

PECULIARITIES

IN ENGLISH

J. MILLINGTON-WARD

PECULIARITIES IN ENGLISH

A Study
for Intermediate and Advanced Students
and a Reference Book for Teachers

by

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PART ONE

PECULIARITIES

(and Fundamental Uses)

of

SPECIAL VERBS

MUST, HAVE TO, SHOULD, OUGHT TO

in Expressions of Necessity, Duty, Obligation and

Advisability

(Affirmative and Negative)

Present and Future Affirmative

§ 1. Necessity in the present and future can be expressed by *must* or *have (has) to** or—in colloquial spoken English only—*have (has) got to*, followed by an Ordinary Infinitive. (See page 250 for Table of Infinitive Forms.)

e.g. "I really *must stop* smoking so much."

"He *has to have* an operation at once."

"He *has got to have* an operation at once."

"I *must go to* see him again next week."

"You *have to be* there at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

"You *have got to be* there at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

* See page 25 for a further discussion of *have to* in expressions of necessity.

(Strictly speaking, there is a distinction of meaning between *must* and *have (got) to*: *must* expresses what can be described as an unexpected necessity, while *have (got) to* expresses a known necessity—i.e. a necessity that the speaker has not just suddenly realised;

e.g. "Nearly seven o'clock already! I *must* ring my wife and tell her I'm on the way. We *have (got) to* be at Hampstead for dinner at eight."

The tendency nowadays, however, is to prefer *must* to *have (got) to*, even for known necessity;

e.g. "The verb 'succeed' *must* be followed by 'in', not 'to'."

§ 2. **Duty, Obligation and Advisability**, in the present and future, can be expressed by *should* or *ought to* followed by an Ordinary Infinitive.

e.g. "I really *should stop* smoking so much."

"You *ought to have* an operation at once."

"I *should go* to see him again next week."

"You *ought to be* there at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

Many foreign students believe that *ought* is the past tense of *must*. This is absolutely wrong. As a word by itself, *ought* expresses duty, obligation, rightness, advisability and so on, but we cannot understand whether it refers to the past or the present or the future until we look at the infinitive which follows it. If it is followed by a Perfect Infinitive, it does indeed refer to the past—but to a very special sort of past (see § 11 below). If it is followed by an Ordinary Infinitive, as it is in the examples above, it **does not** and it **cannot** refer to any sort of past; it refers only to the present or the future.

§ 3. Summarising the foregoing in table form, we have:

PRESENT AND FUTURE—AFFIRMATIVE

I must (go)	}	Necessity.
I have to (go)*		
I have got to (go)		
I should (go)	}	Duty, Obligation and Advisability.
I ought to (go)		

Present and Future Negative

§ 4. Each of the forms shown in the table above has two types of negative.

One type of negative expresses the absence of any necessity or duty (etc.) to do something. The other type of negative expresses what amounts to a prohibition; that is to say, a necessity **not** to do something, or a duty, obligation, or advisability **not** to do it.

§ 5. **Absence of necessity or duty (etc.)** is best expressed by either *I (you, they, etc.) do not have to, I need not, or I do not need to*[†]; *I have not to* is correct but not so common; *I have not got to* is very common, but only in colloquial spoken English. All the expressions are usually contracted in spoken English: *I don't have to, etc.*

These five negatives **all** apply to **each** of the five affirmative expressions shown in the table above.

* Other future forms—*I shall have to go, I may have to go, etc.*—are discussed in §§ 37-43.

† See §§ 18-20 for further discussion of *need*.

e.g. "I must go"—affirmative expression of necessity.

"I don't have to go"	} its negatives expressing absence of necessity.
"I needn't go"	
"I don't need to go"	
"I haven't to go"	
"I haven't got to go"	

"I have (got) to go"—affirmative expression of necessity,

"I don't have to go"	} its negatives expressing absence of necessity.
"I needn't go"	
"I don't need to go"	
"I haven't to go"	
"I haven't got to go"	

"I should go"—affirmative expression of duty (etc.).

"I don't have to go"	} its negatives expressing absence of duty (etc.).
"I needn't go"	
"I don't need to go"	
"I haven't to go"	
"I haven't got to go"	

"I ought to go"—affirmative expression of duty (etc.).

"I don't have to go"	} its negatives expressing absence of duty (etc.).
"I needn't go"	
"I don't need to go"	
"I haven't to go"	
"I haven't got to go"	

§ 6. **Prohibition Negatives** are formed simply by placing *not* after *must* (to show necessity **not** to do something) and after *should* and *ought to* (to show duty, advisability, etc., **not** to do it);

e.g. I must go: *I must not (mustn't) go.*

I should go: *I should not (shouldn't) go.*

I ought to go: *I ought not (oughtn't) to go.*

The placing of *not* after the *have* of *have to* and *have got to* does not form a prohibition negative; it forms, as was seen in the last paragraph, two of the five negatives showing absence of necessity or duty (etc.). As a result of this, the one expression *must not* becomes the prohibition negative not only of *must* but also of *have to* and *have got to*:

i.e.

"I must go"	}	" <i>I must not go.</i> "
"I have to go"		
"I have got to go"		

§ 7. What is the difference between the meanings and the uses of these two types of negative expression?

