

Have vs. Have Got: Possession, Actions & Relationships

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: have vs have got, Physical attributes and illnesses, Family and relationships, Interchangeability in present tense, Do/Does auxiliary usage, Inversion with 'have got', Less usual formal structures, Short form negatives, Food and drink (have breakfast/dinner), Daily hygiene (have a shower/bath)

In English, we use **have** and **have got** to talk about possession, relationships, illnesses, and characteristics. We also use **have** (but *not* have got) for specific actions and experiences.

1. Possession, Relationships, and Characteristics (Stative)

When talking about things we own, family members, physical appearance, or illnesses, **have** and **have got** are generally interchangeable in the **Present Simple**.

- **Positive (+):**
 - *I **have** a new car. = I **have got** ('ve got) a new car.*
 - *She **has** blue eyes. = She **has got** ('s got) blue eyes.*
- **Negative (-):**
 - *I **don't have** any money. (Uses do/does)*
 - *I **haven't got** any money. (Uses have as auxiliary)*
- **Question (?):**
 - **Do you have** a sister?*
 - **Have you got** a sister?*

Note: 'Have got' is more common in informal British English. 'Have' is standard in American English and formal contexts.

2. Actions and Experiences (Dynamic)

When **have** means "to eat," "to drink," "to experience," or "to perform an action" (like hygiene), we **CANNOT** use *have got*. We must use **have** as a main verb.

- **Food/Drink:** *have breakfast, have a coffee, have lunch.*
- **Hygiene:** *have a shower, have a bath.*
- **Experience:** *have a good time, have a party, have an argument.*

Grammar Rules for Actions:

- Use **do/does/did** for questions and negatives.
- You can use Continuous forms (be + -ing) for actions, but **not** for possession.
 - *Correct: I **am having** a shower. (Action)*
 - *Incorrect: ~~I am having~~ a car. (Possession)*

3. The Past Tense

Have got exists mainly in the present tense. To talk about the past, use **had** (Past Simple of *have*).

- *I **had** a headache yesterday. (NOT: ~~I had got~~)*

Practice: Fill in the Blanks

Instructions: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb. Pay close attention to whether the sentence implies **possession/state** (where you can often use *have* or *have got*) or an **action** (where you must use *have* with *do/did* support).

- Use contractions where possible (e.g., *haven't got*, *don't have*).
- Look for specific instructions in brackets, e.g., (*you / have got*).

1. I usually _____ (have) a shower as soon as I wake up in the morning.
2. _____ (you / have got) a minute? I need to speak to you about the project.
3. She looks very pale. I think she _____ (have got) a bad headache.
4. We _____ (not / have) a car when we lived in London because the transport was excellent.
5. Where _____ (you / usually / have) lunch on weekdays?
6. I'm sorry, but I _____ (not / have got) any cash on me right now. Can I pay by card?
7. Please be quiet! The baby _____ (have) a nap upstairs.
8. _____ (she / have) any brothers or sisters?
9. They _____ (not / have) a holiday last year because they were saving money for a house.
10. He _____ (have got) very short hair and glasses.
11. _____ (you / have) trouble finding the address yesterday?
12. We _____ (usually / have) a meeting every Monday morning at 9:00.
13. Unfortunately, they _____ (not / have got) enough room in their car for all of us.
14. While we were walking in the park, we _____ (have) a strange experience.
15. _____ (your parents / have got) a holiday home in Spain?

Answer Key

1. **have** (Action/Habit)
2. **Have you got** (Possession/Stative - specified by prompt)
3. **has got** (Illness/Stative)
4. **didn't have** (Past Tense - 'had got' is generally not used in past)
5. **do you usually have** (Action/Habit - requires 'do' auxiliary)
6. **haven't got** (Possession/Stative - Negative short form)
7. **is having** (Action - Continuous aspect allowed for 'nap')
8. **Does she have** (Relationship - Standard 'do' auxiliary form)
9. **didn't have** (Action/Experience - Past Tense)
10. **has got** (Physical Attribute)
11. **Did you have** (Experience - Past Tense)
12. **usually have** (Action/Habit)
13. **haven't got** (Possession - Negative short form)
14. **had** (Experience - Past Tense)
15. **Have your parents got** (Possession - Inversion required)