

CAUSATIVES

When we arrange for somebody else to do something for us:

To have someone do something

I had the mechanic repair my car

To have something done

I had my hair cut yesterday

To get someone to do something

I got the mechanic to repair my car

To get something done

I got my car fixed on Monday

Let / Make / Have / Get

- **Let** FORM: [let + person + bare infinitive]
This construction means "to allow someone to do something." *Will your parents let you go to the party?*
John let me drive his new car. I don't know whether my boss will let me take the day off.

We do not normally use let in the passive voice - Allow and permit are often used in the passive voice.

I wasn't allowed to go out Children should not be allowed / permitted to watch television after 9 o' clock.

- **Make** FORM: [make + person + bare infinitive]
This construction means "to force someone to do something." *My teacher made me apologize for what I had said. Did somebody make you wear that ugly hat? She made her children do their homework.*

We can also use make in the passive voice, but in this case to before the infinitive is needed:

He had done so badly that he was made to repeat the school year. He had borrowed over five hundred pounds and was made to pay it back in monthly instalments

- **Have** FORM: [have + person + bare infinitive] *I had the mechanic check the brakes.*
This construction means "to give someone the responsibility to do something/to ask."
Dr. Smith had his nurse take the patient's temperature. Please have your secretary fax me the information.
- **Get** FORM: [get + person + to + verb]
This construction usually means "to convince someone to do something" or "to trick someone into doing something."
Susie got her son to take the medicine even though it tasted terrible. - How can parents get their children to read more? - TV commercials are trying to get people to stop smoking.

Get vs. Have

Sometimes "get someone to do something" is interchangeable with "have someone do something," but these expressions do not mean exactly the same thing.

I got the mechanic to check my brakes. (THE MECHANIC DIDN'T THINK IT WAS NECESSARY, BUT I CONVINCED HIM TO.)

I had the mechanic check my brakes. (I ASKED THE MECHANIC TO CHECK THE BRAKES.)

- **Have/get something done**
If you 'have something done', you want somebody else to do something for you.
I'm going to have my hair cut. - She's having her house painted - I'm having a copy of the report sent to you
The differences between have and get something done are that have is slightly more formal than get, and that get is more frequent than have in the imperative form.
I really must get my eyes tested. I'm sure I need glasses. - Get your hair cut!

Unfortunate events

If the verb refers to something negative or unwanted, it has the same meaning as a passive sentence:

Jim had his car stolen last night. (= Jim's car was stolen)

They had their roof blown off in the storm. (= Their roof was blown off in the storm)

The construction can refer to the completion of an activity, especially if a time expression is used:

We'll get the work done as soon as possible. - I'll get those letters typed before lunchtime.

We are more interested in the result of the activity than in the person or object that performs the activity.

Gap-fill Exercise - Complete the sentences below using the correct form of the verbs let/make/have/get

1. Sam really wanted a dog, but his parents wouldn't _____ him have a pet.
2. I can't believe she _____ you look at her vacation pictures again last night. We have to look at those stupid pictures every time we go to her house
3. I don't know how you convince your children to clean up their rooms. I couldn't _____ my children ? clean up their rooms if my life depended on it.
4. Professor Yu _____ her students use a dictionary while they were taking the test.
5. Debbie's husband hates the opera. But after days of nagging, she finally _____ him go and see the new production of La Boheme.
6. Sally _____ me? take off my shoes before I went into her house. She said she wanted to keep the carpet clean.
7. Rebecca Smith requested a copy of that expense report, so I _____ the courier ? take one over to her last week.
8. Marcus _____ me? drive his new BMW. I couldn't believe how quickly it picked up speed.
9. Tommy didn't want to go to his cousin's birthday party, but his mom _____ him ? go.
10. The contract was very detailed, and it was essential that the wording be absolutely correct. Therefore, I _____ the translator ? recheck his work several times to make sure there would be no misunderstandings.
11. Cheryl didn't want to wash her car, so with a little smooth talk she _____ her boyfriend? wash it for her.
12. Dr. Jackson _____ the nurse ? monitor the patient's condition overnight.
13. The news coverage of the recent tornado was incredibly moving. The interview with the little boy who lost his family in the tragedy _____ everyone? cry.

Fill the gaps with **have** and the verb in brackets in their correct forms.

1. We _____ the roof _____ last year. It cost us a packet. (repair)
2. Anne _____ her hair _____ every Friday afternoon. (do)
3. I _____ the brakes _____ three times a year. (check)
4. The government _____ the whole town _____ yesterday. (evacuate)
5. When did you last _____ the air-conditioning _____ ? (service)
6. Daphne _____ her legs _____ once a fortnight. (do)
7. I normally _____ my suit dry _____ once a month. (clean)
8. Have you _____ your house _____ ? (double-glaze)
9. Have you _____ that poster I bought you _____ yet? (frame)
10. The house is in chaos. We're _____ a new kitchen _____ in. (put)

KEY

1. Sam really wanted a dog, but his parents wouldn't **let** him **have** a pet.
2. I can't believe she **made** you **look** at her vacation pictures again last night. We have to look at those stupid pictures every time we go to her house.
3. I don't know how you convince your children to clean up their rooms. I couldn't **get** my children **to clean** up their rooms if my life depended on it.
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1. We **had** the roof repaired last year. It cost us a packet. (repair)
2. Anne has her hair **done** every Friday afternoon. (do)
3. I have the brakes **checked** three times a year. (check)
4. The government had the whole town **evacuated**. (evacuate)
5. When did you last have the air-conditioning **serviced**? (service)
6. Daphne has her legs **done** once a fortnight. (do)
7. I normally have my suit dry **cleaned** once a month. (clean)
8. Have you had your house **double-glazed**? (double-glaze)
9. Have you had that poster I bought you **framed** yet? (frame)
10. The house is in chaos. We're having a new kitchen **put** in at the moment. (put)