

1.4 Have you thought of the verb 'have'...

How many times do you use the verb 'have' in your conversation or writing? Try to keep a count of it for an hour or so. What do you find?

Perhaps you have always thought of this versatile verb as an auxiliary verb or a helping verb as we call it. The helping verb 'have' is used to form what we call perfect tenses. (They *have come*! I *had* clean *forgotten* all about it!) and to make negative sentences (They *haven't come*. I *hadn't forgotten* it). But as a main verb, it is used to mean much more than you think!

Here are a few examples we use very frequently:

❁ In the following sentences, 'have' indicates possession or ownership of something:

1. My friend has a pet cat. (possession)
2. I have a new pen.
3. Do you have a cycle?
4. Our school has six computers. (ownership)
5. The Municipality has six vans and two cars.

❁ We also use have to refer to events, activities and experiences:

1. I am going to have a bath in the river.
2. Let us have a party for your birthday.
3. The class has a short break at 11AM.
4. Did you have a good time at the wedding?
5. I have a meeting this evening.

❁ In some cases, 'have' is used to indicate relationships:

1. I have two sisters.
2. The couple do not have children.
3. I don't have a brother.

❁ We also use have to refer to eating or drinking:

1. We have breakfast at 8 am.
2. Have a slice of cake.
3. What would you like to have – tea or coffee?
4. Can I have a glass of water, please?

❁ Have is also used to refer to a medical/physical condition:

1. I have a headache.
2. He has a cold.
3. Grandfather had a heart attack.

In sentences where 'have' is used as a main verb, it is always used in the simple present or past. The present continuous form is not used in such cases. We do not say –

- I am having a bicycle. **X**
- He is having a cold. **X**
- I am having a lot of homework. **X**

Similarly, it is not used in the negative form as a main verb.

- He hasn't a car. **X**
- I haven't a cold. **X**

To indicate the negative, we use the auxiliary 'do' along with the main verb 'have'.

- He doesn't have a car.
- I don't have a cold.

Have fun exploring the uses of 'have'!

■ ■ ■ ENGLISH WORKSHOP ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

1. Add your own sentences to those given in the passage to illustrate the uses of 'have'.
 - (a) To show possession
 - (b) To indicate relationship
 - (c) To refer to eating/drinking
 - (d) To show ownership
 - (e) To refer to events, activities and experiences
 - (f) To refer to a physical condition
2. Look up the following verbs in a good dictionary. List at least 20 different uses of each. You may include their use with different prepositions, adverbs, and in idioms.

