



## Must, Mustn't and Didn't Have To

*Must* means we have no choice about doing something. We are obliged to do it.

Read this conversation between two friends and look for examples of *must*.

Joe: Andy? Hi! I got the job! I start next month.

Andy: Congratulations!

Joe: Thanks. The only problem is that **I must buy a car**. The factory isn't on a bus route.

Andy: Yes, I told you! I know you don't want to buy one, but it's time you had a car anyway.

Joe: Well, if I buy one, **you must come and help me choose**. I don't know much about cars.

Andy: I'd be happy to. What kind do you want to buy?

Joe: A Ferrari of course! It's the King of cars.

Andy: Ha, ha! **You must be joking!** You've spent so much money in the last few weeks you'll be lucky if you can afford a bicycle!

Joe: Yeah. I know. **I must try to spend less money**. Oh, well, not a Ferrari, then! **But it must have a powerful engine and a good stereo system**. Oh yes! **My dog, Wolfie, must like it as well!!**

Andy: Ha ha! Yeah, sure! Oops! **I must go!** Suzy's coming for dinner and my place is a mess. Well done on getting the job.

Joe: Thanks! Bye!

Andy: Bye.

*Must* and *have to* are very similar in meaning.

*I must buy a car. / I have to buy a car.*

*Have to* is also used when we are talking about something impersonal. The law, the government, the workplace etc may say it is necessary for someone to do something.

Joe: *I'll have to wear a uniform in my new job. And I have to pass a safety exam.* (These are workplace rules.)

*Must* is often used in speaking when we are giving orders. We use it when we are telling someone else what we think is very important for them to do.

*You must study very hard for your safety exam!*

*You must drive carefully. The roads are icy today.*

*Must* is also used in rules:

*Candidates who fail the safety exam must wait three months before applying to retake it.*



When we want to say that we are **not** allowed to do something, we use *mustn't*.

*I mustn't drink and drive. (It's the law.)*

*I mustn't spill food on the carpet or Suzy will kill me! (My girlfriend says I am not allowed to drop food on the carpet.)*

We can't use *don't have to* in this situation. (*Don't have to* means that it is unnecessary for us to do something.)

~~I don't have to drink and drive.~~ Incorrect

~~I don't have to spill food on the carpet or my girlfriend will kill me!~~ Incorrect

There is no past tense for *must*. When we want to use *must* in the past, we use *had to*.

*Before I owned a car, I had to take the bus to work.*

*I had to wait at the bus stop in the wind and the rain. Now I can drive to work and not get wet!*

### Exercise

Joe has been in his new job for two weeks. He meets Andy for a drink at a bar. Complete the gaps in the dialogue below with *must* / *mustn't* or *had to*.

Andy: Hey! How are you?

Joe: Fine. What are you having?

Andy: An orange juice, thanks. I'm so hot. I 1. \_\_\_\_\_ have something cold.

Joe: Oh and I 2. \_\_\_\_\_ pay you back that money I borrowed from you. Remember? I owe you \$50.00.

Andy: Oh thanks. So how is the job?

Joe: Fine. There were a lot of new things to learn. When I first started, I 3. \_\_\_\_\_ be really careful. But now, it's good. I'm enjoying it. Oh and can you remind me to leave here at 7.30? I 4. \_\_\_\_\_ be at the airport at 9 o'clock to meet Suzy. She's been visiting her parents in Toronto.

Andy: O.K. I'll remind you at 8.00!

Joe: Oh. That's not funny. You 5. \_\_\_\_\_ say things like that! Suzy will kill me if I'm late. Hey, and how's Haruka?

Andy: She's fine.

Joe: Say! We 6. \_\_\_\_\_ meet for dinner sometime. The four of us!

Andy: Good idea. But you 7. \_\_\_\_\_ tell Haruka any stories about our high-school days! She might drop me!

Joe: I won't.

Wolfie: Woof!



**Answers:** 1. must, 2. must, 3. had to, 4. must, 5. mustn't, 6. must, 7. mustn't.

