

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 |
|---------|----------|
|---------|----------|

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

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 getting by . I have to get by 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 get through all these emails today. We get through a lot of coffee in our office. I tried to call you but I couldn't get through . |
| get on | 1. to have a good relationship 2. to enter a bus, train or some other forms of transport | We're getting on well with the new boss. Do your children get on ? Mine don't at all! We got on the train at 11.00 but it didn't leave the station until 11.30. |

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

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

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Last update: 2023/02/14 14:21

