

al·low

S1 W1

/ə'laʊ/

verb [transitive]

- 1 LET/ALLOW **can do something** to let someone do or have something, or let something happen

SYN permit:

allow somebody/something to do something

My parents wouldn't allow me to go to the party.

We're not allowed to make personal phone calls at work.

Don't allow your problems to dominate your life.

allow somebody something

Passengers are allowed one item of hand luggage each.

How much time are we allowed?

allow somebody in/out/up etc

I don't allow the cat in the bedroom.

The audience is not allowed backstage.

something is (not) allowed (= something is or is not officially permitted)

Are dictionaries allowed in the exam?

We don't allow diving in the pool.

- 2 LET/ALLOW **make something possible** to make it possible for something to happen or for someone to do something, especially something helpful or useful

SYN permit

This adjustment of the figures allows a fairer comparison.

allow for

Our new system will allow for more efficient use of resources.

allow somebody to do something

A 24-hour ceasefire allowed the two armies to reach an agreement.

allow somebody something

a seat belt that allows the driver greater freedom of movement

3 ENOUGH | have enough of something to be sure that you have enough time, money, food etc available for a particular purpose:

allow somebody something

Allow yourselves plenty of time to get to the airport.

allow something for somebody/something

I've allowed half a bottle of wine for each person.

4 LET/ALLOW | correct/permitted (formal) to accept that something is correct or true, or that something is acceptable according to the rules or law:

allow that

I allow that there may have been a mistake.

The judge allowed the evidence.

5 allow me (formal)

used as a polite way of offering to help someone do something:

'Allow me,' the waiter said, opening the door.

→ LET¹,
FORBID (1)

THESAURUS

allow to say that someone can do something – used about parents, teachers, or people in authority: *They don't allow students to chew gum in the classroom. | I'm not allowed to stay out after ten o'clock.*

let [not in passive] to allow someone to do something. **something. Let** is not used in the passive, and is

much more commonly used in everyday English than **allow**: *Will your Mum let you come to the party? | I'll borrow John's bicycle, if he'll let me.*

permit (formal) if something is permitted, it is allowed according to the rules - used especially on written notices and announcements: *Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building.*

give somebody permission used when someone in an important official position decides to allow someone to do something: *He was given special permission to leave school early. | The Home Office has given him permission to stay in Britain indefinitely.*

give your consent to say that you will allow someone to do something that will affect you personally, or a member of your family, when you have a legal right to say 'no': *Her parents have given their consent to the marriage. | You can't build on someone's land without the owner's consent.*

give something the go-ahead to officially allow a planned project or activity to happen: *The government finally gave the go-ahead for a new terminal at Heathrow airport. | A new nuclear plant has been given the go-ahead.*

authorize to officially or legally allow someone to do something - used about laws or people: *The UN resolution would authorize the use of force. | I never authorized them to give information about me to other banks.*

entitle to give someone the right to do or have something: *The pass entitles you to travel on any bus, at any time, in Norwich. | If the goods are faulty, the customer is entitled to a refund.*

sanction (formal) to give official approval and support for something: *The Truman administration refused to sanction a military attack. | The advertisements were sanctioned by the candidate himself.*

allow for somebody/ something

phrasal verb

PREPARE to consider the possible facts, problems, costs etc involved in something when making a plan, calculation, or judgment:

*Allowing for inflation, the cost of the project will be \$2 million.
You should always allow for the possibility that it might rain.*

allow of something

phrasal verb

(formal)

to make it possible for something to happen or be accepted:

The facts allow of only one interpretation.

Word origin

Date: 1300–1400

Language: Old French

Origin: *allouer*, from Medieval Latin *allocare* (→ ALLOCATE) and from Latin *adlaudare*, from *ad-* 'to' + *laudare* 'to praise'

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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