"GET" … It's not as scary as you think!

John Peter Sloan analyzed the PAGES of "get" in the dictionary, and realized that the meanings can be put into five basic categories.* Star has added another! (We'll do "get" for *fetch* & *bring* in another task!)

*See, for example, *Speak Now*, vol. 7, 15:33-21:55, as of 6 Dec 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvjFbtUkLT4&t=1471s

So, let's start! What kind of "get" could this be?

You tell me by checking your answer!



_____ You wrapped the present.

_____ You received / bought the present.

_____ You chose the present.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

It's a picture of a present up close to you, so you are RECEIVING the present. Or… maybe you just BOUGHT the present for someone.

It's true, you don't have to be close to something to get it – you can get a promotion, a raise, an idea, a whiff of a smell, … – but it helped in the picture to show you that we use "get" for RECEIVING / OBTAINING / BUYING.

Here's the next one! What kind of "get" could this be? Click on your answer.



_____ The sea is calm.

_____ People are taking pictures.

_____ The light is changing.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

It's a picture of a sunrise or a sundown, so the light is changing from one level of light to another level of light; it's getting light or dark.

We also use "get" for changes in states of being … for people, animals, plants, things, and situations!

When I stand from a sitting position, I change my position, so I get up!

When I spill my coffee on my clean shirt, it gets dirty, and I get mad!

When a kitten or a seedling grow, they get big!

When everything is happening at once, it gets crazy!



Here's the next one! Click to choose the right kind of "get."

_____ The taxi has arrived at a place.

_____ The taxi has been decorated.

_____ The taxi driver stopped for a phone call.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The taxi has gone to a place, so it has ARRIVED. We actually prefer "get" for "arrive" in semi-formal and informal situations (that's called "register"...and we'll do that in another task!). Pay attention to prepositions!

I'll get home at 3, today. (Notice the difference with: *I'll be home until 3, today.)*

I got into the office by 9, yesterday.

I got to the airport on time. / *I'll get out of the airport on time.* *(phrasal verb!)*

I'll get into London at 2:33.

Here's the next one! Click to choose the right kind of "get."



_____ The person thinks constantly about light bulbs.

_____ The person needs a light bulb.

_____ The person understands a concept represented, here, by a light bulb.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

When we talk about light bulbs lighting up over/in someone's head, we mean UNDERSTAND.

Be careful, though, because UNDERSTAND is the RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LISTENER/READER, ex.,

I explained all this, yesterday, didn't you get it?

I have to be sure that the person got it, so I have to be sure to get across.

We use "get across" (a lovely phrasal verb) to indicate "convey meaning": RESP'TY OF SPEAKER/WRITER!

You got it? Great! It means that I got across!

Here's the next one! Click to choose the right kind of "get." (It's my FAVORITE!)



_____ The dog is calm.

_____ The dog was doing something naughty when its owner came home, and saw it doing it.

_____ The dog wants a treat.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

This dog looks quite guilty to me, like it knows that it's not supposed to nose around in the trash and laundry, but that's exactly what it was doing when the owner came home, suddenly! … It's caught in the act! … In Italian: *Beccato! Acchiappato!* In English, CATCH/CAUGHT.

We can use this for naughty children, adults, and pets; look at these examples:

He got his wife in an intimate conversation in a bar with another man.

The policeman got one thief in the act, and the other while she was trying to run away. (or… "get away" … a nice phrasal verb for escape that uses the "movement" meaning of "get"*)*

I got you with my April Fool's trick! Gotcha! (fun word! … It's a "squished" form of "got you")

OK, those are John's five main categories for understanding how to use "get" … now let's look at one I want to add … it's the last one, too! Aren't you glad?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

This is our last category of "get"…what kind is it?

You tell me by checking your answer, then scroll down to see if you were right!



_____ The trainer is helping the dog.

_____ The trainer is shaking the leash.

_____ The trainer is encouraging the dog to do something.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

What is the lady doing with the dog? … She's convincing the dog to do something that she wants it to do. She's getting the dog to do it.

We can get people, animals, plants, and even inanimate objects to do what we want. It can be positive (i.e., convince something animate; set up the necessary conditions, for something inanimate) or negative (coerce, force). Look at these examples:

She got her dog to do lots of tricks and to run the obstacle course. He loves it!

I got my sister to pick up my dry cleaning, today, because she passes the cleaners on her way here.

I got my colleague to finish the report for me because I had to leave for an appointment.

Bullies get their victims to do what they want by being mean to them and intimidating them.

The engineer got the river to flow in its new river bed by blocking off the old one.

The boss got his assistant to have* his car washed. (*or "get" … it goes from dirty to clean!)

Did you get all the kinds of "get" I presented in this activity? 

LIVEWORKSHEETS

N.B., All pictures in this file are from Microsoft Clipart in the Word program used to create it.

LIVEWORKSHEETS