

Auxiliary verbs

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

— “don’t need to, no need”

means “(there’s) no need to, don’t have to” — it lifts an obligation. The classic trap: the negative of (“need to”) is , *not* (which means “don’t / don’t want”).

Structure: Subject + + Verb Phrase

{zh: |bú yòng|no need to / |dān xīn|worry / 。 }

No need to worry.

{zh: |hái zi|children / |bú yòng|don’t need to / |mǎi|buy / |piào|a ticket / 。 }

Children don’t need to buy a ticket.

Remember: (“need to”) → (“needn’t”), **NOT** . cancels a *need*; is a *prohibition* (“don’t”); = “can’t”; = “shouldn’t.” Pick by which one you’re denying.

Watch out

- (“you’re welcome”) is literally “no need to thank” — the same .

+ — “have to, must”

The auxiliary — read **děi** here — is a blunt, spoken “have to, must,” a practical necessity.

Structure: Subject + + Verb Phrase

{zh: |wǒ men|we / |děi|have to / |zǒu|go / |le / 。 }

We have to go now.

{zh: |shí jiān|the time / |bù zǎo|getting late / |le / , |wǒ|I / |děi|have to / |huí jiā|go home / |le / 。 }

It’s getting late — I have to head home.

Remember: = **děi** = “gotta.” Its negative borrows (“needn’t”), *not* . And mind the reading: this is **děi** (“must”), a world away from the *de* of complements () or the particles / .

Watch out

- One character, three readings: **děi** (must), **de** (complement marker), **dé** (“obtain”). Context picks it.