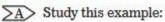
English Grammar in Use (Intermediate Level)

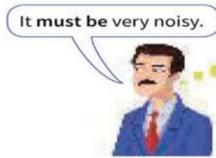
Unit

must and can't



My house is very near the motorway.







We use must to say that we 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.

We use can't to say that we believe something is not possible:

- You've just had lunch. You can't be hungry already.
 (we don't expect people to be hungry immediately aft er a meal)
- They haven't lived here for very long. They can't know many people.

The structure is:

you/she/they (etc.)	must can't	<pre>be (tired / hungry / at work etc.) be -ing (doing / going / joking etc.) get / know / have etc.</pre>
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have gone out.



Martin and Lucy expected their friends to be at home.

They rang the doorbell twice, but nobody has answered. Lucy says:

They **must have gone** out. (= there is no other possibility)

For the past we use must have ... and can't have ...:

- I lost one of my gloves. I must have dropped it somewhere.
 (that's the only explanation I can think of)
- "We used to live very near the motorway." 'Did you? It must have been noisy."
- Sarah hasn't contacted me. She can't have got my message.
- Max walked into a wall. He can't have been looking where he was going.

The structure is:

I/you/he (etc.)	must can't	have	been (asleep / at work etc.) been -ing (doing / looking etc.) gone / got / known etc.
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You can use couldn't have instead of can't have:

- Sarah couldn't have got my message.
- Max couldn't have been looking where he was going.