

Have/ Get something done

Grammar Lesson, Examples & 30 Practice Questions

Have / Get Something Done

Sometimes we do not do things ourselves — we ask another person to do them for us. In English, we use a special grammar structure to talk about this. It is called the **causative**, and we form it with **have something done** or **get something done**.

For example, imagine you do not cut your own hair. You go to a hairdresser and they cut it for you. In English, you say:

"I had my hair cut." or "I got my hair cut."

This structure tells us that **someone else** performed the action for you — you arranged it or paid for it, but you did not do it yourself.

In this lesson, we will look at:

- how to form **have / get something done**
- how to use it in different tenses
- the difference between **have** and **get**
- common mistakes to avoid

What Does "Have / Get Something Done" Mean?

Let's start with a simple situation to understand the meaning.

Situation 1: Mark fixes his own car.

→ *"Mark fixed his car."* (He did it himself.)

Situation 2: Mark takes his car to a mechanic and the mechanic fixes it.

→ *"Mark had his car fixed."* (Someone else did it for him.)

The key idea is this: **the subject arranges for someone else to perform the action**. The subject does not do the action themselves.

More examples:

- *"She had her nails done at the salon."* (A nail technician did her nails.)
- *"We got our house painted last summer."* (Painters painted the house for us.)
- *"He got his eyes tested."* (An optician tested his eyes.)

How to Form "Have / Get Something Done"

The structure follows a clear, fixed pattern. You need four parts:

Subject + have/get + object + past participle

Let's look at each part:

- **Subject** — the person who arranges the action (e.g., I, she, they, Mark)
- **have** or **get** — the causative verb (this changes tense)
- **object** — the thing that is affected (e.g., my hair, the car, her nails)
- **past participle** — the action performed (e.g., cut, fixed, painted, done)

Important: The **object** always comes **before** the past participle. Do not change this order.

Examples of the pattern:

- "I **had** my hair **cut**."
- "She **got** her phone **repaired**."
- "They **had** the windows **cleaned**."

Have / Get Something Done in Different Tenses

Only the verb **have** or **get** changes to show the tense. The **past participle** always stays the same.

Tense	Structure	Example
Present Simple	have/get + object + past participle	<i>She has her hair cut every month.</i>
Present Continuous	am/is/are having/getting + object + past participle	<i>I am having my car serviced right now.</i>
Past Simple	had/got + object + past participle	<i>We had the roof repaired last year.</i>
Past Continuous	was/were having/getting + object + past participle	<i>They were getting the kitchen renovated.</i>
Present Perfect	have/has had/got + object + past participle	<i>He has had his suit dry-cleaned.</i>
Past Perfect	had had/got + object + past participle	<i>She had had her teeth whitened before the wedding.</i>
Future Simple	will have/get + object + past participle	<i>I will have my eyes tested next week.</i>
Future with "going to"	am/is/are going to have/get + object + past participle	<i>We are going to get the fence painted.</i>
Modal Verbs	modal + have/get + object + past participle	<i>You should have your brakes checked.</i>

Negative and Question Forms

Negative Forms

To make a negative sentence, add **not** (or a contraction) after the auxiliary verb or after **did**. The rest of the structure stays the same.

Structure: Subject + do/does/did + not + have/get + object + past participle

- "She **doesn't have** her hair coloured."
- "We **didn't get** the car repaired in the end."
- "I **haven't had** my laptop fixed yet."
- "He **won't get** his tuxedo dry-cleaned before the party."

Question Forms

To make a question, move the auxiliary verb to the front of the sentence.

Structure: Do/Does/Did + subject + have/get + object + past participle?

- "**Do** you **have** your car serviced regularly?"
- "**Did** she **get** her nails done yesterday?"
- "**Have** they **had** the boiler checked?"
- "**When** did you **have** your hair cut?"

The Difference Between "Have" and "Get" Something Done

In most situations, **have something done** and **get something done** have the same meaning. However, there are some useful differences to know at B2 level.

	Have something done	Get something done
Register (formality)	More formal and neutral	More informal and conversational
Emphasis	Neutral — simply states the fact	Can suggest effort, difficulty, or achievement
Common contexts	Written English, professional situations	Spoken English, everyday situations

Examples showing register:

- "I *had* my report proofread before submission." (more formal)
- "I *got* my report proofread before submission." (more informal, same meaning)

Examples showing effort with "get":

- "I *finally got* my visa approved after three attempts." (suggests it was difficult)
- "We *need to get* this done by Friday." (suggests urgency or effort)

Note: In everyday speech, **get something done** is extremely common. Both forms are correct in most situations.

