

INTERMEDIATE COLLOCATIONS II

Get is a very common verb in English, but it is not always appropriate for talking about changes. Note also alternatives to *get* which can improve your style.

A *Go, not get*

Go is used for changes in people's personality, appearance and physical abilities:

People **go mad/bald/grey/blind/deaf**.

Go is often used for sudden, usually negative, changes:

He was very embarrassed and his face **went red**.

Suddenly the sky **went** very **dark** and it started to rain.

Go can also be used for slower colour changes:

The pages of the book had **gone yellow** over the years.

B *Turn, not get*

Turn often collocates with colours:

The sky **turned gold** as the sun set.

When the tomatoes **turn red**, the farmers pick them and sell them.

The news gave his mother such a shock that her hair **turned white** overnight.

C *Get and become*

Get and *become* can often be used with the same collocations, but *become* is more formal and is therefore more appropriate in essays:

She gave up smoking when she **became pregnant**.

I would like to **become involved** in raising money for charity.

The same is true for collocations with adjectives such as *angry, bored, excited, depressed, upset, impatient, violent*:

He **became depressed** after his wife's death.

Become, not *get*, is used with the following: *extinct, (un)popular, homeless, famous*.

Our local baker's has **become famous** for its apple tarts.

D *Alternatives to get and become*

She **fell ill** and was taken to hospital.

Everyone **fell silent** when they heard the shocking news.

As my father **grew older**, he spent less time working.

The noise **grew louder** and soon we realised it was a plane approaching.

E *Overusing and misusing get*

Here are some sentences from students' essays where *get* is wrongly used.

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sentences with <i>get</i>	more appropriate alternatives
I was able to get new friends.	I was able to make new friends .
A year ago he got a heart attack.	A year ago he had/suffered a heart attack .
If I get a child of my own one day ...	If I have a child of my own one day ...
I was getting crazy.	I was going crazy .
In June, I got a baby, James.	In June, I had a baby , James.

8.1 Answer these questions using collocations from A and B.

- 1 What can happen to men as they get older? (Clue: Think of their hair.)
- 2 What can happen if you are embarrassed? (Clue: Think of your face.)
- 3 What can happen if you get bad news? (Clue: Think of your face or hair.)
- 4 What can happen to the pages of a newspaper after a long time?
- 5 What happens to strawberries as they ripen?
- 6 The poet John Milton lost his eyesight at the end of his life. What is another way of saying that?
- 7 The composer Beethoven lost his hearing at the end of his life. What is another way of saying that?
- 8 At the end of Shakespeare's play, Hamlet loses his mind. What is another way of saying that?
- 9 If it is about to rain, what might happen to the sky?

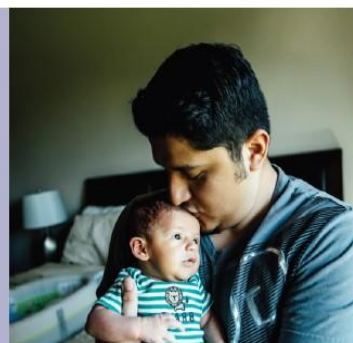
8.2 Look at C, D and E opposite. Correct these sentences.

- 1 Dinosaurs got extinct thousands of years ago.
- 2 When I get married, I'd like to get lots of children.
- 3 Jasmine fell depressed after failing her final exams.
- 4 Niklas has always dreamt of getting famous.
- 5 Would you be interested in growing involved in this project?
- 6 More people have got homeless this year than in any previous year.
- 7 My sister got a baby last week.
- 8 My grandfather got a heart attack last winter.

8.3 Replace each use of *get* with a verb from the box.

fall	become	grow	have	make
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As you get older, you'll begin to understand your parents better. Getting angry with them all the time doesn't help. You may not want to go to summer camp when none of your friends will be there, but your parents know you will soon get new friends there. You would all have gone on a family holiday together if your grandmother hadn't got ill, but surely you can understand why they don't want to leave her. You'll feel much more sympathetic to your parents' feelings when you get a child of your own!



8.4 Complete the collocations in these sentences.

- 1 I think I'd go if I had to put up with such a terrible boss!
- 2 It was a wonderful sunset. The sky gold and we sat on the terrace enjoying it.
- 3 Once upon a time the walls were probably cream but they have brown now and badly need repainting.
- 4 When I start grey, I'm definitely going to dye my hair.
- 5 As the head teacher walked into the hall, the children all silent.
- 6 The noise on the street louder and I looked out of the window to see what was happening.
- 7 My grandmother is a little afraid of ill while she is abroad.
- 8 I was so embarrassed that I bright red.