

English B2 · The causative

Upper-intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

The manager structure

The causative is a manager: you don't do the work; you manage it. The object sits between you and the participle, like a worker between a manager and the job.

have it done or get it done

Form	Flavour	Example
have + object + participle	the neutral everyday choice	I had my hair cut.
get + object + participle	informal, a sense of achievement	She got her phone repaired.

Use the evidence

Tense lives on have/get: I had it cut. I'll have it cut. I've had it cut three times this year.

Your turn: manage it

Your turn

We ____ the classroom ____ (clean) yesterday.

- ☐ A. had ... cleaned
- ☐ B. had ... clean
- ☐ C. had ... cleaning
- ☐ D. have ... cut

Did it, or had it done

I did it myself

I cut my hair.

I fixed my bike. She painted the wall.

I had it done

I had my hair cut.

I had my bike fixed. She had the wall painted.

Your turn: who did it

Your turn

I had cut my hair. — who did the cutting?

- A. A barber.
- B. I did — this is the past perfect, doing it myself.
- C. My hair did.
- D. Nobody; the hair is imaginary.

Name the worker, or don't

have + person + base verb

I had the mechanic fix my car.

The worker is named.

have + thing + participle

I had my car fixed.

The worker is unnamed.

Your turn: the rebel participle

Your turn

I had my hair ____.

- A. cutted
- B. cut
- C. cutting
- D. to cut

Say it aloud

I had my hair cut. I had my bike
fixed. I had my essays marked.



She got her phone repaired and got her photos printed.



And she got her little brother to carry
the bag. Full management suite.



I had my homework eaten by the
cat. The cat was not a professional.

Check yourself

- I had my hair cut — have + object + participle.
- She got her phone repaired — the achievement flavour.
- I had cut my hair — myself; the causative needs the object between.
- I got my brother to help — get + person + to-infinitive.