

Causative Verbs

Jack had his house painted.

This sentence is similar in meaning to: *Someone painted Jack's house.* OR *Jack's house was painted by someone.* Causative verbs express the idea of someone causing something to take place. Causative verbs can be similar in meaning to passive verbs.

Examples:

My hair was cut. (passive)

I had my hair cut. (causative)

Both 'make' and 'have' can be used as causative verbs.

Make

'Make' as a causative verb expresses the idea that the person requires another person to do something.

Construction Chart

Subject + Make + Person + Base Form of Verb

Examples:

Peter made her do her homework.

The teacher made the students stay after class.

Have

'Have' as a causative verb expresses the idea that the person wants something to be done for them. This causative verb is often used when speaking about various services. There are two forms of the causative verb 'have'.

Construction Chart: Use 1

Subject + Have + Person + Base Form of Verb

Examples:

They had John arrive early.

She had her children cook dinner for her.

Construction Chart: Use 2 Subject + Have + Object + Past Participle

Examples:

I had my hair cut last Saturday.

She had the car washed at the weekend.

Let / Make / Have / Get

The following is a mini-tutorial on the use of the causative verbs "let," "make," "have," and "get." After you have studied the tutorial, complete the associated exercises. If you already know how to use these verbs, you can skip the explanation and [go directly to the exercises](#).

Let

FORM

[let + person + verb]

USE

This construction means "to allow someone to do something."

Examples:

- John **let me drive** his new car.
- Will your parents **let you go** to the party?
- I don't know if my boss will **let me take** the day off.

Make

FORM

[make + person + verb]

USE

This construction means "to force someone to do something."

Examples:

- 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.

Have

FORM

[have + person + verb]

USE

This construction means "to give someone the responsibility to do something."

Examples:

- Dr. Smith **had his nurse take** the patient's temperature.
- Please **have your secretary fax** me the information.
- I **had the mechanic check** the brakes.

Get

FORM

[get + person + to + verb]

USE

This construction usually means "to convince to do something" or "to trick someone into doing something."

Examples:

- Susie **got her son to take** the medicine even though it tasted terrible.
- How can parents **get their children to read** more?
- The government 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.

Examples:

- I **got the mechanic to check** my brakes.
At first the mechanic didn't think it was necessary, but I convinced him to check the brakes.
- I **had the mechanic check** my brakes.
I asked the mechanic to check the brakes.

Let / Make / Have / Get

Gap-fill Exercise

Complete the sentences below using the correct form of the verbs "let," "make," "have," and "get," then click the "Check" button to check your answers.

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 to clean up their rooms if my life depended on it.

4. Professor Yu each of her students write an essay describing their future goals in life.

5. Professor Yu her students use a dictionary while they were taking the test.

6. Debbie's husband hates the opera. But after days of nagging, she finally him to go see the new production of La Boheme.

7. Sally me take off my shoes before I went into her house. She said she wanted to keep the carpet clean.

8. Rebecca Smith requested a copy of that expense report, so I the courier take one over to her last week.

9. Diane thinks television is a waste of time, so she won't her children watch TV.

10. Mr. Levine his secretary call Ms. Jackson and reconfirm their meeting on Thursday.

11. Marcus me drive his new BMW. I couldn't believe how quickly it picked up speed.

12. How did you the doctor to make a house call? I haven't heard of a doctor actually going to a patient's house in years.

13. My boss me get him coffee, pick up his dry cleaning and buy presents for his wife. He can't do anything by himself!

14. Tommy didn't want to go to his cousin's birthday party, but his mom him go.

15. I can't believe the zoo keeper you feed the snake. That was so cool!

16. 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.

17. Cheryl didn't want to wash her car, so with a little smooth talk she her boyfriend to wash it for her.

18. If you ask me nicely, I'll you lick the bowl after I make the cookies.

19. Dr. Jackson the nurse monitor the patient's condition overnight.

20. 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.