

49 Should, ought to, had better and be supposed to

A Introduction



B Should and ought to

We use **should** and **ought to** to say what is the best thing or the right thing to do.

There is no difference in meaning.

*You're not very well. Perhaps you **should** see a doctor.*

*Your uncle was very kind to me. I **ought to** write him a letter of thanks.*

*People **shouldn't break/oughtn't to** break their promises.* We can also use **should** and **ought to** in questions to ask for advice.

*Where **should** I put this picture, do you think?*

*It's a difficult problem. How **ought we to** deal with it?*

After **should** or **ought to** we can use a continuous form (**be** + an ing-form).

*It's half past six already. I **should be cooking** the tea. Why are you sitting here doing nothing? You **ought to be working**.*

C Had better

We use **had better** to say what is the best thing to do in a situation.

*It's cold. The children **had better** wear their coats.*

*The neighbours are complaining. We'd **better** turn the music down.*

*My wife is waiting for me. I'd **better not** be late.*

We could also use **should** or **ought to** in these examples, although **had better** is stronger. The speaker sees the action as necessary and expects that it will happen.

D Be supposed to

We use **be supposed to** when we are talking about the normal or correct way of doing things.

*The guests **are supposed to** buy flowers for the hostess. Look at these cars. This area **is supposed to** be kept clear of traffic. The bus driver needs to concentrate. You're **not supposed to** talk to him. How **am I supposed to** cook this? ~ It tells you on the packet.*

We can use was/were **supposed to** for the past.

*It's eleven o'clock. You **were supposed to** be here at ten thirty, you know.*

52D **Shall** used to ask for advice

49 Exercises

1 Should and ought to (B)

Put in *should*, *shouldn't*, *ought* or *oughtn't*. (Look for the word *to*.)

Vicky: I can't come out tonight, Rachel. I (►) *ought to* do some more work.
I'm behind with everything. I've got so much to do.

Rachel: You (1) worry so much, Vicky. Don't panic.

You (2)..... to relax sometimes. You (3)..... take a break.

Vicky: I know I(4) panic, but I do. I can't help it.

Rachel: Anyway, you're doing OK, aren't you? Your results have been good.

You (5)..... be pleased. You (6)..... to invent problems for yourself.

2 Had better (C)

What would you say in these situations? Add a sentence with '*d better (not)* and the words in brackets.

► Vicky doesn't feel well. She's got a headache. What might you say to her? (an aspirin)

You'd better take an aspirin.

1 You and Daniel are meeting Rachel. You've both arrived, but she isn't there yet. She is usually late.
(wait)

2 Ilona is leaving her bike outside the swimming-pool. You know it won't be safe if she leaves it unlocked.
(lock)

3 Some friends are going to visit you today. Your room is in a mess. What do you think?
(tidy)

4 Nick is giving you a lift in his old sports car. There's a speed limit, and there's a police car behind you.
(too fast)

5 There's an exam tomorrow. Neither you nor Rachel have done any work for it.
(some revision)

3 Be supposed to (D)

Add a sentence using *be (not) supposed to* and these verbs:

leave it outside, report to the police, stand in a queue, take two before meals, watch it

► You shouldn't bring your bike in here. *You're supposed to leave it outside.*

1 I've got some pills.....

2 Foreign visitors can't travel freely here.

3 Be careful waiting for a bus in England.

4 This film isn't for under-sixteens.

Should, ought to, had better and be supposed to (A-D)

Complete the conversation. Use *should*, *ought to*, *had better* or *be supposed to* and the verbs in brackets.

Usually there is more than one correct answer.

Vicky: What time (►) *are we supposed to be* (we / be) at the coffee morning?

Rachel: The invitation says ten o'clock.

Vicky: Well, it's ten now. (1) we / hurry).

(2)..... (we / not / be) late.

Rachel: Oh, it won't matter if we're a bit late.

Vicky: I think it would be rude, wouldn't it? I don't think people

(3)..... (arrive) late when they've been invited to something.

