

# 44 Ability: can, could and be able to

## 1 Can and can't

- Vicky: How many instruments **can** you play, Natasha?  
Natasha: Three – the violin, the clarinet and the piano.  
Vicky: That's terrific. You haven't got a piano here, though.  
Natasha: No, but I **can** go to the music room in college and play the one in there.  
Vicky: I'm not musical at all. I **can't** even sing.

We use **can** to say that something is possible: that someone has an ability (*Natasha **can** play the piano*) or an opportunity (*She **can** go to the music room*). **Can** is usually pronounced /kən/ but sometimes we say /kæn/. The negative is **cannot** /'kænɒt/ or **can't** /kɑ:nt/.

## 2 Can and be able to

In the present tense, **be able to** is a little more formal and less usual than **can**.

*Emma is good with computers. She **can** write/is **able to** write programs.*

But in some structures we always use **be able to**, not **can**.

To-infinitive: *It's nice **to be able to** go to the opera.* (NOT ~~to can~~ go)

After a modal verb: *Melanie **might be able to** help us.*

Present Perfect: *It's been quiet today. I've **been able to** get some work done.*

For the future we use **can** or **will be able to** but NOT ~~will can~~.

*If we earn some money, we **can** go/we'll **be able to** go on holiday next summer.*

*I'm afraid I **can't** come/I **won't be able to** come to the disco on Friday.*

But to suggest a possible future action, we normally use **can**.

*Let's have lunch together. We **can** go to that new restaurant.*

## 3 Could and was/were able to

For ability or opportunity in the past, we use **could** or **was/were able to**.

*Natasha **could** play (OR **was able to** play) the piano when she was four.*

*In those days we had a car, so we **could** travel (OR **were able to** travel) very easily.*

To say that the ability or opportunity resulted in a particular action, something that really happened, we use **was/were able to** but not **could**.

*The plane **was able to** take off at eleven o'clock, after the fog had lifted.*

*Luckily Mark **was able to** get (OR **succeeded in getting**) the work done in time.*

*The drivers **were able to** stop (OR **managed to stop** ▷ page 60.3) before they crashed into each other.*

Compare these two sentences.

*The children **could** swim when they were quite young. (a past ability)*

*The children **were able to** swim across the river. (a past action)*

In negative sentences and questions, we can use either form.

*It was foggy, so the plane **couldn't/wasn't able to** take off.*

*The pool was closed, so they **couldn't/weren't able to** have a swim.*

***Could you/Were you able to** describe the man to the police?*

We normally use **could** (not **was/were able to**) with verbs of seeing etc., and with verbs of thinking.

*We **could see** the village in the distance.*

*As soon as Harriet opened the door, she **could smell** gas.*

*I **couldn't understand** what was happening.*

# Practice

## A Can and can't (1)

Look at the pictures and say what they can or can't do. Use these words: *climb trees, juggle, lift the weights, play the violin, walk on his hands*



▶ He can walk on his hands.

- 1 ..... 3 .....
- 2 ..... 4 .....

## B Can and be able to (2)

Harriet is visiting David, who hurt himself when he fell off a ladder. Complete the conversation using *can* or a form of *be able to*. Sometimes there is more than one possible answer.

Harriet: Hello, David. I'm sorry I haven't (▶) been able to come ..... (come) and see you before. I've been really busy lately. How are you?

David: I'm OK, thanks. (1) ..... (I / walk) around now.  
 The doctor says (2) ..... (I / go) back to work soon.  
 It'll be nice (3) ..... (get) out again. I hate being stuck here like this. I haven't (4) ..... (do) anything interesting.

## C Could and was/were able to (3)

▶ Which is closer to the meaning of the sentence 'Years ago I could run a marathon'?

- a)  I ran a marathon at one particular time in the past.  
 b)  I was once fit enough to run a very long way.

1 Which of these sentences is correct?

I was ill, so I couldn't go to the party.  
 I was ill, so I wasn't able to go to the party.

- a)  Only the first one.    b)  Only the second one.    c)  Both of them.

2 Which is closer to the meaning of the sentence 'Sarah was able to leave work early yesterday'?

- a)  Sarah left work early yesterday.  
 b)  Sarah had the opportunity to leave work early yesterday, but we don't know if she took it.

## D Could and was/were able to (3)

Put in *could* or *was/were able to*. Sometimes either is possible. Use a negative if necessary.

▶ Suddenly all the lights went out. We couldn't ..... see a thing.

- 1 The computer went wrong, but luckily Emma ..... put it right again.  
 2 There was a big party last night. You ..... hear the music half a mile away.  
 3 I learnt to read music as a child. I ..... read it when I was five.  
 4 People heard warnings about the flood, and they ..... move out in time.  
 5 The train was full. I ..... find a seat anywhere.

# 45 Permission: can, may, could and be allowed to

## 1 Asking permission

We use **can**, **could** or **may** to ask for permission.

**Can** I use your pen?

**Could** we borrow your ladder, please? ~ Well, I'm using it at the moment.

**May** I see the letter? ~ Certainly.

**Could** often sounds more polite than **can**. **May** is rather formal.

## 2 Giving and refusing permission

To give permission we use **can** or **may** (but not **could**).

You **can** wait in my office if you like.

**Could** I borrow your calculator? ~ Of course you **can**.

You **may** telephone from here. (a written notice)

**May** is formal and is not often used in speech.

To refuse permission we use **can't** or **may not** (but not **couldn't**).

**Could** we picnic here? ~ I'm sorry. I'm afraid you **can't**.

Members **may not** bring more than two guests into the club.

We can also use **must not**.

Luggage **must not** be left unattended.



## 3 Talking about permission

We sometimes talk about rules made by someone else. To do this we use **can**, **could** and **be allowed to**.

We use **can** to talk about the present, and we use **could** for the past.

Present: Each passenger **can** take one bag onto the plane.

