

# Must and can't

A

Study this example:



You can use **must** to say that you believe something is certain:

- You've been travelling all day. You **must be** tired. (Travelling is tiring and you've been travelling all day, so you **must** be tired.)
- 'Joe is a hard worker.' 'Joe? You **must be joking**. He doesn't do anything.'
- Louise **must get** very bored in her job. She does the same thing every day.
- I'm sure Sally gave me her address. I **must have** it somewhere.

You can use **can't** to say that you believe something is not possible:

- You've just had lunch. You **can't be** hungry already. (People are not normally hungry just after eating a meal. You've just eaten, so you **can't** be hungry.)
- They haven't lived here for very long. They **can't know** many people.

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	<b>must</b> <b>can't</b>	<b>be</b> (tired / hungry / at work etc.) <b>be (doing / going / joking</b> etc.) <b>do / get / know / have</b> etc.
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B

For the past we use **must have (done)** and **can't have (done)**.

Study this example:



Martin and Lucy are standing at the door of their friends' house. They have rung the doorbell twice, but nobody has answered. Lucy says:

They **must have gone** out.

- 'We used to live very near the motorway.' 'Did you? It **must have been** noisy.'
- 'I've lost one of my gloves.' 'You **must have dropped** it somewhere.'
- Sarah hasn't contacted me. She **can't have got** my message.
- Tom walked into a wall. He **can't have been looking** where he was going.

Study the structure:

I/you/he (etc.)	<b>must</b> <b>can't</b>	<b>have</b>	<b>been</b> (asleep / at work etc.) <b>been (doing / looking</b> etc.) <b>gone / got / known</b> etc.
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You can use **couldn't have** instead of **can't have**:

- Sarah **couldn't have got** my message.
- Tom **couldn't have been looking** where he was going.

## 28.1 Put in **must** or **can't**.

- 1 You've been travelling all day. You must be tired.
- 2 That restaurant ..... be very good. It's always full of people.
- 3 That restaurant ..... be very good. It's always empty.
- 4 I'm sure I gave you the key. You ..... have it. Have you looked in your bag?
- 5 I often see that woman walking along this street. She ..... live near here.
- 6 It rained every day during their holiday, so they ..... have had a very nice time.
- 7 Congratulations on passing your exam. You ..... be very pleased.
- 8 You got here very quickly. You ..... have walked very fast.
- 9 Bill and Sue always stay at luxury hotels, so they ..... be short of money.

## 28.2 Complete each sentence with a verb (one or two words).

- 1 I've lost one of my gloves. I must have dropped it somewhere.
- 2 Their house is very near the motorway. It must be very noisy.
- 3 Sarah knows a lot about films. She must ..... to the cinema a lot.
- 4 I left my bike outside the house last night and now it's gone. Somebody must ..... it.
- 5 'How old is Ted?' 'He's older than me. He must ..... at least 40.'
- 6 I didn't hear the phone ring. I must ..... asleep.
- 7 A: You're going on holiday soon. You must ..... forward to it.  
B: Yes, it will be really good to get away.
- 8 The police have closed the road, so we have to go a different way. There must ..... an accident.
- 9 I'm sure you know this song. You must ..... it before.
- 10 There is a man walking behind us. He has been walking behind us for the last 20 minutes. He must ..... us.

## 28.3 Read the situations and use the words in brackets to write sentences with **must have** and **can't have**.

- 1 We went to their house and rang the doorbell, but nobody answered. (they / go out)  
They must have gone out.
- 2 Sarah hasn't contacted me. (she / get / my message)  
She can't have got my message.
- 3 The jacket you bought is very good quality. (it / very expensive)  
.....
- 4 I haven't seen our neighbours for ages. (they / go away)  
.....
- 5 I can't find my umbrella. (I / leave / it in the restaurant last night)  
.....
- 6 Amy was in a very difficult situation when she lost her job. (it / easy for her)  
.....
- 7 There was a man standing outside the café. (he / wait / for somebody)  
.....
- 8 Rachel did the opposite of what I asked her to do. (she / understand / what I said)  
.....
- 9 When I got back to my car, the door was unlocked. (I / forget / to lock it)  
.....
- 10 I was woken up in the night by the noise next door. (my neighbours / have / a party)  
.....
- 11 The light was red, but the car didn't stop. (the driver / see / the red light)  
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