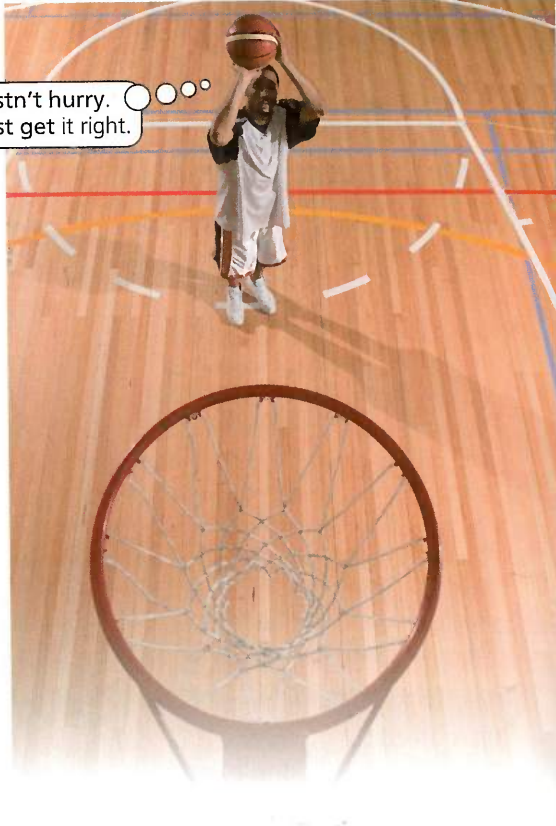


# 65 *must/mustn't*



I mustn't hurry.  
I must get it right.

## 1 *must*

*Must* is a modal verb.

Modal verb form ► Unit 61.1

We use *must* when we think it is important to do something.

It is our opinion, not a rule or law:

*I must get it right.*

(= I think it is important that I get it right.)

*I must go now – I don't want to be late.*

(= I think it is important to be on time.)

We also use *must* in formal instructions, signs and notices. It means 'Do this!':

*Passengers must wear seat belts.*

(instruction on a plane)

*Candidates must answer six questions.*

(instructions on an exam paper)

**NATURAL ENGLISH** It is possible to ask questions with *must*, but it is more common to use *have to*:

*Must you leave so soon?* → *Do you have to leave so soon?*

## 2 *must not (mustn't)*

We use *mustn't* when we think it is important NOT to do something:

*You mustn't tell anyone.* (= I think it is important to keep this secret.)

*Hurry up! We mustn't be late for Diana's party.* (= I think it is important that we aren't late.)

We use *must not* in instructions, signs and notices. It means 'Don't do this!':

*Visitors must not smoke in reception.*

*Students must not take food into the exam room.*



Don't use *to* after *must* or *mustn't*:

✗ ~~*I must to remember to phone the doctor.*~~

✓ *I must remember to phone the doctor.*



Pronunciation ► 1.26

## 3 *mustn't* or *don't have to*?

• *Mustn't* means it is important not to do something; it means 'Don't do this!':  
*We mustn't leave the restaurant without paying – it's illegal.*

• *Don't have to* means something is not necessary (but you can do it if you want to):  
*We don't have to pay for the meal now. We can pay when we leave the hotel.*