



The
AMERICAN
HERITAGE®

dictionary

of the
English
Language



HOW TO USE THE DICTIONARY

To look up an entry in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, use the search window above. For best results, after typing in the word, click on the “Search” button instead of using the “enter” key.

Some compound words (like *bus rapid transit*, *dog whistle*, or *identity theft*) don’t appear on the drop-down list when you type them in the search bar. For best results with compound words, place a quotation mark before the compound word in the search window.

[guide to the dictionary](#)



THE USAGE PANEL

The Usage Panel is a group of nearly 200 prominent scholars, creative writers, journalists, diplomats, and others in occupations requiring mastery of language. Annual surveys have gauged the acceptability of particular usages and grammatical constructions.

[The Panelists](#)



AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY APP

The new American Heritage Dictionary app is now available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#).



THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY BLOG

The articles in our [blog](#) examine new words, revised definitions, interesting images from the fifth edition, discussions of usage, and more.

THE 100 WORDS®

See word lists from the best-selling 100 Words Series!

[Find out more!](#)



INTERESTED IN DICTIONARIES?

Check out the Dictionary Society of North America at <http://www.dictionariesociety.com>

get ¹  (gět)

Share: [Tweet](#)

v. **got**(gőt), **got·ten**(gőt n) or **got** , **get·ting**, **gets**

v. *tr.*

1.

a. To come into possession or use of; receive: *got a cat for her birthday.*

b. To meet with or incur: *got nothing but trouble for her efforts.*

2.

a. To go after and obtain: *got a book at the library; got breakfast in town.*

b. To go after and bring: *Get me a pillow.*

c. To purchase; buy: *get groceries.*

3.

a. To acquire as a result of action or effort: *He got his information from the internet. You can't get water out of a stone.*

b. To earn: *got high marks in math.*

c. To accomplish or attain as a result of military action.

4. To obtain by concession or request: *couldn't get the time off; got permission to go.*

5.

a. To arrive at; reach: *When did you get home?*

b. To reach and board; catch: *She got her plane two minutes before takeoff.*

6. To succeed in communicating with, as by telephone: *can't get me at the office until nine.*

7. To become affected with (an illness, for example) by infection or exposure; catch: *get the flu; got the mumps.*

8.

a. To be subjected to; undergo: *got a severe concussion.*

b. To receive as retribution or punishment: *got six years in prison for tax fraud.*

c. To sustain a specified injury to: *got my arm broken.*

9.

a. To perceive or become aware of by one of the senses: *get a whiff of perfume; got a look at the schedule.*

b. To gain or have understanding of: *Do you get this question?*

c. To learn (a poem, for example) by heart; memorize.

d. To find or reach by calculating: *get a total; can't get the answer.*

10. To procreate; beget: *"Is my life given me for nothing but to get children and work to bring them up?" (D.H. Lawrence).*

11.

a. To cause to become or be in a specified state or condition: *got the children tired and cross; got the shirt clean.*

b. To make ready; prepare: *get lunch for the family.*

c. To cause to come or go: *got the car through traffic.*

d. To cause to move or leave: *Get me out of here!*

12. To cause to undertake or perform; prevail on: *got the guide to give us the complete tour.*

13.

a. To take, especially by force; seize: *The detective got the suspect as he left the restaurant.*

b. *Informal* To overcome or destroy: *The ice storm got the rose bushes.*

c. To evoke an emotional response or reaction in: *Romantic music really gets me.*

d. To annoy or irritate: *What got me was his utter lack of initiative.*

e. To present a difficult problem to; puzzle: *"It's the suspect's indifference that gets me," the detective said.*

f. To take revenge on, especially to kill in revenge for a wrong.

g. *Informal* To hit or strike: *She got him on the chin. The bullet got him in the arm.*

14. **Baseball** To put out or strike out: *got the batter with a cut fastball.*

15. To begin or start. Used with the present participle: *I have to get working on this or I'll miss my deadline.*

16.

a. To have current possession of. Used in the present perfect form with the meaning of the present: *We've got plenty of cash.*

b. **Nonstandard** To have current possession of. Used in the past tense form with the meaning of the present: *They got a nice house in town.*

c. To have as an obligation. Used in the present perfect form with the meaning of the present: *I have got to leave early. You've got to do the dishes.*

d. **Nonstandard** To have as an obligation. Used in the past tense with the meaning of the present: *They got to clean up this mess.*

v. **intr.**

1.

a. To become or grow to be: *eventually got well.*

b. To be successful in coming or going: *When will we get to Dallas?*

2. To be able or permitted: *never got to see Europe; finally got to work at home.*

3.

a. To be successful in becoming: *get free of a drug problem.*

b. Used with the past participle of transitive verbs as a passive voice auxiliary: *got stung by a bee.*

c. To become drawn in, entangled, or involved: *got into debt; get into a hassle.*

4. **Informal** To depart immediately: *yelled at the dog to get.*

5. To work for gain or profit; make money: *Do you feel as though you're exhausting yourself getting and not making enough for spending?*

n.

1. Progeny; offspring: *a thoroughbred's get.*

2. **Chiefly British Slang** [git](#)².

