ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Modals MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 3

English Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF: https://englishtestsonline.com/modals-test-3/

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Explanations

1. - _____ we finish our work today?

- No, you _____.
✔ **D) Must / needn't**
A question with **must** asks if something is necessary. The short answer "No, it isn't necessary" is **needn't**. Not **mustn't**, because that means "it is forbidden".

2. I _____ go to the library for books as I often write compositions at school.
✔ **E) have to**
Have to shows necessity caused by a situation: the speaker often writes compositions, so going to the library is necessary. **Can** and **may** would only express ability or permission.

3. It _____ rain this afternoon.
✔ **B) may**
May expresses possibility in the future: **It may rain** = perhaps it will rain. **Is able to** and **were able to** are about ability, which does not fit the weather.

4. _____ the director receive me now?
✔ **C) Can**
Can is a modal verb, so it goes before the subject in questions and is followed by the bare infinitive: **Can the director receive me? Has to** and **Is to** cannot form a question this way.

5. Who _____ help him at 2 yesterday?
✔ **E) had to**
The clue **yesterday** shows the past, and **had to** is the past form of **have to** (necessity). The other options are present forms.

6. I said that after all that had happened I had no choice: I _____ run away to my aunt's.
✔ **C) had to**
The words **had no choice** show necessity, and after **I said** we need a past form, so **had to** is correct. Not **could** or **might**, because they show possibility, not necessity.

7. - _____ I go to the cinema?

- No, you _____. The film is for grown-ups.
✔ **A) May / mustn't**
May I...? asks for permission. The reply **No, you mustn't** means it is not allowed, and the reason is given: the film is for grown-ups. Not **Could / couldn't**: we answer a permission question with **can't** or **mustn't**, not **couldn't**.

8. Teacher: "You _____ ring me up when you _____ my advice."
✔ **B) may / need**
May gives permission: the teacher allows the student to call. After **when** referring to the future, we use the present simple: **when you need**. Not **can / will need**, because **will** is not used after **when** in time clauses.

9. "Never put off till tomorrow what you _____ do today."
✔ **D) can**
This proverb uses **can** for ability: don't wait until tomorrow to do what you are able to do today. **Have to** or **must** would change the fixed saying.

10. - I _____ understand the rule; _____ I take the examination another time?

- Yes, of course.
✔ **C) can't / may**
The first gap shows inability: **I can't understand the rule**. The second asks for permission politely: **May I take the examination another time?** The reply **Yes, of course** gives permission.

11. Pupils _____ speak only English at their English lessons.
✔ **B) must**
Must expresses a rule or obligation and is followed by the bare infinitive: **Pupils must speak English**. Not **has to**, because the subject **pupils** is plural, and not **must to**, because **must** is never followed by **to**.

12. The lecturer mentioned the name of the town several times, but unfortunately I _____ remember it.
✔ **D) could not**
Unfortunately shows a problem, and the sentence is in the past (**mentioned**), so we need past inability: **could not remember**.

13. - Must I do this exercise too?

- No, you _____. It isn't necessary.
✔ **D) needn't**
It isn't necessary shows lack of necessity, which is **needn't**. Not **mustn't**, because that means it is forbidden.

14. Mother, look, I _____ skate well.
✔ **A) can**
Can shows ability: **I can skate well** = I know how to skate well.

15. I'm sorry, you _____ smoke here.
✔ **B) can't**
Can't is used to say that something is not allowed: **you can't smoke here** = smoking is forbidden here. **Must** and **have to** would mean you are obliged to smoke.

16. We _____ protect our nature from pollution.
✔ **E) must**
Must expresses a strong duty or obligation that the speaker feels: we must protect nature. Not **need**, because the main verb **need** takes **to**: **need to protect**.

17. He is very helpless, so I _____ help him.
✔ **C) have to**
Have to shows necessity caused by the situation: he is helpless, so helping him is necessary. **Can** and **may** only show ability or permission, not necessity.

18. Excuse me, _____ you tell me the time?
✔ **D) can**
Can you…? is a common way to make a request: **Can you tell me the time?** We don't use **may you** or **must you** for requests.

19. My grandfather's ill and I _____ go to see him today, so I _____ go with you.
✔ **B) have to / can't**
The first gap is necessity: the grandfather is ill, so I **have to** visit him. The result is inability: I **can't** go with you.

20. The Browns _____ not return on Sunday, as the weather was bad.
✔ **B) could**
The sentence is about the past (**the weather was bad**), so we need past inability: **could not return**. Not **may not**, because it shows present or future possibility, not a past fact.

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