ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

All Modal Verbs Test Exercises – Multiple Choice Questions With Answers – Advanced Level 6

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Explanations

1. I _____ be at home by 10 o'clock; otherwise, my father said, he would not let me in.
✔ **C) have to**
Have to expresses an obligation that comes from outside the speaker, here a rule set by the father. The clue is the consequence: if I'm late, he won't let me in. Not **should**, because **should** is only advice, and the father's threat makes this a firm rule.

2. My director made it clear that I _____ be at the office at 10 a.m. every day.
✔ **E) had to**
In reported speech after a past verb (**made it clear**), the obligation **must** / **have to** becomes **had to**: **I had to be at the office at 10 a.m. Ought** needs **to** (**ought to be**), and **can**, **might** and **shall** do not express a firm obligation.

3. I _____ attend the make-up lesson since I attended the original lesson last week and understood it very well.
✔ **E) don't have to**
Don't have to means something is not necessary. I already attended the lesson and understood it, so there is no need to attend the make-up lesson. Not **must not**, because that means it is forbidden, which is not the case here.

4. "_____ you be a little bit quieter, ladies and gentlemen?" asked the teacher furiously.
✔ **E) Could**
Could you …? is the usual way to make a request: **Could you be a little bit quieter?** Not **Need**: modal **need** in questions asks whether something is necessary (**Need you be so loud?**). It is not used for requests.

5. You _____ your umbrella with you. It is going to rain soon.
✔ **C) had better take**
Had better + base form gives strong advice about a present or future situation: **It's going to rain, so you had better take your umbrella.** Not **should have taken**, because that criticises a past action, but the rain hasn't started yet.

6. You _____ the meeting early. The professor mentioned very important points at the end, which astonished us.
✔ **B) shouldn't have left**
Shouldn't have + past participle criticises a past action: you left early, and that was a mistake because you missed the important points. Not **shouldn't leave**, because the leaving already happened in the past.

7. He is said to _____ for the same company for many years before he retired last year.
✔ **E) have been working**
After **is said to**, we use the perfect infinitive (**to have done**) for an earlier action. The continuous form **to have been working** stresses the long duration (**for many years**). **Had worked** is wrong because an infinitive cannot take a past form.

8. You _____ my car without my permission. I needed it myself in the morning, and I couldn't find it, which made me very angry.
✔ **C) should not have taken**
Shouldn't have + past participle criticises something that was done in the past: you took the car, and that was wrong. Not **needn't have taken**, which means the action was unnecessary, not wrong.

9. He _____ when he was young, but he gave it up when the doctor warned him that he must stop as soon as possible.
✔ **D) used to smoke**
Used to + base form describes a past habit that no longer happens: **He used to smoke, but he gave it up.** Not **might have smoked**, because that shows uncertainty, but the sentence clearly says he smoked and then stopped.

10. There _____ an artist here five years ago who drew portraits of tourists in five minutes.
✔ **C) used to be**
There used to be describes a past situation that is no longer true: there was an artist here, but now there isn't. Not **had to be**, which expresses past obligation.

11. He is not at home. You _____ before coming.
✔ **E) should have phoned**
Should have + past participle criticises a past action that didn't happen: you didn't phone, so you came for nothing. Not **should phone**, because the visit has already taken place.

12. With the help of developments in technology, we _____ all kinds of information easily.
✔ **E) can access**
Can expresses ability or possibility: thanks to technology, we are able to access information easily. The other options express obligation, lack of necessity or past criticism, none of which fit the meaning.

13. At first, I _____ read his messy handwriting, but after a few weeks I got used to it.
✔ **B) wasn't able to**
Wasn't able to expresses inability in the past; the clues are **At first** and **got used to it**. Not **can't**, because the situation is in the past, and not **didn't have to**, which means it was not necessary.

14. - Where is Jim?

- He _____ at home now. I phoned him just a minute ago and he was in.
✔ **D) must be**
Must be expresses a strong, logical conclusion about the present. I phoned him a minute ago and he was in, so I'm almost sure he is at home. Not **could be** or **may not be**, which show much less certainty.

15. I've lived in London for ten years, so I _____ living in crowded cities now.
✔ **D) am accustomed to**
Be accustomed to (= **be used to**) + -ing means something is familiar and normal for you. **Now** and the ten years in London show a present state, so **am accustomed to**. Not **used to**, because **used to** + -ing needs **be** (**I am used to living**).

16. I _____ afraid of dogs when I was a child but now I like them.
✔ **A) used to be**
Used to + base form describes a past state that is no longer true: **I used to be afraid of dogs, but now I like them.** Not **was used to be**, because **be used to** is followed by a noun or -ing form and means 'be familiar with'.

17. You _____ anyone that the key is always there in case someone steals something from our office.
✔ **D) must not tell**
Must not (**mustn't**) expresses a prohibition: telling anyone is forbidden because a thief could use the key. Not **needn't have told** or **didn't need to tell**, which only mean something was not necessary.

18. I _____ when I was young but I started smoking after my father's death; since then I have been smoking.
✔ **C) didn't use to smoke**
Didn't use to + base form says something was not a habit in the past: I didn't smoke when I was young, but I started later. Not **used to smoke**, because the sentence says the smoking started only after the father's death.

19. I _____ at the office early because my boss always phones me to check whether I'm there or not.
✔ **E) must be**
Must expresses a strong present obligation: the boss checks every day, so being early is necessary. Not **mustn't be**, which would mean being early is forbidden.

20. You _____ take an umbrella. It might rain.
✔ **B) had better**
Had better + base form (no **to**) gives strong advice for a particular situation: **It might rain, so you had better take an umbrella.** Not **had better to**, because **had better** is never followed by **to**. **Would better** does not exist; the fixed form is **had better** (short form **you'd better**).

21. We need to buy some petrol and we have no cash, Father. You _____ find your credit card.
✔ **E) have got to**
Have got to (= **have to**) expresses necessity: there is no cash, so finding the credit card is necessary. **Have** and **have got** alone need **to** before a verb, and **can** or **could** only express possibility.

22. He'll share his secret with us, but we _____ talk about it to anyone.
✔ **D) mustn't**
Mustn't expresses a prohibition: it is a secret, so talking about it is not allowed. Not **needn't** or **don't have to**, which only mean something is not necessary.

23. You _____ me before taking my pen. I had an exam in the morning and I couldn't find it because you had taken it.
✔ **D) should have asked**
Should have + past participle criticises a past action that didn't happen: you didn't ask before taking the pen, and that was wrong. Not **could ask**, which refers to present ability, not past criticism.

24. He bought a house which is too small for his family. He _____ a big one.
✔ **A) should have bought**
Should have + past participle shows that a past action was a mistake: he bought a small house, but a bigger one was the right choice. Not **should buy**, because the purchase is already in the past.

25. Ali is in his room reading his English book. He will take an important exam this afternoon. He _____ at the moment.
✔ **B) must be studying**
Must be + -ing expresses a confident conclusion about an action happening now. The clues are that he is reading his English book and has an exam today. Not **should study**, which is advice, not a conclusion about the present.

26. I'm sorry I'm late. I _____ a meeting at the firm.
✔ **D) had to join**
Had to expresses a past obligation and gives the reason for being late: the meeting was necessary. Not **must have joined**, which is a guess about the past, and the speaker knows what happened.

27. Bill and Mary were naughty children. They _____ tricks on their friends.
✔ **B) used to play**
Used to + base form describes a repeated past habit: **They used to play tricks on their friends.** The clue is that they **were naughty children**, which describes their general past behaviour. Not **should have played**, which would mean playing tricks was the right thing to do.