

## Must and can't

A

Study this example:

My house is very near the motorway.

It **must be** very noisy.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.

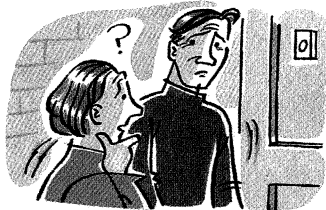
Study the structure:

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

B

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

Study this example:

There's nobody at home. They **must have gone** out.

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>have</b> | <b>been</b> (asleep / at work etc.) |
|                 | <b>can't</b> |             | <b>been (doing / looking etc.)</b>  |
|                 |              |             | <b>gone / got / known etc.</b>      |

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 cafe. (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)  
.....