



# Not necessary?

Every month in this section, ROBERT PARR uses notes on a short text to present and explain a key point of grammar.

easy plus

**Jake and Trish have walked into their local town to do some shopping.**

Jake: Why are you shaking your head?  
 Trish: Didn't you see the light (*Ampel*)? It was red!  
 Jake: Yeah, but there were no cars around.  
 Trish: Still. You **mustn't do** that. Just imagine if children had been watching!  
 Jake: You **don't have to be** so aggressive.  
 Trish: I'm not. I just don't understand why you did it.  
 Jake: What's the matter with you?  
 Trish: Nothing.

*Two minutes later.*

Jake: Look, I'm sorry about that — you know, crossing when the light was red.  
 Trish: You **needn't be** sorry. *I'm* sorry for reacting like that.  
 Jake: Shall we forget about it?  
 Trish: I have done already. Let's go to the supermarket now. Then we **don't need to go** there on the way back.

You use **mustn't + an infinitive** to say that something is not allowed.

Use **don't have to + an infinitive** to talk about something that is not necessary.

Another way of talking about something that is not necessary is **needn't + an infinitive** or **don't need to + an infinitive**.

## Remember!

You can use **don't have to**, **needn't** or **don't need to + an infinitive** to talk about something that is not necessary.

- We're going shopping, but you **don't have to / needn't / don't need to** come with us if you're busy.

## Beyond the basics

**Don't need to** and **needn't** are not exactly the same: **don't need to** is an ordinary verb, and **needn't** is a modal verb that can be used only to talk about the present. In a specific situation, both verbs are possible:

- We **don't need to** wash up (*spülen*) now. We can do it tomorrow morning.
- We **needn't** wash up now. We can do it tomorrow morning.

But when you are talking about a general situation, or something that is not immediately necessary, only **don't need to** can be used:

- You **don't need to** (not: **needn't**) be over 21 to hire a car.

## Exercise

Underline the appropriate (*angemessen*) verb in the sentences below.

- You **don't have to drive** — **mustn't drive** a car without a valid licence (*gültiger Führerschein*).
- You **don't have to have** — **mustn't have** an appointment to have your hair cut, but it's advisable.
- You **don't have to get** — **mustn't get** the 8.15 a.m. train. It doesn't stop at the airport.
- You **don't have to forget** — **mustn't forget** to call Grandma on her birthday.
- You **don't have to play** — **mustn't play** a musical instrument to enjoy classical music.
- You **don't have to wear** — **mustn't wear** smart (*fein*) clothes. You can come in jeans if you want.

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