

Week 13

Supplementary material

English for migrant activists

What Are Modals?

Modals are helping verbs that express necessity, obligation, or advice. In this lesson, we will focus on "must," "have to," and "should" as they relate to migrant workers' rights, especially the issue of decent pay.

Uses and Examples

- **Obligation & Necessity:**

- *Employers must pay workers a fair wage.* (Strong obligation, from law or rules)
- *Workers have to work overtime if required by contract.* (External necessity, from regulations or conditions)

- **Advice & Recommendations:**

- *Migrant workers should check their contracts before signing.* (Strong advice but not a rule)

Forming Sentences with Modals

- **Positive:** Subject + modal + base verb (*Workers must receive their full salary.*)
- **Negative:** Subject + modal + not + base verb (*Employers must not underpay their workers.*)
- **Question:** Modal + subject + base verb? (*Should migrants report wage theft?*)

Examples Related to Decent Pay and Worker Rights

1. *All employers must follow the minimum wage laws.*
2. *Workers have to track their working hours to ensure fair pay.*
3. *Migrants should seek legal help if they are not paid on time.*
4. *You must report unsafe working conditions.*
5. *Workers should know their rights before signing a contract.*
6. *In some countries, workers have to provide proof of employment to access benefits.*
7. *Employers must not withhold workers' passports.*

Tip:

- Use “**must**” for strong legal or moral obligations.
- Use “**have to**” for requirements from external forces like laws or contracts.
- Use “**should**” for advice and best practices.

Practice Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks with the correct modal

1. Workers _____ receive fair wages according to the law. (*obligation*)
2. You _____ (not) accept a job without a written contract. (*strong advice*)
3. Migrant workers _____ work overtime if their contract requires it. (*necessity*)

4. If you face wage theft, you _____ report it to a labor rights organization. (*advice*)
5. Employers _____ not deduct money from wages unfairly. (*prohibition*)

B. Rewrite the sentences in negative form

1. Employers must provide a safe working environment. →

2. Migrant workers have to show their identification at work. →

3. Workers should accept unfair salaries. → _____

4. Everyone must follow labor laws. → _____

5. You have to work in unsafe conditions. → _____

C. Discussion Questions

- What must employers do to ensure decent pay?
- Should governments enforce stricter laws to protect migrant workers?
Why?
- What have you heard about cases where workers did not receive fair wages?