

MODAL VERB “MUST”

We use “must” when we want to 1) to express an obligation, duty or command, 2) to express an urgent situation, 3) to express a very strong possibility which may be as high as 90% and 4) to express a strong suggestion.

Examples:

All employees **must** wear safety glasses in this area. (Obligation)

All motorists **must** wear their safety belts. (Obligation)

All students **must** take the entrance exam before registration. (Obligation)

You look horrible, you **must** go to the doctor! (Urgent situation)

She is mad at me, I **must** call her to apologize! (Urgent situation)

It is getting very late, we **must** leave! (Urgent situation)

We **must** take immediate action before it is too late! (Urgent situation)

She **must** be rich, she’s been working sixteen hours a day! (Strong possibility)

They must be madly in love, they are always kissing each other. (Strong possibility)

A. What time is it?

B. It **must** be midnight, I’ve just heard the church bell ring. (Strong possibility)

We **must** go to the concert, it is going to be great! (Strong suggestion)

You **must** see that movie, it is very funny! (Strong suggestion)

You **must** go on a diet, you’re getting fat. (Strong suggestion)

Note: Never use “TO” with “MUST”.

Error: You must to go to church every Sunday.

Correct: You must go to church every Sunday.

Error: Children must to respect older people.

Correct: Children must respect older people.

Error: We must to finish painting the house.

Correct: We must finish painting the house.

The structure to use “must” is as follows:

SUBJECT	+ MUST	+ VERB IN INFINITIVE FORM	+ COMPLEMENTIZER
I	must	study	for the exam.
You	must	go	visit your friend in the hospital.
He	must	buy	some flowers for his wife.
She	must	be	at home, she never goes out.
It	must	be	sunny, it is hot in here.
We	must	talk	to the president.
They	must	come	to our party. They are so funny!

The negative form of “must” is must not or the contracted form “mustn’t” which is more commonly used as a negative command and not used commonly as a negative possibility.

Examples:

Children mustn't play with matches. You mustn't forget to mail the letter.

She mustn't treat her boyfriend that way. You mustn't drink and drive.

They mustn't play in the street after dark.

They mustn't be there, they just left five minutes ago. It mustn't be raining, the sun is out.

It mustn't be that late already!

He mustn't be going out with her, she is too beautiful for him. They mustn't be sleeping still, it's twelve o'clock.

Note: When expressing a strong negative possibility, it is much more common to use "couldn't" rather than "mustn't".

Examples:

They couldn't be there yet, they just left 5 minutes ago. It couldn't be raining, the sun is out.

It couldn't be that late already.

He couldn't be going out with her, she is too beautiful for him. They couldn't be sleeping still, it's twelve o'clock.



Read the sentences carefully and select the choice that best matches the sentence. Use the modal verb **must, have to or has to**.

1. I _____ to finish my paper for school, but I can wait until tomorrow because it is due in three days.
a. have to b. must c. has to
2. He broke his leg. He _____ be in pain.
a. have to b. must c. has to
3. She _____ get an A in the final, or else she won't pass.
a. have to b. must c. has to
4. We _____ until they call out names.
a. have to b. must c. has to
5. It is raining outside and you are not wearing a raincoat. You _____ be soaking wet.
a. have to b. must c. has to
6. I _____ to finish my homework before my mother gets home.
a. have to b. must c. has to
7. All employees _____ wash their hands before returning to work.
a. have to b. must c. has to
8. They _____ call us and let us know if they are coming.
a. have to b. must c. has to
9. He _____ be at home. I just spoke to him on the phone.
a. have to b. must c. has to
10. He _____ be more serious about his studies.
a. have to b. must c. has to
11. People _____ not drink and drive.
a. have to b. must c. has to

