

have got

English A1

What this topic teaches

Chinese uses for two jobs: existence (有) and possession (有). Topic 5 covered existence with *there is*. Possession has its own tool: **have got**.

- *I have got a cat.* = . The cat is mine.
- British English loves *have got*; American English usually drops the *got* and just says *I have a cat*. Both are correct; *have got* is the friendlier, more spoken form.
- Memory hook: *got* is a decoration, not a past tense. *I have got* talks about **now**, not the past. The *got* just sits there looking busy.
- △ *I have got a cat* does not mean “I went and obtained a cat.” It means the cat exists in my life right now, probably sleeping on my homework.

The forms: have and has

Person	Full form	Short form
I / you / we / they	have got	've got
he / she / it	has got	's got

- *I've got two brothers. She's got a new phone. We've got a problem.*
- △ Third person changes *have* to *has*: *he has got*, never *he have got*. The same *he/she/it* rule from *is* – third person singular always wants special treatment.
- The short forms *'ve got* and *'s got* are everywhere in speech. “*I've got an idea*” is how half of all British conversations begin.

Negatives and questions

- Negative: *have/has + not + got*: *I haven't got any money. She hasn't got a car.*
- Question: flip *have/has* to the front: *Have you got a pen? Has he got my keys?*
- Short answers: *Yes, I have.* / *No, I haven't.* Note: the answer drops *got* – *Yes, I have.* Saying “*Yes, I have got*” sounds like you are answering a police interview.
- – *Have you got any brothers or sisters?*

have or have got?

Situation	Form	Example
everyday British speech	have got	I've got a headache.
American English, formal writing	have	I have a question.
possession, family, illness, features	both work	He's got two sisters. / He has two sisters.

- *have got* also covers more than owning: family (*I've got two brothers*), illness (*She's got a cold*), and features (*The house has got a garden*).
- △ For habits and repeated actions, use plain *have*, not *have got*: *I have lunch at twelve* ✓, *I have got lunch at twelve* ×. Owning lunch is fine; repeatedly possessing it at noon is weird.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- △ **No *do* with *have got*.** The question is *Have you got a pen?* – never “*Do you have got a pen?*” *Do* belongs to the American version: *Do you have a pen?* Two systems, both correct; just don't blend them into a grammar smoothie.
- △ **Third person: *has*.** – *He has got two older brothers.* *He have got* is the classic slip.
- △ ***got* is not the past here.** *I've got ten yuan* means I own it now. Yesterday's money is a different topic and, honestly, a sad one.
- △ **Don't drop *have*.** “*I got a cat*” in British English sounds like the cat arrived this morning, possibly by post. In American speech it is common slang, but in your exam, keep the *have*.

Say it aloud

Interview a partner. Real answers only.

- Have you got any brothers or sisters? – Yes, I have. I've got one sister.
- Has your best friend got a pet? – No, they haven't. Their goldfish left us.
- Have you got a pen I can borrow? – Yes, I have. It costs one smile.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *She _____ got a new phone.* – **has**. Third person singular takes *has*, like it takes *is*.
2. Question form of *You have got a pen.* – **Have you got a pen?** Flip *have* forward; no *do* allowed.
3. *Have you got any brothers?* – **Yes, I have.** The short answer drops *got*.
4. *Wǒ yǒu yì zhī māo* – **I have got a cat.** (Or *I have a cat*, American style.) Possession, right now, no time travel.
5. *I _____ lunch at twelve every day.* – **have**. Habits take plain *have*; *have got* is for possession, not routines.