

# To get



It's **getting** late. Let's stop reading now and **get** you to bed.

## Definition

The verb 'to get' has many different meanings and uses. For example:<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

You've **got** to **get** a ticket to **get** on the bus to **get** to town to **get** some scissors to **get** a haircut!

## Construction

Present simple: get(s)<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

Present participle: getting

Past simple and past participle: got

## Uses

1. **As a main verb with a variety of meanings. It is commonly used in conversation and sounds much more natural than standard verbs.**

Meaning	Examples
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<b>To become</b>	<p>She was ill last week but she's <b>getting</b> better now.</p> <p>He <b>got</b> rich when he started his own business.</p>
<b>To obtain or acquire</b>	<p>I need to <b>get</b> a new laptop - this one's so slow.</p> <p>We're <b>getting</b> a new manager.</p>
<b>To receive</b>	<p>Did you <b>get</b> a reply to your email?</p> <p>We <b>got</b> a lot of complaints about the new system.</p>
<b>To bring, fetch or take</b>	<p>I'll just <b>get</b> a pen from my office and I'll join you in a minute.</p> <p>I need to <b>get</b> a message to George - are you seeing him later?</p>
<b>To take or catch [transport]</b>	<p>I always <b>get</b> a bus to work.</p> <p>We're <b>getting</b> a taxi to the airport - it's more expensive but quicker.</p>
<b>With prepositions of place - to go and/or arrive at a location or state</b>	<p>How can I <b>get</b> to the station?</p> <p>We didn't <b>get</b> out of the meeting until 7 o'clock.</p> <p>She <b>got</b> into trouble for arguing with the boss.</p>
<b>With gerunds - to start doing something</b>	<p>Let's <b>get</b> going or we'll be late.</p> <p>I met a nice Englishman at the conference and we <b>got</b> talking about football.</p>
<b>To understand</b>	<p>I don't <b>get</b> it. Why do we have to start so early?</p> <p>Now do you <b>get</b> why it's so important?</p>
<b>To contract an illness or disease</b>	<p>I think I'm <b>getting</b> a cold.</p> <p>She <b>got</b> flu last winter and couldn't work for two weeks.</p>
<b>With the infinitive - to be able or allowed to or have an opportunity to do something</b>	<p>We went to Paris but didn't <b>get</b> to see an opera - everything was fully booked.</p> <p>We started at 6 o'clock this morning so we <b>get</b> to leave early.</p>
<b>To cause something to be done</b>	<p>I'll <b>get</b> it finished by tomorrow.</p> <p>Can you <b>get</b> this calculator to work? I've tried but I can't.</p>

Where possible, we should avoid 'get' in very formal writing. Instead, use a standard verb or alternative expression. For example:

Informal	Formal
We <b>got</b> some new desks and chairs.	We <b>bought</b> some new desks and chairs.
We'll <b>get</b> to talk to him next week.	We will have an opportunity to talk to him next week.
We should <b>get</b> moving.	We should <b>act</b> now.
She's <b>getting</b> better at speaking English.	Her spoken English is <b>improving</b> .

2. 'Got' with 'have' as an alternative to:

a) 'have' for possession:

I have a red car. I've **got** a red car.

b) 'have to' for necessity:

I have to go to the dentist tomorrow. I've **got** to go to the dentist tomorrow.

3. As part of a phrasal verb. There are lots of phrasal verbs that are formed with get. Here are a few examples:

Phrasal verb	Meaning	Examples
get by	to manage or cope with limited resources	Two people are off sick at the moment but we're <b>getting by</b> .  I have to <b>get by</b> on a much lower salary nowadays.
get through	1. to finish doing something  2. to use or finish a supply of something  4. To connect with someone on the phone	I don't think I'll <b>get through</b> all these emails today.  We <b>get through</b> a lot of coffee in our office.  I tried to call you but I couldn't <b>get through</b> .
get on	1. to have a good relationship  2. to enter a bus, train or some other forms of transport	We're <b>getting on</b> well with the new boss. Do your children <b>get on</b> ? Mine don't at all!  We <b>got on</b> the train at 11.00 but it didn't leave the station until 11.30.

<b>get out of something</b>	<b>To avoid doing something</b>	<b>I really don't want to go to the meeting tomorrow but I don't know how to <b>get out of</b> it.</b>  <b>I <b>got out of</b> doing the presentation because an important client called.</b>
<b>get away with something</b>	<b>To evade detection, punishment or other consequences</b>	<b>She's always making personal calls - the boss shouldn't let her <b>get away with</b> it.</b>  <b>It's not fair that some people <b>get away with</b> not paying tax.</b>
<b>get on to something</b>	<b>To begin doing or talking about something</b>	<b>In the UK, we <b>get on to</b> first name terms quite quickly.</b>  <b>Let's <b>get on to</b> the next item.</b>
<b>get up</b>	<b>to leave one's bed</b>	<b>I usually <b>get up</b> at 6.30.</b>  <b>I <b>got up</b> late yesterday and missed the bus.</b>

**Note that like a lot of other phrasal verbs, some of these have more than one meaning.**

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