

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.

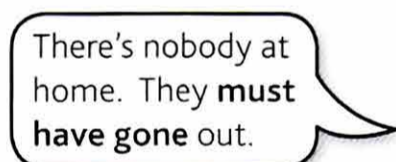
Study the structure:

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

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.)	must	have	been (asleep / at work etc.)
	can't		been (doing / looking etc.)
			gone / got / known etc.

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.