Rachel: You worry too much. (4)..... (you / not / take) everything so seriously, Vicky. It's a coffee morning, not a job interview.

(5)..... (we / not / get) there exactly on time.

50 Asking people to do things

A Polite requests

We can use **can** or **could** in a request, when we ask someone to do something.

Can everyone be quiet for a minute, please?

Can you keep me informed? ~ Yes, of course.

Could you lend me ten pounds until tomorrow? ~ Sorry, I haven't got ten pounds.

I wonder if you could explain something to me. ~ I'll try.

Could is often more polite than **can**.

In a request we can also use **Do you mind ...?** or **Would you mind...?** with an ing-form.

Do you mind waiting a moment? ~ No, I can wait.

Would you mind sitting in the back? ~ No, not at all. We

can also use **Would you like to ...?**

Would you like to lay the table for me? ~ Yes, of course. We do not use **Do you like ...?**

for a request, NOT ~~DO YOU LIKE TO LIE THE TABLE FOR ME?~~

It is always worth taking the trouble to use one of these request forms in English. We do not normally say ~~Lay the table for me.~~ This can sound very abrupt and impolite without a phrase like **Could you ...?**

B The imperative

We can sometimes use the imperative form to tell someone what to do.

Bring another chair. Hurry up or we'll be late. We

form the negative with **don't**.

Don't be silly. Don't make so much noise.

We can use an imperative when we are with friends in an informal situation. But we do not use it to a stranger or in a more formal situation.

Excuse me. Could you tell me the way to Oxford Street, please?

NOT ~~Tell me the way to Oxford Street please.~~

Would you mind sending me a copy of your catalogue?

NOT ~~Send me a copy of your catalogue.~~

Even people in authority often avoid using the imperative to give orders. Instead they can use **I want/I'd like you to ...**, **You must...**, or a polite request form. Manager: / *want you all to be at the meeting.*

Policeman: *You must wait until you see the green light.* Doctor: *Could you lie down on the bed, please?*

C Asking for things

We use **Can I/we have...?** and **Could I/we have ...?** when we ask someone to give us something.

Can we have our room key, please? Could I have a receipt, please? We can also say

Could you give me a receipt, please? but we do not use the imperative.

NOT ~~Give me a receipt.~~

When we ask for something in a shop or a cafe, we can simply name what we want, but we must say please

A large white loaf, please. Two coffees, please.

We can also use **I'd like ...** or **I'll have ...**

I'd like a chicken sandwich, please. I'll have a coffee.

50 Exercises

1 Asking people to do things (A-C)

Complete these sentences and write them in: *Can I... a fork, please? Could ... have a towel, ...? Could you ... the ... for me? Would you ... answering the phone?*



► *Could you open the door for me?*

1

2

3

2 Asking people to do things (A-C)

Mr Atkins is the boss at Zedco. He tells everyone what to do. Complete his sentences. Use these words: *can, could, have, like, mind, must, want, wonder, would*

► Would you *mind* making some tea, Alan?

1 You.....inform me of any developments.

2 Could I the latest sales figures, please?

3 Would youto arrange a meeting some time next week, Fiona?

4 I.....everyone to read the report.

5I see the file, please, Mark?

6you mind putting this in writing?

7 I.....if you could translate this letter, Linda.

8 you meet our customer at the airport?

3 Asking people to do things (A-C)

Read about each situation and then make a request. Use the word in brackets.

► It is cold in the restaurant. Ask the waiter to shut the window, (could)

Could you shut the window, please ?

