


# HAVE, GET, MAKE, LET, HELP - CAUSATIVE VERBS

## GRAMMAR LESSON & QUIZ

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We use **causative verbs** to say that someone or something causes something to happen. We can use them in the past, present or future.

To change the tense of the sentence, only the causative verb changes.

### 1 Have

As a causative verb, we use **have** to say that someone does something for us. We generally use this construction when we pay someone to perform a service.

The structure is **subject + have + object + past participle**.

#### In the present:

- Ben **has** his house cleaned.
- Gary loves **having** his photo taken.

#### In the past:

- I **had** my hair cut.
- Tara **had** her car repaired.

#### In the future:

- We **will have** our new flat painted.
- I **am going to have** these documents translated.

We can replace **have** with **get** in informal sentences. The meaning and the grammar don't change.

- I love **getting** my photo taken.
- Sarah **got** her hair cut.
- We're **going to get** our new flat painted.

In all of these sentences, the subject doesn't perform the action, someone else does it. We often **don't say who does the action**, either because it is obvious or it isn't important. This is the same as when we use the passive voice.

## 2 Have (2)

The second way we use **have** as a causative verb is very similar to the first but in this way, we say who does the action. It doesn't have to be for a paid service but it can be.

The structure is **subject + have + person + infinitive**.

### In the present:

- Sue **is having** her cleaner sweep the garage.
- The teacher **has** his students write an essay every Friday.

### In the past:

- I **had** my children clean their rooms.

### In the future:

- I **will have** Jane call you.

Remember to use the infinitive after the person. Don't conjugate the verb!

*Want to learn more about the verb have? Watch my video on 10 English Expressions with HAVE by clicking on the link in the description box of the video for this PDF!*

## 3 Get

When you get someone to do something, you persuade them to do something.

The structure of a causative sentence with **get** is **subject + get + person + to infinitive**.

### In the present

- My dad **gets** all his friends to help him bake the cakes for the weekly bake sale.



### In the past

- I **got** my son to cook dinner because I was tired.
- Helen **got** the mechanic to check the whole engine.

### In the future

- They **will get** a professional to check their speech before the event.

## 4 Make

The causative verb make is used to say that we force someone or something to do something. We use make with the structure **subject + make + object + infinitive**.

- She **made** me watch a horror film.
- I **make** my children do their homework before dinner.

In the first sentence, we understand that the person didn't want to watch the horror film and in the second, that the children don't want to do their homework before dinner – or maybe at all!

### In the present:

- I **make** people take off their shoes when they come to my house.

### In the past:

- My parents **made** me call him to apologise.

### In the future:

- I know my teacher **will make** me rewrite this essay.

## 5 Let

When we use let as a causative verb, we mean that we give someone permission to do something or we allow something to happen. The structure is **subject + let + object + infinitive**.

- My parents **let** their grandchildren stay up as late as they want.
- I **let** the grass grow very long and now it's hard to cut it.

The first sentence involves an active decision to give the children permission to stay up. The second sentence means we allow something to happen, but we didn't make an active decision about it.

**In the present:**

- I don't **let** my children have sugary drinks.

**In the past:**

- My parents **didn't let** me take the train alone until I was 12.

**In the future:**

- The teacher **will let** the students watch a film during their last lesson

## 6 Help

Help means to assist someone. The structure when we use help as a causative verb is **subject + help + object + (to) infinitive**. We can create sentences with or without to and the meaning doesn't change. It's more common to create sentences without to.

**In the present:**

- Music **helps** me to fall asleep.
- My extra lessons **help** me pass tests at school.

**In the past:**

- I **helped** my friend move house.
- Alex **helped** her mum clean the flat.

**In the future:**

- My mum **will help** me decorate my flat.
- My grandfather **is going to help** me to learn to drive.



# Activity

Fill in the gaps with the correct form of have, get, make, let or help. Use each word only once in each set of questions. Fill in the second gap with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ my tooth \_\_\_\_\_ (take) out yesterday.
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ my parents \_\_\_\_\_ (make) dinner tomorrow.
3. Ellen \_\_\_\_\_ her meals \_\_\_\_\_ (cook) by a personal chef.
4. I don't \_\_\_\_\_ my kids \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) sweet things for breakfast.
5. My teacher \_\_\_\_\_ us \_\_\_\_\_ (do) the test again because she thought we cheated.

1. Bob \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_ (call) all the managers to tell them the meeting was a success.
2. The coach \_\_\_\_\_ them \_\_\_\_\_ (run) around the field twice because they were late. They really didn't want to do it.
3. Pete always \_\_\_\_\_ the dishes \_\_\_\_\_ (pile) up in the sink because he hates washing up.
4. I \_\_\_\_\_ my carpets \_\_\_\_\_ (clean) when I moved in here.
5. Halle \_\_\_\_\_ her photos \_\_\_\_\_ (print) after her holiday next month.

printed

1. had, call 2. made, run 3. lets, pile, 4. had/got, cleaned, 5. will have/will get,

1. had/got, taken, 2. will help, make 3. has/gets, cooked 4. let, eat 5. is making, do

## The End