

## Here is Audio Word Study #084 on DailyStep.com

In today's Word Study, I'll explain **how to use the modal verbs MUST and CAN'T when you are expressing logical conclusions in English**. Let's take a closer look at some of the structures in the story above, **Harry must be crazy!**

Here are Harry's first two thoughts when he wakes up in the police cell, and then **in purple font**, another way of expressing each of those thoughts.

- 1. I must be dreaming.** = **The logical conclusion is that I am dreaming.**
- 2. I can't be dreaming.** = **The logical conclusion is that I am not dreaming.**

In sentence 1, Harry uses **MUST + BARE INFINITIVE** to express **a positive logical conclusion**. In other words, he concludes that something is happening now so he uses **MUST + BARE PRESENT CONTINUOUS INFINITIVE**, in other words, MUST + BE DREAMING. "I must be dreaming!"

In sentence 2, Harry uses **CAN'T + BARE INFINITIVE** to express **a negative logical conclusion**. He concludes that something is **not** happening now, so he uses **CAN'T + BARE PRESENT CONTINUOUS INFINITIVE**, in other words, CAN'T + BE DREAMING. "I can't be dreaming!"

By the way, a BARE INFINITIVE is an INFINITIVE without TO. I will teach you more about how to use infinitives and modals in a blog coming soon, but for now, let's focus only on how to use MUST and CAN'T.

Here are Harry's second two thoughts when he wakes up in the police cell, and then **in purple font**, another way of expressing each of those thoughts.

- 3. I must have drunk too much last night.** = **The logical conclusion is that I drank too much last night.**
- 4. I can't have drunk too much last night.** = **The logical conclusion is that I did not drink too much last night.**

In sentence 3, Harry uses **MUST + BARE INFINITIVE** to express a positive logical conclusion. He concludes that something happened in the past, so he uses **MUST + BARE PERFECT INFINITIVE**, in other words, MUST + HAVE DRUNK. "I must have drunk too much last night!"

In sentence 4, Harry uses **CAN'T + BARE INFINITIVE** to express a negative logical conclusion about the past. He concludes that something did not happen in the past, so he uses **CAN'T + BARE PERFECT INFINITIVE**, in other words, CAN'T + HAVE DRUNK. "I can't have drunk too much."

**Now, listen to more examples of Harry's logical conclusions, and this time listen carefully to the pronunciation of the word HAVE in the bare perfect infinitive.**

**5 .** It was their second date and things were going well but **something must have gone wrong** during the meal.

**6 . The doctor can't have mentioned** that it was dangerous to mix the painkillers with alcohol and **Harry must have forgotten to read** the instructions on the packet.

**7. Mavis must have been so embarrassed.** Will she ever forgive me?

**What did you notice about the pronunciation of HAVE?** Or did you even hear the word at all? English speaking children often think, until they are corrected at school, that the word is OF, so they say, for example, HE MUST OF DONE IT, or HE CAN'T OF DONE IT. But in fact the pronunciation is even weaker than OF. We say it like this:

**mʌst əv dʌn ɪt = must have done it.**

**kɑːnt əv dʌn ɪt = can't have done it.**

**For this reason, it is often easy to miss these structures when you are listening to native English speakers.** Subscribers to our DailyStep Audio lessons sometimes ask me if the word has been omitted completely, because they can't hear it in the sentence. But this is the way we actually speak, so keep practising with your DailyStep lessons and you will find that you don't make these mistakes again!

Now, read and listen to this Audio Word Study again, and try speaking along with the audio file. That's all for **Audio Word Study #084 on DailyStep.com**.

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