

Usage of HAVE

Grammar Lesson, Examples & 30 Practice Questions

Usage of HAVE in Advanced English

The verb **have** is one of the most versatile and important verbs in the English language. At C1 level, you need to move beyond simply knowing that **have** expresses possession. In advanced English, **have** functions as an auxiliary verb, a main verb, and appears in a wide range of complex structures including causatives, perfect aspect constructions, modal perfects, and idiomatic expressions.

Understanding the full usage of **have** is essential for sophisticated communication in academic writing, professional contexts, and fluent conversation. This lesson covers every major function of **have** with clear rules, patterns, and examples.

The Core Functions of HAVE

At C1 level, **have** performs four distinct grammatical roles:

- **Main verb** — expressing possession, relationships, states, and experiences
- **Auxiliary verb** — forming perfect tenses and passive structures
- **Causative verb** — expressing that someone arranges for something to be done
- **Modal perfect structures** — expressing speculation, criticism, and necessity about the past

HAVE as a Main Verb

1. Possession and Ownership

The most fundamental use of **have** as a main verb is to describe possession. At this level, you should also be aware of the distinction between **have** and **have got** in formal and informal registers.

Formal / Written English: *She has considerable influence over the committee.*

Informal / Spoken British English: *She's got considerable influence over the committee.*

In American English, **have got** is generally avoided in formal writing. In British English, **have got** is common in spoken and informal contexts but avoided in academic or professional writing.

Form	Affirmative	Negative	Question
have (formal)	She has strong opinions.	She doesn't have strong opinions.	Does she have strong opinions?
have got (informal)	She's got strong opinions.	She hasn't got strong opinions.	Has she got strong opinions?

Key rule: In the simple past, only **had** is used. Never use *had got* in standard formal English.

✗ *They hadn't got enough evidence.* (informal, avoid in formal writing)

✓ **They didn't have enough evidence.**

2. Describing States, Experiences, and Characteristics

As a main verb, **have** describes a wide range of states, relationships, and inherent characteristics. These uses are **stative** — they describe conditions rather than actions — and are therefore **not normally used in continuous tenses**.

- **Characteristics:** *The proposal has several significant weaknesses.*
- **Relationships:** *She has two colleagues who specialise in corporate law.*
- **Obligations:** *He has a duty to disclose the information.*
- **Illnesses / physical states:** *He has a chronic back condition.*

3. HAVE in Event and Experience Expressions

When **have** refers to **actions, events, or experiences**, it behaves like a dynamic verb. In this case, it **can** be used in continuous tenses and is negated and questioned using **do/does/did**.

Compare these two sentences:

Stative (possession/state): *I have a meeting this afternoon.* — describing a scheduled arrangement

Dynamic (event/activity): *We are having a very productive discussion.* — describing an event in progress

Expression Type	Example	Continuous Possible?
Have a conversation	They were having a heated argument.	✓ Yes
Have dinner / lunch	We are having dinner with the director.	✓ Yes
Have a break	The team had a short break at noon.	✓ Yes
Have time (= possess)	I don't have time to review this.	✗ No
Have an opinion	She has reservations about the plan.	✗ No
Have a look	Could you have a look at this draft?	✗ No

HAVE as an Auxiliary Verb: Perfect Tenses

At C1 level, mastery of **have** as an auxiliary verb is critical. It combines with a past participle to form all **perfect aspect** constructions.

Present Perfect Simple and Continuous

Pattern: *have/has + past participle*

The government has introduced a number of controversial policies.

She has been working on this project for over a year.

Past Perfect Simple and Continuous

Pattern: *had + past participle*

By the time the report was released, the committee had already reached a decision.

He had been negotiating for three hours before an agreement was reached.

Future Perfect Simple and Continuous

Pattern: *will have + past participle*

By next year, the research team will have completed the study.

She will have been working at the firm for a decade by the time she retires.

