

A2.2 Advice/Obligations - Handout

- 1** The idea of a 'problem page' in a magazine with an 'agony aunt' who writes letters of advice is used here to present a context in which modal verbs for giving advice would naturally occur: "should" and "shouldn't". The problems described in the letters can be read aloud for pronunciation purposes - first by the native speaker to provide a model then by the learner of the language. Following this, you can discuss together what the people in the problematic situations should do.
- 2** These situations could lead to some interesting discussion of cultural differences/universals. The modal verbs "must" and "have to" for obligation, "don't have to" for absence of obligation and "mustn't" for prohibition can be used in addition to "should/shouldn't". "Must" and "have to" can be used interchangeably here. Although if there is a difference, it is that "have to" is more often used for *external* obligation and "must" for *internal* obligation (when you are telling yourself). Perhaps more important though, at this level, is the fact that "must" cannot be used in the past – we need to use "had to" or "didn't have to" instead.
- 3** This role-played activity gives more opportunity to use the target modal verbs. This time to describe rules at work. You can choose how strict an employer you wish to be. It might be an idea to exchange roles at the end so that your partner can also practise making the rules rather than just asking about them.
- 4** Finally there is a short writing task to consolidate the focus on using modal verbs. There is a free choice concerning which of the three letters is replied to. You could discuss with your partner which of the letters is going to be chosen and offer some helpful advice as well.