ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Modal Verbs Test A1 – A2 Grammar Exercises

A1 A2 Level Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF:
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Explanations

1. A: You are ill. You _____ on the balcony. It isn't warm outside.

B: I'm wearing warm clothes. Don't worry.
✔ **D) mustn't sit**
A says it is a bad idea because you are ill and it is cold, so we use **mustn't** (don't do it). Not **needn't**, because that only means it is not necessary.

2. A: I don't want to leave my phone at the desk before I enter the exam hall. _____?

B: Unfortunately, yes. It is the rule.
✔ **B) Must I**
B says **Unfortunately, yes. It is the rule.** A rule is an obligation, so we ask **Must I?** (Is it necessary?). **Can I?** / **May I?** ask for permission, and the answer would not be 'unfortunately'.

3. A: You _____ wash those strawberries. I've already washed them.

B: Oh, good. Thank you.
✔ **A) needn't**
The strawberries are already washed, so it is not necessary to wash them: **You needn't wash them.**

4. I _____ tell the time when I was 8 years old, but now I can.
✔ **B) couldn't**
When I was 8 is the past, and **but now I can** shows the opposite, so we need **couldn't** (past of **can't**). Not **can't**, because that is present.

5. A: _____ help you?

B: Yes, please. I'm looking for a leather jacket.
✔ **C) Can I**
Can I help you? is the usual way to offer help, for example in a shop.

6. A: Betty _____ pay her rent today.

B: I hope she has enough money.
✔ **B) must**
Paying the rent today is necessary, so we use **must**. B hopes she has enough money because she has no choice.

7. Margaret _____ speak Italian and English, so she _____ work with a translator on this project.
✔ **C) can / needn't**
Margaret **can** speak both languages, so it is not necessary for her to use a translator: she **needn't** work with one. Not **mustn't**, because that means it is not allowed.

8. A: I _____ open this jar.

B: Let me help you. _____ use a knife?

A: No problem.
✔ **A) can't / Can I**
A needs help, so A **can't** open the jar. B asks for permission to try with a knife: **Can I use a knife?**

9. A: _____ turn up the volume of the radio? This is my favourite song.

B: Sure. You _____ ask me. I'm never disturbed by the music.
✔ **D) Can I / needn't**
A asks for permission: **Can I turn up the volume?** B says it is not necessary to ask, so **You needn't ask me.**

10. A: _____ ask you a question?

B: Yes, sure, but I _____ answer it if it is about my private life.
✔ **C) May I / can't**
May I ask you a question? is a polite request. B will not answer private questions, so **I can't answer it**.

11. A: I _____ work hard during the weekend.

B: Why?

A: I _____ finish my weekly task yesterday.
✔ **D) must / couldn't**
A has to work at the weekend, so **I must work hard**. The reason is in the past (**yesterday**): **I couldn't finish my task.**

12. She _____ smoke because she is pregnant and it is harmful to the baby.
✔ **C) mustn't**
Smoking is harmful to the baby, so it is a strong 'no': **She mustn't smoke.** Not **needn't**, because that only means it is not necessary.

13. I _____ get a visa to go to England. I'm a British citizen.
✔ **D) needn't**
A British citizen does not need a visa for England, so it is not necessary: **I needn't get a visa.** Not **mustn't**, because that means it is not allowed.

14. A: _____ read and write when you were 5?

B: No, I _____.
✔ **A) Could you / couldn't**
When you were 5 is the past, so we use **Could you…?** and the short answer **No, I couldn't.**

15. A: _____ pay any money for this treatment?

B: No, you _____.
✔ **B) Must I / needn't**
A asks if paying is necessary: **Must I pay?** B says it is not necessary: **No, you needn't.**

16. This medicine _____ heal you. Give it a try.
✔ **A) can**
Give it a try shows the medicine is possible help, so we use **can**: **This medicine can heal you.**

17. You _____ give up. You are strong enough to overcome this problem.
✔ **A) mustn't**
The speaker says you are strong, so giving up is a strong 'no': **You mustn't give up.** Not **needn't**, because that only means it is not necessary.

18. A: Jeremy _____ come to the dinner party today.

B: I know. As far as I know, he _____ go on a business trip.
✔ **C) can't / must**
Jeremy is not able to come, so he **can't come**. The reason is an obligation: he **must go** on a business trip.

19. A: I _____ speak English fluently before I stayed in England for a year.

B: But now you _____. That's very good.
✔ **C) couldn't / can**
In the past A was not able to speak fluently: **couldn't**. Now it is possible: **now you can**.

20. A: _____ see your passport?

B: Why _____ show it?

A: Because I need to see a picture ID.
✔ **D) Can I / must I**
A asks for permission: **Can I see your passport?** B asks why it is necessary: **Why must I show it?**

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