When Someone Does Something Unpleasant to You

We can also use **have something done** when something unpleasant happens to a person — something they did **not** arrange or want. In this case, there is **no agent doing it for them**; it simply happened to them.

Examples:

- "She had her bag stolen on the train." (Someone stole it — she did not arrange this.)
- "He had his window broken by a football." (It happened to him.)
- "They had their car broken into last night." (An unwanted event.)

The context makes it clear whether the meaning is *arranged by the subject* or *happened to the subject*. This use is less common with **get**, though it is possible in informal speech.

Mentioning the Agent (Who Did the Work)

Usually, we do not need to say who performed the action. However, if you want to be specific, you can add **by + agent** at the end of the sentence.

Structure: Subject + have/get + object + past participle + **by + agent**

- "She had her portrait painted **by a famous artist**."
- "We got the roof repaired **by a local builder**."
- "He had his accounts checked **by an external auditor**."

Only include the agent when the information is important or interesting to the listener.

Common Verbs Used with "Have / Get Something Done"

Here are some very common combinations you will hear and read in everyday English:

Object	Past Participle	Example
hair	cut / coloured / done	<i>I need to get my hair cut.</i>
car	serviced / repaired / washed	<i>She had her car serviced.</i>
house	painted / decorated / cleaned	<i>They are having their house decorated.</i>
eyes / teeth	tested / checked / whitened	<i>You should have your eyes tested.</i>
photos	taken / developed / printed	<i>We had our photos taken professionally.</i>
suit / dress	dry-cleaned / altered / tailored	<i>He got his suit dry-cleaned.</i>
passport / visa	renewed / processed / stamped	<i>I had my passport renewed last month.</i>
boiler / roof	repaired / replaced / installed	<i>We need to get the boiler replaced.</i>

Important Differences and Special Cases

Have / Get Something Done vs. Do Something Yourself

It is important to distinguish between doing something yourself and arranging for someone else to do it.

Compare:

- "I painted my bedroom." → I did it myself.
- "I had my bedroom painted." → Someone else painted it for me.
- "She cut her hair." → She cut it herself.
- "She had her hair cut." → A hairdresser cut it for her.

Have / Get Something Done vs. Make Someone Do Something

Both structures involve one person causing another to do something, but they work differently:

- **Have/get something done** focuses on the *result* and the *thing affected*.
→ "I had the report checked." (Focus: the report was checked.)
- **Make someone do something** focuses on the *person* who performs the action.
→ "I made my assistant check the report." (Focus: my assistant did it.)

Have / Get Something Done vs. Have Someone Do Something

There is a related but different structure: **have + person + base verb** (without "done").

- "I had the mechanic check the brakes." (have + person + base verb)
- "I had the brakes checked." (have + object + past participle)

Both sentences mean the same thing. The first names the person; the second focuses on the object. Both are correct.

Note: With **get** in this pattern, the person is followed by **to + infinitive**:

- "I got the mechanic **to check** the brakes."

Common Mistakes

✗ I had cut my hair at the salon.

✓ I had my hair cut at the salon. (The object must come before the past participle.)

✗ She got her car repair.

✓ She got her car repaired. (Always use the past participle, not the base form.)

✗ They had painted their house by a professional.

✓ They had their house painted by a professional. (The structure is have + object + past participle.)

✗ He got his tooth to fill at the dentist.

✓ He got his tooth filled at the dentist. (Use the past participle, not the infinitive.)

✗ I have my car service every year.

✓ I have my car serviced every year. (The past participle is required.)

✗ *Did she had her nails done?*

✓ **Did she have her nails done?** (After "did", use the base form of "have".)

✗ *We got repaired the roof.*

✓ **We got the roof repaired.** (The object must come directly after "have" or "get".)

Have / Get Something Done: Quick Summary

Here is a review of everything we have covered in this lesson:

- Use **have / get something done** when you arrange for someone else to do something for you.
- The structure is: **Subject + have/get + object + past participle**.
- Only **have** or **get** changes tense — the past participle stays the same.
- **Have something done** is more formal; **get something done** is more informal and conversational.
- You can also use **have something done** when something unpleasant happens to you (e.g., "*She had her phone stolen.*").
- You can add **by + agent** to say who did the work, but only when it is important.
- Always place the **object before the past participle** — never after it.