Past: In the 1920s you **could** drive without taking a test.

We can also use **be allowed to**.

Present: Passengers **are allowed to** take one bag onto the plane.

Future: **Will I be allowed to** record the interview on tape?

Past: We **weren't allowed to** look round the factory yesterday.

For a general permission in the past we use either **could** or **was/were allowed to**.

I **could** always stay/I **was** always **allowed to** stay up late as a child.

But to say that the permission resulted in a particular action, something that really happened, we use **was/were allowed to** (but not **could**).

I **was allowed to** leave work early yesterday.

We **were allowed to** go into the control room when we looked around the power station.

Compare these questions with **may** and **be allowed to**.

### ASKING FOR PERMISSION

**May** I take a photo of you?  
(= Will you allow it?)

### ASKING ABOUT PERMISSION

**Are we allowed to** take photos?  
(= What is the rule?)

# Practice

## A Asking permission (1)

How would you ask for permission in these situations?

Use *Can I ...?*, *Could I ...?* or *May I ...?* and these verbs: *borrow, join, look at, use*

▶ You are at a friend's flat. You want to make a phone call.

Can I use your phone?

1 You need a calculator. The person sitting next to you has got one.

2 You have gone into a café. Three people who you know from work are sitting at a table. You go over to the table.

3 You had to go to a lecture, but you were ill. Your friend went to the lecture and took notes. Next day you are well again and you see your friend.

## B Giving and refusing permission (2)

A policeman is telling you what the signs mean. What does he say?

Use *can* and *can't* and these verbs: *drop, go, have, park, play, smoke, turn*



Policeman:

▶ You can't go this way.

▶ You can park here.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....

## C Be allowed to (3)

Put in the correct forms.

Rita: I hear you've moved into a new flat with a couple of friends.

Emma: Yes, it's a nice flat, but the landlady is really strict. ▶ We aren't allowed to do

(we / not / allow / do) anything. It was my birthday last month, and

(1) ..... (I / not / allow / have) a party.

Rita: Oh, (2) ..... (we / allow / have) parties at our place, luckily. (3) ..... (we / allow / do) anything, more or

less. We're hoping to have an all-night party soon, but I'm not absolutely sure if

(4) ..... (we / allow / hold) it.

## D May I ...? or Am I allowed to ...? (3)

Are you asking for permission, or are you asking what the rule is? Put in *May I ...?* or *Am I allowed to ...?*

▶ May I ..... use your computer?

▶ Am I allowed to ..... smoke in this cinema?

1 ..... cross the road here?

2 ..... ask you a personal question?

3 ..... rollerblade in this park?

4 ..... drive a car without insurance?

5 ..... read your magazine?

# 46 Possibility and certainty: may, might, could, must, etc.

## 1 May, might and could

Rachel: *Whose bag is that?*

Daniel: *I don't know. It **may** belong to Maria's friend.*

Vicky: *It **might** be a bomb. It **could** explode at any moment.*

We use **may** or **might** to say that something is possible or that it is quite likely.

We can use them for the present or the future.

*It **may/might** be a bomb. (= Perhaps it is a bomb.)*

*I **may/might** go to the disco tomorrow. (= Perhaps I will go to the disco.)*

We can use **could** to say that something is possible.

*The story **could** be true, I suppose. (= Possibly it is true.)*

*You **could** win a million pounds! (= Possibly you will win a million pounds.)*

Sometimes **could** means only a small possibility. It is possible (but not likely) that you will win a million pounds.

In some situations we can use **may**, **might** or **could**.

*It **may/might/could** rain later.*

After **may**, **might** or **could** we can use a continuous form (**be** + an -ing form).

*That man **may/might be watching** us. (= Perhaps he is watching us.)*

*Sarah **may/might be working** late tonight. (= Perhaps she will be working late.)*

*I'm not sure where Matthew is. He **could be playing** squash. (= Possibly he is playing squash.)*

## 2 May, might and could in the negative

The negative forms are **may not**, **might not/mightn't**, and **could not/couldn't**.

### MAY NOT AND MIGHT NOT

Something negative is possible.

*Daniel **may not** get the job.*

*Tom **might not** be in.*

*I **mightn't** finish the marathon tomorrow.*

(It is possible that I will not finish it.)

### COULDN'T

Something is impossible.

*Vicky is afraid of heights. She **couldn't** climb onto the roof.*

*I'm completely unfit. I **couldn't** run a marathon.*

(It is impossible for me to run it.)

## 3 Must and can't

### MUST

We use **must** when we realize that something is certainly true.

*She isn't answering the phone. She **must** be out.*

*I had my keys a moment ago. They **must** be here somewhere.*

*Andrew isn't here. He **must** be working in the library.*

### CAN'T

We use **can't** when we realize that something is impossible.

*We haven't walked far. You **can't** be tired yet.*

*Life **can't** be easy when you have to spend it in a wheelchair.*

*Nick **can't** be touring Scotland. I saw him here this morning.*

▷ 53 Might/could/must have been    ▷ page 379 Mustn't in American English  
▷ 51.1 Could in suggestions

# Practice

## A Might be and might be doing (1)

Vicky and Rachel are at college. They're looking for their friend Natasha. Complete the conversation. Use *may* or *might* and the verb in brackets. Sometimes you need to use the continuous.

Vicky: I can't find Natasha. Have you seen her?

Rachel: (▶) *She might be* (she / be) in the music room. (▶) *She may be practising* (she / practise).

Vicky: No, she isn't there. I thought (1) ..... (she / be) with you.

Rachel: It's a nice day. (2) ..... (she / be) on the lawn.

(3) ..... (she / sit) out there reading the paper. Or

(4) ..... (she / have) a coffee.

(5) ..... (you / find) her in the canteen.

Emma: No, I've looked there.

Rachel: Well, here comes Jessica. (6) ..... (she / know).

