



Presentation

can, could, must, need to, have to, had to, let, allow, make

Use *can, could, must, need to, have to* and *be allowed to* to talk about permission, obligation, prohibition and necessity.

	present	past
permission	<i>can, is/are allowed to</i>	<i>could, was/were allowed to</i>
obligation/ necessity	<i>must, have to, need to</i>	<i>had to, needed to</i>
prohibition	<i>mustn't, can't</i>	<i>couldn't, wasn't/ weren't allowed to</i>
no necessity	<i>don't have to, needn't/ don't need to</i>	<i>didn't have to, needn't have/didn't need to</i>

Notice that there is no past form of *must* and *mustn't*. Use *had to, couldn't* or *was/weren't allowed to*.

must, have to, need to

Use *must, have to* and *need to* to say that it is obligatory or very important to do something. There is very little difference between the three verbs in the affirmative.

- *Must* can be used to show that the person who is speaking has the authority to insist that something is done:
You must stay in tonight. (= parent speaking to child)
- *Have to* can be used to show that an obligation is being imposed by someone else:
I have to stay in tonight. (= My parents said so.)
- *Need to* can be used to explain that an action is necessary rather than obligatory:
I need to stay in tonight to look after my little sister.

mustn't, don't have to, don't need to

Use *mustn't* to say that it is important not to do something:
You mustn't forget your homework. (= It's important that you don't forget.)

Use *don't have to* and *don't need to* to show that:

- something is not important or essential:
I don't have to get up early at the weekend.
- you can choose not to do something if you want:
You don't need to do your homework now. You can do it later.

needn't / don't need to

You can use *needn't* or *don't need to* with the same meaning:

You needn't stay at home tonight. You don't need to stay at home tonight.

Do not use *to* before the infinitive with *needn't*:

You needn't get up early today. (don't say *You needn't to get up early today.*)

needn't have / didn't need to

Use *needn't have* with a past participle to say that a past action was not necessary. Use *didn't need to* with an infinitive to say that an action wasn't necessary and therefore wasn't performed.

You needn't have bought me a present! (= You did it, but it wasn't necessary.)

We didn't need to pay. (= It wasn't necessary and we didn't do it.)

let, allow, make

Use *let* and *allow* + object + infinitive to talk about permission and prohibition. Use the *to* infinitive with *allow*. *Allow* is slightly more formal than *let*.

They never let me go out with my friends.

They don't even let me talk to them on the phone!

They allowed me to stay up late.

Use *make* + object + infinitive to talk about an obligation.

They made me get up at five o'clock. (= I had no choice.)

1 Look at the sign and complete the sentences using the words in brackets.



- 1 You (can) bring dogs to the campsite.
- 2 You (must) light a fire.
- 3 You (must) be quiet after 10 p.m.
- 4 You (have to) leave your car in the car park.
- 5 You (allowed to) ride bicycles on the campsite.
- 6 You (have to) pay to hire a bike.

2 Complete the conversation using the past form of *allow*, *can* or *have to*. Use no more than two words in each gap. *Weren't* or *didn't* count as one word. Then listen and check.

A: How was your camping weekend?

B: It was OK. They had a no-pets rule, so we ¹ leave the dogs at home and we
² be really quiet. We ³ to play music or make any noise after
 10 p.m. But at six o'clock in the morning, you ⁴ make as much noise as you wanted!
 There was a no-fires rule, so we ⁵ to have barbecues. But luckily, there was a great café.
 We ate there the whole time and we ⁶ to do any cooking at all.

3 Choose the correct options.

- 1 We *need* / *needn't* to get up at 6.30 tomorrow to catch the early train.
- 2 I *don't need* / *needn't* go to work today. I've got the day off.
- 3 You *didn't need* / *needn't* have brought a towel you know. There are plenty here.
- 4 He *didn't need* / *needn't* to take the car. He went on the bus.

4 Complete the texts using *let*, *allow* and *make*. You may need to make changes to the verb.

My parents are really strict. They don't ¹ us to watch TV during the week. They always
² us get up early on Saturday mornings to do our homework – even in the holidays! But if
 we do it quickly and well, they ³ us go out with our friends in the afternoon.

Your boss ⁴ you take time off work, doesn't he? I asked my boss for a day off last week. He
 was really angry with me for asking and ⁵ me stay late to finish off some extra work!