

## THE VERB - TO GET

### A. Overview

This verb can be used in a number of ways and has many meanings. It can therefore be one of the most frustrating verbs to use, but it is used all the time.

It is a verb that replaces another verb in a sentence, but it keeps the original verb's meaning. For example with the verb 'to buy':

*'I'm going to buy Rosy a computer for her birthday.'*

*'I'm going to get Rosy a computer for her birthday.'*

There are two important things to remember when using 'to get':

- It is informal English.
- Context is important because people are often only able to understand which meaning is being used by the context.

Now let's look at the verb in context:

#### **1. TO GET + DIRECT OBJECT = TO OBTAIN, TO RECEIVE, TO BUY**

- I *got* my passport last week. (*to obtain*)
- Rosy *got* her driving license last week. (*to obtain*)
- I *got* a letter from my friend in France. (*to receive*)
- She *got* a new coat from Lima. (*to buy*)
- We *got* a new TV for the sitting room. (*to buy*)

#### **2. TO GET + PLACE EXPRESSION = REACH, ARRIVE AT A PLACE**

- How are you *getting* home tonight?
- We *got* to Paris around 6 p.m.
- When did you *get* back from Bogota?

#### **3. TO GET + ADJECTIVE = BECOME, SHOW A CHANGE OF STATE**

- I am *getting* old.
- It's *getting* hotter.
- By the time they got home they were *getting* thirsty.
- I'm *getting* tired of all this nonsense.
- My dad's *getting* old and needs looking after.

#### **4. TO GET + PREPOSITION/ADVERB = PHRASAL VERBS WITH VARIOUS MEANINGS**

*to get at* – to try to express a meaning:

*"I think I see what you're getting at."*

*to get away with* – to escape punishment for a crime or bad action:

*"I can't believe you got away with cheating on that test!"*

*to get by* – to manage (financially):

*"Rosy doesn't earn much, but we get by."*

*to get down* - depress, descend:

*"This wind is really getting me down."*

*to get off* - leave a form of transport (train, bus, bicycle, plane):

*"We got off the metro at our station."*

*to get on* - enter/sit on a form of transport (train, bus, bicycle, plane); / have a good relationship:

*"Rosy got on her bicycle and rode down the street."*

*"Felipe and I get on really well."*

*to get on with* - to proceed; as well as for relationships (see above):

"I have so much homework, I'd better *get on with* it."

*to get out of* - avoid doing something:

"Rosy *got out of* the washing-up every day, even when it was her turn."

*to get over* - recover (from an illness, a surprise, etc.):

"Have you *got over* your stomach bug yet?"

*to get through* - use or finish the supply of something:

"We've *got through* all the invoices. Are there any more to process?"

*to get up* - leave your bed:

"Rosy *gets up* at 6.00 a.m. every morning."

*to get up to* - to do something, usually something bad:

"The children are very quiet. I wonder what they're *getting up to*."

*to get rid of* - to throw something away:

"I'm going to *get rid of* all these old shoes."

## 5. OTHER EXPRESSIONS WITH GET:"

- "*Do you get it*" means do you understand.
- He's "*getting dinner*" tonight means he's preparing the meal.
- I'll "*get the bill*" means I'll pay.
- That really "*gets me!*" means that irritates me.
- To "*get out of bed on the wrong side*" means to be in a bad mood.
- To "*get your own back*" means to have your revenge or punish someone.

## B. SKILLS

**Part 1** - we are going to look at some verbs which 'get' can replace while keeping the meaning of the verbs. Context is very important in deciding which verbs 'get' is replacing. Look at the following sentences and decide in what context 'get' is being used:

to answer   to arrive at   to become   to buy   to earn   to hear   to obtain   to order  
to persuade   to receive   to take   to understand   to win

1. Rosy gets about \$2000 a month from her job.
2. Felipe got angry when he heard about the news.
3. I don't get how the machine works.
4. Did you get the e-mail I sent you this morning?
5. My boss got me to do the report, even though I didn't want to.
6. What time will you get to Paris?
7. It wasn't easy, but I finally got her to sign the contract.
8. I got a 7 in my maths exam.
9. I would like to get Rosy a watch for her birthday.
10. Somebody is calling. Can you get the phone?
11. I get the metro to work every morning.
12. Sorry, it's noisy here. I didn't get what you said.
13. They got the new service contract.

**Part 2** - now decide if the word in bold can be replaced by the verb 'get' without changing its meaning.

1. I thought they were lost, but I **found** my keys under the table.
2. I need to **find** a new house before the end of summer.
3. I **catch** the metro every morning.

4. I'll throw the ball and you **catch** it.
5. I **became** lost in the centre of London. I didn't know where I was.
6. I **became** the manager of this team in 2019.
7. I can't **answer** your question.
8. Somebody is ringing the doorbell. I'll **answer** the door.
9. I'm going to **take** the computer to work by taxi.
10. He has to **take** his medicine before eating.
11. I **took** a taxi from the airport to arrive here.