Tense	Structure	Example
Present Perfect Simple	have/has + past participle	He has revised the contract.
Present Perfect Continuous	have/has + been + -ing	She has been reviewing the evidence.
Past Perfect Simple	had + past participle	They had submitted the bid before the deadline.
Past Perfect Continuous	had + been + -ing	He had been expecting a different outcome.
Future Perfect Simple	will have + past participle	We will have finalised the merger by March.
Future Perfect Continuous	will have + been + -ing	She will have been leading the project for two years.

Modal Perfects: Modal + HAVE + Past Participle

This is one of the most important advanced structures involving **have**. Modal perfects combine a modal verb with **have** and a past participle to express a range of meanings about past situations, including speculation, deduction, criticism, and regret.

Pattern: *modal verb + have + past participle*

Speculation and Deduction about the Past

Must have + past participle — logical certainty about the past

She must have known about the irregularities before the audit.

Can't have / couldn't have + past participle — logical impossibility in the past

He can't have seen the document. It was classified.

May have / might have / could have + past participle — possibility in the past

The delay might have been caused by an administrative error.

She could have misunderstood the instructions.

Criticism and Regret

Should have + past participle — something was the right thing to do but did not happen

The manager should have consulted the team before making that decision.

Shouldn't have + past participle — something was done but was a mistake

They shouldn't have released the statement without verifying the facts.

Would have + past participle — expressing a hypothetical past result (third conditional)

If the funding had been approved, we would have launched the programme in January.

Need not have + past participle — something was done but was unnecessary

You needn't have prepared such a detailed report — a summary would have been sufficient.

Modal Perfect	Meaning	Example
must have + pp	Logical certainty (past)	He must have left before we arrived.
can't have + pp	Logical impossibility (past)	She can't have finished already.
might/may/could have + pp	Possibility (past)	They might have taken the wrong approach.
should have + pp	Criticism / regret (not done)	You should have informed us earlier.
shouldn't have + pp	Criticism (done incorrectly)	She shouldn't have disclosed that information.
would have + pp	Hypothetical past result	We would have succeeded with more resources.
needn't have + pp	Unnecessary completed action	You needn't have worried.
could have + pp	Unrealised past ability	He could have raised the issue sooner.

The Causative HAVE: HAVE Something Done

The **causative have** is a sophisticated structure used to express that someone arranges for another person to perform an action on their behalf. The subject does not perform the action themselves but causes it to happen.

Pattern: *have + object + past participle*

The company had its headquarters redesigned last year. (An external team redesigned it; the company arranged this.)

She is having her annual report reviewed by a consultant.

We will have the system upgraded before the launch.

The causative **have** can be used in all tenses:

Tense	Example
Simple Present	He has his reports proofread every week.
Present Continuous	She is having her office refurbished.
Simple Past	They had the contract reviewed by a solicitor.
Present Perfect	We have had the software updated.
Future Simple	The firm will have the data audited next quarter.
Modal	You should have it checked before signing.

Causative HAVE vs. GET

Have and **get** can both be used causatively, but there are register differences:

Have something done — more formal and neutral

She had the financial documents certified by an auditor.

Get something done — more informal; can also imply more effort or difficulty

I finally got the issue resolved after weeks of chasing.

Causative HAVE with an Active Infinitive

There is a second causative pattern using **have + person + base verb**. This is used when the subject causes a **specific person** to perform an action:

Pattern: *have + person + base form of verb*

The director had the team submit all documents by Friday.

She had her assistant arrange the conference call.

Note the difference:

She had the report written. (causative passive — someone wrote it for her)

She had her assistant write the report. (causative active — her assistant did it)

HAVE TO: Obligation and Necessity

Have to is used to express external obligation or necessity — something that is required by rules, circumstances, or another authority. It is distinct from **must**, which typically expresses internal obligation or the speaker's own authority.

External obligation: *All candidates have to submit three references.* (a rule imposed by the institution)

Internal obligation: *I must finish this tonight.* (the speaker's own determination)

Tense	Structure	Example
Present	have to / has to + base verb	She has to obtain board approval.

Tense	Structure	Example
Past	had to + base verb	He had to revise the entire proposal.
Future	will have to + base verb	They will have to renegotiate the terms.
Present Perfect	have/has had to + base verb	We have had to reconsider our strategy.

