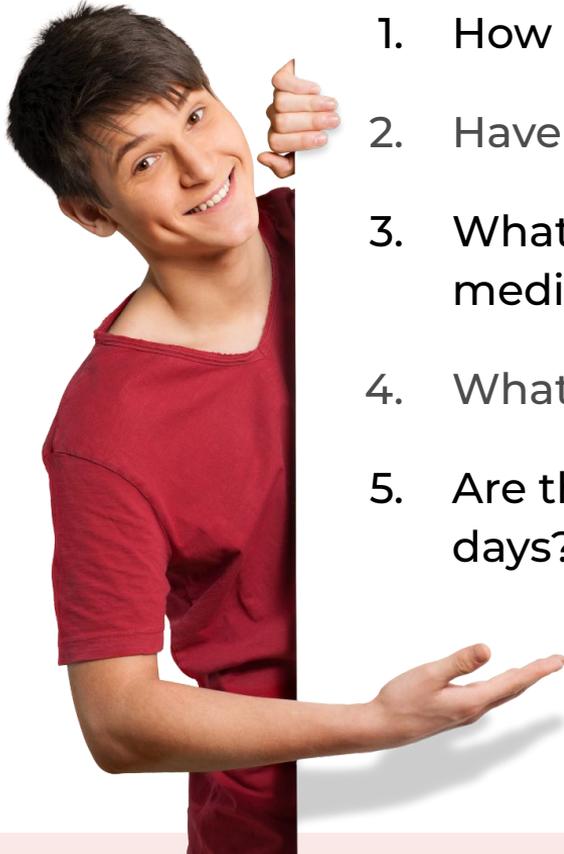




B2 - Digital life: Social media and online safety

Focus on modals of advice and obligation: 'should', 'ought to', 'had better', and 'have to'.

Warm-up discussion



1. How often do you use social media?
2. Have you ever received a suspicious message or link online?
3. What advice would you give someone starting to use social media?
4. What are some online behaviours people should avoid?
5. Are there any online habits people have to develop these days?

Grammar guide: Modals of advice and obligation

Modal	Use	Example
Should	General advice.	<i>You should update your privacy settings.</i>
Ought to	Slightly more formal advice.	<i>You ought to be careful about what you post.</i>
Had better	Stronger warning (possible bad result).	<i>You had better not share your password.</i>
Have to	Obligation or necessity.	<i>You have to log out on public computers.</i>

'Should' VS. 'ought to'

Both 'should' and 'ought to' are modals of advice — and they're almost interchangeable in meaning. **BUT** there are slight differences in tone, usage, and popularity.

Meaning: Both are used to give advice, recommendations, or express moral duty.

1. *You should wear a helmet.*
2. *You ought to wear a helmet.*

Both mean the speaker thinks it's a good idea, but not an obligation.

Use '**should**' for everyday advice — it's simple, modern, and versatile.

Use '**ought to**' when you want a more thoughtful, formal tone or when discussing moral obligations or rules.

Key differences: 'should' and 'ought to'

Feature	Should	Ought to
Frequency	Very common in modern English.	Less common, slightly more formal.
Tone	Neutral to friendly.	Slightly formal, traditional.
Form	No "to" after it → <i>should + base verb</i>	Always followed by "to" → <i>ought to + base verb</i>
Negatives	<i>Shouldn't + base verb</i> → easy	<i>Ought not to</i> → more formal / old-fashioned
Example	<i>You should back up your files.</i>	<i>You ought to back up your files.</i>

When NOT interchangeable:

- In question forms, "should" is preferred:
Should I call him?
Ought I to call him? ← sounds very old-fashioned or British-formal.
- Also, "should" is more flexible in conditionals:
If you should need help, let me know.
If you ought to need help ... ← sounds unnatural.

The Curious Case of Lena's Locked Account

Lena, a freelance designer, woke up to find her Instagram account had been locked. She had received a strange email the night before, asking her to verify her login. It looked real, so she clicked the link.

A few minutes later, her screen went black. Her password no longer worked. She panicked. Her work portfolio was gone — everything she had spent years building.

Lena contacted tech support, but it would take days to restore access. She realized she should have checked the sender's email address. She ought to have enabled two-factor authentication. And she had better be more careful next time — especially since she has to run her business online.



Comprehension questions

True or False

1. Lena works in marketing.
2. She received a suspicious email.
3. Lena didn't realise the email was fake.
4. She was able to access her account immediately.
5. She reflected on what she should have done differently.

Open Questions

1. What mistake did Lena make?
2. What advice would you give her?
3. What can others learn from this situation?



Matching activity

Situation	Advice / Obligation
1. You're using a café's Wi-Fi.	a. You have to use a strong password.
2. You click on an unknown link.	b. You had better not post sensitive info.
3. You want to keep your account secure.	c. You should avoid entering your bank info.
4. You're posting about your vacation in real-time.	d. You ought to verify the email sender.
5. You receive a strange email.	e. You had better not do that without a VPN.

