Modal Verbs for Obligation, Prohibition and Permission — A2

CEFR Level A2 | 3 Worksheets: Have To and Must • mustn't vs don't have to • Should, Can and Reading | Answer Key Included

Worksheet 1: Have To and Must

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A2 (CEFR)

Reference: Two Ways to Say "It Is Necessary"

You know **must**. Now we add **have to**. They are similar, but not the same.

Form	Meaning	Example
must	The speaker thinks it is important	I **must** call my mother. (I decide this.)
have to / has to	A rule from outside — a law, a job, a boss	I **have to** wear a uniform. (My school decides.)

Have to changes! Must does not.

Person	have to	must
I / you / we / they	have to	must
he / she / it	**has to**	must
Past (all people)	**had to**	— (no past form: use had to)
Question	**Do** you **have to** …?	Must you …?

Careful! *Must* has no past. For the past, we always use had to: "Yesterday I had to work."

Exercise A: Complete with have to / has to

#	Sentence
1	My brother _____ get up at six every day.
2	We _____ wear a helmet on the building site.
3	She _____ study a lot this week — she has an exam.
4	I _____ take the bus because my car is broken.
5	Anna _____ work on Saturdays.
6	They _____ show their tickets at the door.

Exercise B: Past Tense

Write the sentences in the past with had to.

1. I must finish my homework. → Yesterday, I _____
2. She has to work late. → Last night, she _____
3. We must wait for the bus. → This morning, we _____
4. He has to pay for the ticket. → Last week, he _____

Exercise C: Must or Have To?

Choose the better answer. Think: who decides — the speaker, or a rule outside?

1. I really **must** / **have to** phone my grandmother. I miss her.
2. Passengers **must** / **have to** show a passport at the airport. It is the law.
3. I **must** / **have to** wear a tie at work. My boss says so.

4. You **must** / **have to** see this film! It is wonderful.
5. Doctors **must** / **have to** study for many years.
6. I **must** / **have to** stop eating so much chocolate.

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: The Big Difference — mustn't / don't have to

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A2 (CEFR)

Reference: NOT the Same!

This is the most important page in this worksheet. These two look similar. They are **opposites**.

Form	Meaning	Example
mustn't	**STOP!** It is forbidden. You have no choice.	You **mustn't** park here. (You will get a fine.)
don't have to	**It's free!** It is not necessary. You choose.	You **don't have to** park here. (You can, but there are other places.)

Compare:

"You **mustn't** come to the party." = Don't come! You are not invited.

"You **don't have to** come to the party." = Come if you want. It's OK if you don't.

Exercise A: Which Meaning?

Write FORBIDDEN or NOT NECESSARY.

#	Sentence	Meaning
1	You mustn't touch the paintings.	_____
2	You don't have to pay — it's free today.	_____
3	Children mustn't play with matches.	_____
4	We don't have to get up early tomorrow.	_____
5	You mustn't tell anyone. It's a secret.	_____
6	She doesn't have to wear a uniform at her new school.	_____

Exercise B: Complete the Sentences

Write mustn't or don't / doesn't have to.

#	Sentence
1	You _____ smoke in the hospital. It is against the law.
2	It's Sunday, so I _____ go to work. I can stay in bed!
3	You _____ forget your passport, or you can't travel.
4	He _____ cook tonight — we are going to a restaurant.
5	You _____ be late for the exam. They close the door at nine.
6	We _____ hurry. The film starts in an hour.
7	You _____ drink that water. It is dirty.
8	She _____ take the bus. Her father can drive her.

Exercise C: Find the Mistake

Each sentence has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. "You mustn't pay. It's free!"

   → _____

2. "She must to work on Saturday."

   → _____

3. "Yesterday I must wait for two hours."

→ _____

4. "He don't have to come if he is tired."

→ _____

5. "Do you must wear a uniform?"

→ _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Should, Can and Reading

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: A2 (CEFR)

Part A – Should: Giving Advice

Should is not a rule. It is **advice** — a good idea.

Form	Meaning	Example
should	It is a good idea	You **should** drink more water.
shouldn't	It is not a good idea	You **shouldn't** eat so late at night.
must	It is a rule — no choice	You **must** stop at a red light.

Give advice. Write a sentence with should or shouldn't.

#	Problem	Your advice
1	"I am very tired all the time."	_____
2	"I want to learn English faster."	_____
3	"I have a bad headache."	_____
4	"My English test is tomorrow!"	_____
5	"I am always late for school."	_____

Part B – Reading

Read the text and answer the questions.