Negative — Don't have to expresses lack of obligation (not prohibition):

You don't have to attend the preliminary session, but it is recommended.

Compare:

You mustn't disclose this information. (prohibition — it is forbidden)

You don't have to disclose this information. (no obligation — it is optional)

HAVE in Idiomatic and Fixed Expressions

At C1 level, you should be comfortable recognising and using **have** in a wide range of idiomatic expressions. These are fixed collocations where **have** functions as a delexical verb — it carries little independent meaning and the noun provides the key meaning.

Expression	Meaning	Example
have an impact on	to affect something	The new policy will have a significant impact on output.
have access to	to be able to use something	All employees have access to the company database.
have reservations about	to feel uncertain or doubtful	She had serious reservations about the proposed merger.
have no choice but to	to be forced to do something	We had no choice but to terminate the contract.
have a bearing on	to be relevant to something	His background has a direct bearing on the case.
have something in common	to share characteristics	The two approaches have a great deal in common.
have it out with someone	to confront someone directly	She decided to have it out with her supervisor.
have the upper hand	to be in a stronger position	The defendant's legal team had the upper hand throughout.
have your work cut out	to face a very difficult task	The new director will have her work cut out rebuilding trust.

Expression	Meaning	Example
have a vested interest in	to have a personal stake in something	The shareholders have a vested interest in the outcome.

Perfect Infinitives with HAVE

The **perfect infinitive** (*to have + past participle*) is used after certain verbs, adjectives, and modals to express actions that occurred before a reference point or that are hypothetical.

After modal verbs (already covered above):

He appears to have overlooked the implications.

She seems to have been misled by the initial report.

After verbs of thinking, claiming, and reporting:

The study claims to have identified a causal link.

The witness appears to have contradicted herself.

After adjectives expressing luck, happiness, relief:

We were fortunate to have secured the funding in time.

She was relieved to have resolved the dispute out of court.

In third conditional (hypothetical):

It would have been preferable to have consulted stakeholders earlier.

HAVE in Passive and Complex Structures

Perfect Passive: Have + Been + Past Participle

When the perfect tense is combined with a passive structure, **have** still acts as the auxiliary:

Pattern: *have/has/had + been + past participle*

The matter has been referred to the ethics committee.

Several concerns had been raised before the inquiry began.

The budget will have been approved by the end of the month.

Have + Object + Past Participle (Passive Experience)

This structure is also used to describe an unpleasant experience that happens to the subject — something done *to* them, often without their control. This is a distinct use from the causative.

She had her car stolen outside the office. (She did not arrange this — it happened to her.)

He had his proposal rejected three times.

They had their funding withdrawn without notice.

Context usually makes clear whether the meaning is causative (arranged) or experiential (suffered). Compare:

She had her hair cut. — causative (she arranged it)

She had her hair pulled during the altercation. — experiential (it happened to her)

Important Differences and Special Cases

HAVE vs. HAVE GOT: Register Matters

Both **have** and **have got** express possession and states, but their use depends heavily on register and variety of English.

Context	Preferred Form	Example
Formal writing / academic English	have / do not have	The report does not have a clear conclusion.
Informal spoken British English	have got / haven't got	I haven't got the time to go through it now.
American English (any register)	have / don't have	He doesn't have a valid argument.
Past tense (all registers)	had / didn't have	They didn't have sufficient evidence.

MUST vs. HAVE TO

Form	Use	Example
must	Speaker's authority / internal obligation	I must attend to this urgently.
have to	External rule / obligation from another source	All staff have to complete the compliance training.
don't have to	No obligation (optional)	You don't have to include a cover letter.
mustn't	Prohibition	Participants mustn't share confidential data.

DIDN'T NEED TO vs. NEEDN'T HAVE

These two structures are frequently confused at advanced level:

Didn't need to + base verb — the action was not necessary, and it is *not known* whether it was done:
She didn't need to resubmit the form. (We don't know if she did or not.)

