

Prepare for {IELTS}

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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Obligation

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE
TO, MUST AND NEED TO

EXPLANATION

- **OBLIGATION** is connected to the feeling that we are asked or forced to do something. We may feel that it is necessary to do something for legal reasons, moral reasons or because the person/organisation which wants us to do something is powerful.
- We can refer to **OBLIGATION** in the present, the past and the future.
- Candidates often want to refer to **OBLIGATION** in the IELTS Speaking and Writing Tests.
- The concept of **OBLIGATION** is often found in the IELTS Reading and Listening Tests.
- We often use **should, ought to, have to, must** and **need to** when we want to describe **OBLIGATION**.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can sometimes use **should, ought to, have to, must and need to** for obligation:

- Parents **should spend** more time with their children.
- As a society, we **ought to look after** the elderly better.
- Anyone wanting to enter the country **has to fill out** a great deal of documentation.
- Schools **must put** measures in place to eradicate bullying.
- We **need to realise** that the environmental crisis will not just disappear.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We use **should** to express the subject's obligation or duty. There is no authority (either from another person or in general) to force us to act:

- You **should turn out** the lights when you are not using them.
- We **should** all **learn** to be a little bit kinder to others.
- The government **should introduce** a law banning cars from entering city-centres.
- Politicians **should focus** on telling the truth instead of lying.
- You **should be** a bit more careful.
- The doctor said that I **should start** doing sport. Apparently, I'm overweight and unhealthy.
- You **shouldn't be** so selfish!

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We often use **ought to** when something is a good idea, sensible or morally the right thing to do. Again, there is no authority (either from another person or generally) to force us to act:

- You **ought to cut down** on your smoking.
- I suppose I **ought to be** more polite when dealing with customers.
- You **ought to wear** a helmet when you ride your bike.
- You **ought to pay** back the money you borrowed.
- I know I **ought to donate** more to charity but I just wonder whether the money actually reaches those in need.
- You **ought not to stay up** so late on weekday evenings.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

Both **should** and **ought to** can refer specifically to the future:

- You really **should work** harder next term.
- I suppose I **should be** more polite next time I find myself in that situation.
- You **ought to wear** a helmet in future.
- You **ought to pay** back the money you borrowed next time you see her.
- I know I **ought to donate** more to charity in the future.
- You **shouldn't get** so angry if it happens again.
- You **ought not to stay up** so late next time.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

Both **should** and **ought to** have past forms. These forms can indicate obligation in the past or regret about something in the past which did not happen:

- We **should have listened** to your advice. If we had, we wouldn't be in such a mess now.
- Governments **should have changed** the law on online privacy years ago. Now, it's probably too late.
- You **shouldn't have been** so tactless.
- You **ought to have worked** harder on your project. You could have done much better.
- I **ought not to have taken up** smoking when I was younger.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We use **must** and **have to** when there is authority and when we think the action will be fulfilled. We use **have to** when there is general authority:

- Because of the outbreak of Ebola, those wishing to cross the border **have to wash** their hands in chlorinated water and **have to have** their temperature taken.
- If you want to join the army, you **have to undergo** a rigorous medical examination and strenuous physical tests.
- These days, passengers **have to arrive** a couple of hours before their flight is due to take off.
- Candidates **have to bring** two forms of photographic identification with them to the exam, but **don't have to provide** proof of address.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We use **must** and **have to** when there is authority and when we think the action will be fulfilled. We use **must** when the speaker has authority:

- I told both of our children that they **must try** harder at school, so I am hoping to see improvements in their exam results and report grades.
- As an environmentalist, I believe that we **must take** action immediately to avert the looming ecological crisis.
- I **must say** that your party was one of the best I have ever been to.
- You **mustn't be** so careless with your personal details. I bet I've told you a million times!

