

Get vs. become

The word get and become are sometimes interchangeable. However, get has several different meanings. Become, on the other hand, is mainly used to talk about a development of some kind.

Get is one of the commonest words in English. It is mainly used in informal English. Some people even believe that get should not be used in formal speech and writing. That probably doesn't make much sense, though.

1. Get/become + adjective : 되다

Both get and become can be followed by adjectives. In this case, they both indicate growth or development of some sort.

Compare the following sentences.

She got angry when she realized that he was lying. (Informal)

She became angry when she realized that he was lying. (Formal)

I got / became interested in classical music when I was in high school.

As I get older I get more optimistic.

As I become older I become more optimistic.

It got colder and colder the higher we climbed.

It became increasingly cold as we climbed higher.

2. Become + noun : 되다

Get cannot be used with a noun to indicate development or change. In this case, only become is possible.

She became a nun. (BUT NOT She got a nun.)

3. Get + noun/pronoun :

Receive(받다), Buy(사다), Arrive(도착하다), Understand(이해하다)

Receive : 받다

I got this watch from my grandfather.

She's just got a message from her boyfriend.

I'll be grounded if I get a bad mark on my math test.

Buy : 사다

Can you get some bread when you go shopping?

Where did you get those trainers? I love them.

I didn't get anything for Chris for his birthday.

Arrive : 도착하다

When did you get home last night?

I'm not sure how to get to John's place.

When you get to the church, turn left and take the first street on the right.

Understand : 이해하다

Don't you get it? He loves you.

I don't get it, I'm afraid. Can you explain it to me?

Nobody gets my jokes. Maybe they're not funny.