

# Grammar structures with need

## Need ...ing

After need an -ing form can be used in British English. In this case the -ing form has the same meaning as that of a passive infinitive.

That carpet needs cleaning. (= That carpet needs to be cleaned.)

Your nails need cutting. (= Your nails need to be cut.)

That car needs repairing. (= That car needs to be repaired.)

Those plants need watering. (= Those plants need to be watered.)

The structure need + object + -ing form is also possible in some cases.

You need your hair cutting. OR You need your hair cut.

He needs his head examining. OR He needs his head examined.

## Need not + perfect infinitive

If we say that somebody need not have done something, we mean that he or she did it, but that it was unnecessary.

We need not have waited for him. (We waited for him but that was unnecessary.)

I need not have cooked so much food. Nobody was hungry.

The structure did not need to is used for saying that something was not necessary (whether or not it was done).

Nobody was hungry so I didn't need to cook much food.