ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Subjunctive Mood MCQ Test With Answers – Online Exercises

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Explanations

1. In this exercise, you are asked to ***opt for the subjunctive,*** whether the other option also constitutes a viable construction or not.

It is recommended that she _____ a holiday.
✓ **A) take**
After verbs and expressions of advice or demand such as **it is recommended that**, formal English uses the subjunctive: the base form of the verb for every person, with no **-s** in the third person singular. So we say **she take**, not **she takes**. The indicative **takes** is heard in informal British English, but the task asks for the subjunctive.

2. It is essential that you _____ at the meeting tomorrow.
✓ **B) be**
It is essential that is followed by the subjunctive, which uses the base form of the verb. The subjunctive of **to be** is **be** for every person: **It is essential that you be there. Are** is the ordinary indicative form, not the subjunctive.

3. The urgency of the job necessitates that we _____ late for work.
✓ **B) not be**
The verb **necessitate** expresses a requirement, so the **that**-clause takes the subjunctive. In the negative subjunctive, **not** comes directly before the base form, with no auxiliary **do**: **that we not be late**. **Are not** is the indicative and does not follow this pattern.

4. It is absolutely essential that he _____ the job by midday.
✓ **B) finish**
It is absolutely essential that takes the subjunctive, so the verb stays in its base form even after **he**: **that he finish**. **Finishes** is the indicative, with the third-person **-s** that the subjunctive drops.

5. His landlady has requested that my friend _____ the flat by Sunday.
✓ **B) vacate**
Request that is a verb of demand, so the that-clause takes the subjunctive. The subjunctive is the base form for every person, with no -s: **requested that my friend vacate the flat**. The tense of the main verb (**has requested**, **requested**, **requests**) does not change it, because the subjunctive has only one form. Not **vacates**: that is the indicative, with the third-person -s. To **vacate** means to leave a place so that it is empty for someone else.

6. It is necessary that each and every employee _____ a uniform.
✓ **A) wear**
It is necessary that introduces a subjunctive clause, so the verb is the base form: **each and every employee wear**. **Each and every employee** is singular, which is why **wears** is tempting, but the subjunctive never adds **-s**.

7. It is important that you _____ the gate closely.
✓ **A) be guarding**
The subjunctive also has a continuous form: **be** + **-ing**. After **it is important that**, we use **be guarding** to stress an action that must be in progress. **Are guarding** is the ordinary present continuous, which is the indicative and not the subjunctive.

8. It is absolutely essential that the job _____ by midday.
✓ **B) be finished**
The passive subjunctive is **be** + past participle for every subject: **that the job be finished**. It follows **it is absolutely essential that**, just like the active form. **Is finished** is the indicative passive.

9. It is absolutely crucial that two or three police escort cars _____ for the minister when his plane arrives.
✓ **A) be waiting**
It is absolutely crucial that requires the subjunctive. Here it is the continuous subjunctive, **be** + **-ing**, because the cars must already be waiting when the plane arrives: **that two or three police escort cars be waiting**. With a plural subject, **be** and **are** may look similar in function, but only **be** is the subjunctive form.

10. I would recommend that she _____ the job without negotiating for a decent salary first.
✓ **A) not take**
After **recommend that**, the subjunctive is used. In the negative, **not** goes directly before the base form, without **do** or **does**: **I would recommend that she not take the job**. **Does not take** is the indicative, so it is not the subjunctive.

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