5 Introduction to researching language

A Warm-up

Work in pairs. Answer the questions.

1 In the box are some questions which a teacher might need the answers to before working on grammar, vocabulary or functional language with learners. Look at the language analysis form from your trainer. Which questions do you need to answer to complete the form?

a What situations is the language item likely to be used in?
b What does the language mean (in this context)?
c What is the written form of the language? (What does it look like?)
d What is the pronunciation (spoken form) of the language? (What does it sound like?)
e What problems might learners have with the meaning or use of the language?
f What problems might learners have with the written form of the language?
g What problems might learners have with the pronunciation of the language?

2 What sources could a teacher use to find out this information?

B Researching language using coursebooks

1 Your TP tutor has given you a grammar lesson to teach on the topic of 'modals of obligation'. Look at the coursebook extract and complete the following tasks.

i Underline the words and phrases which express obligation and advice.
ii Work with a partner. Work out the rules from the example sentences.

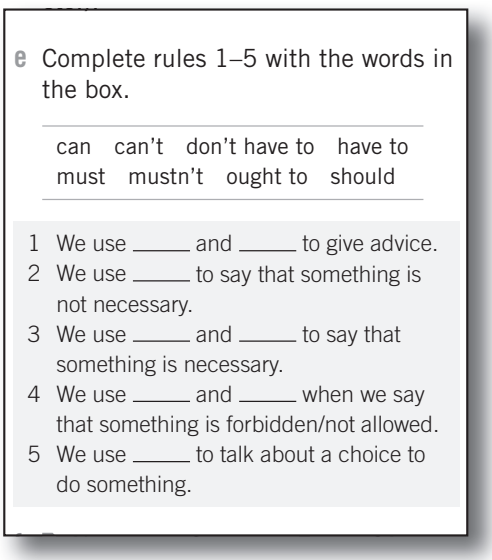
The words or phrases you have identified form part of 'model sentences'. You can use them as your examples when working on grammar with learners.



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2 The next activity in the book asks learners to identify the meaning of four modals of obligation from the context, plus four extra modals of obligation. Try it yourself:



e Complete rules 1–5 with the words in the box.

can can't don't have to have to
must mustn't ought to should

1 We use _____ and _____ to give advice.
2 We use _____ to say that something is not necessary.
3 We use _____ and _____ to say that something is necessary.
4 We use _____ and _____ when we say that something is forbidden/not allowed.
5 We use _____ to talk about a choice to do something.

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3 At the back of the coursebook, you can often find a summary of the grammar, along with some extra information. Use the grammar summary on the next page to complete as much of this table as you can.

Verb	**Use**	**Notes / Possible problems**
must	when we make the rules	no past or future form – use *have to* instead questions with *must* are very rare
have to		
have got to		
mustn't		[no information in the summary]
can't		[no information in the summary]
couldn't		[no information in the summary]
don't have to		[no information in the summary]
should		
ought to		

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6A Modals of obligation

2.25 *must* and *have to*

We use *must* when we make the rules:
*I **must get** a good night's sleep tonight.*
We use *have to* when we talk about other people's rules:
*You **have to buy** a ticket before you get on the train.*
There is no past or future form of *must*. When we talk about rules in the past or future, we always use the correct form of *have to*:
*When you go to India, you **'ll have to** get a visa.*
*I **had to** wear a uniform at school.*

Tip

Don't use contractions with *have to*:
I have to go. NOT ~~*I've to go.*~~

Tip

- Often there is not much difference in meaning between *must* or *have to*. *Have to* is much more common than *must*, especially in spoken English.
- *have got to* is also used in spoken English and means the same as *have to*.
- Questions with *must* are very rare.

2.26 *mustn't, can't* and *don't have to*

We use *mustn't* or *can't* to say that something is not allowed.
We often use *mustn't* when we make the rules and *can't* to talk about other people's rules:
*I **mustn't** forget to email my mum.*
*We **can't** cross the road yet – the light's still red.*
For things which were not allowed in the past, use *couldn't*:
*I **couldn't** work in India because I only had a tourist visa.*

We use *don't have to* when there is no obligation. It means it's not necessary to do something:
*University students **don't have to wear** a uniform.*
*I **didn't have to** call a taxi. Robert drove me home.*

2.27 *should* and *ought to*

We use *should* or *ought to* to give advice and recommendations. They have the same meaning, but *should* is much more common:
*We **should see** as much as possible. We **shouldn't waste** time.*
*We **ought to see** as much as possible. We **ought not to waste** time.*



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C Researching language using teacher's books

This is an excerpt from the teacher's book which corresponds to the student's book pages we looked at in task B:

CAREFUL!

Students are likely to make a number of errors of form and use with modals of obligation.

Problems with form include using the wrong verb form after a modal, e.g. ~~*I must to go*~~ (Correct form = *I must **go***). With *have to*, students may also contract the structure inappropriately, e.g. ~~*I've to go to the doctor*~~ (Correct form = *I have **to go** …*). They also make mistakes with word order, e.g. ~~*We have also to wear a uniform*~~ (Correct form = *We **also have to wear**…*).

The difference between *mustn't* and *don't have to* can also be difficult for students at this level, e.g. ~~*You don't have to eat too many sweets. They're bad for you.*~~ (Correct form = ***You mustn't eat** …*), and ~~*I mustn't go to the shops. There's enough milk*~~ (Correct form = *I **don't have to** go …*).

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Use the information in the excerpt to answer the questions.

1 What is the correct verb form after a modal like *must* or *can*? What is one problem which learners might have with the form?
2 What two other problems with the form of modals of obligation might learners have?
3 What problem with the meaning of *mustn't* and *don't have to* might learners have? Why? You may wish to look back at B3 to help you.

D Researching language using reference books

A reputable grammar book aimed at teachers will generally focus on key areas which it is useful for teachers to work on with learners, including potential problems which learners might have.

Your trainer will give you a relevant excerpt from a grammar reference book. Speak to everybody in the group. Which of the questions from task A does each excerpt answer?

E Putting it all together

Work with a partner.

1 Look back at the questions in A. How many of them can you now answer about modals of obligation? Which sources have you used to gather this information? Which sources did you find to be more or less useful in your research?

2 In this TP, do you feel like you would be prepared to:
- communicate the most important points connected to the grammar?
- answer learners' questions about the grammar?

KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.

- *meaning*
- *form*
- *pronunciation*
- *context*
- *model sentence*
- *modal verb*
- *auxiliary verb*
- *infinitive*

REFLECTION

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- You should research the language items you plan to teach before you plan how to teach them.
- You need to research quite different information when you're teaching vocabulary rather than grammar.

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- The best place to find out information about grammar you're teaching is in a grammar book.
- You should have a comprehensive knowledge of new language you're planning to teach before you enter the classroom.
- It's important to teach learners everything you know about the new language item(s) you're working on.
- You should be able to answer all of the learners' questions about the language you are teaching during the lesson.
- Predicting possible problems learners might have with the language will help you to feel more confident in the classroom.

Compare your answers with a partner.

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