

Have got to

The structure have to / have got to is used to talk about obligation. The meaning is similar to must.

I have got to there before 6 o'clock.

I often have to travel on business.

I have got to go now.

Have got to can also be used to talk about certainty. This use of have got to is common in American English.

You have got to be joking. (= You must be joking.)

In this structure have can be used like an ordinary verb or like an auxiliary verb. When have is used like an ordinary verb, we make questions and negatives with do.

I have to go now.

Do you have to go now?

I don't have to go now.

When have is used like an auxiliary verb, we make questions and negatives without do.

I have got to go now.

Have you got to go now?

I haven't got to go now.

We don't use have (got) to to talk about a purely future obligation. Instead, we use will have to.

I have got to get up early tomorrow – I have a meeting at 8 am. (The obligation exists now.)

One day you will have to get permission to build houses. (Future obligation that doesn't exist now.)