

## SECTION 2

### True, untrue, possible: present and past

#### 1 TRUE/UNTRUE

##### Present

In addition to predicting, we use *may*, *might*, *could* and *will* to say whether we think something is true or likely in the present:

*You may / might / could very well be right.* (= it's likely now) *You may / might / could conceivably / possibly have a point there.* (= it's not impossible) *That'll be my mother on the phone.* (= I'm quite sure) *Nikos'll be arriving in Brighton about now, I should think.* (= it's probable) *Surely he won't be there already?* (= I don't believe he is)

##### Past

We use *could have*, *will have*, *may have* and *might have* to speculate about the possibility of something happening in the past (see Unit 4, Section 2 for modals in the past):

*They may have finished already, for all I know.*  
*The doctor won't have had a chance to look at your X-ray yet.*

- Sometimes we speculate about something that didn't happen but we feel there was potential for it to happen:  
*That wasn't a good idea – you might have hurt him.*
- Sometimes we speculate about what happened without knowing exactly what did happen:  
*You may / might / could have done just enough to scrape through.*

#### watch out!

- We use *may not / might not* to express possibility (see also Section 4). We use *could not* to talk about deduction (see 3 below) and ability (see Unit 4, Section 2):  
*I might / may not have her new phone number; let me check.* (= possibility)  
*He couldn't be there already – it's over thirty miles away.* (= deduction)  
*'How far is to London from here?' 'I couldn't say.'* (= ability)

#### 2 IN MY OPINION...

We use *should* and *ought to* to give our subjective opinion about whether we think something is possible or true (see Section 1.3 for *should / ought to* for predictions):

*I've fixed your video and it should / ought to be working all right now.*

- However, we use *should* and *ought to* more commonly to give our opinion about whether something is right or not (see Section 3.2):  
*That table shouldn't be here. It should be over there.*  
*There ought to be another packet of sugar in that cupboard.*

#### 3 DEDUCTION

When we give good reasons for thinking something is true or untrue, we use *must* and *can't* as opposites:

*He goes to Scotland every year for his holidays. He must like it.* (= I'm sure he does) *John can't possibly be seventy! He doesn't look a day over fifty.* (= I'm sure it isn't true)

- When we give reasons for making logical assumptions about the past, we use *must have* and *can't have*:  
*You look very relaxed – it must have been a good holiday.* *Where's Dominic? He can't have left already, can he?*
- We can also use *couldn't* and *couldn't have*:  
*They couldn't be asking for me – no one knows I live here.* (= disbelief)  
*He couldn't have taken it by mistake, could he?* (= doubt)

#### 4 EXPRESSING ANNOYANCE

We can use *might have* and *could have* to express annoyance about something that happened:

*He could / might at least have offered to pay!* (= but he didn't)

#### ? check

Which one of these sentences does *not* illustrate one of the points above?

- He'll probably be getting off the plane now.
- They must be enjoying themselves; just listen.
- You could have done the car a lot of damage.
- He may well come along later.
- I think that socket should work now.

## Practice

**1** Tick (✓) the pairs of sentences that express approximately the same idea. Put a cross (X) by those where there is a clear difference in meaning.

Examples: x I may well have been a little bit late in arriving.

It's quite possible I was a little bit late. ✓

y We may not get there in time for the speeches.

We couldn't get there in time for the speeches. X

- a This could be the chance we've all been waiting for.  
This might be the chance we've all been waiting for.
- b This may very well be the last chance for peace.  
This might very well be the last chance for peace.
- c That's probably the postman dropping in the weekly free newspaper.  
That'll be the postman dropping in the weekly free newspaper.
- d They won't have read our fax yet.  
I doubt if they've read our fax yet.
- e The exam results should be here by now.  
The exam results should be here any day now.
- f They must have taken a short cut to get here.  
They had to take a short cut to get here.
- g You could have done yourself a nasty injury.  
You might have done yourself a nasty injury.
- h The washing machine shouldn't be making such a strange noise.  
The washing machine couldn't be making such a strange noise.

**2** Tick (✓) the modal verbs that complete each of the sentences in this passage. One, two or all of them may be possible.

There *shouldn't/might not/ought not* (1) be a comma before the 'who' in this sentence, Kostas. Oh yes, you *may well/might well/will well* (2) say that writing English is not important for you. But you *could/may/might* (3) have to write a dissertation in English one day. Punctuation and spelling *should/could/may* (4) be quite a serious problem for you. But it *can/should/could* (5) always be possible for you to get full stops in the right place. And it *can't/shouldn't/mustn't* (6) be that difficult to spell most short words more or less correctly. You *may/must/might* (7) not have realised how flexible English is. For example, you *may/should/can* (8) find 'organisation' spelt with an 's' or a 'z'. It makes life easier, doesn't it?

