

Modals of Advice

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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

MODALS OF ADVICE

Modals (also known as *modal verbs*) are words that come before a main verb and give it extra meaning such as *ability, advice, necessity, possibility*, etc. Modals of Advice are used for giving advice, suggestions, and recommendations.

1. Modal Pattern

MODAL + BASE VERB

Modals are always followed by a base verb. A base verb is a verb with **no ending** (-s, -ed, -ing, etc.) added to it.

3. Usage

Should

Should is the most common modal of advice.

Ought to

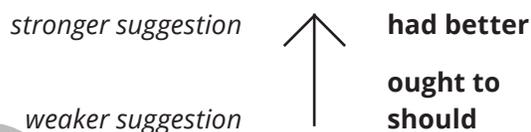
Ought to is more formal than *should*, and it is becoming more and more old-fashioned in American English. On the rare occasions that it is used in speaking, it is often pronounced "oughta" (/ədæ/). *Ought to* is a slightly stronger suggestion than *should*, but the difference is not important. *Ought to* is not used in questions and is rarely used in negative sentences.

Had better

Had better is common when making a stronger suggestion. It is often shortened to '*d better*. *Had better* is not used in questions. In casual speaking, *had* is sometimes dropped.

2. Suggestion Scale

There are three common modals of advice in English: *should, ought to, and had better*. *Had better* is a stronger suggestion than *should* and *ought to*.



4. Sentence Patterns

Positive: You should study tonight.
You ought to study tonight.
You had better study tonight.
You'd better study tonight.
You better study tonight.*

Negative: You should not go out tonight.
You shouldn't go out tonight.
You ought not (to) go out tonight.**
You oughtn't go out tonight.**
You had better not go out tonight.
You'd better not go out tonight.
You better not go out tonight.*

Question: Should I go out tonight?

*Had can be dropped in casual speaking.

**Negative forms of ought to are very rarely used. If used, to is usually dropped.

Exercise 1

Rewrite the sentences using *should*.

1. My brother never gets up on time.

My brother should get up on time.

2. My coworker never eats lunch.

3. My neighbor doesn't speak to the people in the neighborhood.

4. My friend doesn't get much sleep at night.

5. The cashier never gives the correct change.

6. My classmates don't study hard.

7. Mr. Roberts doesn't read the morning paper.

8. She doesn't get enough vitamins.

9. They aren't careful with their reports.

10. He never exercises.

Exercise 2

Pretend you're a school counselor giving advice to students. Write suggestions using *should*, *ought to*, and *had better*. Then have a conversation with a partner. Take turns being the counselor and a student whose grades are slipping.

SHOULD:

1. study / two hours / a night

You should study two hours a night.

2. get / eight hours of sleep / every night
-

3. ask your teachers for help / after class
-

4. ignore / friends who try to talk to you / during class
-

OUGHT TO:

5. read / a chapter / a night
-

6. do / your homework / right after school
-

HAD BETTER:

7. concentrate / during class
-

8. study / before your final exams
-

Exercise 3

Change the sentences into questions using *should*.

1. She hasn't finished her homework yet. (go out)

Should she go out tonight?

2. He didn't tell me what to do. (ask)
-

3. My roommate needs to buy some new clothes. (go shopping)
-

4. They aren't sure where the restaurant is. (ask)
-

5. We need to plan our date. (call)
-

6. She didn't hand in the report on time. (apologize)
-

7. I have a cold today. (take)
-

8. They forgot to tell me when they'll be in town. (email)
-

9. Her doctor's appointment conflicts with her piano lesson. (cancel)
-

10. He has a test next week. (study)
-

Exercise 4

Write short answers using *should* and *had better*.

1. Should I have junk food for dinner? (no, had better)

No, you'd better not.

