

Modals and idioms

With your partner, choose the verb which you think matches the situation best. There is often more than one possible answer, depending on what you think the best action is and cultural differences.

If your latest project blows up in your face, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must quit your job as soon as possible.

If you are on the crest of a wave at work, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must quit and use that experience to get a better job elsewhere before something goes wrong.

If the share price has dipped, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must sell your stock.

If you get off on the wrong foot with your colleagues, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must tell your boss about the problem and ask his or her advice.

If you're glad to see the back of your boss, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must tell everyone you feel that way once he or she has left.

If you are sure there is something wrong with the latest business plan but you can't quite put your finger on it, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must mention your concerns in meetings about the plan.

If a member of your family joins the same company as you, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must keep them at arms length at work.

You mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must keep your subordinates on their toes at all times.

You mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must use rules of thumb in most business situations.

If you've had to lay someone off due to overstaffing, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must say "You're fired".

In Britain, if they all give you a big hand at the end of a meeting, especially a small one, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must look embarrassed by their praise.

In Britain, if you can't eat any more when you are someone's guest, you mustn't/ shouldn't/ can/ should/ must say "My eyes were bigger than my stomach"

Do you think the advice for the last two would be different in your country or the USA?

Do you know any other cultural differences between America and the UK?