

Modals: For Advice

FORM:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>weakest</i> | could | |
| | should/ought to | |
| | had better | + main verb |
| <i>strongest</i> | must | |

USE:

These modals express different degrees of strength. “**COULD**” is the weakest form of advice. It expresses possibilities but does not necessarily mean that the speaker thinks something is a good idea. “**OUGHT TO**” is usually not used in questions and negatives. “**HAD BETTER**” is more urgent than should/ought to, and often suggests that there will be a negative result if the advice is not followed. “**MUST**” is the strongest modal, indicating that it is necessary to follow the speaker’s advice. The modals can also be used with questions and negatives.

EXAMPLES:

You could take a taxi or a bus if your car is broken.
He should stay home if he feels sick.
Mary had better study for this test because she failed the last one.
If you’re going to drive in Canada, you must have car insurance.
You should not be late for your job interview.
Should I wear a jacket today?

Choose the best MODAL to complete each piece of advice.

1. In many Canadian cities, you (*must not/should not*) smoke in restaurants and public places.
2. You (*could/had better*) eat in the Chinese restaurant or the Mexican restaurant. They’re both good.
3. It’s cold outside. You (*must/should*) wear a scarf and hat.
4. Our plane leaves in ten minutes. We (*had better/should*) run so we don’t miss it.
5. I have a headache. I (*must/should*) take some aspirin and lie down for a few minutes.
6. (*Must/Should*) I bring a gift to the birthday party?
7. If you’re speeding and a police officer asks for your license, you (*should/must*) show it to him.
8. Some people think that men (*must/should*) not work as nurses.