Causatives

CEFR C1 · Directness, register and the causative in discourse

WS1 A Cline of Directness · WS2 Register & Agency · WS3 Nuance, Blame & Cohesion · WS4 Critical Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: A Cline of Directness

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Causatives Grade Force and Volition

The causative verbs form a **cline** from strong compulsion to mere permission: **force/make** (compel) > **get** (persuade/manage to) > **have** (arrange, neutral authority) > **help** (assist) > **let/allow** (permit). The choice encodes how much power, volition and effort are involved — a key resource for precise, diplomatic expression.

Force level	Verb	Implication
Compulsion	make / force	no choice for the other person
Persuasion / effort	get (sb to)	resistance overcome
Neutral authority	have (sb do)	expected, within a role
Assistance	help	shared effort
Permission	let / allow	the other person chooses

Part A – Rank and Justify

Rank these from strongest to weakest compulsion, and name the implication of each.

#	Sentence	Force level + implication
1	I eventually got the board to reconsider.	
2	The regime forced dissidents to recant.	
3	She let the interns leave early.	
4	The editor had the piece rewritten.	

Part B – Replace for Precision

Rewrite, replacing the vague verb with a causative that fits the meaning in brackets.

1. (persuade, with effort) I convinced him to invest. → _____
2. (neutral authority) The director arranged for the files to be archived. → _____
3. (permit) The policy allows staff to work from home. → _____

Score: ____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Register & Agency

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

Reference: Causatives Manage Who Is Responsible

Like the passive, causatives let a writer foreground or background agency. *Have something done* can hide the actual worker; *get someone to* can credit or blame the influencer; *be made to* can present someone as a victim of authority. Register matters: *have* is neutral-formal, *get* informal, and periphrases like *arrange for* or *cause … to* are more formal still.

Choice	Effect on agency	Register
have sth done	backgrounds the worker	neutral/formal
get sb to do	foregrounds the influencer	informal–neutral
be made to	casts subject as compelled	neutral
arrange for / cause to	formal, explicit causation	formal

Part A – Whose Agency Is Foregrounded?

#	Sentence	Foregrounded / backgrounded agent
1	The minister had the report shelved.	
2	Activists got the council to reverse the decision.	
3	Recruits were made to sign waivers.	
4	The firm arranged for the data to be destroyed.	

Part B – Recast for Register

1. Formal: "We got someone to check the figures." → _____
2. Neutral, hide the worker: "A contractor demolished the wing." → _____
3. Cast as compelled: "The staff had to attend." → _____

Score: ____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Nuance, Blame & Cohesion

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Fine Distinctions in Use

Subtle contrasts matter at C1: *had my car stolen* (misfortune) vs *had my car cleaned* (service); *got him to apologise* (succeeded, with effort) vs *made him apologise* (forced); *have someone doing* (ongoing) vs *have someone do* (single act). Causatives also aid **cohesion**, letting one topic control a run of clauses without repeating the agent.

Contrast	Meaning A	Meaning B
had it stolen / cleaned	misfortune (unplanned)	service (arranged)
got / made him do	persuaded (effort)	forced (no choice)
have sb doing / do	ongoing action	single completed act
let / had	permitted	arranged with authority

Part A – Disambiguate

Explain the difference in meaning within each pair.

1. a) She had her students write essays. b) She had her students writing essays.
   _____
2. a) I got the tenant to leave. b) I made the tenant leave. _____
3. a) He had his manuscript returned. b) He had his manuscript rejected. _____

Part B – Choose for Blame or Credit

Pick the causative that assigns responsibility as indicated.

#	Situation (credit / blame / neutral)	Best causative + why
1	Credit an organiser who persuaded sponsors.	
2	Neutrally report that a wall was demolished (worker irrelevant).	
3	Present employees as coerced into overtime.	

Part C – Cohesion Rewrite

Combine into one cohesive sentence using causatives, keeping "the new CEO" as the topic.

> *The new CEO arranged for the logo to be redesigned. She persuaded managers to cut costs. She forced two directors to resign.*

_____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Reading

There is a quiet politics in the causative. To say that a leader had the policy reversed is to grant her authority while erasing the officials who did the reversing; to say she got her opponents to back down is to credit her persuasion; to say her critics were made to apologise is to cast them as victims of compulsion. The same event, differently framed, distributes agency and sympathy in different ways. The grammar offers a menu of forces — compel, persuade, arrange, permit — and the writer, in choosing one, quietly takes a side.

1. Identify every causative and place it on the force cline (compel–persuade–arrange–permit).
2. "had the policy reversed" erases the officials. Rewrite to restore them and comment on the change in agency.
3. Analyse how "got … to back down" and "were made to apologise" distribute sympathy differently.
4. Evaluate the claim that "in choosing one, the writer quietly takes a side." Is causative choice inherently evaluative?

Part B – Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of 160–200 words on: "How we cause things to happen is never neutral: the causative encodes power." You must include and underline: (1) one **compulsion** causative (make/force + passive); (2) one **persuasion** causative (get sb to); (3) one **arrange** causative (have sth done); (4) one **permission** causative (let/allow); (5) two **epistemic hedges** calibrated to claim strength.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Features: _____ / 5 Word count: _____ Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Causatives

Worksheet 1 – Part A (model)

Strongest → weakest: "forced dissidents to recant" (compulsion, no choice) > "had the piece rewritten" (neutral authority — arranged) > "got the board to reconsider" (persuasion/effort) > "let the interns leave" (permission). Note: "had … rewritten" and "got … to reconsider" are close; accept either order if the implication is correctly named (arranged authority vs effortful persuasion).

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 I got him to invest. · 2 The director had the files archived. · 3 The policy lets staff work from home / allows staff to work from home.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (model)

1 backgrounds the officials who shelved it; foregrounds the minister's authority. · 2 foregrounds the activists' influence (they caused the reversal). · 3 foregrounds the compelling authority; recruits are the compelled. · 4 backgrounds the workers; formal, explicit causation by the firm.

Worksheet 2 – Part B (model)

1 We arranged for the figures to be checked. · 2 We had the wing demolished. · 3 The staff were made to attend.

Worksheet 3 – Part A (model)

1 a) single completed act (they wrote essays); b) ongoing activity (in the middle of writing). · 2 a) persuaded, with effort; b) forced, no choice. · 3 a) service/result (got it back); b) misfortune (it was rejected).

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model)

1 "got the sponsors to commit" — credits persuasion. · 2 "had the wall demolished" — neutral, worker irrelevant. · 3 "were made to work overtime" — presents them as coerced.

Worksheet 3 – Part C (model)

The new CEO had the logo redesigned, got managers to cut costs, and made two directors resign (forced two directors to resign).

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 "had the policy reversed" (arrange/authority); "got her opponents to back down" (persuade); "were made to apologise" (compel); the menu "compel–persuade–arrange–permit" names the cline itself. · 2 e.g. "she ordered officials to reverse the policy" / "officials reversed the policy at her direction" — restoring the officials shifts agency to them and makes her authority explicit rather than seamless. · 3 "got … to back down" credits her influence and implies the opponents retained some volition; "were made to apologise" strips volition and frames the critics as victims, inviting sympathy for them. · 4 A strong answer agrees causative choice is evaluative in effect — each verb foregrounds a different distribution of power and volition — while noting the grammar itself is a neutral resource; the evaluation lies in the selection, not the form.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks

Compulsion causative	make/force (+passive) correct	0–5
Persuasion causative	get sb to, correct	0–5
Arrange causative	have sth done, correct	0–5
Permission causative	let/allow, correct	0–5
Argument & length	160–200 words; developed with hedges	0–5