**3** Combine each question and answer using *for* to make one sentence.

Examples: 'Was it a serious crime?' 'Well, the police have put quite a lot of men on the case.'

It must have been quite a serious crime for the police to have put so many men on the case.

'Does he work many hours?' 'I don't know, but I do know his wages are very low.'

He can't work very many hours for his wages to be so low.

- a 'Was very much stolen?' 'Well, the bank's offering a reward of £50,000.'
- b 'Was it an exciting match?' 'Well, half the spectators left at half-time.'
- c 'Is it a good show?' 'Well, people have travelled an awfully long way to see it.'
- d 'Is it a big school?' 'Well, there are over sixty teachers working there.'
- e 'Has something serious gone wrong?' 'Well, the boss is ranting and raving like a madman.'
- f 'Was it a major operation?' 'Well, they let her out of hospital the following day.'

**4** Fill each of the blanks with a suitable word or phrase.

Example: I think you *may very well* have put your finger on the problem there.

- a Our neighbours must ..... fortune on that new garden furniture of theirs.
- b It couldn't ..... you spoke to; I wasn't even in the country at the time.
- c It's well past dinner time; surely the conference should ..... by now.
- d She can't ..... very well to have left the party so early.
- e I might ..... like this would happen.
- f You could ..... know beforehand that you couldn't come.



# SECTION 3

## Necessity, duty and advice

### 1 NECESSITY

We use *must* and *mustn't* when we decide for ourselves what's necessary:

*You **mustn't** keep asking for my help all the time.* (= I don't want you to) *I really **must** be going: it's getting late.* (= I think I must)

- We can also use *must* and *mustn't* for impersonal necessity:  
*The lead **must** be connected properly or it won't work.*
- The strength of necessity varies with the situation:  
*All questions **must** be answered.* (= order) *You **must** see the film – it's really good.* (= advice) *We **must** get together sometime and talk this over.* (= suggestion)

### have to

Although not a modal verb, we often use *have to* and *have got to* (more informal) before verbs to talk about necessity. *Have to* usually suggests that someone else decides what's necessary:

*The notice says we **have to** report to the manager's office.*

*I've **got to** go or my boss will wonder where I am.*

- Because *have to* isn't a modal, it has a past form, -ing form, infinitive form, etc. This means we can use it in more situations than *must*:  
*We **had to** break in because we'd forgotten our key.*  
*They'll **have to** hurry if they're not going to be late.*  
*I don't like **having to** wear a suit and tie.*  
*He pretended to **have to** leave early.*

### 2 DUTY AND ADVICE

We use *should* and *ought to* to express our opinion about what's right and wrong:

*Drivers **ought to** be more considerate to other road users.* (= it's their duty) *You **should** take this responsibility very seriously.* (= it's your duty)

*You really **shouldn't** be lifting heavy furniture at your age.* (= strong advice / criticism)

- To talk about the past, we use *should have* and *ought to have*. They suggest what happened in the past was wrong or unfortunate:  
*The Government **ought to have** listened.* (= they didn't)  
*You **shouldn't have** worked so hard.* (= you did)
- We use *shall* as well as *should* and *ought to* to ask for advice:  
*What **shall** I do? Do you think I **should** tell her?*

### 3 NOT NECESSARY

To say there is no obligation to do something we use *needn't*, *don't need to* or *don't have to*. In many instances there is little or no change in meaning, but:

- We generally use *needn't* when the authority comes from the speaker:  
*You **needn't** come this evening if you don't want to.*
- We generally use *don't need to* and *don't have to* when the authority doesn't come from the speaker:  
*You **don't need to** / **don't have to** carry an identity card.*
- To talk about the past, we use *needn't have* or *didn't need to* / *didn't have to*. *Needn't have* means 'you did, but it wasn't necessary':  
*You **needn't have** cooked so much food.*
- With *didn't need to* / *didn't have to* only the context tells us whether it actually happened:  
*I **didn't need to** go shopping, but I did, just for fun.*  
*I **didn't have to** do any extra shopping, so I didn't.*

### 4 OTHER VERBS FOR EXPRESSING NECESSITY AND ADVICE

Other verbs express necessity or advice:

*Hard hats **are to** be worn on this site.* (= necessity)  
*All guests **will** vacate their room before eleven o'clock.* (= necessity)

*I **wouldn't** do that if I were you.* (= advice)

*You'd **better** phone home – they have news of your sister.* (= advice)

- We use *had better* for advice in a particular situation. *Should* and *ought to* can be more general:  
~~✗ Employees **had better** give three months' notice.~~  
✓ *Employees **should** give three months' notice.*  
*You'd **better** give in your notice if you plan to leave.*

For other ways of expressing necessity, see Section 5.