## B May and might (1–2)

Add a sentence with *may* or *might* (both are correct).

▶ I'm not sure if it's going to rain. *It might rain* .....

▶ I don't know if we'll see an elephant. *We may see one* .....

1 I can't say whether Daniel will win. ....

2 I haven't decided if I'm having a holiday. ....

3 I don't know if we'll get an invitation. ....

4 I've no idea whether Sarah will be late. ....

5 I'm not sure if my friends are visiting me. ....

## C Mightn't and couldn't (2)

Put in *mightn't* or *couldn't*.

▶ I've got one or two things to do, so I *mightn't* ..... have time to come out tonight.

▶ David *couldn't* ..... work as a taxi driver. He can't drive.

1 We're going to need lots of glasses. We ..... have enough, you know.

2 Mark ..... be in the office tomorrow. He thinks he's getting a cold.

3 We ..... possibly have a dog, living in a small flat like this.

4 How can you work with all this noise? I ..... work in such conditions.

5 Don't come tomorrow because I ..... be in. I'm not sure what I'm doing.

## D Must, can't and might (1, 3)

A reporter is interviewing Mrs Miles for a TV news programme.

Complete the conversation. Put in *must*, *can't* or *might*.

Mrs Miles: My name's Nora Miles, and I'm going to do a parachute jump.

Reporter: Mrs Miles, you're seventy-three, and you're going to jump out of an aeroplane.

You (▶) *must* ..... be mad. You (1) ..... be serious.

Mrs Miles: It really (2) ..... be wonderful to look down from the sky. I've always wanted to try it.

Reporter: But anything could happen. You (3) ..... be injured or even killed. I wouldn't take the risk.

Mrs Miles: Well, young man, your life (4) ..... be much fun if you never take risks. You ought to try it. You never know – you (5) ..... enjoy it.

Reporter: Enjoy it? You (6) ..... be joking!

# 47 Necessity: must and have to

## 1 Present, past and future

We use **must** and **have to/has to** to say that something is necessary.

*You'll be leaving college soon. You **must** think about your future.*

*We're very busy at the office. I **have to** work on Saturday morning.*

*Mark **has to** get the car repaired. There's something wrong with the brakes.*

When we use the past, or the future with **will**, we need a form of **have to**.

*Emma **had to** go to the dentist yesterday. NOT ~~She must go to the dentist yesterday.~~*

*That wasn't very good. We'll **have to** do better next time.*

And in other structures we also use a form of **have to**, not **must**.

To-infinitive: *I don't want **to have to** wait in a queue for ages.*

After a modal verb: *Emma has toothache. She **might have to** go to the dentist.*

Present Perfect: *Mark **has had to** drive all the way to Glasgow.*

For negatives and questions with **have to/has to** and **had to**, we use a form of **do**.

*I **don't have to** work on Sundays. Why **does** Andrew **have to** study every evening?*

***Did** you **have to** pay for your second cup of coffee? ~ No, I **didn't**.*

*I don't have to work means that it is not necessary for me to work (see Unit 48.2).*

## 2 Must or have to?

Both **must** and **have to** express necessity, but we use them differently.



### MUST

We use **must** when the speaker feels that something is necessary.

*You **must** exercise. (I'm telling you.)*

*We **must** be quiet. (I'm telling you.)*

**I/we must** can also express a wish.

*I **must** buy a newspaper. I want to see the racing results.*

*We **must** invite Claire. She's wonderful company.*

### HAVE TO

We use **have to** when the situation makes something necessary.

*I **have to** exercise. (The doctor told me.)*

*We **have to** be quiet. (That's the rule.)*

*I **have to** buy a newspaper. The boss asked me to get one.*

*We **have to** invite Trevor and Laura. They invited us last time.*

## 3 Have got to

**Have got to** means the same as **have to**, but **have got to** is informal. We use it mainly in the present.

*I **have to/I've got to** make my sandwiches. My father **has to/has got to** take these pills.*

***Do we have to apply/Have we got to** apply for a visa?*

▷ 48 Mustn't and needn't

# Practice

## A Have to (1)

Complete the conversations. Use the words in brackets and a form of *have to*.

- ▶ Melanie: David's broken his leg. He's had to go (he's / go) to hospital.  
Harriet: Oh no! How long will he have to stay (will / he / stay) there?  
Melanie: I don't know.
- 1 Claire: I parked my car outside the hairdresser's, and while I was in there, the police took the car away. I've got it back now. But ..... (I / pay) a lot of money.  
Henry: How much ..... (you / pay)?  
Claire: Two hundred pounds!
- 2 Trevor: That door doesn't shut properly. .... (you / slam) it every time.  
Laura: ..... (you / will / fix) it then, won't you?
- 3 Jessica: You're always taking exams. Why ..... (you / take) so many?  
Andrew: ..... (I / will / take) a lot more if I want a good job.
- 4 Mike: We're in a new house now. .... (we / move). The old place was too small.  
Nick: Did it take you long to find a house?  
Mike: No, we found one easily. .... (we / not / look) very hard. But it was in bad condition. .... (we've / do) a lot of work on it.
- 5 Nick: My brother ..... (start) work at five o'clock in the morning.  
Melanie: That's pretty early. What time ..... (he / get) up?  
Nick: Half past three.

## B Must and have to (2)

Write a sentence with *must*, *have to* or *has to*.

- ▶ The sign says: 'Passengers must show their tickets.'  
So passengers have to show their tickets.
- ▶ The children have to be in bed by nine.  
Their parents said: 'You must be in bed by nine.'
- 1 Laura has to get to work on time.  
Her boss told her: .....
- 2 The police told Nick: 'You must keep your dog under control.'  
So Nick .....
- 3 The pupils have to listen carefully.  
The teacher says: .....
- 4 The new sign says: 'Visitors must report to the security officer.'  
So now .....

## C Must or have to? (2)

Put in *must* or *have to/has to*. Choose which is best for the situation.