1 You are buying a coat. Ask the assistant for a receipt, (can)

2 You want to know the time. Ask someone in the street, (could)

Excuse me

3 You need someone to help you. Ask a friend, (can)

4 You have bought some food, but you haven't got a bag. Ask the assistant, (could)

5 You are carrying a tray. Ask someone to clear a space on the table, (mind)

6 You are on the phone. You want to speak to the manager, (could)

51 Suggestions, offers and invitations

A Suggestions

We can use **Shall we ...?** or **Let's** to make a suggestion. *It's a lovely day. **Shall we** go for a walk? ~ Yes, OK. **Let's** play some music. ~ Good idea.*

We can also use **could** for a suggestion.
*We **could** watch this comedy on TV tonight. ~ Well, actually I've seen it before.*
*You **could** invite a few friends around. ~ Yes, why not?*

We can also use **Why don't...?**
***Why don't** we have a look round the market?*

To ask for a suggestion we use **shall, should** or **can**.
*Where **shall/should** we go for our holiday? ~ What about Spain?*
*What **can** I get Claire for her birthday? ~ I've no idea.*

B Offers

We can use **will** or **can** to offer to do something. ***I'll** carry your bag. ~ Oh, thanks. We **can** give you a lift. ~ Oh, that would be great. Thank you.*

We can also use question forms with **shall** or **can**.
***Shall** we pay you the money now? ~ Oh, there's no hurry.*
***Can** I get a taxi for you? ~ Yes, please.*

To offer food or drink, we use **would like**.
***Would you like** one of these chocolates? ~ Yes, please. Thank you.*
***Would anyone like** more coffee? ~ No, thanks.*

We can also use **Will/Won't you have ...?**
***Will you have** a biscuit? ~ Thank you.*
***Won't you have** something to drink? ~ Not for me, thank you.*

In informal speech we can use the imperative.
***Have** a biscuit. ~ Thank you.*

C Invitations

The words we use in invitations are similar to those we use in offers of food and drink (see B).

To invite someone, we often use **Would you like to ...?**
***Would you like to** have lunch with us? ~ Yes, I'd love to. Thank you.*

Would like can have a verb with **to** after it, or an object with a noun. *Would you like **to stay** the night. ~ Oh, that's very kind of you. Would you like **a bed** for the night? ~ Are you sure it's not too much trouble?*

We can also use **Will/Won't you ...?**
***Will you** join us for coffee? ~ Yes. Thanks. **Won't you** sit down?*

In informal speech we can use the imperative. ***Come** and have coffee with us. Please **sit** down.*

51 Exercises

i Suggestions, offers and invitations (A-C)

Put the words in the right order and write in the sentences:

post I for you I'll / that letter
for a minute I shall / stop /we

have / one of these / wont I you
a game / like / would /you



► *Wont you have one of these?*
 1 ..

2
 3

2 Suggestions and offers (A-B)

Complete the conversation. Put in *could, shall, will* or *would*.

Daniel: Where (►) *shall* we have our picnic, then?
 Rachel: This looks all right. (1)..... we sit here?
 Emma: Oh, I've forgotten the sausages. They're in the car.
 Matthew: (2) I get them?
 Emma: Oh, thanks, Matthew.
 Vicky: We (3).....sit by those trees. It looks nicer over there.
 Rachel: No, it's fine here.
 Daniel: Yes, it's better here, I think.
 Emma: (4)you like a sandwich, Vicky?
 Vicky: Oh, thank you.
 Emma: (5)you have one, Rachel?
 Matthew: And here are the sausages. (6)..... anyone like one?

3 Suggestions, offers and invitations (A-C)

What would you say? There is more than one correct answer.

► A friend has called at your flat. Invite him to come in.
Would you like to come in ?

- 1 Offer your visitor a cup of tea.
- 2 You don't know what to say in your letter. Ask your friend for a suggestion.
- 3 You are walking in town with a friend. Suggest having a cup of coffee.
- 4 A woman you know is afraid to walk home alone. Offer to walk home with her.
- 5 You are writing to a friend. Invite her to visit you one weekend.

52 Will, would, shall and should

A Will and would for predictions

We can use **will** for a prediction (see Unit 25C).

It's midnight, and Sarah is still working. She'll be tired tomorrow.

*We're going to Cornwall for the weekend. ~ That'll be nice. Wait a minute while I send this e-mail. It **won't** take long.*

We use **would** for a past prediction or a prediction about a possible situation.

