **should** call the restaurant to make a reservation **(affirmative)**
- You **shouldn't** eat too much junk food **(negative)**
- **Should** I adopt this dog? **(question)**



Note:
The negative forms of "have to" and "must" can sometimes create confusion. "Don't have to" implies that something is not necessary, whereas "mustn't" implies that something is prohibited or forbidden.

Modal verbs of obligation: have to, must, should exercise 1:

Choose the most appropriate answer for each question.

1. You _____ finish your assignment before the deadline.
a) must
b) should

2. Visitors _____ follow the museum rules and regulations.
a) should
b) must

3. Students _____ study regularly to perform well in exams.
a) should
b) have to

4. I think you _____ probably get your ears tested if you can't hear me.
a) have to
b) should

5. I failed the exam, so I _____ do it again if I want to qualify.
a) should
b) have to

6. Your teeth look terrible. You _____ go to the dentist immediately.
a) must
b) should

7. My mum thinks I _____ cut my hair. She likes it long.
a) have to
b) shouldn't

8. This work is really not acceptable. Things _____ change.
a) should
b) must

9. I'm afraid I can't come to the concert tonight because I _____ finish my homework for tomorrow.
a) have to
b) should

10. My sister thinks I _____ join her yoga class. She loves it.
a) have to
b) should



Modal verbs of obligation: have to, must, should exercise 2:

Complete the sentences with the most appropriate modal verb of obligation (have to, must, should).

1. Students _____ complete their assignments on time.

2. You _____ read the instructions before starting the experiment.

3. We _____ consider the consequences of our actions.

4. Employees _____ attend the mandatory training session.

5. Children _____ drink a lot of sugary drinks.

6. We _____ arrive early to secure good seats.

7. He _____ show his identification to enter the restricted area.

8. You _____ think twice before making a decision.

9. Students _____ pay attention to the teacher during the lecture.

10. Guests _____ RSVP for the event by the specified date.

Modal verbs of obligation: have to, must, should: answer key

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Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. a) must
2. b) must
3. a) should
4. b) should
5. b) have to
6. a) must
7. b) shouldn't
8. b) must
9. a) have to
10. b) should

Exercise 2

1. have to / must
2. should
3. should
4. have to / must
5. shouldn't
6. should
7. has to / must
8. should
9. must / have to
10. have to / must