- ▶ I have to go to the airport. I'm meeting someone.
- 1 You ..... lock the door when you go out. There've been a lot of break-ins recently.
- 2 Daniel ..... go to the bank. He hasn't any money.
- 3 I ..... work late tomorrow. We're very busy at the office.
- 4 You really ..... make less noise. I'm trying to concentrate.
- 5 I think you ..... pay to park here. I'll just go and read that notice.
- 6 You really ..... hurry up, Vicky. We don't want to be late.
- 7 I ..... put the heating on. I feel really cold.

# 48 Necessity: mustn't, needn't, etc.

## 1 Mustn't or needn't?

We use **must** to say that something is necessary (see Unit 47).

*You **must** be careful with those glasses. I **must** remember my key.*

Now compare **mustn't** and **needn't**.

### MUSTN'T

We use **mustn't** /'mʌsnt/ to say that something is a bad idea.

*You **mustn't** drop those glasses. They'll break.*

*I **mustn't** forget my key, or I won't get in.*

*You **mustn't** wear your best clothes. You'll get them dirty.*

### NEEDN'T

We use **needn't** when something is not necessary.

*You **needn't** wash those glasses. They're clean.*

*We **needn't** make sandwiches. There's a café.*

*You **needn't** wear your best clothes. You can wear what you like.*

## 2 Don't have to and don't need to

We can use **don't have to** and **don't need to** when something is not necessary.

The meaning is the same as **needn't**.

*You **don't have to** / **don't need to** wash those glasses. They're clean.*

*Mark **doesn't have to** / **doesn't need to** finish the report today. He can do it at the weekend.*

For American usage see page 379.

For the past we use **didn't**.

*The food was free. We **didn't have to** pay/We **didn't need to** pay for it.*

## 3 Didn't need to or needn't have?



*Daniel hadn't booked a seat, but luckily the train wasn't full. He **didn't need** to stand.*

### DIDN'T NEED TO

We use **didn't need to** when something was not necessary. Standing was not necessary because there were seats.

*Mark **didn't need** to hurry. He had lots of time.*

*He drove slowly along the motorway.*

*We **didn't need** to go to the supermarket because we had plenty of food.*



*Trevor and Laura booked a table for dinner. But the restaurant was empty. They **needn't have** booked a table.*

### NEEDN'T HAVE

We use **needn't have** + a past participle for something we did which we now know was not necessary, e.g. booking a table.

*Mark **needn't have** hurried. After driving at top speed, he arrived half an hour early.*

*We **needn't have** gone to the supermarket. We already had a pizza for tonight.*

Sometimes we can use **didn't need to** when the action happened, even though it was not necessary.

*Mark **didn't need to** hurry, but he drove at top speed. He likes driving fast.*

# Practice

## A Must, mustn't or needn't? (1)

Put in *must*, *mustn't* or *needn't*.

- ▶ Laura: You *needn't* ..... take an umbrella. It isn't going to rain.  
Trevor: Well, I don't know. It might do.  
Laura: Don't lose it then. You *mustn't* ..... leave it on the bus.
- 1 Vicky: Come on. We ..... hurry. We ..... be late.  
Rachel: It's only ten past. We ..... hurry. There's lots of time.
- 2 Claire: My sister and I are going a different way.  
Guide: Oh, you ..... go off on your own. It isn't safe. We ..... keep together in a group.
- 3 David: I'll put these cups in the dishwasher.  
Melanie: No, you ..... put them in there. It might damage them. In fact, we ..... wash them at all. We didn't use them.
- 4 Secretary: I ..... forget to type this letter.  
Mark: Yes, it ..... go in the post today because it's quite urgent. But the report isn't so important. You ..... type the report today.

## B Don't have to (2)

An old woman is talking to a reporter from her local newspaper. She is comparing life today with life in the past. Complete her sentences using *don't have to*, *doesn't have to* or *didn't have to*.

- ▶ We had to make our own fun in the old days. There wasn't any television then. These days people *don't have to make their own fun* .....
- 1 There's so much traffic now. You have to wait ages to cross the road. In those days you .....
- 2 I had to work long hours when I was young. But children today have it easy.  
They .....
- 3 My father had to work in a factory when he was twelve. Just imagine! Today a twelve-year-old child .....
- 4 There's so much crime today, isn't there? People have to lock their doors now. It was better in the old days when people .....
- 5 We had to wash our clothes by hand. There weren't any washing-machines, you know. Nowadays people .....

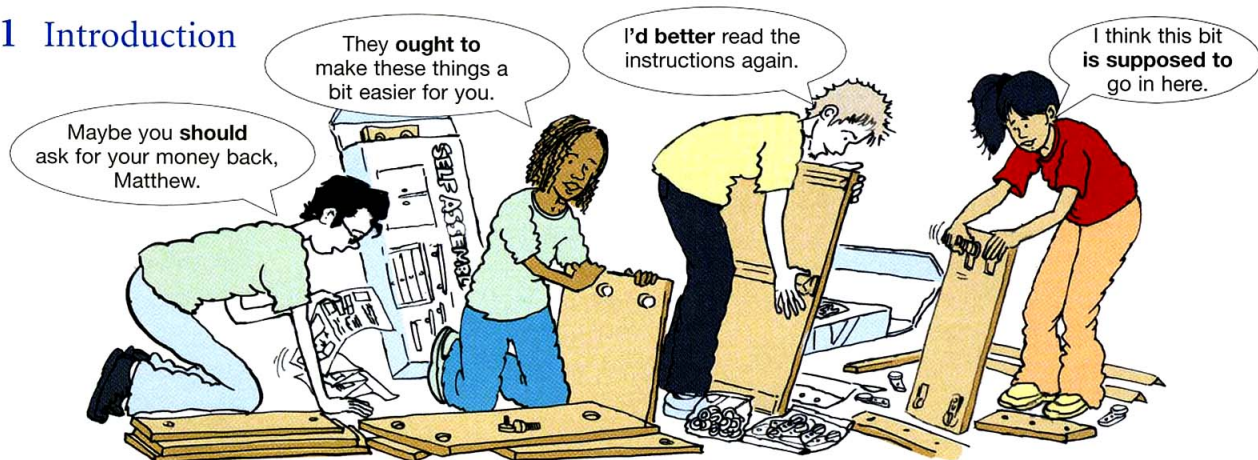
## C Didn't need to or needn't have? (3)

Write the sentences using *didn't need to* or *needn't have*.