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can also use **must** to express a very strong feeling in support of something (even when the speaker does not have personal authority):

- We **must stop** treating children and the elderly as second-class citizens.
- Companies which make profits from social media **must do** more to control the disturbing and inappropriate content which is available to youngsters.
- We **must change** the law so that childless couples are able to adopt children whose families have abandoned them.
- We **must give** young children more opportunities to play.
- We **must not be** so critical of young people.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can use **need to** to express a very strong feeling in support of something when obligation is connected to necessity:

- You **need to take** a lot more care of your money. You keep buying things you really don't have any use for.
- You **need to concentrate** much harder at school if you want to do well.
- You **need to fill out** your tax returns before the end of the month. If you don't, you will have to pay a fine.
- People **need to realise** that every time they buy new clothes, it damages the environment.
- We **do not need to be** so materialistic.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

When we use **need to** and **have to** with a singular subject, they agree with the singular form:

- **My boss** **needs/has to learn** that if you treat staff badly, they will look for another job.
- **She** **needs/has to complete** an application form if she wants to work for the civil service.
- **He** **needs/has to take** his own luggage onto the plane for security reasons.
- **It** **needs/has to be understood** that younger people are unhappy and disillusioned. (This is a passive form)
- Saturdays are great! **She** **doesn't have/need to work**.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

When referring to obligation in the past, we can use **had to** or **needed to**. They replace **have to**, **need to** and **must**:

- In the past, workers **had/needed to do** what their bosses told them to do. Similarly, children **had/needed to obey** parents and relatives.
- I'm afraid I **had/needed to lie**. I couldn't tell him that I had been given the job which he applied for. He would have been furious.
- We got to the meeting late. The train broke down and we **had/needed to wait** for a bus. Obviously, the bus did not stop anywhere near the centre so we **had/needed to walk** for an hour.
- I **had/needed to leave** Zimbabwe because I couldn't find a decent job.
- We **didn't have/need to do** any homework this week.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can use **will have to** and **will need to** when we want to refer to an obligation in the future:

- If we do not make living in the countryside a more attractive proposition, a huge number of people will migrate to cities and we **will have/need to deal** with massive levels of overcrowding and a consequent deterioration in the quality of life.
- As sea-levels continue to rise, it is predicted that many people living in coastal zones **will have/need to re-locate** to inland areas.
- We **will have/need to find** new forms of transport in the future. Using cars will not be viable in the long term.
- We **won't have/need to come** to any more classes after next Friday. The course finishes then.

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OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can use **have to** and **need to** to describe obligation in several other tenses:

- I **am** currently **having/needing to work** far harder than I used to.
- I **have** always **had/needed to be** nearly perfect in order to satisfy my demanding parents.
- I **used to have/need to wear** glasses, but my sight has improved.
- I **am going to have/need to ask** you to show some identification.
- I **would have/need to move** if my mother came to live here.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Obligation

USING NEGATIVE FORMS

EXPLANATION

- **OBLIGATION** is connected to the feeling that we are asked or forced to do something. We may feel that it is necessary to do something for legal reasons, moral reasons or because the person/organisation which wants us to do something is powerful.
- We can refer to **OBLIGATION** in the present, the past and the future.
- Candidates often want to refer to **OBLIGATION** in the IELTS Speaking and Writing Tests.
- The concept of **OBLIGATION** is often found in the IELTS Reading and Listening Tests.
- We can use **negative forms** when we want to describe **OBLIGATION**.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We can use negative forms of **should** and **ought to** to indicate an obligation not to do something, or a strong suggestion that doing something is bad or wrong:

- You **should** definitely **not tell** so many lies.
- You **shouldn't spend** so much. It's important to save money.
- You **shouldn't have been** so selfish. (This is a past form)
- We all know we **ought not to eat** so much meat, but changing the habits of a lifetime is difficult.
- You **oughtn't to be** so critical of others.
- I **ought not to have agreed**. I deeply regret it. (This is a past form)

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

When we want to indicate that an external authority gives permission not to do something, we usually use **do not (don't) have to**:

- Many European citizens **do not have to show** their passports when crossing borders within The EU.
- Those who fundamentally disagree with the entire political system **do not have to vote** in elections.
- Currently, students **do not have to study** a foreign language after reaching the age of sixteen. I personally feel this is a shame and a missed opportunity.
- It seems ridiculous to me that cyclists **do not have to wear** a helmet. If I were in charge, I would make it compulsory.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We use **does not (doesn't) have to** to agree with a singular subject:

