

Movies & Languages 2014-2015

American Hustle

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	David O. Russell
YEAR / COUNTRY	2013 / USA
GENRE	American crime comedy-drama
ACTORS	C. Bale, A. Adams, B. Cooper, J. Renner, J. Lawrence



PLOT

American Hustle is a fictional film based on some scandals in the U.S. in the late 1970s. It tells the story of a brilliant con man, Irving Rosenfeld, who along with his equally cunning and seductive partner Sydney Prosser is forced to work for a wild FBI agent Richie DiMaso in a sting operation. DiMaso pushes them into the world of New Jersey politicians and mafia creating intriguing and dangerous situations.

As well as being a box office success, the film received widespread critical acclaim. It received ten Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director, but did not win in any category.

LANGUAGE

Standard American English, New York City and New Jersey accents at times.

GRAMMAR

Modal Verbs: Obligation

MUST and HAVE TO

In the present **must** is used when the obligation comes from the speaker. **Have (got) to** is more common when the obligation comes from someone else, often a law or rule. For example:

I must stop smoking (I want to)

I've got to stop smoking (doctor's orders)

In Italy, motorcyclists have to wear a crash helmet (This is the law)

In the future and the past **have to (had to, will have to)** is the only way of expressing obligation. For example:

There was a bus strike last week so Walt had to walk to work

If they move to the country, they'll have to buy a car

MUSTN'T and NEEDN'T/ DON'T HAVE TO

Mustn't expresses a negative obligation (the action is forbidden)

Needn't and **don't have to** indicate that there is no obligation

For example:

You mustn't drink smoke in the classroom (forbidden)
You don't have to have a licence to ride a bike (no legal obligation)
You needn't wash up. I'll do it later (no obligation)

SHOULD and OUGHT TO

Should and **ought to** are interchangeable and are used when the obligation is not so strong. Often they express advice or duty. For example:

You should write to your family more often
I ought to stay home and study tonight

NEED

In the present tense **need to** expresses a weaker obligation than **have to** or **must**. It is used mainly in questions and negative sentences. For example:

Need I really study modals again?
You needn't finish painting the house if you're tired
In hot weather you need to water the flowers every day

VOCABULARY

Hustle: to obtain money by fraud or deception	Embezzling: to steal money entrusted to you
To con someone: to fool or trick someone	Dummy: somebody stupid
Going behind my back: doing things without telling me	Mop up a mess: solving serious problems
Punk: petty criminal	Grifter: someone who tricks or fools for money
Pissed off: angry	Comb over: combing your hair in a way to hide baldness
Bullshit: nonsense, foolish talk	Freaking me out: making me confused and nervous
A mark: a victim, a target for a crime	Close a deal: conclude a transaction
To be broke: without money	To bust someone: to arrest someone for a crime
Boldness: courage	To cuff someone: to arrest someone and put handcuffs on them
WPA: Works Progress Administration	Party pooper: a person who ruins a party for lack of enthusiasm and participation
Fuck it up: to break something or make something go wrong	Sting operation: catching and trapping criminals through deception