

RESOURCE VIDEO

MODALS (SHOULD & WOULD)

HOW TO USE “SHOULD”

We use **should** to give advice or suggestions and to talk about things that are possible or likely to happen.

- Affirmative: Subject + **should** + main verb
- Negative: Subject + **shouldn't/should not** + main verb
- Interrogative: **Should** + subject + main verb?

EXAMPLES

Affirmative

1. You should eat more vegetables. (advice)
2. I should study more. (advice)
3. Kevin should be here any minute. (likely to happen)

Negative

1. You shouldn't criticize people when they make mistakes. (advice)
2. The teacher shouldn't say things like that in front of the students. (advice)
3. The alarm shouldn't be going off now. I wonder what happened. (not likely to happen)

Interrogative

1. What should I bring to the party? (asking for advice)
2. Should I invite Eva to dinner? (asking for advice/suggestions)
3. Should the kids be outside in this cold weather? (asking for advice/suggestions)

PRACTICE

Practice questions:

1. If your friend wants to lose weight, what should he/she do?

Possible answers:

He / She should drink more water, exercise more and eat healthier foods.

2. If I want to improve my English, what should I do?

Possible answers:

You should study more, listen to more content in English, watch TV in English, find people who speak English to practice with, read in English, listen to your GPS in English, etc.

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MODALS (SHOULD & WOULD)

HOW TO USE “WOULD”

We use **would** to talk about possibilities or hypothetical situations (conditionals), formal requests and to talk about past habits.

- Affirmative: Subject + **would** + main verb
- Negative: Subject + **wouldn't/would not** + main verb
- Interrogative: **Would** + subject + main verb?

EXAMPLES

Affirmative

1. If I were you, I would (I'd) quit my job and move to the Bahamas! (hypothetical situation)
2. When I was in college, I would (I'd) wear pajamas to class almost every day. (past habit)
3. If I had more time, I would (I'd) take dance lessons. (hypothetical situation)

Negative

1. The dogs wouldn't go outside this morning. It was too cold. (past habit)
2. When I was little, I wouldn't eat any vegetables. But now, I eat them every day. (past habit)
3. Even if you paid me a million dollars, I wouldn't eat that. (hypothetical situation)

Interrogative

1. Would you mind opening the door for me? (formal request)
2. Would you like to out to dinner sometime? (formal request)
3. If you had to learn another language, would you learn Russian or French? (hypothetical situation)

PRACTICE

Practice questions:

1. What is something that you would do all the time when you were a child?

Possible answers:

When I was a child, I would play with my dolls / play video games / watch cartoons.

2. What would you do if you found a puppy on the street?

Possible answers:

If I found a puppy on the street, I would bring him home / bring him to a shelter.

USED TO X WOULD

Both ‘USED TO + verb’ and ‘WOULD + verb’ can be used to talk about past habits. However, when using certain stative (non-action) verbs, we only use USED TO.

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MODALS (SHOULD & WOULD)

EXAMPLES

Use USED TO and/or WOULD when talking about past habits:

1. When I was a child, I used to ride my bike every day.
When I was a child, I would ride my bike every day.

2. When Sarah was in college, she would drink 10 cups of coffee per day.
When Sarah was in college, she used to drink 10 cups of coffee per day.

In these examples, you can use “USED TO + verb” or “WOULD + verb” to describe a past habit. The meaning stays the same.

Use USED TO (not WOULD) with non-action verbs:

1. When I was a child, I used to believe in Santa Claus. (believe = a non-action verb)
When I was a child, I ~~would~~ believe in Santa Claus. (incorrect)

2. I used to know how to speak German, but I've forgotten almost everything. (know = non-action verb)
I ~~would~~ know how to speak German, but I've forgotten almost everything. (incorrect)

In these examples, you can only use USED TO because “believe” and “know” are non-action verbs.