Multiple choice activity

<p>1. You ___ check who you're sharing your location with.</p> <p>a. had better b. should c. have to</p>	<p>2. You ___ not open attachments from unknown sources.</p> <p>a. have to b. should c. had better</p>	<p>3. You ___ set your profile to private if you don't want strangers to see it.</p> <p>a. have to b. ought to c. had better</p>
<p>4. You ___ create a backup of your digital files.</p> <p>a. ought to b. have to c. should</p>	<p>5. You ___ never share your password with anyone.</p> <p>a. had better b. have to c. should</p>	

Gap-fill activity: “*Staying Safe Online*”

Complete the sentences using: ‘*should*’, ‘*ought to*’, ‘*had better*’, or ‘*have to*’.

1. You _____ report any suspicious activity.
2. People _____ think before they post online.
3. You _____ not ignore warning messages from your device.
4. If you run a business online, you _____ back up your data regularly.
5. You _____ change your passwords every few months.



Debate activity

Debate motion: “Social media platforms should be responsible for protecting users from harmful content and online scams.”

1. Team A: Agree (Affirmative)

- a. Argue that platforms should monitor content, protect users, and have to do more to stop scams.
- b. Example sentence: “They have to filter content to keep users safe.”

2. Team B: Disagree (Negative)

- a. Argue that users ought to take responsibility for their own safety and had better learn digital hygiene.
- b. Example sentence: “Users had better learn how to protect themselves — the internet is too big to control.”

Matching activity: Internet and online safety

1. Phishing

2. Feed

3. Profile

4. Data breach

5. Privacy settings

6. Antivirus software

7. Troll

8. Online footprint



a. A personal online space that shows your information / posts.

b. A scam designed to trick you into giving away information.

c. Software that protects against viruses and malware.

d. Someone who provokes others online with negative comments.

e. A record of everything you've done or posted online.

f. Where you see posts and updates from others on social media.

g. A situation where private info is stolen or exposed.

h. Controls that manage who sees your personal information.

Gap-fill quiz: Internet vocabulary in context

Instructions: Choose the correct word from the two options in brackets to complete each sentence.

1. I updated my _____ (profile / spam) to include my new job title and profile picture.
2. You should always check your _____ (privacy settings / data breach) to control who can see your posts.
3. That email looked suspicious — it was probably a _____ (malware / phishing) attempt.
4. I spent an hour scrolling through my Instagram _____ (feed / screen time) this morning.
5. She downloaded an _____ (antivirus software / profile) to protect her laptop from online threats.
6. After the company's _____ (data breach / comment), thousands of passwords were leaked.
7. His _____ (online footprint / login) is huge — he's been posting daily since 2010.
8. You need to _____ (log in / troll) before accessing your email account.
9. The post went viral because so many people reacted and left a _____ (username / comment).
10. Don't click that link — it could contain _____ (spam / malware).

Internet and social media vocabulary [1 of 4]

General Terms

1. Internet – a global network connecting millions of computers and devices
2. Wi-Fi – a wireless connection to the internet
3. Username – the name you use to log into an account
4. Password – a secret combination of characters used to protect your account
5. Login / Log in – to access your account by entering your username and password
6. Logout / Log out – to exit or disconnect from an account
7. Profile – your personal page or information on a platform

Internet and social media vocabulary [2 of 4]

Social Media & Communication

1. Platform – a service or application like Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter)
2. Feed – the stream of content (posts, photos, updates) you see on social media
3. Post – something you write or share on a platform
4. Comment – a response to a post
5. Like / React – to show approval or emotion toward a post
6. Tag – to link or mention someone in a post or photo
7. Follow / Unfollow – to subscribe to someone's content, or stop receiving it

Internet and social media vocabulary [3 of 4]

Safety & Privacy

1. Privacy settings – controls that allow users to protect their personal information
2. Two-factor authentication (2FA) – an extra security step for logging in
3. Phishing – a type of scam where fake emails or messages try to steal your info
4. Data breach – when personal information is exposed or stolen online
5. Malware – malicious software designed to harm or steal data
6. Antivirus software – a program used to detect and remove harmful software
7. Secure connection (HTTPS) – a website that uses encryption to protect data

Internet and social media vocabulary [4 of 4]

Digital Behaviour

1. Online footprint – the trail of information you leave behind online
2. Screen time – the amount of time you spend looking at a screen
3. Cyberbullying – using the internet to harm or harass others
4. Troll / Trolling – someone who posts comments to provoke or upset others
5. Spam – unwanted or repetitive online messages
6. Terms of service – the rules you agree to when using an online service



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