



Advice (should/ought to): Should vs Ought To vs Had Better: Choosing the Right Modal

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- You ____ try the new Italian restaurant on Park Street. The food is amazing!
a) had better
b) ought
c) must
d) should
- You'd ____ not forget your passport, or you won't be able to board the plane.
a) should
b) better
c) ought
d) rather
- All visitors ____ to report to the reception desk upon arrival.
a) ought
b) had better
c) should
d) would
- It's getting late. I think we ____ leave soon.
a) should
b) must
c) ought
d) shall
- The road is very icy. You'd better ____ slowly.
a) to drive
b) driving
c) drive
d) drove
- The package ____ arrive by Friday. I sent it three days ago.
a) had better
b) must
c) should
d) ought
- Applicants ____ to submit their documents before the deadline.
a) had better
b) would
c) ought
d) should
- You ____ watch that documentary. I really enjoyed it.
a) should
b) had better
c) ought
d) must
- You'd better ____ lie on your CV. If they find out, you'll lose the job.
a) don't
b) to not
c) never to
d) not
- I ____ think this is a good idea, but it's your choice.
a) ought not
b) hadn't better
c) don't
d) mustn't



Answers

1. d) should
2. b) better
3. a) ought
4. a) should
5. c) drive
6. c) should
7. c) ought
8. a) should
9. d) not
10. c) don't
11. d) ought
12. b) should
13. b) finish
14. a) should
15. d) ought
16. c) or
17. c) should
18. a) ought
19. a) read
20. b) should



Explanations

1. “should” (d)

Use 'should' for casual, friendly recommendations. You're suggesting something enjoyable, not giving a formal instruction or a warning. 'Had better' would imply a negative consequence, which doesn't fit here.

2. “better” (b)

'Had better not' is used when there is a clear negative consequence. Forgetting your passport means you can't fly — this makes 'had better' the right choice because the warning is serious and specific.

3. “ought” (a)

'Ought to' fits formal contexts like official rules and workplace procedures. 'All visitors ought to report to reception' sounds professional. 'Should to report' would be incorrect because 'should' is not followed by 'to'.

4. “should” (a)

'I think we should...' is a soft, friendly suggestion. 'I think' naturally pairs with 'should' to express a gentle opinion about what is a good idea. This is the most common way to make a casual group suggestion.

5. “drive” (c)

'Had better' is followed by the base verb without 'to'. 'You'd better drive slowly' warns about a real danger — icy roads can cause accidents. Remember: had better + base verb.

6. “should” (c)

Use 'should' to express an expectation or prediction based on what is likely. 'The package should arrive by Friday' means 'I expect it will arrive'. This is not advice — it's a prediction about a probable outcome.

7. “ought” (c)

'Ought to' is suitable for formal instructions and official recommendations. 'Applicants ought to submit' sounds professional and appropriate for a formal context like a job application process.

8. “should” (a)

Use 'should' for a casual, personal recommendation. You're sharing something you liked, not giving a formal instruction or a warning. 'You should watch it' is friendly and natural.

9. “not” (d)

The negative of 'had better' is 'had better not + base verb'. The consequence here is serious — losing your job — which makes 'had better not' appropriate. Do not use 'don't' with 'had better'.

10. “don't” (c)

'I don't think this is a good idea' expresses a personal opinion using the simple present tense with 'think'. This is not advice using a modal verb — it's a statement of opinion. None of the modal options fit this sentence structure naturally.

11. “ought” (d)

'Ought to' is suitable for formal safety guidelines. 'Drivers ought to keep their eyes on the road' reads like an official road safety recommendation. 'Should to keep' would be incorrect because 'should' does not take 'to'.

12. “should” (b)

Use 'should' for gentle, everyday advice. The situation is not urgent or dangerous — it 'might' get cold, so a jacket is a good idea. 'Had better' would be too strong for this mild suggestion.

13. “finish” (b)

'Had better + base verb' without 'to'. 'You'd better finish the report' carries urgency — the boss asking for it is the implied negative consequence. Always use the base form after 'had better'.

14. “should” (a)

Use 'should' for a reasonable expectation. 'The meeting should take about an hour' means 'I expect it will last an hour based on the information I have'. This is a prediction, not advice.

15. “ought” (d)

'Ought not to' is the negative form of 'ought to'. The sentence structure 'You ___ not to ignore' requires 'ought' because only 'ought' is followed by 'to'. 'Should' would need: 'You should not ignore' (without 'to').

16. “or” (c)

'Had better' often pairs with 'or' to state the negative consequence explicitly. 'You'd better hurry up, or you'll be late' makes the warning clear. 'Or' introduces what will happen if the advice is not followed.

17. “should” (c)

'I think everyone should...' is a personal opinion about what is a good idea in general. This is not urgent or formal — it's a general recommendation about a useful life skill.

18. “ought” (a)

'Ought to' is appropriate for medical and formal recommendations. 'Patients ought to inform their doctor' sounds like a professional healthcare guideline. It carries more weight than casual 'should'.

19. “read” (a)

'Had better + base verb'. 'You'd better read that contract' is strong advice with an implied warning — if you don't read it carefully, you might agree to something bad. Always base verb after 'had better'.

20. “should” (b)

Use 'should' for sensible everyday advice. While 'had better' is possible if the rain is dangerous, 'should' is the most natural choice for a general suggestion to stay inside. The situation is not life-threatening.