

MODALS

obligation, necessity and advice

PRESENT / FUTURE



PAST

Must

- STRONG OBLIGATIONS THE SPEAKER IMPOSES ON OTHERS.
- TO TELL ONESELF WHAT'S NECESSARY.
- RULES AND LAWS.
- STRONG ADVICE.

Have to

OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED BY SOMEONE ELSE OR EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Mustn't

PROHIBITION

Don't/doesn't have to

ABSENCE OF OBLIGATION

Need to

NECESSITY

Don't/doesn't need to

ABSENCE OF NECESSITY

There's no need to

ABSENCE OF NECESSITY

Should

- ADVICE.
- MILD OBLIGATIONS.
- TO SAY WHAT WE THINK IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
- ITS NEGATIVE FORM IS 'SHOULDN'T'.

Ought to

SAME USE AS 'SHOULD' BUT MORE FORMAL. ITS NEGATIVE FORM IS 'OUGHTN'T TO'.

Had to

Had to

wasn't/weren't allowed to

didn't have to

needed to

didn't need to do

SOMETHING WASN'T NECESSARY TO DO SO YOU DIDN'T DO IT.

needn't have done

SOMETHING WASN'T NECESSARY TO DO BUT YOU DID IT.

There was no need to

ABSENCE OF NECESSITY

Should have done

- TO SAY WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN A GOOD IDEA BUT DIDN'T HAPPEN/YOU DIDN'T DO IT.
- 'SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE' IS USED TO SAY WHAT WASN'T A GOOD IDEA BUT HAPPENED / YOU DID IT.

Ought to have done

SAME USES AS 'SHOULD HAVE DONE'. NOT VERY USED.