



Lesson20

The Use of Must and Can't

I. RULES AND EXAMPLES

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

Examples:

1. You've been traveling all day. You **must** be tired. (Traveling is tiring and you've been traveling all day, so you **must** be tired.)
2. 'Jim is a hard worker.' 'Jim? You **must be joking**. He doesn't do anything.'
3. Carol **must get** very bored in her job. She does the same thing every day.
4. I'm sure Sally gave me her phone number. I **must have** it somewhere.

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

Examples:

1. You've just had lunch. You **can't be** hungry already. (People are not normally hungry after eating a meal. You've just eaten, so you **can't** be hungry.)
2. 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.

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

Examples:

1. I didn't hear the phone. I **must have been** asleep.
2. 'I've lost one of my gloves.' 'You **must have dropped** it somewhere.'
3. Sue hasn't contacted me. She **can't have got** my message.

4. Tom walked into a wall. He **can't have been** looking where he was going.
5. There's nobody at home. They **must have gone** out.

Study the structure:

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

You can use **couldn't have** instead of **can't have**:

Examples:

1. Sue **couldn't have got** my message.
2. Tom **couldn't have been looking** where he was going.

II. EXERCISES

Put in must or can't

Example: You've been traveling all day. You ____ be tired.

Answer : You've been traveling all day. You must be tired.

Start here:

1. That restaurant ____ be very good. It's always full of people.
2. That restaurant ____ be very good. It's always empty.
3. I'm sure I gave you the key. You ____ have it. Have you looked in your bag?
4. You're going on holiday next week. You ____ be looking forward to it.
5. It rained every day during their holiday, so they ____ have had a very nice time.
6. Congratulations on passing your exam. You ____ be very pleased.
7. You got here very quickly. You ____ have walked very fast.
8. Bill and Sue always travel business class, so they ____ be short of money.

Complete each sentence with a verb (one or two words) in the correct form.

Example: I've lost one of my gloves. I must ____ it somewhere.

Answer : I've lost one of my gloves. I must have dropped it somewhere.

Example: They haven't lived here for very long. They can't ____ many people.

Answer : They haven't lived here for very long. They can't know many people.

Start here:

1. Ted isn't at work today. He must _____ ill.
2. Ted wasn't at work last week. He must _____ ill.
3. (the doorbell rings) I wonder who that is. It can't _____ Mary. She's still at work at this time.
4. Sarah knows a lot about films. She must _____ to the cinema a lot.
5. Look. James is putting on his hat and coat. He must _____ out.
6. I left my bike outside the house last night and now it has gone. Somebody must _____ it.
7. Amy was in a very difficult situation when she lost her job. It can't _____ easy for her.
8. There is a man walking behind us. He has been walking behind us for the past twenty minutes. He must _____ us.

III. WRITING

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

Example: The phone rang, but I didn't hear it. (I / asleep)

Answer : I must have been asleep.

Example: Sue hasn't contacted me. (She / get / my message)

Answer : She can't have got my message.

Start here:

1. The jacket you bought is very good quality. (it / very expensive)
2. I haven't seen the people next door for ages. (they / go away)
3. I can't find my umbrella. (I / leave / it in the restaurant last night)
4. Dave, who is usually very friendly, walked past me without speaking. (he / see / me)
5. There was a man standing outside the café. (he / wait / for somebody)
6. Liz did the opposite of what I asked her to do. (she / understand / what I said)
7. What I got back to my car, the door was unlocked. (I / forget / to lock it)
8. I was woken up in the night by the noise next door. (the neighbors / have / a party)
9. The light was red, but it didn't stop. (the driver / see / the red light)

IV. FREE TALKING

Answer the following questions:

1. What would you do if you were late for an important appointment?
2. Describe a famous park or recreation area in your home country.
3. Tell about a time when you lost something.
4. What is your opinion about cellular phones?
5. Tell how to find something on the Internet. Give the instructions.