Needn't have + past participle — the action was done, but it turned out to be unnecessary:
She needn't have resubmitted the form. (She did resubmit it, but it was not necessary.)

Common Mistakes

✗ *I am having a lot of experience in this field.*

✓ **I have a lot of experience in this field.** — Stative uses of **have** do not take the continuous form.

✗ *She must have been the one to told them.*

✓ **She must have been the one to tell them.** — After **must have been**, the infinitive remains in base form.

- ✗ *We had our budget cutting by 20%.*
- ✓ **We had our budget cut by 20%.** — The causative requires the **past participle**, not the continuous form.
- ✗ *He has to submitted the application yesterday.*
- ✓ **He had to submit the application yesterday.** — **Have to** in the past is **had to**, followed by the base form.
- ✗ *They didn't need to have worried about the results.*
- ✓ **They needn't have worried about the results.** — When the action was completed unnecessarily, use **needn't have**.
- ✗ *The proposal would have succeed with better planning.*
- ✓ **The proposal would have succeeded with better planning.** — **Would have** must be followed by the **past participle**, not the base form.
- ✗ *She had got a lot of good feedback during the review. (past event)*
- ✓ **She received a lot of good feedback during the review.** — In the past, **had got** is not used for events; use the simple past.
- ✗ *The company has its headquarters redesign last year.*
- ✓ **The company had its headquarters redesigned last year.** — Causative **have** requires the correct tense of **have** and the **past participle**.

Usage of HAVE: Quick Summary

HAVE as a main verb expresses possession, states, relationships, and experiences. Dynamic uses (events and activities) can take continuous forms; stative uses cannot.

HAVE as an auxiliary verb forms all perfect tenses — present, past, and future — in both active and passive constructions. The pattern is always **have/has/had + past participle**.

Modal perfects combine a modal verb with **have + past participle** to express speculation, deduction, criticism, regret, and hypothetical past situations. Each modal perfect carries a distinct meaning that must be chosen carefully.

Causative HAVE follows the pattern **have + object + past participle** and expresses that someone arranges for another person to perform an action. The same structure with context can also express an unpleasant experience suffered by the subject.

Have to expresses external obligation and follows the full verb pattern with *do/does/did* for negatives and questions. It is distinct from **must**, which expresses internal or speaker-imposed obligation.

Register awareness is essential: *have got* is appropriate in spoken and informal British English but should be avoided in academic and formal writing. The past tense is always **had**, never *had got*.

Now practise the **usage of HAVE** in the exercises below.

Usage of HAVE – Practice Test

C1 | 30 Questions: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap & Fill-in-the-Blank

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 By the time the project deadline arrived, the team ____ already submitted their final report.

- A** had
- B** have had
- C** had had
- D** has had

2 She insists on ____ her work reviewed by two colleagues before submitting it.

- A** have
- B** having
- C** had
- D** has

3 The CEO ____ the report prepared before the board meeting begins.

- A** had better have
- B** would better have
- C** had better has
- D** has better have

4 We strongly recommend that every applicant ____ their documents notarized before submission.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had
- D** having

