

A NOTE ON NEGATIVES: THE NOT-HOPPING PROBLEM Kroch and Lasnik  
MIT

1. a. John { mayn't } go out to play (without asking Mary first).  
      { may not }
- b. John { can't } swim very well.  
      { cannot }
2. a. (If he is tired), John may not finish the job until tomorrow.  
   b. (When it is to his advantage to be polite), John can not misbehave for hours.
3. a. (If he feels like staying home), John { mustn't } come to work.  
      { must not }
- b. (If John doesn't like Bill), he { shouldn't } help him out  
      { should not } with the job.
4. a. John must not sign that lease without his family's approval.  
   b. John should not resent helpful criticism.
5. a. John can't not do the work now after having agreed to it.  
   b. \*Soldiers can't not not obey some orders.
6. a. John { CAN } not tell lies to protect himself from criticism.  
      { MAY }
- b. John { can't } tell lies to protect himself from criticism.  
      { mayn't }
7. a. John { MUST } not tell lies to protect himself from criticism  
      { SHOULD }
- b. John { mustn't } tell lies to protect himself from criticism.  
      { shouldn't }
11. John { can not } not pay his share of the costs at this late date.  
      { can't }
12. John { must not } not pay his share of the costs at this late  
      { mustn't } date.
16. \*John must NOT not sign the agreement.
19. Can John swim well?
20. Can't John swim well?
21. Is it the case that John can swim well?
22. a. Isn't it the case that John can swim well?  
   b. Is it the case that John can't swim well?
23. a. { Mustn't } John Jones go to New York for a while?  
   b. { Shouldn't }
24. a. { Must } John Jones not go to New York?  
   b. { Can }