> *Sam has a new job in a hotel. He has to start at seven o'clock in the morning, so he must go to bed early. He has to wear a black uniform, but he doesn't have to buy it — the hotel gives it to him. He mustn't use his phone when he is working. On Sundays he doesn't have to work, so he can visit his family. His manager says: "You should smile more, Sam! And you shouldn't look so tired." Sam thinks he should find a new job.*

1. What time does Sam **have to** start work?

   _____

2. Does Sam **have to** buy his uniform? Why / why not?

   _____

3. What **mustn't** Sam do at work?

   _____

4. What does Sam do on Sundays? Why?

   _____

5. What advice does the manager give? Write both sentences.

   _____

Part C – Writing

Write about **your school or your job**. Write 50–70 words. Use **have to**, **don't have to**, **mustn't** and **should** at least once each.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
____

_____
____

_____
____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 20

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — A2 Level Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – Exercise A

1	2	3	4	5	6
has to	have to	has to	have to	has to	have to

Worksheet 1 – Exercise B (Past)

#	Answer
1	Yesterday, I **had to finish** my homework.
2	Last night, she **had to work** late.
3	This morning, we **had to wait** for the bus.
4	Last week, he **had to pay** for the ticket.

Key teaching point: "must" has no past form. Every past necessity is "had to", whoever decided it.

Worksheet 1 – Exercise C (Must or Have To)

#	Answer	Why
1	must	The speaker feels this personally. Nobody forces him.
2	have to	The law decides — an outside rule.
3	have to	The boss decides.
4	must	A strong personal recommendation.
5	have to	The profession decides.
6	must	The speaker decides for himself.

Note: in real English both are often possible, and speakers mix them freely. Accept a defended alternative — the aim is that learners can explain their choice, not that they hit one answer.

Worksheet 2 – Exercise A (Which Meaning?)

1	2	3	4	5	6
FORBIDDEN	NOT NECESSARY	FORBIDDEN	NOT NECESSARY	FORBIDDEN	NOT NECESSARY

Worksheet 2 – Exercise B

#	Answer	Why
1	mustn't	Against the law = forbidden.
2	don't have to	Not necessary — and he is happy about it.
3	mustn't	A warning — the result is bad.
4	doesn't have to	Not necessary; there is another plan.
5	mustn't	The door closes = no choice.
6	don't have to	There is plenty of time.
7	mustn't	Dangerous = forbidden.
8	doesn't have to	There is an alternative.

Worksheet 2 – Exercise C (Mistakes)

#	Mistake	Correction & rule
1	mustn't pay	**You don't have to pay.** — "It's free" means not necessary, not forbidden. The classic error.
2	must to work	**She has to work** / **She must work.** — No "to" after must.
3	must wait (past)	**Yesterday I had to wait.** — Must has no past form.
4	He don't have to	**He doesn't have to come.** — Third person: doesn't.
5	Do you must…?	**Do you have to wear a uniform?** — Must questions are "Must you…?"; with "do", use "have to".

Worksheet 3 – Part A (Advice)

Accept any sensible advice. Models:

#	Model answer
1	You should go to bed earlier. / You shouldn't drink coffee at night.
2	You should watch films in English. / You should speak every day.
3	You should take an aspirin and rest.
4	You should study tonight. / You shouldn't watch TV.
5	You should get up earlier. / You shouldn't stay up so late.

Worksheet 3 – Part B (Reading)

#	Answer
1	At seven o'clock in the morning.
2	No. The hotel gives it to him, so it is not necessary.
3	He mustn't use his phone when he is working.
4	He visits his family, because he doesn't have to work on Sundays.
5	"You should smile more." and "You shouldn't look so tired."

Marking Guide — Writing (Worksheet 3 Part C)

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Range	Uses have to, don't have to, mustn't and should	0–4
Meaning	mustn't and don't have to are NOT confused	0–3
Form	has/have/had to correct; no "to" after must	0–3

Teacher Notes — A2

- **mustn't vs don't have to is the whole worksheet.** Everything else at A2 is straightforward; this one distinction causes more errors than the rest of the modal system combined. Learners hear "not" in both and assume they are the same. Teach them as opposites, not as variants.
- **Must has no past.** Learners produce "Yesterday I must go". The repair is simple and mechanical: every past obligation is *had to*. Drill it early.
- **Don't over-police must vs have to.** Textbooks present a clean split (internal vs external), but real speakers use them almost interchangeably, and *have to* is far more common in speech. Teach the tendency, accept the overlap, and mark for explanation rather than for the "right" answer.
- **Have to is not a modal.** It takes do/does/did in questions and negatives ("Do you have to…?"). This is why "Do you must…?" is wrong. Learners find it easier if you tell them plainly: *have to* is an ordinary verb wearing a modal's coat.

- **Should arrives here as advice only.** Keep it away from expectation ("The train should arrive at six") — that belongs with the certainty worksheets at B1.