

## **Grappling Grammar: Modal Verbs.**

In today's post, we are going to focus on a very important element of English grammar, the use of modal verbs. We can use modal verbs in a variety of situations, today we are going to focus on their uses to express obligations, advice, necessity and prohibition.

### **1. Giving Advice:**

#### **Should/Shouldn't:**

When offering advice in British English, 'should' is a trusty companion. For instance, "You should consider taking a break to avoid getting tired." (Debes tomar un descanso para no cansarse.) This modal verb implies a recommendation without imposing a strict obligation. Conversely, "You shouldn't procrastinate if you want to succeed" (No debes procrastinar si quieres tener éxito.) suggests advice against a certain behaviour.

#### **Ought to:**

Another gem in the realm of advice-giving is 'ought to'. "You ought to be more careful with your spending" (Deberías tener más cuidado con tus gastos.) implies a moral or social obligation to act in a particular way, adding a layer of responsibility to the advice offered.

### **2. Expressing Obligations:**

#### **Must/Have to:**

When obligations are at play, 'must' and 'have to' come to the forefront. "You must complete the assignment by Monday" (Tienes que terminar la tarea para el lunes.) conveys a sense of strong necessity or obligation. Similarly, "You have to attend the meeting" (Tienes que asistir a la reunión.) indicates a requirement or obligation, akin to 'must'.

#### **Need to/Don't need to:**

'Need to' and 'don't need to' are wielded to express necessity or lack thereof. "You need to submit your application before the deadline" (Necesitas entregar la solicitud antes de la fecha límite.) signifies a requirement, while "You don't need to bring your own materials; they'll be provided" (No necesitas traer tus propias materias, se les proporcionará.) communicates the absence of necessity.

### **3. Prohibitions:**

#### **Mustn't:**

When it comes to setting prohibitions, 'mustn't' is the go-to modal verb. "You mustn't use your phone during the exam" (No debes de usar el móvil durante el examen.) clearly prohibits a specific action, leaving no room for ambiguity.

In conclusion, mastering modal verbs in English is pivotal for effective communication, particularly when offering advice, expressing obligations, or setting prohibitions. Whether it's 'should' for gentle recommendations or 'must' for firm directives, understanding the nuances of these modal verbs empowers you to navigate various social and professional contexts with finesse.

So, next time you find yourself in need of giving advice or setting obligations, remember to wield the power of modal verbs with confidence and precision. Your communication prowess will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression!

Now let's practise with some exercises involving the use of modal verbs!

Complete the sentence with the correct modal verb:

1. Passengers \_\_\_\_\_ fasten their seatbelts before the plane takes off.
2. Students \_\_\_\_\_ start preparing for exams well in advance to avoid last-minute panic.
3. You \_\_\_\_\_ switch off all electronic devices before entering the laboratory.
4. If you're feeling stressed, you \_\_\_\_\_ try practising mindfulness techniques.
5. Guests \_\_\_\_\_ smoke in the hotel rooms.
6. Candidates \_\_\_\_\_ complete the registration process online prior to the interview.
7. Parents \_\_\_\_\_ ensure their children have completed their homework before bedtime.
8. Drivers \_\_\_\_\_ park in the reserved spaces without proper authorization.
9. Employees \_\_\_\_\_ attend the mandatory training session next Friday.
10. You \_\_\_\_\_ listen to your doctor's advice if you want to improve your health.

**Answer key:**

1. must
2. ought to
3. must
4. should
5. mustn't
6. need to
7. should
8. mustn't
9. have to
10. should