Past: *At midnight Sarah was still working. She **would** be tired the next day.*

Possible: *How about going to Cornwall next weekend? ~ That **would** be nice. I **wouldn't** enjoy a camping holiday.*

We can use **shall** instead of **will**, and **should** instead of **would**, but only in the first person, after **I** and **we**,

*I **will/shall** be twenty-five in June.*

*We **would/should** like to meet your family.* But NOT ~~*My friend should like...*~~

Shall and **should** are a little formal here.

B Would like

We can use **would like**, usually shortened to **'d like**, when we ask for something.

I'd like a brochure, please. We'd like to order our drinks first.

This is a more polite way of saying *I want a brochure*, for example.

We also use **would like** in offers and invitations.

***Would** you like a free gift? **Would** you like to visit the museum with us?*

C Decisions and refusals

We can use **will** for an instant decision or for an offer.

Decision: *Tea or coffee? ~ I'll have coffee, please, (see Unit 23B)*

Offer: *I'll wait for you if you like. ~ Oh, thanks. I won't be long.*

We use **won't** and **wouldn't** for a refusal.

*The strikers **won't** go back to work until they get a pay increase.*

*The key went in the lock, but it **wouldn't** turn. **I***

won't... is a strong refusal.

*I **won't** listen to any more of this nonsense.*

D Shall and should

We use **Shall I ...?** in offers and **Shall we ...?** in suggestions.

Offer: ***Shall** I wait for you? ~ Oh, thanks. I won't be long.*

Suggestion: ***Shall** we go to the park? ~ Good idea.*

We also use **shall** to ask for a suggestion. *What*

***shall** we have for lunch?*

We use either **shall** or **should** to ask for advice.

*I'm in terrible trouble. What **shall/should** I do?* We use **should** to say what is the best thing or the right thing to do.

*People **should** exercise regularly.*

*You **shouldn't** spend all your money as soon as you've earned it.*

52 Exercises

1 Will and would (A-B)

Complete the conversation. Put in *will*, *won't*, *would* or *wouldn't*.

- Emma: We (►) *won't be* here next September. It's hard to believe, isn't it?
In a few months our student days (1).....be over.
- Matthew: It (2).....be long now. I wish I had a job.
Then I (3).....know where I was going.
- Emma: Who knows what the future (4).....bring?
- Matthew: Why don't we get married, Emma? Then at least we (5).....be together.
- Emma: I don't think so, Matthew. It (6).....be a good idea.
- Matthew: I couldn't live without you, Emma.
- Emma: I really (7).....like to believe you, Matthew.

2 Some other uses of will and would (B-C)

Complete the conversations. Put in *will*, *won't*, *would* or *wouldn't* with these verbs:
eat, give, go, help, let, like, open, stand

- Vicky: Have you noticed how thin Jessica has got?
Rachel: She's on a diet. She *won't eat* anything except carrots.
- 1 Harriet: Mike and I.....you get everything ready.
Mike: Yes, we're quite willing to lend a hand.
- 2 Laura: You're late. I thought you were going to leave work early today.
Trevor: Sorry. The boss me go.
- 3 Mark: Sarah and Iyou a lift, Mike.
Sarah: Yes, we're going your way.
- 4 Harriet: I heard Rita has quarrelled with her boyfriend.
Melanie: That's right. If he's invited to the party, she
- 5 Vicky: I've had enough of table tennis for one day.
Rachel: OK. Maybe Daniel..... a game with me.
- 6 Trevor: What's wrong with the washing-machine?
Laura: When I tried to use it earlier, the door
- 7 Mike: This lamp is always falling over.
Harriet: It up properly.

3 Will, would, shall and should (A-D)

What would you say? Use *will*, *would*, *shall* or *should*.

- Offer to make the tea.
Shall I make the tea ?
- 1 Suggest going to the swimming-pool.
- 2 Refuse to take any risks.
- 3 Say politely that you want a shower.
- 4 Tell someone it's best they don't decide in a hurry.
- 5 Predict the end of the world in the year 3000.