- She says that **she doesn't have to complete** the course because she has already done something similar.
- **A good friend of mine doesn't have to do** military service because of a serious medical condition.
- Thankfully, **my mother doesn't have to work** any more. She has reached retirement age.
- **The Queen doesn't have to pay** taxes on her income or assets. I find this incredibly unfair.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

When we want to give personal permission for an action not to be done, we can use **needn't/need not** or **don't need to**:

- The tutor told us that we **need not take** the end-of-year exam, as long as we complete a 5000-word project before May.
- The teacher said that we **don't need to come** to class tomorrow. She is going to spend the afternoon marking.
- The conference last year was excruciatingly boring. I remember it well! You **needn't remind / don't need to remind** me!
- My boss says that I **needn't go / don't need to go** to work tomorrow.
- I've got another set of keys so you **needn't worry / don't need to worry** about the ones you lost.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We use **does not (doesn't) need to** to agree with a singular subject:

- **She** **doesn't need to work** on Saturdays and Sundays.
- **The Managing Director of the company** **doesn't need to drive**. He has a chauffeur.
- **My friend** **doesn't need to pay** rent. She lives with her parents.
- **Your performance** **doesn't need to be** perfect every time!
- Please tell him that **he** **doesn't need to bring** anything with him.
- **The owner** **doesn't need to show** proof of ownership.
- **The person watching the film** **doesn't need to take** notes.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We can use **didn't need to** and **didn't have to** to describe a lack of obligation in the past. There is no difference between personal authority and general authority:

- When I was at school, I **didn't have/need to pay** for lunch because of my family's low income.
- After I left your house, I **didn't have/need to wait** long for the bus.
- In the past, youngsters **didn't have/need to worry** so much about physical appearance. Social media has changed all that.
- I think that when I was young, schoolchildren **didn't have/need to work** as hard as they do now. There was less pressure on them to do well in exams.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We can use **will not (won't) have to** and **will not (won't) need to** when we want to refer to a lack of obligation in the future:

- When you go to university, you **won't have/need to wear** a uniform.
- I'm delighted to be retiring. I **won't have/need to get up** early and go to work every day.
- The doctor has told me that from next week I **won't have/need to take** any more tablets. Apparently my condition is significantly better.
- When you visit, you **won't have/need to bring** a raincoat or umbrella. We never get any bad weather at this time of year.

OBLIGATION

SHOULD, OUGHT TO, HAVE TO, MUST, NEED TO

We can use **have to** and **need to** with negative forms to describe obligation in several other tenses:

- I **am not currently having/needing to work** too hard.
- I **have not always had/needed to rely** on other people, but I think that as I have got older, I have become less self-confident.
- I **didn't use to have/need to wear** glasses but my sight has worsened.
- I **am not going to have/need to ask** you any more questions. You are free to enter the country.
- I **would not have/need to move** if my landlord didn't insist on putting the rent up.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

We use **must not (mustn't)** to express an obligation not to do something:

- Those taking the IELTS exam **must not cheat**. They **must not use** dictionaries or smartphones and definitely **must not ask** fellow-candidates for help.
- Athletes **must not take** performance-enhancing steroids. If they are caught, they will face disqualification from the event and may be banned from the sport for a lengthy period.
- Passengers **must not smoke** in any part of the aircraft. In addition, they **must not use** electronic devices during take-off and landing, as smartphones and tablets can actually interfere with the plane's navigation system.