- ▶ The previous owners had already decorated the flat, so *we didn't need to decorate it ourselves* ..... (we / decorate / it / ourselves).
- 1 Luckily we were able to sell our old flat before we bought the new one, so ..... (we / borrow / any money).
- 2 It was very hot yesterday, so I watered all the flowers.  
And now it's pouring with rain. .... (I / bother).
- 3 We've done the journey much more quickly than I expected.  
..... (we / leave / so early).
- 4 A friend had already given me a free ticket to the exhibition, so ..... (I / pay / to go in).
- 5 Service was included in the bill, so ..... (you / tip / the waiter). It was a waste of money.

# 49 Should, ought to, had better and be supposed to

## 1 Introduction



## 2 Should and ought to

We use **should** and **ought to** to say what is the best thing or the right thing to do. There is no difference in meaning.

*You're not very well. Perhaps you **should** see a doctor.*

*Your uncle was very kind to me. I **ought to** write him a letter of thanks.*

*People **shouldn't** break/**oughtn't to** break their promises.*

We can also use **should** and **ought to** in questions to ask for advice.

*Where **should** I put this picture, do you think?*

*It's a difficult problem. How **ought we to** deal with it?*

After **should** or **ought to** we can use a continuous form (**be + an -ing form**).

*It's half past six already. I **should be cooking** the tea.*

*Why are you sitting here doing nothing? You **ought to be working**.*

## 3 Had better

We use **had better** to say what is the best thing to do in a situation.

*It's cold. The children **had better** wear their coats.*

*The neighbours are complaining. We'd **better** turn the music down.*

*My wife is waiting for me. I'd **better not** be late.*

We could also use **should** or **ought to** in these examples, although **had better** is stronger.

The speaker sees the action as necessary and expects that it will happen.

## 4 Be supposed to

We use **be supposed to** when we are talking about the normal or correct way of doing things.

*The guests **are supposed to** buy flowers for the hostess.*

*Look at these cars. This area **is supposed to** be kept clear of traffic.*

*The bus driver needs to concentrate. You're **not supposed to** talk to him.*

*How **am I supposed to** cook this? ~ It tells you on the packet.*

We can use **was/were supposed to** for the past.

*It's eleven o'clock. You **were supposed to** be here at ten thirty, you know.*

▷ 52.4 Shall used to ask for advice

# Practice

## A Should and ought to (2)

Put in *should*, *shouldn't*, *ought* or *oughtn't*. (Look for the word *to*.)

Vicky: I can't come out tonight, Rachel. I (▶) *ought* ..... to do some more work. I'm behind with everything. I've got so much to do.

Rachel: You (1) ..... worry so much, Vicky. Don't panic. You (2) ..... to relax sometimes. You (3) ..... take a break.

Vicky: I know I (4) ..... panic, but I do. I can't help it.

Rachel: Anyway, you're doing OK, aren't you? Your results have been good.

You (5) ..... be pleased. You (6) ..... to invent problems for yourself.

## B Had better (3)

What would you say in these situations? Add a sentence with *'d better (not)* and the words in brackets.

▶ Vicky doesn't feel well. She's got a headache. What might you say to her? (an aspirin)

*You'd better take an aspirin.*

1 You and Daniel are meeting Rachel. You've both arrived, but she isn't there yet. She is usually late. (wait) .....

2 Ilona is leaving her bike outside the swimming-pool. You know it won't be safe if she leaves it unlocked. (lock) .....

3 Some friends are going to visit you today. Your room is in a mess. What do you think? (tidy) .....

4 Nick is giving you a lift in his old sports car. There's a speed limit, and there's a police car behind you. (too fast) .....

5 There's an exam tomorrow. Neither you nor Rachel have done any work for it. (some revision) .....

## C Be supposed to (4)

Add a sentence using *be (not) supposed to* and these words:

*leave it outside, report to the police, stand in a queue, take two before meals, watch it*

▶ You shouldn't bring your bike in here. *You're supposed to leave it outside.*

1 I've got some pills. ....

2 Foreign visitors can't travel freely here. ....

3 Be careful waiting for a bus in England. ....

4 This film isn't for under-sixteens. ....

## D Should, ought to, had better and be supposed to (1–4)

Complete the conversation. Use *should*, *ought to*, *had better* or *be supposed to* and the verbs in brackets. Usually there is more than one correct answer.

Vicky: What time (▶) *are we supposed to be* ..... (we / be) at the coffee morning?

Rachel: The invitation says ten o'clock.

Vicky: Well, it's ten now. (1) ..... (we / hurry).

(2) ..... (we / not / be) late.

Rachel: Oh, it won't matter if we're a bit late.

Vicky: I think it would be rude, wouldn't it? I don't think people

(3) ..... (arrive) late when they've been invited to something.

Rachel: You worry too much. (4) ..... (you / not / take)

everything so seriously, Vicky. It's a coffee morning, not a job interview.

(5) ..... (we / not / get) there exactly on time.

# 50 Asking people to do things

## 1 Polite requests

We can use **can** or **could** in a request, when we ask someone to do something.

**Can** you keep me informed? ~ Yes, of course.

**Could** you lend me ten pounds until tomorrow? ~ Sorry, I haven't got ten pounds.

I wonder if you **could** explain something to me. ~ I'll try.