2. Should I take vitamins every day? (yes, should)
-

3. Should I study for the test tomorrow? (yes, had better)
-

4. Should I go out instead of studying? (no, should)
-

5. Should I call my mom on her birthday? (yes, had better)
-

6. Should I watch TV late at night? (no, should)
-

7. Should I visit my friend in the hospital? (yes, should)
-

8. Should I buy all these expensive clothes? (no, had better)
-

9. Should I show up at the party I wasn't invited to? (no, should)
-

10. Should I practice speaking English every day? (yes, should)
-

Exercise 5

A. Classroom Advice

Rewrite the negative sentences using *should* and *had better*.

1. Don't run with scissors.

You shouldn't run with scissors.

2. Don't speak your native language in class.

3. Don't be late for school.

4. Don't interrupt the teacher.

5. Don't chew gum in class.

6. Don't tease your classmates.

7. Don't play music in class.

8. Don't eat during the lesson.

9. Don't text your friends in class.

10. Don't daydream when you're supposed to be working.

B. Crazy Class Rules

With a partner, write some positive and negative sentences using *should* and *had better*.

Think of some crazy rules for your class!

Examples:

- You'd better sing a song when you enter the classroom.
- You shouldn't do your homework.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

Exercise 6

Rewrite each of the sentences from Exercise 1 with an appropriate suggestion of your own.

1. My brother never gets up on time.

He should set his alarm the night before.

2. My coworker never eats lunch.
-

3. My neighbor doesn't speak to the people in the neighborhood.
-

4. My friend doesn't get much sleep at night.
-

5. The cashier never gives the correct change.
-

6. My classmates don't study hard.
-

7. Mr. Roberts doesn't read the morning paper.
-

8. She doesn't get enough vitamins.
-

9. They aren't careful with their reports.
-

10. He never exercises.
-

Exercise 7

Write 10 suggestions for a tourist in your hometown using *should*, *ought to*, or *had better*. Include positive and negative sentences.

Examples:

- You should try Jack's Diner for breakfast.
- You'd better not park on the street overnight or you'll get towed.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Answer Key

Exercise 1

1. My brother should get up on time.
2. My coworker should eat lunch.
3. My neighbor should speak to the people in the neighborhood.
4. My friend should get more sleep at night.
5. The cashier should give the correct change.
6. My classmates should study hard/harder.
7. Mr. Roberts should read the morning paper.
8. She should get more vitamins.
9. They should be (more) careful with their reports.
10. He should exercise.

Exercise 2

1. You should study two hours a night.
2. You should get eight hours of sleep every night.
3. You should ask your teachers for help after class.
4. You should ignore friends who try to talk to you during class.
5. You ought to read a chapter a night.
6. You ought to do your homework right after school.
7. You had better concentrate during class.
8. You had better study before your final exams.

Exercise 3

Answers may vary slightly.

1. Should she go out tonight?
2. Should I ask him what to do?
3. Should my roommate go shopping (for new clothes)?
4. Should they ask someone where the restaurant is?
5. Should I call you (to plan our date)?
6. Should she apologize (to her boss)?
7. Should I take some medicine?
8. Should I email them (to find out when they'll be in town)?
9. Should she cancel her doctor's appointment/her piano lesson?
10. Should he study tonight?

Exercise 4

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. No, you'd better not. | 6. No, you shouldn't. |
| 2. Yes, you should. | 7. Yes, you should. |
| 3. Yes, you'd better. | 8. No, you'd better not. |
| 4. No, you shouldn't. | 9. No, you shouldn't. |
| 5. Yes, you'd better. | 10. Yes, you should. |

Exercise 5

A. CLASSROOM ADVICE

1. You shouldn't run with scissors.
2. You shouldn't speak your native language in class.
3. You shouldn't be late for school.
4. You shouldn't interrupt the teacher.
5. You shouldn't chew gum in class.
6. You shouldn't tease your classmates.
7. You shouldn't play music in class.
8. You shouldn't eat during the lesson.
9. You shouldn't text your friends in class.
10. You shouldn't daydream when you're supposed to be working.

B. CRAZY CLASS RULES

Answers will vary.

Exercise 6

Answers will vary.

Exercise 7

Answers will vary.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Counselor*, *Neighbor*, *Neighborhood*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Counsellor*, *Neighbour*, *Neighbourhood*, and *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.