5 If you ____ the contract signed earlier, we wouldn't be in this difficult situation now.

- A** had had
- B** have had
- C** had have
- D** would have had

6 The investigators ____ the premises searched thoroughly before releasing any statement.

- A** got
- B** made
- C** had
- D** let

7 He ____ known better than to sign the agreement without legal advice.

- A** should have
- B** must have
- C** would have
- D** might had

8 The manager ____ the documents translated into three languages for the international summit.

- A** made
- B** let
- C** had
- D** caused

9 They appear ____ resolved the dispute before the arbitration panel convened.

- A** to have
- B** having
- C** to had
- D** have

10 Not until the evidence was presented ____ the committee finally acknowledge the scale of the problem.

- A** did they have to
- B** had they
- C** they have
- D** have they had

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

11 By the time the investigators arrived, the suspect ____ the country.

- A** had already left
- B** has already left
- C** was already leaving

12 She ____ her driving licence renewed before she could legally operate the vehicle.

- A** had to have
- B** had to get
- C** has had to have

13 I would rather ____ a candid conversation now than face a bigger problem later.

- A** have
- B** had
- C** having

14 The committee ____ the report finalised before the board meeting next Friday.

- A** will have had
- B** will have
- C** is having

15 He ____ a complete breakdown if the merger negotiations fall through.

- A** could have
- B** could had
- C** could be having

16 The architect ____ the building plans approved by two separate regulatory bodies before construction could begin.

- A** had to have
- B** had to be having
- C** had had

17 Looking back, I ____ invested in that company — it turned out to be enormously profitable.

- A** should have
- B** should had
- C** ought have

18 The professor insisted that every student ____ their thesis submitted by the end of the semester.

- A** have
- B** had
- C** has

19 She ____ her manuscript edited by a professional before submitting it to the publisher.

- A** had
- B** got
- C** made

20 He ____ no choice but to resign after the scandal became public.

- A** had
- B** has had
- C** was having

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 By the time the inspector arrived, the suspect _____ all the evidence.

22 She _____ on that research paper for over six months and still hasn't finished.

23 The committee insisted that every delegate _____ a copy of the revised agenda before the session began.

24 We could _____ the crisis had management listened to the early warning signs.

25 The journalist is said to _____ a major scandal involving several high-ranking officials.

26 You _____ me earlier — I had no idea the deadline had been moved.

27 Having _____ her application, she felt an enormous sense of relief wash over her.

28 The new policy will _____ effect by the end of the fiscal year.

29 It is essential that each participant _____ sufficient time to review the contract before signing.

30 She needn't _____ to the airport; the flight was delayed by three hours.

Answer Key & Explanations

Usage of HAVE | C1

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **C** Correct Answer: had had ✓ Explanation: In the past perfect, we use had + past participle. Since have is both the main verb and the auxiliary here, the structure requires had had — the first had is the auxiliary and the second is the past participle of have.
2. **B** Correct Answer: having ✓ Explanation: After prepositions like on, we must use the gerund (-ing form). The causative structure having something done means arranging for someone else to do it, so having her work reviewed is grammatically correct.
3. **A** Correct Answer: had better have ✓ Explanation: The fixed expression had better is used to give strong advice or warnings, always followed by the bare infinitive. Had better does not change with the subject, making has better incorrect.
4. **B** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: After verbs like recommend followed by a that-clause, the subjunctive mood requires the base form of the verb regardless of subject. Therefore, every applicant have is correct in formal English.
5. **A** Correct Answer: had had ✓ Explanation: This is a third conditional sentence expressing a hypothetical past situation. The structure is if + past perfect, so had had is correct — had as the auxiliary and had as the causative verb meaning caused something to be done.
6. **C** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: The causative have structure — have + object + past participle — is used when a subject arranges for something to be done by someone else. Had the premises searched correctly implies the investigators arranged the search.
7. **A** Correct Answer: should have ✓ Explanation: Should have + past participle is used to express criticism or regret about a past action that did not happen. Should have known better implies he failed to exercise expected judgment.
8. **C** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: The causative have construction — have + object + past participle — is the most natural and formal way to express that someone arranged for a task to be completed by others. Had the documents translated fits this pattern precisely.
9. **A** Correct Answer: to have ✓ Explanation: After verbs like appear, the perfect infinitive — to have + past participle — is used to indicate an action completed before the time of speaking. Appear to have resolved correctly conveys that the resolution happened earlier.
10. **B** Correct Answer: had they ✓ Explanation: When a sentence begins with a negative adverbial like not until, subject-auxiliary inversion is required. The correct inversion in this past context uses had + subject, producing Not until the evidence was presented had they finally acknowledged.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: had already left Explanation: The past perfect (had + past participle) is required here because the suspect's departure happened before another past event (the investigators' arrival). By the time they arrived, he had already left.
12. **A** Correct Answer: had to have Explanation: The structure had to have + object + past participle expresses a causative obligation in the past — someone else performed the action on her behalf. She had to have her licence renewed means she arranged for it to be done.
13. **A** Correct Answer: have Explanation: After would rather, the bare infinitive is used. Have here means to conduct or to hold a conversation. I would rather have a candid conversation now.
14. **A** Correct Answer: will have had Explanation: The future perfect (will have + past participle) describes an action that will be completed before a specific future point. Will have had the report finalised uses the causative have + object + past participle in a future perfect context.
15. **A** Correct Answer: could have Explanation: Could have + noun phrase expresses a possible future outcome in a conditional context. He could have a complete breakdown means it is possible he will experience one. Could had is grammatically incorrect.
16. **A** Correct Answer: had to have Explanation: Had to have + object + past participle is the causative modal structure in the past, indicating an obligation for someone else to perform an action. Had to have the plans approved means the approval was carried out by others.
17. **A** Correct Answer: should have Explanation: Should have + past participle expresses regret or criticism about a past action that did not happen. I should have invested implies I did not, but wish I had. Should had and ought have are both grammatically incorrect.
18. **A** Correct Answer: have Explanation: After verbs of insistence such as insisted that, the subjunctive mood requires the base form of the verb regardless of the subject. That every student have is the correct subjunctive form, not had or has.
19. **A** Correct Answer: had Explanation: The causative have structure (have + object + past participle) means she arranged for someone else to edit her manuscript. While got is also used causatively, the most formal and idiomatic choice at C1 level here is had. Made requires a bare infinitive, not a past participle.
20. **A** Correct Answer: had Explanation: The expression have no choice but to in the simple past (had) is appropriate here because the situation is clearly a completed past event. Was having is incorrect as have in this idiomatic sense is a stative verb and does not take progressive forms.