**Could** is often more polite than **can**.

In a request we can also use **Do you mind ...?** or **Would you mind...?** with an -ing form.

**Do you mind waiting** a moment? ~ No, I can wait.

**Would you mind sitting** in the back? ~ No, not at all.

We can also use **Would you like to ...?**

**Would you like to** lay the table for me? ~ Yes, of course.

We do not use **Do you like ...?** for a request. NOT ~~Do you like to lay the table for me?~~

It is always worth taking the trouble to use one of these request forms in English. We do not normally say ~~Lay the table for me~~. This can sound very abrupt and impolite without a phrase like **Could you ...?**

## 2 The imperative

We can sometimes use the imperative form to tell someone what to do.

**Bring** another chair. **Hurry** up or we'll be late.

We form the negative with **don't**.

**Don't be** silly. **Don't make** so much noise.

We can use an imperative when we are with friends in an informal situation. But we do not use it to tell a stranger what to do in a more formal situation.

Excuse me. **Could you** tell me the way to Oxford Street, please?

**Would you mind** sending me a copy of your catalogue?

NOT ~~Send me a copy of your catalogue.~~

Even people in authority often avoid using the imperative to give orders. Instead they can use **I want/I'd like you to ...**, **You must ...**, or a polite request form.

Manager: **I want you** all to be at the meeting.

Policeman: **You must** wait until you see the green light.

Doctor: **Could you** lie down on the bed, please?

But we use an imperative in instructions and directions, in offers and invitations, and to express good wishes.

**Turn** right at the crossroads. **Have** a biscuit.

**Enjoy** your holiday.

## 3 Asking for things

We use **Can I/we have...?** and **Could I/we have ...?** when we ask someone to give us something.

**Can we have** our room key, please? **Could I have** a receipt, please?

We can also say **Could you give me a receipt, please?** but we do not use the imperative.

When we ask for something in a shop or a café, we can simply name what we want, but we must say **please**.

A large white loaf, **please**. Two coffees, **please**.

We can also use **I'd like ...** or **I'll have ...**

**I'd like** a chicken sandwich, please. **I'll have** a coffee.

▷ 45 Can and could for permission ▷ 52.2 Would like

# Practice

## A Asking people to do things (1-3)

Complete these sentences and write them in: *Can I ... a fork, please? Could ... have a towel, ...? Could you ... the ... for me? Would you ... answering the phone?*



- ▶ *Could you open the door for me?* 2  
 1 ..... 3 .....

## B Asking people to do things (1-3)

Mr Atkins is the boss at Zedco. He tells everyone what to do. Complete his sentences. Use these words: *can, could, have, like, mind, must, want, wonder, would*

- ▶ Would you mind ..... making some tea, Alan?  
 1 You ..... inform me of any developments.  
 2 Could I ..... the latest sales figures, please?  
 3 Would you ..... to arrange a meeting some time next week, Fiona?  
 4 I ..... everyone to read the report.  
 5 ..... I see the file, please, Mark?  
 6 ..... you mind putting this in writing?  
 7 I ..... if you could translate this letter, Linda.  
 8 ..... you meet our customer at the airport?

## C Asking people to do things (1-3)

Read about each situation and then make a request. Use the word in brackets.

- ▶ It is cold in the restaurant. Ask the waiter to shut the window. (could)  
*Could you shut the window, please?* .....
- 1 You are buying a coat. Ask the assistant for a receipt. (can)  
 .....
- 2 You want to know the time. Ask someone in the street. (could)  
 Excuse me. ....
- 3 You need someone to help you. Ask a friend. (can)  
 .....
- 4 You have bought some food, but you haven't got a bag. Ask the assistant. (could)  
 .....
- 5 You are carrying a tray. Ask someone to clear a space on the table. (mind)  
 .....
- 6 You are on the phone. You want to speak to the manager. (could)  
 .....

# 51 Suggestions, offers and invitations

## 1 Suggestions

We can use **Shall we ...?** or **Let's** to make a suggestion.

*It's a lovely day. **Shall we** go for a walk? ~ Yes, OK.*

***Let's** play some music. ~ Good idea.*

We can also use **could** for a suggestion.

*We **could** watch this comedy on TV tonight. ~ Well, actually I've seen it before.*

*You **could** invite a few friends around. ~ Yes, why not?*

We can also use **Why don't ...?**

***Why don't** we have a look round the market?*

To ask for a suggestion we use **shall, should** or **can**.

*Where **shall/should** we go for our holiday? ~ What about Spain?*

*What **can** I get Claire for her birthday? ~ I've no idea.*

## 2 Offers

We can use **will** or **can** to offer to do something.

*I'll carry your bag. ~ Oh, thanks.*

*We **can** give you a lift. ~ Oh, that would be great. Thank you.*

We can also use question forms with **shall** or **can**.

***Shall** we pay you the money now? ~ Oh, there's no hurry.*

***Can** I get a taxi for you? ~ Yes, please.*

To offer food or drink, we use **would like**.

***Would** you **like** one of these chocolates? ~ Yes, please. Thank you.*

***Would** anyone **like** more coffee? ~ No, thanks.*

We can also use **Will/Won't you have ...?**

***Will you have** a biscuit? ~ Thank you.*

***Won't you have** something to drink? ~ Not for me, thank you.*

In informal speech we can use the imperative.

***Have** a biscuit. ~ Thank you.*

## 3 Invitations

The words we use in invitations are similar to those we use in offers of food and drink (see 2).

To invite someone, we often use **Would you like to ...?**

***Would you like to** have lunch with us? ~ Yes, I'd love to. Thank you.*

**Would like** can have a verb with **to** after it, or an object with a noun.

*Would you like **to stay** the night. ~ Oh, that's very kind of you.*

*Would you like **a bed** for the night? ~ Are you sure it's not too much trouble?*

We can also use **Will/Won't you ...?**

***Will you** join us for coffee? ~ Yes. Thanks. **Won't you** sit down?*

In informal speech we can use the imperative.