3. **Sports** A return, as in tennis, on a shot that seems impossible to reach.

Phrasal Verbs:

get across

1. To make understandable or clear: *tried to get my point across.*

2. To be convincing or understandable: *How can I get across to the students?*

get after

To urge or scold: *You should get after them to mow the lawn.*

get ahead

To improve one's situation; be successful.

get along

1. To be or continue to be on harmonious terms: *gets along with the in-laws.*

2. To manage or fare with reasonable success: *can't get along on those wages.*

3. To make progress: *Are you getting along with the project?*

4. To grow old: *getting along in years.*

5. To go away; leave: *The store owner told the children to get along.*

get around

1. To circumvent or evade: *managed to get around the rules.*

2. To deal with; overcome: *got around the problem.*

3. To convince or win over by flattering or cajoling.

4. To travel from place to place: *It is hard to get around without a car.*

5. To become known; circulate: *Word got around.*

6. To have numerous sexual partners; be promiscuous.

get at

1. To touch or reach successfully: *The cat hid where we couldn't get at it.*

2. To try to make understandable; hint at or suggest: *I don't know what you're getting at.*

3. To discover or understand: *tried to get at the cause of the problem.*

4. **Informal** To bribe or influence by improper or illegal means: *He got at the judge, and the charges were dismissed.*

get away

1. To break free; escape.

2. To leave or go away: *wanted to come along, but couldn't get away.*

get back

To return to a person, place, or condition: *Let's get back to the subject at hand.*

get by

1. To succeed at a level of minimal acceptability or with the minimal amount of effort: *just got by in college.*
2. To succeed in managing; survive: *We'll get by if we economize.*
3. To be unnoticed or ignored by: *The mistake got by the editor, but the proofreader caught it.*

get down

1. To descend.
2. To give one's attention. Often used with *to*: *Let's get down to work.*
3. To exhaust, discourage, or depress: *The heat was getting me down.*
4. To swallow: *got the pill down on the first try.*
5. To describe in writing: *If I could just get down how I feel!*
6. *Informal* To lose one's inhibitions; enjoy oneself wholeheartedly.

get in

1. To enter: *got in the garage.*
2. To arrive: *We got in late last night.*
3. To become or cause to become involved: *She got in with the wrong crowd. Repeated loans from the finance company got me deeper in debt.*
4. To become accepted, as in a club.
5. To succeed in making or doing: *got in six deliveries before noon.*

get into

1. To become involved in: *got into trouble by stealing cars.*
2. *Informal* To be interested in: *got into gourmet cooking.*
3. To affect, especially negatively: *What's gotten into you lately?*

get off

1. To start, as on a trip; leave.
2. To fire (a round of ammunition, for example): *got off two shots before the deer disappeared.*
3. To write and send, as a letter.
4. To escape, as from punishment or danger: *got off scot-free.*
5. To obtain a release or lesser penalty for: *The attorney got her client off with a slap on the wrist.*
6. To get permission to leave one's workplace: *got off early and went fishing.*
7. *Informal* To act or speak with effrontery: *Where does he get off telling me to hurry up?*
8. *Slang*
 - a. To have an orgasm.
 - b. To feel great pleasure or gratification: *gets off on gossiping about coworkers.*
 - c. To experience euphoria, for example, as a result of taking a drug.

get on

1. To be or continue on harmonious terms: *gets on well with the neighbors.*
2. To manage or fare: *How are you getting on?*
3. To make progress; continue: *get on with a performance.*
4. To grow old: *The CEO is getting on and will retire soon.*
5. To acquire understanding or knowledge: *got on to the con game.*

get out

1. To leave or escape: *Our canary got out.*
2. To become known: *Somehow the secret got out.*
3. To publish, as a newspaper.

get over

1. To get across: *got over the ditch.*
2. To recover from: *finally got over the divorce.*

get through

1. To finish or assist in finishing: *The rat got through the maze. His mother got him through the college application process.*
2. To succeed in making contact: *telephoned but couldn't get through.*
3. To make oneself understood: *What do I need to do to get through to you?*

get to

1. To begin. Used with the present participle: *got to reminiscing.*
2. To start to deal with: *didn't get to the housework until Sunday.*
3. To influence or affect, especially adversely: *The noise really gets to me.*

get together

1. To bring together; gather: *getting the author's correspondence together.*
2. To come together: *We got together for lunch.*
3. To arrive at an agreement: *The feuding parties finally got together.*

get up

1. To arise from bed or rise to one's feet: *She got up and opened the door.*
2. To climb: *How long will it take to get up the mountain?*
3. To act as the creator or organizer of: *got up a petition against rezoning.*
4. To dress or adorn: *She got herself up in a bizarre outfit.*
5. To find within oneself; summon: *got up the nerve to quit.*

Idioms:**get around to**

To find the time or occasion for; deal with: *We finally got around to unpacking our knickknacks.*

get away with

To escape the consequences of (a blameworthy act, for example): *got away with cheating.*

get back at

To take revenge on.

get cracking

To begin to work; get started.

get even

To obtain revenge.