OBLIGATION USING NEGATIVE FORMS

Must not (mustn't) can also be used to give strong or emphatic advice:

- You **mustn't get** upset so easily. It won't help.
- I'm telling you this in the strictest confidence: you **mustn't tell** anybody. / You **mustn't breathe** a word about this to anybody.
- You **mustn't put down** poison to kill the slugs. Hedgehogs eat slugs and they can be killed if they ingest these chemicals.
- You **mustn't swim** there. Apparently, sharks have been spotted in that area recently.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Obligation

USING **NEEDN'T HAVE**

EXPLANATION

- **OBLIGATION** is connected to the feeling that we are asked or forced to do something. We may feel that it is necessary to do something for legal reasons, moral reasons or because the person/organisation which wants us to do something is powerful.
- We can refer to **OBLIGATION** in the present, the past and the future.
- Candidates often want to refer to **OBLIGATION** in the IELTS Speaking and Writing Tests.
- The concept of **OBLIGATION** is often found in the IELTS Reading and Listening Tests.
- We can use **needn't have** to describe a lack of **OBLIGATION** in the past.

OBLIGATION

USING NEEDN'T HAVE

We can use **needn't + have + past participle** to describe an unnecessary action which happened:

- I **needn't have worried** about it raining during the party. The sun shone all the time. (= I worried and it was not necessary)
- I **needn't have spent** so much on that present. I found it online at half the price just after I had bought it. (= I spent a lot of money and it was not necessary)
- You **needn't have driven** to meet me at the airport. I could have found your house from the directions you gave me. (= You came and it was not necessary)

OBLIGATION

USING NEEDN'T HAVE

We can use **needn't + have + past participle** to describe an unnecessary action which happened:

- Actually, she **needn't have come**. I don't know why we didn't just sort it all out on the phone. (= **She came and it was not necessary**)
- You **needn't have translated** all of those documents. We have a professional interpreter in the office and she could have done it. (= **You translated the documents and it was not necessary**)
- We **needn't have done** our homework. The tutor forgot to ask us to hand it in. (= **We did our homework and it was not necessary**)
- You **needn't have cooked**. We managed to get a takeaway meal on the way over. (= **You cooked and it was not necessary**)

OBLIGATION USING NEEDN'T HAVE

We often use **needn't + have + past participle** with **could + have + past participle**. This expresses the idea of a better option:

- You **needn't have sent** me the money. You **could have kept** it until later.
- The weather was amazing. I **needn't have taken** my coat. I **could have just gone** with shorts and a t-shirt.
- When people get old they sometimes feel that they **needn't have spent** so much time working. They **could have retired** earlier.
- She **needn't have waited** for us. She **could have gone** home on her own.

OBLIGATION

USING NEEDN'T HAVE

We sometimes use **needn't + have + past participle** with **should + have + past participle**. This expresses the idea of criticism:

- You **needn't have stayed** at home all day. You **should have gone** out with your friends.
- You **needn't have spent** all that money on her present. You **should have just bought** her a card and some flowers.
- I can see now that I **needn't have bothered** coming. I **should have just stayed** at home.
- You **needn't have cleaned** the entire house. You **should have left** it until we all got back. We **could have done** it together.



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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Fill in the missing word(s) to complete the sentences. All of the sentences are connected with obligation:

1. Schools sh_____ teach pupils how to be physically, mentally, emotionally and financially healthy.
2. You could be a really good pianist. You o_____ t_____ practise more.
3. If you want to adopt a child, you h_____ t_____ go on several courses and take a range of psychological tests.
4. We all n_____ t_____ realise that the only way to save the planet is for everyone to act immediately.
5. You sh_____ only turn on lights when you really need them.
6. I know I o_____ t_____ visit my auntie more often. She doesn't get many visitors and sometimes feels quite lonely.
7. The government sh_____ h_____ banned smoking in public places years ago.
8. You o_____ t_____ h_____ asked before you borrowed my bicycle. It was wrong of you just to take it.

ANSWERS

1. Schools **should** teach pupils how to be physically, mentally, emotionally and financially healthy.
2. You could be a really good pianist. You **ought to** practise more.
3. If you want to adopt a child, you **have to** go on several courses and take a range of psychological tests.
4. We all **need to** realise that the only way to save the planet is for everyone to act immediately.
5. You **should** only turn on lights when you really need them.
6. I know I **ought to** visit my auntie more often. She doesn't get many visitors and sometimes feels quite lonely.
7. The government **should have** banned smoking in public places years ago.
8. You **ought to have** asked before you borrowed my bicycle. It was wrong of you just to take it.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Fill in the missing word(s) to complete the sentences. All of the sentences are connected with obligation:

1. I o_____ n_____ t_____ h_____ listened to your advice about where to invest my money.
2. You m_____ b_____ more careful with your personal belongings. You keep losing things, and it costs a lot of money to replace them.
3. We m_____ outlaw child labour. It is totally wrong that young children have to work instead of going to school.
4. If you want to join the police force, you h_____ t_____ go through a rigorous selection process. Only around one in every five applicants is successful.
5. I'm afraid I h_____ t_____ lie. If I had told the truth, my boss would have sacked me. I really need that job!
6. In the 1990s, many people felt that they h_____ t_____ leave the country for economic reasons.
7. We will probably h_____ t_____ find a more sustainable way of farming in the future.
8. I sh_____ definitely n_____ eat as much red meat as I do.

ANSWERS

1. I **ought not to have** listened to your advice about where to invest my money.
2. You **must be** more careful with your personal belongings. You keep losing things, and it costs a lot of money to replace them.
3. We **must** outlaw child labour. It is totally wrong that young children have to work instead of going to school.
4. If you want to join the police force, you **have to** go through a rigorous selection process. Only around one in every five applicants is successful.
5. I'm afraid I **had to** lie. If I had told the truth, my boss would have sacked me. I really need that job!
6. In the 1990s, many people felt that they **had to** leave the country for economic reasons.
7. We will probably **have to** find a more sustainable way of farming in the future.
8. I **should** definitely **not** eat as much red meat as I do.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Fill in the missing word(s) to complete the sentences. All of the sentences are connected with obligation:

1. You o_____ n_____ t_____ drink so much whiskey. It's very bad for your health.
2. You sh_____ n_____ h_____ eaten so much.
3. You o_____ n_____ t_____ h_____ been so critical.
4. You d_____ n_____ h_____ t_____ wear a seatbelt if you are driving on private land.
5. My sister d_____ h_____ t_____ do military service for medical reasons.
6. I've got another set of keys so you n_____ worry about the ones you lost.
7. I d_____ n_____ t_____ go to class tomorrow because the lesson is only for students who didn't pass last week's test.
8. I know I d_____ h_____ t_____ bring you anything back from my holidays, but I wanted to.

ANSWERS

1. You **ought not to** drink so much whiskey. It's very bad for your health.
2. You **should not have** eaten so much.
3. You **ought not to have** been so critical.
4. You **do not have to** wear a seatbelt if you are driving on private land.
5. My sister **doesn't have to** do military service for medical reasons.
6. I've got another set of keys so you **needn't** worry about the ones you lost.
7. I **don't need to** go to class tomorrow because the lesson is only for students who didn't pass last week's test.
8. I know I **didn't have to** bring you anything back from my holidays, but I wanted to.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Fill in the missing word(s) to complete the sentences. All of the sentences are connected with obligation:

1. I am really looking forward to retiring. I w_____ h_____ t_____ get up early.
2. It is sometimes said that in the future we w_____ h_____ t_____ do housework. Machines will do it all for us.
3. You m_____ n_____ lean out of the window when the train is moving.
4. Passengers m_____ n_____ use electronic devices during take-off and landing.
5. You m_____ n_____ swim in that area. Apparently there are crocodiles there.
6. I n_____ h_____ bothered worrying about the weather. It was beautiful all day.
7. You n_____ h_____ waited for us. You could have gone home.
8. You n_____ h_____ translated all of those documents from French. The company also sent us a version in English.

ANSWERS

1. I am really looking forward to retiring. I **won't have to** get up early.
2. It is sometimes said that in the future we **won't have to** do housework. Machines will do it all for us.
3. You **must not** lean out of the window when the train is moving.
4. Passengers **must not** use electronic devices during take-off and landing.
5. You **must not** swim in that area. Apparently there are crocodiles there.
6. I **needn't have** bothered worrying about the weather. It was beautiful all day.
7. You **needn't have** waited for us. You could have gone home.
8. You **needn't have** translated all of those documents from French. The company also sent us a version in English.