Meaning	Example
Arranged service (neutral)	<i>I had my hair cut.</i>
Arranged service (informal)	<i>I got my hair cut.</i>
Unpleasant event	<i>She had her bag stolen.</i>
With agent	<i>We had the house painted by a local company.</i>
Question form	<i>Did you have your car serviced?</i>
Negative form	<i>He didn't get his suit dry-cleaned.</i>

Now practise **have / get something done** in the exercises below.

Have/ Get something done – Practice Test

B2 | 30 Questions: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap & Fill-in-the-Blank

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 She decided to ____ her car serviced before the long road trip.

- A** do
- B** make
- C** have
- D** let

2 They are planning to ____ their house repainted next month.

- A** get
- B** do
- C** make
- D** let

3 Which sentence is grammatically correct?

- A** I had my hair cutting yesterday.
- B** I had my hair cut yesterday.
- C** I had cut my hair by someone yesterday.
- D** I got my hair cutting yesterday.

4 He needs to ____ his eyes tested. He can hardly read the sign.

- A** make
- B** do
- C** have
- D** let

5 Why don't you ____ that broken window fixed before winter arrives?

- A** make
- B** get
- C** do
- D** let

6 The manager had all the reports ____ before the board meeting.

- A** preparing
- B** prepared
- C** prepare
- D** to prepare

7 We are getting the new kitchen ____ by a local company.

- A** install
- B** installing
- C** to install
- D** installed

8 She had her passport ____ urgently because she was travelling the next day.

- A** renew
- B** renewed
- C** renewing
- D** to renew

9 Which sentence correctly uses the 'have something done' structure?

- A** They have cleaned their carpets by a professional.
- B** They had a professional clean their carpets.
- C** They have their carpets cleaning.
- D** They had their carpets cleaned by a professional.

10 I must ____ my laptop repaired. It keeps crashing.

- A** do
- B** make
- C** get
- D** let

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

11 We ____ the exterior of our house painted last summer because it was looking really worn out.

- A** had
- B** were
- C** did

12 She is planning to ____ her eyes tested before she buys new glasses.

- A** get
- B** make
- C** do

13 They ____ their roof repaired after the storm caused significant damage.

- A** had
- B** got
- C** made

14 I need to ____ my car serviced before we set off on the long road trip.

- A** get
- B** let
- C** have done

15 He ____ his hair cut every four weeks at the same barber he has visited for years.

- A** has
- B** does
- C** makes

16 The company ____ their annual financial reports audited by an independent firm every year.

- A** gets
- B** makes
- C** lets

17 We are currently ____ the plumbing in the building completely replaced by a specialist contractor.

- A** having
- B** making
- C** getting done

18 She decided to ____ her old photographs digitised so they wouldn't be lost.

- A** have
- B** let
- C** do

19 You really should ____ that broken window replaced before winter arrives.

- A** get
- B** make
- C** had

20 They ____ their new kitchen installed by a professional team in just three days.

- A** got
- B** made
- C** were

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 My car broke down last week, so I _____ it repaired at the local garage.