### ? check

Which one of these sentences does not contain the idea of necessity, duty or advice?

- You'd better have a good excuse or you're in trouble.
- This film should be really good: it's had great reviews.
- You must try harder than that if you're going to make the team.
- You should have got up earlier – then you wouldn't be late.
- We may have to give in to their demands.

## Practice

## 1 Tick (✓) the sentences below which express necessity, duty or advice.

Example: It must be hard work on an oil rig, mustn't it? ✗

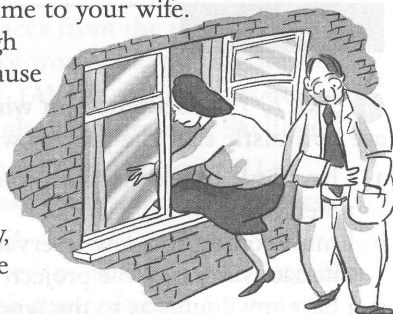
I must be on my way if you don't mind. ✓

- a The filler must be hard before you can paint over it.
- b You must be joking.
- c It must have been offside because the goal was disallowed.
- d Having to get up so early every morning is really getting me down.
- e A bike is sometimes worth having to beat traffic jams in towns.
- f Do you think I ought to give Dad a ring?
- g Should you have any problems with your computer, give me a call.
- h Doctors should respect their patients' wishes.
- i Are you saying we needn't have gone to all this trouble anyway?
- j He'd better not be late again!

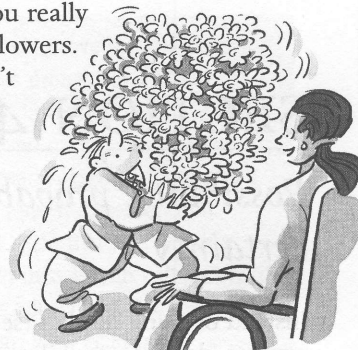
2 Fill each of the gaps with *must* or a form of *have to* followed by a suitable verb.

Example: I really dislike *having to go* shopping at the weekend.

- a Just recently I ..... down on my spending.
- b You really ..... me to your wife.
- c We ..... through the window because I had left my key inside.
- d One day everyone ..... at the age of fifty, whether they like it or not.
- e This exercise is so difficult one ..... a genius to do it.
- f I didn't take the job because I ..... fifty hours a week.
- g Come on, you ..... me drive you home.
- h You ..... at your desk at nine sharp or else part of your salary .....
- i You ..... for twenty-six weeks in the previous year to qualify for unemployment benefit.
- j I find I ..... longer and longer on my homework at the moment just to keep up.

3 Tick (✓) each of the sentences in which *didn't need to* can be replaced with *needn't have* + -ed.

- a It's sweet of you, but you really didn't need to buy me flowers.
- b It's a good job we didn't need to be here earlier.
- c It was strange that we didn't need to show our passports.
- d You didn't need to come and pick me up: I could have got a taxi.
- e There was a sofa in the other room: you didn't need to sleep on the floor.
- f I didn't need to use cash; I had my credit card with me after all.



## 4 Finish each of the following sentences in two different ways so that they are as similar in meaning as possible to the sentence printed before them.

Example: If I were you, I'd have the lobster.

- a I think you ought to have the lobster.
- b You really should have the lobster.

- 1 Why ever did you go to so much trouble with the refreshments?
  - a You really needn't .....
  - b It really .....
- 2 There is to be no talking whatsoever during the examination.
  - a Candidates will not .....
  - b Silence is to .....
- 3 I really must be going now.
  - a I've absolutely .....
  - b I really mustn't .....
- 4 She should take some form of identification with her, shouldn't she?
  - a She'd .....
  - b It might be .....
- 5 It may be possible for you to go there without a visa after all.
  - a It may not .....
  - b You might not .....
- 6 Don't you think it's time we made our excuses and left?
  - a Hadn't .....
  - b Oughtn't .....