***Come** and have coffee with us. Please **sit** down.*

▷ 52 Will, would, shall and should

# Practice

## A Suggestions, offers and invitations (1–3)

Put the words in the right order and write in the sentences:

*post / for you / I'll / that letter*  
*for a minute / shall / stop / we*

*have / one of these / won't / you*  
*a game / like / would / you*



- ▶ *Won't you have one of these?* ..... 2 .....  
 1 ..... 3 .....

## B Suggestions and offers (1–2)

Complete the conversation. Put in *could, shall, will or would*.

- Daniel: Where (▶) *shall* ..... we have our picnic, then?  
 Rachel: This looks all right. (1) ..... we sit here?  
 Emma: Oh, I've forgotten the sausages. They're in the car.  
 Matthew: (2) ..... I get them?  
 Emma: Oh, thanks, Matthew.  
 Vicky: We (3) ..... sit by those trees. It looks nicer over there.  
 Rachel: No, it's fine here.  
 Daniel: Yes, it's better here, I think.  
 Emma: (4) ..... you like a sandwich, Vicky?  
 Vicky: Oh, thank you.  
 Emma: (5) ..... you have one, Rachel?  
 Matthew: And here are the sausages. (6) ..... anyone like one?

## C Suggestions, offers and invitations (1–3)

What would you say? There is more than one correct answer.

- ▶ A friend has called at your flat. Invite him to come in.  
*Would you like to come in?* .....
- 1 Offer your visitor a cup of tea.  
 .....
  - 2 You don't know what to say in your letter. Ask your friend for a suggestion.  
 .....
  - 3 You are walking in town with a friend. Suggest having a cup of coffee.  
 .....
  - 4 A woman you know is afraid to walk home alone. Offer to walk home with her.  
 .....
  - 5 You are writing to a friend. Invite her to visit you one weekend.  
 .....

# 52 Will, would, shall and should

## 1 Will and would for predictions

We can use **will** for a prediction (see Unit 25.3).

*It's midnight, and Sarah is still working. She'll be tired tomorrow.*

*We're going to Cornwall for the weekend. ~ That'll be nice.*

*Wait a minute while I send this e-mail. It **won't** take long.*

We use **would** for a past prediction or a prediction about a possible situation.

Past: *At midnight Sarah was still working. She **would** be tired the next day.*

Possible: *How about going to Cornwall next weekend? ~ That **would** be nice.*

*I **wouldn't** enjoy a camping holiday.*

We can use **shall** instead of **will**, and **should** instead of **would**, but only in the first person, after I and we.

*I **will/shall** be twenty-five in June.*

*We **would/should** like to meet your family. But NOT ~~My friend should like ...~~*

**Shall** and **should** are a little formal here.

## 2 Would like

We can use **would like**, usually shortened to **'d like**, when we ask for something.

*I'd like a brochure, please. We'd like to order our drinks first.*

This is a more polite way of saying *I want a brochure*, for example.

We also use **would like** in offers and invitations.

***Would** you like a free gift? **Would** you like to visit the museum with us?*

## 3 Decisions and refusals

We can use **will** for an instant decision or for an offer.

Decision: *Tea or coffee? ~ I'll have coffee, please. (see Unit 23.2)*

Offer: *I'll wait for you if you like. ~ Oh, thanks. I won't be long.*

We use **won't** and **wouldn't** for a refusal.

*The strikers **won't** go back to work until they get a pay increase.*

*The key went in the lock, but it **wouldn't** turn.*

**I won't ...** is a strong refusal.

*I **won't** listen to any more of this nonsense.*

## 4 Shall and should

We use **Shall I ...?** in offers and **Shall we ...?** in suggestions.

Offer: ***Shall** I wait for you? ~ Oh, thanks. I won't be long.*

Suggestion: ***Shall** we go to the park? ~ Good idea.*

We also use **shall** to ask for a suggestion.

*What **shall** we have for lunch?*

We use either **shall** or **should** to ask for advice.

*I'm in terrible trouble. What **shall/should** I do?*

We use **should** to say what is the best thing or the right thing to do.

*People **should** exercise regularly.*

*You **shouldn't** spend all your money as soon as you've earned it.*

# Practice

## A Will and would (1–2)

Complete the conversation. Put in *will*, *won't*, *would* or *wouldn't*.

- Emma: We (▶) won't ..... be here next September. It's hard to believe, isn't it?  
In a few months our student days (1) ..... be over.
- Matthew: It (2) ..... be long now. I wish I had a job. Then I  
(3) ..... know where I was going.
- Emma: Who knows what the future (4) ..... bring?
- Matthew: Why don't we get married, Emma? Then at least we (5) .....  
be together.
- Emma: I don't think so, Matthew. It (6) ..... be a good idea.
- Matthew: I couldn't live without you, Emma.
- Emma: I really (7) ..... like to believe you, Matthew.

## B Some other uses of will and would (2–3)

Complete the conversations. Put in *will*, *won't*, *would* or *wouldn't* with these verbs:  
*eat, give, go, help, let, like, open, stand*

- ▶ Vicky: Have you noticed how thin Jessica has got?  
Rachel: She's on a diet. She won't eat ..... anything except carrots.
- 1 Harriet: Mike and I ..... you get everything ready.  
Mike: Yes, we're quite willing to lend a hand.
- 2 Laura: You're late. I thought you were going to leave work early today.  
Trevor: Sorry. The boss ..... me go.
- 3 Mark: Sarah and I ..... you a lift, Mike.  
Sarah: Yes, we're going your way.
- 4 Harriet: I heard Rita has quarrelled with her boyfriend.  
Melanie: That's right. If he's invited to the party, she .....
- 5 Vicky: I've had enough of table tennis for one day.  
Rachel: OK. Maybe Daniel ..... a game with me.
- 6 Trevor: What's wrong with the washing-machine?  
Laura: When I tried to use it earlier, the door .....
- 7 Mike: This lamp is always falling over.  
Harriet: It ..... up properly.