get even with

To repay with an equivalent act, as for revenge.

get going

To make a beginning; get started.

get hold (or ahold) of

1. To bring into one's grasp, possession, or control.
2. To communicate with, especially by telephone.

get it Informal

To be punished or scolded: *You broke the vase. Now you're really going to get it!*

get it on Slang

1. To become filled with energy or excitement.
2. To engage in sexual intercourse.

get it up

Vulgar Slang To have an erection.

get nowhere

To make no progress.

get (one's) Informal

To receive one's due punishment: *After sassing his parents, he really got his.*

get on the stick

To begin to work.

get on with

To continue or resume doing (something); make progress regarding: *We must get on with the project.*

get out of

To gain release from the obligation of: *She tried to get out of taking her brother to the mall. He couldn't get out of his date on Saturday.*

get (someone's) goat

To make angry or vexed.

get somewhere Informal

To make progress.

get there Informal

To make progress or achieve success: *I'm not finished, but I'm getting there.*

get wind of

To learn of: *got wind of the scheme.*

[Middle English *geten*, from Old Norse *geta*; see **ghend-** in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

get a·ble, get ta·ble *adj.*

Usage Note: The use of *get* in the passive, as in *We got sunburned at the beach*, is generally avoided in formal writing. In less formal contexts, however, the construction can provide a useful difference in tone or emphasis, as between the sentences *The demonstrators were arrested* and *The demonstrators got arrested*. The first example implies that the responsibility for the arrests rests primarily with the police, while the example using *get* implies that the demonstrators deliberately provoked the arrests. · In colloquial use and in numerous nonstandard varieties of

American English, the past tense form *got* has the meaning of the present. This arose probably by dropping the helping verb *have* from the past perfects *have got*, *has got*. *We've got to go*, *we've got a lot of problems* became *We got to go*, *we got a lot of problems*. The reanalysis of *got* as a present-tense form has led to the creation of a third-person singular *gots* in some varieties of English.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

get²  (gĕt)

Share: [Tweet](#)

n. pl. git·tin (gĕ·tĕn , gĭt ĭn)

1. A document presented by a husband to his wife whereby a divorce is effected between them according to Jewish religious law.
2. A divorce effected by a get.

[Mishnaic Hebrew *gĕt*, from Aramaic, from Akkadian *giṭtu*, long clay tablet, receipt, document, from Sumerian *gíd.da*, long.]

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition copyright ©2022 by HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

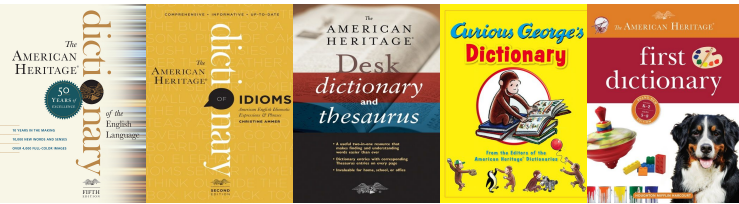
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

American Heritage Dictionary Products



- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| The American Heritage Dictionary, 5th Edition | The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms | The American Heritage Roget's Thesaurus | Curious George's Dictionary | The American Heritage Children's Dictionary |
|---|--|---|---|---|

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CONTACT US• Customer Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make Me An Author• Ebooks Help with Glose Reader | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ABOUT US• Company Profile |
|---|---|--|

- [Leadership Team](#)
- [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)
- [HarperCollins Careers](#)
- [HarperCollins Imprints](#)
- [HarperGreen](#)
- [Social Media Directory](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- **FOR READERS**
- [Browse Reading Guides](#)
- **FOR AUTHORS**
- [Submit a Manuscript](#)
- [Report Piracy](#)
- [Agent Portal](#)
- **MEDIA**
- [Publicity Contacts](#)
- [Press Room](#)
- **SERVICES**
- [HarperCollins Speakers Bureau](#)
- [Library Services](#)
- [Academic Services](#)
- [Desk & Exam Copies](#)
- [Review Copies](#)
- [OpenBook API](#)
- [Marketing Partnerships](#)
- **COVID-19 RESOURCES & PERMISSIONS**
- [Permissions for Adult Online Readings](#)
- [Permissions for Kids Online Readings](#)
- **SALES & RIGHTS**
- [Booksellers & Retailer Ordering](#)
- [HarperCollins Catalogs](#)
- [Permissions](#)
- [Subsidiary Rights](#)
- [Media Rights and Content Development](#)
- **GLOSE APP**
- [iPhone](#)
- [Android](#)
-
-
-
- **GLOBAL DIVISIONS**
- [HarperCollins US](#)
- [HarperCollins Canada](#)
- [HarperCollins Christian](#)
- [HarperCollins Australia](#)
- [HarperCollins India](#)
- [HarperCollins UK](#)
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



News Corp

[Terms of Use](#) • [Terms of Sale](#) • [Your Ad Choices](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [California Privacy Policy](#)
[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright 2022 HarperCollins Publishers All rights reserved.

*This website is best viewed in Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Safari. Some characters in pronunciations and etymologies cannot be displayed properly in Internet Explorer.