

MODAL VERBS BUSINESS ENGLISH A2

SHOULD/SHOULDN'T

We use should to give advice. We use shouldn't to say something is a bad idea.

- You should drink more water.

NEED TO / DON'T NEED TO

We use need to when something is necessary. We use don't need to when something is not necessary.

- I need to finish this report today.

MUST / MUSTN'T

We use must for strong rules or important obligations. We use mustn't for things that are not allowed.

- You must wear a helmet here.

HAVE TO / DON'T HAVE TO

We use have to for rules or things that are required. We use don't have to when something is optional.

- We have to wear ID badges at work.

Are these modal verbs correct?

Read the office rules below. Decide if the modal verb is correct or incorrect.

1. Employees mustn't arrive late for work.
2. You don't have to smoke inside the office building.
3. Staff should wear an ID badge at all times.
4. Visitors have to sign in at reception.
5. You must use your phone during meetings.
6. Employees don't need to clean their desks at the end of the day.
7. You shouldn't eat other people's food from the fridge.
8. We have to be polite to clients and colleagues.

Fill in the gap - choose the correct modal verb

(should / shouldn't / need to / don't need to / have to / don't have to / must / mustn't)

1. You _____ be more careful when you send emails to clients.
2. Employees _____ smoke inside the office building.
3. I _____ finish this today — my boss asked me to.
4. You _____ bring your own mug; there are cups in the kitchen.
5. We _____ arrive at work before 9:00 a.m.
6. You _____ eat lunch at your desk if you don't want to.
7. He _____ check the meeting time — he's not sure.
8. You _____ talk loudly on the phone in open spaces.

Reading 1 - Office Rules

Welcome to our office! To keep a comfortable and professional environment, all employees must follow these rules.

You must arrive at work on time. The office opens at 8:30 a.m., and everyone has to be ready to work by 9:00. If you are late, you need to inform your manager as soon as possible. Employees mustn't smoke inside the building, including toilets and stairways. Smoking is only allowed outside.

You have to wear your ID badge at all times. Visitors must sign in at reception. During meetings, you shouldn't use your phone unless it is necessary. You don't have to wear formal clothes every day, but you should dress neatly and appropriately.

You must keep your workspace clean and tidy. Food mustn't be left on desks overnight. If you have questions about these rules, you should speak to HR. Thank you for helping make our office a great place to work.

Let's check! True or false?

1. The office opens at 9:00 a.m.
2. Employees must tell their manager if they are late.
3. Smoking is allowed in the toilets.
4. ID badges are optional.
5. Visitors have to sign in.
6. Employees must wear formal clothes every day.
7. Food must not be left on desks overnight.
8. Employees should speak to HR if they have questions.

Let's check!

1. Why does everyone need to follow kitchen rules?
2. What mustn't employees drink if it is not theirs?
3. What information should be on food in the fridge?
4. What must employees do after using cups or plates?
5. Do employees have to wash dishes by hand?
6. When must old food be thrown away?
7. What happens to unlabeled food?
8. Why shouldn't people leave strong-smelling food?

Reading 2 - The Office Kitchen

The office kitchen is a shared space, so everyone needs to follow a few simple rules. First, you mustn't eat or drink food that is not yours. This includes milk, snacks, and lunches in the fridge – yes, even that milk 😬. All food should have a name and date on it. You need to label your lunch box clearly.

You have to clean up after yourself. Dirty cups and plates mustn't be left in the sink. If you use the microwave, you should cover your food and clean any mess immediately. You don't have to wash dishes by hand – the dishwasher is available.

You must throw away old food every Friday. The fridge is cleaned regularly, and unlabeled items will be removed. You shouldn't leave food with strong smells in the fridge. Following these rules helps keep the kitchen clean and friendly for everyone.

Guess the place!

Work in pairs. One person chooses a place (can be from the list, but do not say the name). Describe the rules in this place using modal verbs. The other person has to guess the location.

Example:

A: You must be quiet in this place. You mustn't talk on your phone. You have to return things on time. You don't have to pay if you are a member. You should respect other people.

B: Is it a library?

A: Yes, it is!

Example places:

1. an office
2. an office kitchen
3. a meeting room
4. a factory
5. a warehouse
6. a shop / store
7. a reception area
8. a call centre
9. a construction site
10. a staff room
11. a coworking space
12. a company car park

Let's talk!

A - THE OFFICE

1. What time do you have to start work?
2. Is there anything you mustn't do in your office?
3. What should people do to be polite at work?
4. Do you have to wear special clothes at work?
5. Is there anything you don't have to do, but people often do anyway?

B - THE GYM

1. What mustn't people do in the gym?
2. Do you have to bring your own towel?
3. What should people do after using the equipment?
4. Is there anything you don't need to do at the gym?

C - PUBLIC TRANSPORT

1. What must passengers do when they get on?
2. What mustn't people do on public transport?
3. What should people do for older passengers?
4. Do you have to buy a ticket before you travel?
5. What shouldn't people do on their phones?

ANSWER KEY:

Are the modal verbs correct?

1. Correct
2. Incorrect → Employees mustn't smoke inside the office building.
3. Correct
4. Correct
5. Incorrect → You mustn't use your phone during meetings.
6. Incorrect → Employees have to / need to clean their desks at the end of the day.
7. Correct
8. Correct

Fill in the gaps:

1. You should be more careful when you send emails to clients.
2. Employees mustn't smoke inside the office building.
3. I have to finish this today – my boss asked me to.
4. You don't need to bring your own mug; there are cups in the kitchen.
5. We have to arrive at work before 9:00 a.m.
6. You don't have to eat lunch at your desk if you don't want to.
7. He should check the meeting time – he's not sure.
8. You mustn't talk loudly on the phone in open spaces.

Reading 1: Office Rules

1. The office opens at 9:00 a.m. → False
2. Employees must tell their manager if they are late. → True
3. Smoking is allowed in the toilets. → False
4. ID badges are optional. → False
5. Visitors have to sign in. → True
6. Employees must wear formal clothes every day. → False
7. Food must not be left on desks overnight. → True
8. Employees should speak to HR if they have questions. → True

Reading 2: The Office Kitchen

1. → Because the kitchen is a shared space / to keep it clean and friendly.
2. → Other people's milk or drinks.
3. → A name and a date.
4. → Clean them / not leave them in the sink.
5. → No, they don't. There is a dishwasher.
6. → Every Friday.
7. → It is removed / thrown away.
8. → Because it smells bad / it can bother other people.