22 She is planning to _____ her hair cut before the wedding next Saturday.

23 We _____ the kitchen renovated at the moment, so we can't cook at home.

24 They _____ their passports renewed just in time for their holiday.

25 He needs to have his eyes _____ — he's been getting headaches from reading.

26 By next month, we will have _____ the roof fixed and the house will be ready to sell.

27 You should get your blood pressure _____ regularly if you have a stressful job.

28 She had her laptop _____ on the train, so she had to buy a new one.

29 Are you going to _____ those old photographs framed? They would look great on the wall.

30 The company _____ its annual accounts audited by an external firm every year.

Answer Key & Explanations

Have/ Get something done | B2

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **C** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: The structure have + object + past participle is used when someone arranges for another person to do something for them. She had her car serviced means she arranged for a mechanic to service it.
2. **A** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle is an informal alternative to have + object + past participle. Get their house repainted means they will arrange for someone to repaint it.
3. **B** Correct Answer: I had my hair cut yesterday. ✓ Explanation: The correct structure is have + object + past participle. The object is my hair and the past participle is cut. The -ing form is never used in this structure.
4. **C** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: We use have + object + past participle to talk about arranging a professional service. Have his eyes tested means he will visit an optician to test them.
5. **B** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle is commonly used in informal speech to mean arranging for something to be done. Get that broken window fixed means arranging for someone else to fix it.
6. **B** Correct Answer: prepared ✓ Explanation: After have + object, we always use the past participle. Had all the reports prepared means someone was arranged to prepare them before the meeting.
7. **D** Correct Answer: installed ✓ Explanation: The structure get + object + past participle requires the past participle after the object. Getting the new kitchen installed means they arranged for a company to install it.
8. **B** Correct Answer: renewed ✓ Explanation: In the have something done structure, the verb following the object must be in the past participle form. Had her passport renewed means she arranged for officials to renew it.
9. **D** Correct Answer: They had their carpets cleaned by a professional. ✓ Explanation: The correct have something done structure is have + object + past participle. The agent can be added with by. Their carpets cleaned by a professional correctly follows this pattern.
10. **C** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle is used to talk about arranging for a service to be done, often with a sense of urgency or effort. Get my laptop repaired means arranging for a technician to fix it.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use have/had + object + past participle to say someone else did the task for us. We had the house painted means a professional painter did it, not us.
12. **A** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle is a common alternative to have something done, especially in spoken English. Get her eyes tested means a professional will test them for her.
13. **A** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: Had + object + past participle is the standard form of have something done in the past. Had their roof repaired means a professional repaired it for them.
14. **A** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle expresses arranging for someone else to do something. Get my car serviced means a mechanic will service it, not the speaker.
15. **A** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: Have + object + past participle in the present simple describes a regular arrangement. Has his hair cut means the barber cuts it for him, not himself.
16. **A** Correct Answer: gets ✓ Explanation: Get + object + past participle is used here to show that the company arranges for an external firm to audit the reports. Gets their reports audited — they don't do it themselves.
17. **A** Correct Answer: having ✓ Explanation: The present continuous form have + object + past participle is used to describe something happening right now that someone else is doing. Having the plumbing replaced means a contractor is doing it at this moment.
18. **A** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: Have + object + past participle shows that someone else performs the action for the subject. Have her photographs digitised means a professional converted them, not her.
19. **A** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: After should, we use the base form. Get + object + past participle here gives advice about arranging for someone else to replace the window. Get that broken window replaced.
20. **A** Correct Answer: got ✓ Explanation: Got + object + past participle is the past form of get something done. Got their kitchen installed means a professional team did the work for them, not themselves.

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **had** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use have/get something done to show that someone else performed a service for us. In the past simple, have becomes had. I had it repaired means a mechanic repaired it for me.
22. **get** Correct Answer: get ✓ Explanation: Get something done is an informal alternative to have something done. The structure is get + object + past participle. Get her hair cut means a hairdresser will cut it for her.

23. **are having|'re having** Correct Answer: are having / 're having ✓ Explanation: The present continuous of have something done is am/is/are + having + object + past participle. Are having the kitchen renovated means builders are doing it for them right now.
24. **got** Correct Answer: got ✓ Explanation: Get something done in the past simple uses got + object + past participle. Got their passports renewed means an official renewed them on their behalf.
25. **tested** Correct Answer: tested ✓ Explanation: In the have/get something done structure, the verb after the object must be in the past participle form. Have his eyes tested means an optician will perform the test for him.
26. **had** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: The future perfect of have something done is will have had + object + past participle. Will have had the roof fixed shows the action will be completed by a future point.
27. **checked** Correct Answer: checked ✓ Explanation: After get/have + object, we always use the past participle. Get your blood pressure checked means a doctor or nurse performs the check for you.
28. **stolen** Correct Answer: stolen ✓ Explanation: Have something done can also describe an unwanted experience that happens to someone. Had her laptop stolen means the theft happened to her, not that she arranged it.
29. **have|get** Correct Answer: have / get ✓ Explanation: Both have and get are correct in this structure. Have/get those photographs framed means someone else (a professional) will do the framing for you.
30. **has had|has gotten** Correct Answer: has had / has gotten ✓ Explanation: The present perfect of have something done uses has/have + had + object + past participle. Has had its accounts audited means an external firm performs the audit on behalf of the company.

Score Guide

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 27–30 Correct | Excellent! You have mastered this topic. |
| 23–26 Correct | Very good! Review the rules you missed. |
| 18–22 Correct | Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples. |
| 0–17 Correct | Study the lesson again before retaking the test. |