

British and American business etiquette modals practice Updated September 2016

Fill each gap below with at least modal verb or similar form ("have to" etc). You can also add adverbs like "usually" and "probably" if you like.

You _____ call a Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish person "English".

In America, you _____ emphasise your (many) achievements in a job interview. In the UK you _____ be modest about your achievements.

In America, you _____ say how proud you are of your children's achievements, but in the UK you _____

The British often make critical comments about their country. You _____ join in by making other negative comments about the UK.

In the UK, you _____ say sorry to someone who has bumped into you (even if it isn't your fault at all).

In the UK, you _____ pay each time you order a round of drinks for everyone and you _____ take turns being the person on in your group who pays.

You _____ smoke in a British pub.

In the UK, you _____ bring humour into every meeting, presentation and conference speech.

You _____ be exactly on time or a little early for a British business meeting, but you _____ arrive ten to twenty minutes late for a dinner party at someone's house

You _____ use first names with managers of your company in both America and the UK

Suggested answers

Many other answers are possible, so please check with your teacher if you wrote something different.

You _____ mustn't _____ call a Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish person "English".

In America, you _____ need to _____ emphasise your (many) achievements in a job interview. In the UK you _____ should _____ be modest about your achievements.

In America, you _____ can _____ say how proud you are of your children's achievements, but in the UK you _____ shouldn't _____

The British often make critical comments about their country. You _____ mustn't _____ join in by making other negative comments about the UK.

In the UK, you _____ should _____ say sorry to someone who has bumped into you (even if it isn't your fault at all).

In the UK, you _____ have to _____ pay each time you order a round of drinks for everyone and you _____ have to/ must _____ take turns being the person on in your group who pays.

You _____ can't _____ smoke in a British pub.

In the UK, you _____ can/ should _____ bring humour into every meeting, presentation and conference speech.

You _____ must _____ be exactly on time or a little early for a British business meeting, but you _____ should _____ arrive ten to twenty minutes late for a dinner party at someone's house

You _____ can (usually/ almost always) _____ use first names with managers of your company in both America and the UK

What things above are different in your country? Make similar sentences about those and other things. Does your partner think it is true and/ or think the same is true about their country?

What other differences do you know between Britain and the USA?