

60 Obligations

In English, "have to" or "must" are used when talking about obligations or things that are necessary. They are often used to give important instructions.

See also:

Future with "will" 18 Types of verbs 49

Modal verbs 56

60.1 OBLIGATIONS

"Must" and "have to" both express a strong need or obligation to do something.



You **must** / **have to** rest, or your leg won't heal.

"Must not" is a strong negative obligation. It means something is not allowed.



You **must not** get your bandage wet, or your leg might not heal properly.

"Don't have to" means something is not necessary, or there is no obligation.



You **don't have to** come again. Your leg is better.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

He **must** take two pills each morning and evening for the next two weeks.



She **must not** go back to work until her back is better.



Do I have to go back to the doctor again? I'm feeling so much better now.



HOW TO FORM

"Must" does not change with the subject, but "have to" becomes "has to" in the third person singular. Both forms are followed by the base form of the main verb.

SUBJECT	"MUST / HAVE TO"	MAIN VERB	REST OF SENTENCE
She	must has to must not doesn't have to	take	this medicine.



COMMON MISTAKES "MUST NOT" AND "DON'T HAVE TO"

"Must not" and "don't have to" do not mean the same thing. "Must not" is used to give an instruction that forbids someone from doing something. "Don't have to" is used to tell someone that it is not necessary that they do something.

You **must not** use a calculator during this exam.

[It is against the rules to use a calculator during this exam.]



You **don't have to** use a calculator, but it might be useful.

[You are allowed to use a calculator, but it is not required.]



60.2 "MUST" AND "HAVE TO" IN THE FUTURE

There is no future form of "must." The future of "have to" is formed with the auxiliary verb "will."

In some countries, people **{ must have to }** recycle. It's the law.



In the future, I think everyone **will have to** recycle.

↖ "Will must" is incorrect.

"Must not" does not have a future form. "Don't have to" can be used in the future by changing "don't" to "will not" or "won't."

One day, I hope I **will not have to** work so hard.



60.3 "MUST" AND "HAVE TO" IN THE PAST

There is no past form of "must." The past tense of "have to" is used instead.

For most jobs, you **{ must have to }** use a computer.

In the past, you **didn't have to** use a computer.