## C Will, would, shall and should (1–4)

What would you say? Use *will*, *would*, *shall* or *should*.

- ▶ Offer to make the tea.  
Shall I make the tea? .....
- 1 Suggest going to the swimming-pool.  
.....
- 2 Refuse to take any risks.  
.....
- 3 Say politely that you want a shower.  
.....
- 4 Tell someone it's best they don't decide in a hurry.  
.....
- 5 Predict the end of the world in the year 3000.  
.....

# 53 It may/could/must have been, etc.

## 1 Introduction

Vicky, Emma and Matthew are at a club in town.

Vicky: *Where's Daniel? He **should have been** here half an hour ago.*

Emma: *He **may have got** lost. It isn't easy to find this place.*

Matthew: *He **could have forgotten** all about it, I suppose.*

Emma: *He **can't have forgotten**. We were talking about it this morning.*

Matthew: *Well, something **must have delayed** him.*

We can use a modal verb with the perfect (have + a past participle).

We use this structure to talk about possible past events.

## 2 May have, might have and could have

We use these forms to say that possibly something happened in the past.

*He **may have got** lost. (= Perhaps he has got lost.)*

*You **might have left** your keys at work. (= Perhaps you left them at work.)*

*Someone **could have stolen** them. (= It is possible that someone stole them.)*

We also use **could have** for an opportunity that we didn't take or a possible result that didn't happen.

*We **could have gone** out somewhere, but we were too tired.*

*You were very lucky. There **could have been** a terrible accident.*

## 3 May not have, might not have and couldn't have

Compare these different uses.

### MAY/MIGHT NOT HAVE

Possibly something did not happen.

*Daniel **may not have caught** the bus. I expect he missed it.*

(Perhaps he didn't catch it.)

*I **might not have locked** the door.*

(Perhaps I didn't lock it.)

### COULDN'T HAVE

It is impossible that something happened.

*Daniel **couldn't have caught** the bus. It doesn't run on Sundays.*

(It is impossible for him to have caught the bus.)

## 4 Must have and can't have

**Must** and **can't** are opposites.

### MUST HAVE

*My watch says it's only ten past two. It **must have stopped**.*

I realize it is certainly true that my watch has stopped.

### CAN'T HAVE

*You've only spent five minutes on that job. You **can't have done** it properly.*

I realize it is impossible that you did the job properly.

## 5 Should have and ought to have

We use these forms when someone didn't do the right thing.

*We didn't play very well. We **should have played** better.*

*I got lost. ~ Sorry. I **ought to have drawn** you a map.*

*It was a lovely old building. They **shouldn't have knocked** it down.*

- ▷ 29.1 Will have done    ▷ 46 May, might, could, must, can't    ▷ 48.3 Needn't have  
▷ 49 Should, ought to    ▷ 146 Would have

# Practice

## A It may/could/must have been, etc. (2–4)

Look at each conversation and choose the best sentence, a) or b).

- ▶ Has the car broken down? ~ Well, we may have run out of petrol.  
a)  I'm sure there's no petrol left. b)  I think there's no petrol left.
- 1 You could have had a free holiday. ~ Yes, we could, but the dates weren't convenient.  
a)  We had a free holiday. b)  We didn't have a free holiday.
- 2 Did you record the programme? ~ I can't remember. I might not have done.  
a)  I'm not sure if I recorded it. b)  I certainly didn't record it.
- 3 Can't you find that newspaper? ~ No, someone must have thrown it away.  
a)  It was necessary to throw it away. b)  I realize now that it was thrown away.

## B Should and ought to (5 and Unit 49.2)

Complete the replies. Use *should/ought to* or *should have/ought to have*.

- ▶ Rita: Tom's car was stolen. He hadn't locked it.  
David: I suppose it's his fault then. *He should have locked it.*
- ▶ Tom: I can't sleep sometimes. My neighbours play music all night.  
Melanie: That's a nuisance. *They shouldn't play music all night.*
- 1 Mark: The picnickers left litter everywhere.  
Sarah: That's awful. ....
- 2 Emma: Jessica isn't very friendly, is she? She never says hello to people.  
Matthew: I know. ....
- 3 Rachel: I don't think Daniel's going to get that job. He was late for the interview.  
Natasha: That can't have looked very good. ....
- 4 Daniel: Did you see Vicky crossing the road? She didn't look.  
Emma: She could have been killed. ....

## C It may/could/must have been, etc. (2–5)

Complete the conversation. Use *can't have*, *might have*, *must have* and *shouldn't have*.

- Harriet: There's a parcel outside. The postman (▶) *must have left* ..... (leave) it.  
Mike: Well, (1) ..... (he / leave) it outside. He isn't supposed to do that. Someone (2) ..... (take) it. Why didn't he ring the bell?  
Harriet: He always rings. (3) ..... (you / be) out when he came.  
Mike: I haven't been out. So (4) ..... (he / ring) the bell.

## D It may/could/must have been, etc. (2–5)

Complete the sentences. The second person agrees with the first. Use *might have*, *couldn't have*, etc.

- ▶ Matthew: I'm sure the computer didn't make a mistake. That's impossible.  
Emma: No, of course *the computer couldn't have made a mistake.*
- 1 Mark: I can't see the letter here now. So clearly someone posted it.  
Alan: Yes, .....
- 2 Natasha: It's possible Emma didn't hear the alarm.  
Rachel: Well, I suppose .....
- 3 Sarah: Henry drove at 100 miles an hour. Don't you think that's dangerous?  
Mark: Yes, I do. ....
- 4 Daniel: I just don't believe that Andrew has failed the exam.  
Vicky: Andrew? Impossible! .....