Suppose that a friend of yours is ill in hospital and you have decided to go to see him because you feel that a visit is either a necessity or a duty; depending on which you feel it is, you have said one of the following sentences to yourself:

"*I must go to the hospital to see Wilfred.*"

"*I have (got) to go to the hospital to see Wilfred.*"

"*I should go to the hospital to see Wilfred.*"

"*I ought to go to the hospital to see Wilfred.*"

You now telephone the hospital to make sure about visiting times and you learn, let us say, that your friend is no longer there; he has recovered from his illness and has been sent home. You thus realise that there is no need, after all, for you to go to the hospital, and so, regardless of whether your original sentence expressed a

necessity or a duty, the negative expression that you will now use will be one of five that express *absence of necessity or duty*;

i.e. "I don't have to go to the hospital, after all."

or: "I needn't go to the hospital, after all."

or: "I don't need to go to the hospital, after all."

~~or: "I haven't to go to the hospital, after all."~~

or: "I haven't got to go to the hospital, after all."

Imagine, on the other hand, that when you telephone the hospital you are told that your friend has contracted a highly infectious disease, and (depending upon whether the disease is something like cholera or something like measles) you are either ordered or advised not to go anywhere near him. The negative expression that you will now use will be one of the Prohibition Negatives.

If you were ordered not to go anywhere near him, your expression will be:

"I must not go to the hospital, after all."

If you were merely advised not to go anywhere near him (in case, say, you pass on his illness to your children), your expression will be either:

"I should not go to the hospital, after all."

or "I ought not to go to the hospital, after all."

§ 8. Thus, in table form, we now have:

PRESENT AND FUTURE		
Negatives showing Absence of Necessity or Duty (etc.)	Affirmatives	Negatives showing Prohibition
I do not have to (go)	I must (go)	I must not (go)
	I have to (go)	
	I have got to (go)	
I need not (go)	I should (go)	I should not (go)
I do not need to (go)	I ought to (go)	I ought not to (go)
I have not to (go)		
I have not got to (go)		

Past Affirmative

§ 9. Each of the four present and future affirmative forms (as shown in the table above) has two past affirmative forms.

One past form shows that the necessity or duty (etc.) was in fact fulfilled; let us call this the **Fulfilled Past**.

The other past form shows that the necessity or duty (etc.) was not fulfilled; let us call this the **Unfulfilled Past**.

§ 10. The **Fulfilled Past of all the five present and future forms** is the Past Ordinary tense of the verb *have* followed by *to* and an Ordinary Infinitive;

e.g. I (you, he, etc.) *had to go*;
(i.e. there was a necessity, or a duty (etc.), for
me to go—**and I did in fact go**);

(The addition of *got* to this last form (i.e. I *had got to go*) is possible in colloquial spoken English but the plain *had to* expression is much to be preferred.)

§ 11. The Unfulfilled Past of **all the five present and future forms** is either *should* or *ought to* followed by a Perfect Infinitive (see page 250 for Infinitives);

e.g. I (you, he, etc.) $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{should} \\ \textit{ought to} \end{array} \right\}$ *have gone*;
(i.e. there was a necessity, or a duty (etc.), for
me to go—**but I did not go**);

§ 12. Another set of examples:

Let us take these five affirmative present and future expressions:

"I must write some letters tonight."

"I have to write some letters tonight."

"I have got to write some letters tonight."

"I should write some letters tonight."

"I ought to write some letters tonight."

The Affirmative Fulfilled Past of all these five expressions is:

"I had to write some letters (last night)."

(i.e. I did in fact write them.)

(As was stated above, "*I had got to write etc.*" is possible but not to be preferred.)

The Affirmative Unfulfilled Past of all the five expressions is either:

“I should have written some letters (last night).”
 or: “I ought to have written some letters (last night).”

(i.e. I did not write them.)

§ 13. It is here, and here only, that *ought* is equivalent to a past form of *must*. However, it is, as we have seen, a special sort of past form—and it is equally the same special sort of past form of *have to*, *have got to*, *should*, and *ought to*, as well.

§ 14. Thus, building up our table, we now have:

PRESENT AND FUTURE		
Negatives showing Absence of Necessity or Duty (etc.)	Affirmatives	Negatives showing Prohibition
I do not have to (go) I need not (go) I do not need to (go) I have not to (go) I have not got to (go)	I must (go) I have to (go) I have got to (go) I should (go) I ought to (go)	I must not (go) I should not (go) I ought not to (go)





PAST AFFIRMATIVES	
Fulfilled	Unfulfilled
I had to (go) (I had got to (go)) [i.e. I did in fact (go)]	I { should } have (gone) { ought to } [i.e. I did not (go)]

Past Negative

§ 15. We saw in § 4 that there are two types of negative of the present and future expressions of necessity and duty (etc.): one showing the absence of necessity or duty (etc.); the other showing prohibition.

Each type has its own past forms:

(a) Past Absence of Necessity or Duty (etc.):

I (you, he, etc.) { *did not have to*
 did not need to } (go).
 had not to

(The expression *I had not got to* is also found in colloquial spoken English, but the others are much to be preferred.)

(b) Past Prohibition:

—expressed only by an explanatory sentence;

e.g. I (etc.) *was not allowed to* (go).

I *was told not to* (go).

I *was advised not to* (go).

etc.

§ 16. Thus, explaining to someone why you did not go to the hospital to see Wilfred, you would say either:

“I { *didn't have to*
didn't need to
hadn't to } go, after all. They'd sent him home.”

or “I { *wasn't allowed to*
was told not to
was advised not to } go there. He is infectious.”

§ 17. And so our final table is this:

PRESENT AND FUTURE		
Negatives showing Absence of Necessity or Duty (etc.)	Affirmatives	Negatives showing Prohibition
I do not have to (go)	I must (go)	I must not (go)
I need not (go)	I have to (go)	
I do not need to (go)	I have got to (go)	
I have not to (go)	I should (go)	I should not (go)
I have not got to (go)	I ought to (go)	I ought not to (go)

↓
(over)