



Answers

1. a) could
2. b) mustn't
3. c) don't have to
4. d) may
5. a) able to
6. b) have to
7. c) allowed to
8. d) can ... can't
9. a) don't have to
10. b) was able to
11. c) must
12. d) can
13. a) Could
14. b) mustn't
15. c) don't need to
16. d) allowed to
17. a) couldn't
18. b) don't have to
19. c) must
20. d) can



Explanations

1. “could” (a)

Use 'could' to talk about a general ability in the past. The speaker had the ability to run fast when young but no longer can. 'Can' is for present ability, not past.

2. “mustn't” (b)

Use 'mustn't' for prohibition — something that is not allowed. Touching paintings is forbidden. 'Don't have to' means it's not necessary (you have a choice), which is completely different.

3. “don't have to” (c)

Use 'don't have to' when something is not necessary — there is no obligation. Because the company provides meals, bringing lunch is optional. 'Mustn't' would mean bringing lunch is forbidden.

4. “may” (d)

Use 'May I...?' to ask for polite permission. This is a formal, polite way to ask if the seat is available. 'Can I...?' would also work but is less formal.

5. “able to” (a)

Use 'was/were able to' to talk about a specific achievement in the past — something that was difficult but successfully accomplished. 'Could' is used for general past ability, not for specific successful actions.

6. “have to” (b)

Use 'have to' for external obligations — rules and laws imposed by others. Driving on the left is a legal requirement in the UK. 'Must' could also work, but 'have to' is more natural for laws.

7. “allowed to” (c)

Use 'be allowed to' for permission granted or denied by rules. The law does not permit children to buy alcohol. 'Be able to' would refer to ability, not permission.

8. “can ... can't” (d)

Use 'can' and 'can't' for present abilities. The speaker has the ability to play guitar but lacks the ability to play piano. 'Could/couldn't' would refer to past ability.

9. “don't have to” (a)

Use 'don't have to' when there is no obligation. The school has no uniform requirement, so students are free to choose. 'Mustn't' would mean wearing a uniform is forbidden, which is the opposite meaning.

10. “was able to” (b)

Use 'was able to' for a specific past achievement — something difficult that was accomplished. The footballer managed to finish the match despite being injured. 'Could' is for general past ability, not specific achievements.

11. “must” (c)

Use 'must' for rules and regulations within an organisation. Arriving before 9 a.m. is a strict company requirement. 'Should' would only be a suggestion.

12. “can” (d)

Use 'can' to express permission — something that is allowed. Phones are permitted during meetings, with the condition of being on silent mode.

13. “Could” (a)

Use 'Could you...?' to ask about general ability in the past. The question is about language skills during the school years. 'Can' would ask about present ability.

14. “mustn't” (b)

Use 'mustn't' for strict prohibition. Smoking inside a hospital is completely banned. 'Don't have to' would mean smoking is optional, and 'shouldn't' is too weak for a hospital ban.

15. “don't need to” (c)

Use 'don't need to' when something is not necessary. A visa is not required because a passport alone is sufficient. 'Mustn't' would mean getting a visa is forbidden.

16. “allowed to” (d)

Use 'be allowed to' for legal or social permission. Women were denied the right to vote — it was a matter of permission, not ability. They had the ability but were not given permission by law.

17. “couldn't” (a)

Use 'couldn't' for inability in a specific past situation. The speaker was not able to understand because the other person spoke too quietly.

18. “don't have to” (b)

Use 'don't have to' when something is not necessary. The software is free, so paying is not required. 'Mustn't' would mean paying is forbidden, and 'can't' would mean it's impossible to pay.

19. “must” (c)

Use 'must' for official requirements and rules. Registration is compulsory for all visitors — it is not optional. 'Should' would be too weak for a mandatory requirement.

20. “can” (d)

Use 'can' to express a present ability, especially one that is surprising or impressive. A three-year-old reading is remarkable. 'May' would express possibility rather than confirmed ability.