

# Causative verbs

## Definition

Causative verbs indicate that someone or something causes or enables something to happen.

## Construction

These verbs can be used in any tense, or with modal verbs, according to the usual rules. It is important to learn whether they are followed by the bare infinitive or the infinitive with 'to'.

Verb	Meaning	Construction
<b>let</b>	to allow something to happen by not preventing it, or by giving permission	Subject + causative verb + object + bare infinitive  My boss <b>lets</b> me <b>leave</b> early. I'm <b>letting</b> my hair <b>grow</b> long.
<b>have</b>	to arrange for someone to do something	I'll <b>have</b> my assistant <b>send</b> you a copy.
<b>make</b>	to compel someone to do something	They should <b>make</b> him <b>pay</b> for the damage.
<b>permit/allow</b>	to give permission to someone to do something – more formal than 'let'; often used in the passive	Subject + causative verb + object + infinitive  The company <b>permits</b> all staff <b>to take</b> unpaid leave in the winter.  They <b>allow</b> their children <b>to stay</b> out later at the weekend.
<b>get</b>	to arrange for or persuade someone to do something	I <b>got</b> my colleagues <b>to help</b> me.
<b>force</b>	to compel someone to do something; stronger than 'make', often implying violence or strong pressure	The robbers <b>forced</b> the bank staff <b>to hand over</b> the money.
<b>require</b>	to order someone to do something, especially because of a rule or law	The airline <b>requires</b> all passengers <b>to check</b> in two hours before the flight.
<b>want / would like</b>	to wish for something to happen	Gina <b>wants</b> Helen <b>to help</b> her. [Gina wants that I help her. ✗]  <b>Would</b> you <b>like</b> me <b>to come</b> with you? [Would you like that I come with you? ✗]
<b>help</b>	to make it possible or easier for someone to do something	Subject + 'help' + object + bare infinitive <u>or</u> infinitive  She <b>helped</b> me <b>(to) carry</b> the bags. [more common without 'to']

Note that some passive forms are also possible. For example:



- At school, we **were made to eat** all our vegetables.
- All visitors **are required to show** a valid form of ID.

## Uses

There are various uses depending on the meaning of the verb. It is also important to note that the verbs in the table above might also have other meanings, and be used with other structures.

## 'To have someone do something' or 'to get someone to do something'?

These are very similar but 'get' is more informal. Also, there can be a subtle difference in the meaning. 'Have' often means that someone uses their authority in order to make something happen:

- The manager **had** the technician **fix** the problem right away.

And 'get' can suggest an element of persuasion.

- I **got** Kevin to **represent** me at the meeting.

## To have/get something done

This structure is also a form of the causative. The focus is often on the action rather than the person who does it.

### Construction

'to have'/'to get'	object + past participle
to have/get	the windows cleaned

'Have' and 'get' mean the same but 'get' is more informal. There are other subtle differences between them. This form has various uses – here are some examples:

Uses	Examples
Solving a problem	I need to <b>have/get</b> my brakes fixed.
Paying someone to do something	We <b>had the</b> new ingredient <b>tested</b> and <b>certified</b> . ['had' is more common in the past]
When something negative happens, not arranged by us	I <b>had</b> my car <b>stolen</b> last week.

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Last update: 2023/02/14 14:32

