

## Should

### A

You **should do** something = it is a good thing to do or the right thing to do. You can use **should** to give advice or to give an opinion:

- You look tired. You **should go** to bed.
- The government **should do** more to help homeless people.
- "Should we invite Susan to the party?" "Yes, I think we **should**."

We often use **should** with **I think / I don't think / Do you think . . . ?**:

- I **think** the government **should do** more to help homeless people.
- I **don't think** you **should work** so hard.
- "Do you **think** I **should apply** for this job?" "Yes, I **think** you **should**."

You **shouldn't do** something = it isn't a good thing to do:

- You **shouldn't believe** everything you read in the newspapers.

**Should** is not as strong as **must**:

- You **should apologize**. (= it would be a good thing to do)
- You **must apologize**. (= you have no alternative)

### B

We also use **should** when something is not right or not what we expect:

- I wonder where Liz is. She **should be** here by now. (= she isn't here yet, and this is not normal)
- The price on this package is wrong. It **should be** \$1.29, not \$1.59.
- Those boys **shouldn't be playing** football right now. They **should be** in school.

We use **should** to say that we expect something to happen:

- She's been studying hard for the exam, so she **should pass**. (= I expect her to pass)
- There are plenty of hotels in this city. It **shouldn't be difficult** to find a place to stay. (= I don't expect that it will be difficult)

### C

You **should have done** something = you didn't do it but it would have been the right thing to do:

- It was a great party last night. You **should have come**. Why didn't you? (= you didn't come, but it would have been good to come)
- I feel sick. I **shouldn't have eaten** so much chocolate. (= I ate too much chocolate)
- I wonder why they're so late. They **should have been** here an hour ago.
- She **shouldn't have been listening** to our conversation. It was private.

Compare **should (do)** and **should have (done)**:

- You look tired. You **should go** to bed now.
- You went to bed very late last night. You **should have gone** to bed earlier.

### D

**Ought to**

You can use **ought (with to)** instead of **should**:

- Do you think I **ought to apply** for this job? (= Do you think I **should apply**?)
- She's been studying hard for the exam, so she **ought to pass**.

# Exercises

## 31.1 For each situation, write a sentence with *should* or *shouldn't* + one of the following:

~~go away for a few days~~      go to bed so late      look for another job  
take a photograph      use her car so much

1. Liz needs a change. She should go away for a few days.
2. Your salary is too low. You \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Eric always has trouble getting up. He \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What a beautiful view! You \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Sue drives everywhere. She never walks. She \_\_\_\_\_.

## 31.2 Read the situations and write sentences with *I think / I don't think ... should ...*

1. Chris and Amy are planning to get married. You think it's a bad idea.  
(get married) I don't think they should get married.
2. I have a very bad cold, but I plan to go out this evening. You don't think this is a good idea. You say to me: (go out) \_\_\_\_\_.
3. You don't like smoking, especially in restaurants.  
(be banned) I think \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The government wants to raise taxes, but you don't think this is a good idea.  
(raise) \_\_\_\_\_.

## 31.3 Complete the sentences with *should* or *should have* + the verb in parentheses.

1. Tracy should pass the exam. She's been studying very hard. (pass)
2. You missed a great party last night. You should have come. (come)
3. We don't see you enough. You \_\_\_\_\_ and see us more often. (come)
4. I'm in a difficult position. What do you think I \_\_\_\_\_? (do)
5. I'm sorry that I didn't follow your advice. I \_\_\_\_\_ what you said. (do)
6. We lost the game, but we \_\_\_\_\_. Our team was better than theirs.  
(win)
7. "Is John here yet?" "Not yet, but he \_\_\_\_\_ here soon." (be)
8. I mailed the letter three days ago, so it \_\_\_\_\_ by now. (arrive)

## 31.4 Read the situations and write sentences with *should/shouldn't*. Some of the sentences are past, and some are present.

1. I'm feeling sick. I ate too much. I shouldn't have eaten so much.
2. That man on the motorcycle isn't wearing a helmet. That's dangerous.  
He should be wearing a helmet.
3. When we got to the restaurant, there were no free tables. We hadn't reserved one.  
We \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The sign says that the store opens every day at 8:30. It's 9:00 now, but the store isn't open yet. \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The speed limit is 30 miles an hour, but Catherine is driving 50 miles an hour.  
She \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I went to Dallas. A friend of mine lives in Dallas, but I didn't go to see him while I was there. When I saw him later, he said:  
You \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I was driving right behind another car. Suddenly the driver in front of me stopped and I drove into the back of his car. It was my fault.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
8. I walked into a wall. I wasn't looking where I was going.  
\_\_\_\_\_.