59 Suggestions and advice

The modal verb "could" can be used to offer suggestions. "Could" is not as strong as "should." It communicates gentle advice.

See also:

Conditional sentences **29** Types of verbs **49** Modal verbs **56**

59.1 "SHOULD" FOR ADVICE

"Should" is used when the speaker wants to make a strong suggestion.

It's very sunny. You should wear a hat.

"Should" comes before the advice.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

It might rain. You should take your umbrella with you.



You're sick. I don't think you should go to work today.

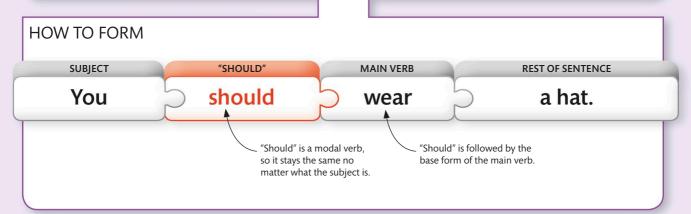


There's ice on the roads. You shouldn't drive tonight.



Which hat should I buy? They're all so cool.





59.2 "OUGHT TO" FOR ADVICE

"Ought to" is a more formal and less common way to say "should." It is not usually used in the negative or question forms.



You $\begin{cases} should \\ ought to \end{cases}$ wear a scarf. It's very cold outside.

"IF I WERE YOU"

English uses "if I were you" to give advice in second conditional sentences. The advice is expressed using "I would."

I don't know if I should take this job.



If I were you, I would take it.

English uses "were," not

'was," in this context.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I'm going to the concert tonight.



If I were you, I'd leave early. The traffic is awful.

The suggestion can come first without changing the meaning.

I think I'll buy this shirt.



wouldn't buy it if I were you. I don't like the pattern.

There is no comma before "if."

"HAD BETTER" 59.4

"Had better" can also be used to give very strong or urgent advice that can have a negative consequence if it is not followed.



leave for school! It's already 8.45.





You could study science in college.



We could learn English in Canada next year.



If they need more space, they could buy a bigger house.