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **had already destroyed|had destroyed** Correct Answer: had already destroyed ✓ Explanation: The past perfect (had + past participle) is required here to show that one past action — destroying the evidence — was completed before another past action — the inspector's arrival. The adverb already reinforces this sequence.
22. **has been working|'s been working** Correct Answer: has been working ✓ Explanation: The present perfect continuous (have/has been + -ing) is used to emphasise the ongoing duration of an activity that started in the past and continues into the present. The phrase for over six months confirms this duration.
23. **have** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: After verbs of insistence, recommendation, or requirement such as insisted that, English uses the subjunctive mood, which requires the base form have (not has) for all subjects, including third-person singular.
24. **have prevented|have avoided** Correct Answer: have prevented ✓ Explanation: Could have + past participle expresses an unrealised past ability or possibility — something that was possible but did not happen. The inverted conditional had management listened confirms this is a third conditional structure.
25. **have uncovered** Correct Answer: have uncovered ✓ Explanation: When a reporting structure like is said to refers to an action that happened before the reporting time, the perfect infinitive (to have + past participle) is required to show that the uncovering occurred in the past.
26. **should have informed|should have told** Correct Answer: should have informed ✓ Explanation: Should have + past participle is used to express criticism or regret about a past action that did not happen. It implies the speaker believes informing them earlier was the correct course of action.
27. **submitted** Correct Answer: submitted ✓ Explanation: The structure Having + past participle forms a perfect participle clause, indicating that the action of submitting was completed before the main clause action (feeling relief). It functions like a past perfect in condensed form.
28. **have taken** Correct Answer: have taken ✓ Explanation: Will have + past participle forms the future perfect, used to describe an action that will be completed before a specific future point in time. Here, by the end of the fiscal year marks that future deadline.
29. **have** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: After expressions such as it is essential that, the present subjunctive requires the base form of the verb for all subjects. Therefore, have — not has — is grammatically correct regardless of the subject.
30. **have rushed** Correct Answer: have rushed ✓ Explanation: Needn't have + past participle expresses that a past action was unnecessary but was actually performed. It differs from didn't need to, which merely states the action was not necessary without implying it was done.

Score Guide

27–30 Correct	Excellent! You have mastered this topic.
23–26 Correct	Very good! Review the rules you missed.
18–22 Correct	Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples.
0–17 Correct	Study the lesson again before retaking the test.