

## Grammar – Possession

### How to Use 'Have' and 'Have Got' – Info Page

We use the verb forms **have** and **have got** to talk about **possession**:

	have:	have got:
<i>ownership</i>	I have a new bike.	I have got (I've got) a new bike.
<i>relationships</i>	I have two brothers.	I have got (I've got) two brothers.
<i>personal attributes</i>	He has brown hair.	He has got (He's got) brown hair.
<i>illnesses</i>	She has a cold.	She has got (She's got) a cold.
<i>timetabled events</i>	I have a meeting today.	I have got (I've got) a meeting today.

<i>Positive:</i>	I have a new bike.	I have got (I've got) a new bike.
<i>Negative:</i>	I do not (don't) have a new bike.	I have not (haven't) got a new bike.
<i>Yes / No Questions:</i>	Do you have a new bike?	Have you got a new bike?
	Yes, I do. / No, I don't.	Yes, I have. / No, I haven't.
<i>Wh- Questions:</i>	What do you have? / A new bike.	What have you got? / A new bike.

'Have' and 'have got' both generally mean the same thing, although 'have' is more common in **American English** and 'have got' is more common in **British English**. One reason for this may be that 'have got' provides stronger sentence stress than 'have', which is preferred in British English. For example:

have:                    /        /  
He has a new car.

'Has' tends to be unstressed or lightly stressed. We do not hear the rhythm that is familiar in British English:

have got:                /        /        /  
He's got a new car.

'Got' provides a strong stress, before the weak stressed article 'a', followed by two strong stresses 'new car', creating a satisfying 'up and down' rhythm more typical of British English.

Additionally, we can say that 'have' is more **formal** and used in **written English** more often, while 'have got' is more **informal** and used in **spoken English** more frequently.

*Note: in the categories above, **have got** is a present perfect form, but with a present simple meaning. It is therefore an anomaly in English. It is neither present simple nor present perfect, but rather an adjunct to present simple that is only used in regular time in the present for possession (states) rather than actions.*

Here are some of the **errors** that often occur with this topic:

Error:	Rule:	Correction:
1. I am having a bike.	'Have' for possession is a state verb, so no continuous tense.	I have a bike.
2. I've a car.	'Have' cannot be contracted because then there is no main verb.	I have a car.
3. I have got fun on holiday.	'Have got' cannot be used for actions, only states.	I have fun on holiday.
4. I got a car.	This is considered slang.	I have got a car.
5. Do you got a car?	Auxiliary verbs cannot be mixed.	Do you have...? / Have you got...?
6. Have you got a car? / Yes, I do.	Auxiliary verbs should match in the question and answer.	Do you have a car? / Yes, I do. Have you got a car? / Yes, I have.
7. I usually have got a meeting at one.	'Have got' cannot be used with regular events, e.g. with adverbs of frequency.	I usually have a meeting at one.
8. I had got a bike.	We only use 'have got' in the present.	I have got a bike.