ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Modals MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 5

English Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF: https://englishtestsonline.com/modals-test-5/

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Explanations

1. A little girl comes up to her mother and asks if she _____ go to the park with her friend.
✔ **D) may**
The girl is asking for **permission**, so we use **may**: She asks if she **may** go to the park. Not **must**, because **must** means it is necessary, not that someone allows it.

2. If you are ill and _____ go to school, you _____ learn everything you have missed.
✔ **B) can't / must**
When you are ill, you are not able to go to school, so the first gap needs **can't**. Afterwards it is necessary to catch up, so the second gap needs **must**: **you must learn everything you have missed**.

3. The dog had run away and the children _____ find it though they were looking for it the whole day.
✔ **E) could not**
The story is in the past (**had run away**), and they looked all day without success, so we need past inability: **could not**. Not **can't**, because that is present tense.

4. As Mr. John hadn't got the dictionary at hand, he _____ guess the meaning of the word.
✔ **E) had to**
He had no dictionary, so it was necessary for him to guess. For past necessity we use **had to**. **Must** and **has to** are present forms, so they do not fit the past context (**hadn't got**).

5. Mark Twain _____ easily _____ across the Mississippi River.
✔ **E) could / swim**
This is about **ability in the past**, so we use **could** + base verb: Mark Twain **could** easily **swim** across the Mississippi River. Not **may**, which talks about permission or possibility.

6. It was late but the pupils _____ stay at school for an additional lesson.
✔ **C) had to**
It was late but shows the pupils stayed against their wish, because it was necessary. For past obligation we use **had to**. Not **needed**, because it needs **to**: **needed to stay**.

7. The children have done their homework. I think they _____ have a rest now.
✔ **A) may**
The homework is finished, so the children are allowed to rest. We use **may** for **permission**: they **may have** a rest now. Not **are able**, because it needs **to**: **are able to have**.

8. - Shall I retell the text?

- _____. You can only translate it.
✔ **D) No, you needn't**
You can only translate it shows that retelling is not necessary. To say something is not necessary, we use **needn't**: **No, you needn't.** Not **Yes, you may**, because the speaker is saying no.

9. Patient: Must I go to the hospital?

Doctor: No, you _____. You _____ stay at home.
✔ **C) needn't / may**
The answer to **Must I...?** when it is not necessary is **No, you needn't**. Then the doctor gives permission: **You may stay at home.** Not **mustn't**, which means it is forbidden.

10. It _____ rain today. There are so many clouds in the sky.
✔ **C) may**
The clouds show it is **possible** that it will rain, so we use **may**: It **may** rain today. Not **can**, which is not used for a possibility on one particular occasion like this.

11. I understood that he _____ never _____ back.
✔ **D) would / come**
After a past reporting verb (**I understood**), **will** usually changes to **would**, followed by the base verb: he **would** never **come** back. Not **wouldn't**, because **never** is already negative.

12. My son is ill, so I _____ stay at home.
✔ **E) have to**
It is necessary because of a situation (my son is ill), so we use **have to**. With **I** we say **have to**, not **has to**.

13. A: Must I do it?

B: No, you _____. It isn't necessary.
✔ **C) needn't**
It isn't necessary tells us the answer: **No, you needn't.** Not **may not** or **can't**, which mean it is not allowed.

14. I feel ill and very tired, so I _____ go to school.
✔ **D) am not able to**
Because I am ill, I cannot go, so we need inability: **am not able to**. Not **haven't to**, which is not correct English (we say **don't have to**).

15. He was very poor and _____ marry a woman eight years older than himself.
✔ **D) had to**
His poverty forced him, so it was a **past necessity**: **had to**. **Must** is used for the present and does not fit the past context (**He was**).

16. By law, children _____ go to school at the age of 7.
✔ **B) must**
By law shows it is a rule, so it is necessary: children **must** go to school. Not **has to**, because **children** is plural (**have to**).

17. - _____ I trouble you for a moment?

- Yes, certainly. What _____ I do for you?
✔ **B) May / can**
May I…? is a polite way to ask for permission, and **What can I do for you?** is the usual offer of help. Not **What may I do for you?**, which is not natural.

18. He _____ know her address. Ask him.
✔ **B) must**
Must is used when we are almost sure something is true: **He must know her address.** Not **can't**, which means we are sure it is not true, so **Ask him** would make no sense.

19. You knew he was ill. You _____ have visited him.
✔ **B) might**
Might have + past participle can express **reproach** about something someone failed to do: You **might have visited** him! (= you should have). Not **may have visited**, which only means it is possible that you visited him.

20. May I take this pen? No, you _____.
✔ **C) mustn’t**
A negative answer to **May I…?** that refuses permission is **No, you mustn't** (or **No, you may not**). Not **may**, because the answer starts with **No**.

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