"Must" and "have to"

1. "Have to" is much more common than "must" in modern English, especially in spoken English (and American English).
2. "Have to" is conjugated as a regular verb and is used with an auxiliary verb in the question form or negative.
3. "Must" is used only in the present and the future. The past form of "must" is "had to".

"Must": We occasionally use "must" to express strong personal feelings that something is necessary (like a strong "should"), but we **usually** use it to state formal rules and regulations.
- I really **must** finish this work before I leave. (It feels that I should)
- Visitors **must** remove all footwear before entering the mosque. (a regulation)

"Have to": We use "have to" in the past, present and future to express responsibility, necessity or 3rd party obligation. (like "need to")
- We **have to** get up early tomorrow or we'll miss the train. (inflexible schedule)
- She **had to** work extra hard yesterday because Ann was ill. (force of circumstance)
- They **will have to** arrive early if they want good seats. (not an obligation, but a good idea)
- Does he **have to** go already? (could also say "Must he go already"?, but it would sound very formal)

"Mustn't": The negative form of "must" expresses the idea that something is prohibited (= not allowed…**don't** do it!) - this form is very different in meaning than the negative of "have to"!
- She **mustn't** use such horrible language. My mother will be shocked.
- Tom, you **mustn't** play with fire. It's dangerous.

"Don't have to": The negative form of 'have to' expresses the idea that something is not necessary (= **don't need to**).
- I **don't have to** arrive at 8am because we have flexitime.
- The students **didn't have to** do their homework because the teacher was feeling nice.