



Yield/Give In, Make/Force, or Let/Allow/Permit?: A Word Choice exercise for Chinese EFL learners Name: _____

Background: In Chinese, the word 让 *ràng* can mean at least three subtly different things in English. For each of the following sentences, fill in the blank with the word or phrase (yield/give in, make, let/allow/permit) which best fits the context. Also be sure to conjugate the verb when necessary, adding the correct suffix 后 (-s, -ing, -ed) or turning it into a gerund 动名词 or leaving it as the infinitive 不定式 after "to..." Each blank is worth one point for the correct word and one more for the correct form/conjugation 动词的变位. (Each blank is worth two points: give half credit *only* for the right verb in the wrong form!) Some blanks have more than one correct answer, while others have only one that fits.

EXAMPLE: Examples let students know how to answer by making the instructions clearer. Total Score: _____/100

1&2. When driving, this sign (above) means _____. The driver has to _____ other cars go first.

3. When Trump was campaigning, he said he wanted to _____ NATO and other countries relying on the U.S. for security pay more.

4-6. A passport _____ one to travel abroad, but a person can't _____ a country _____ him/her in if they don't want to just because s/he has one.

7. My girlfriend never _____ and agreed that my point was correct. She always kept arguing with me.

8&9. As a foreigner in China, I am not _____ to stay beyond the validity of my visa, or the government will _____ me pay a fine.

10 & 11. Japan is a great power and financial contributor to the UN, but particular members of the UNSC won't _____ it join the Security Council. Perhaps this _____ Japanese nationalists angry and more likely to pursue military expansion.

12&13. The key to choosing between the words is first deciding whether the direct object wants to do the action in question or is being _____ to do it by force. If the subject is _____ the object to do it, we know that "let, allow," or "permit" is not a strong enough word. Anytime the action wouldn't happen by itself, some form of "make" is probably appropriate.

14&15. If the direct object is changed to the subject, by contrast, and you can imagine s/he wants to do the action, "make" is too strong, as there's no need to _____ someone to do what s/he already wants to do. You may, however, need to give him/her permission, thus _____ him/her to actually do it without worrying about punishment, being scolded, or whether the action is allowed by law or the rules. Softer words like "let, allow" and "permit" fit such situations better, when the subject might prevent the action from happening.

16. Confusingly, when we give permission, we remove the "to" when we let someone do something, but the "to" is kept for "allowing" or "permitting" someone *to* do something. Rules like this _____ students heads hurt.

17. Similarly, to get people to do what they don't want to, we'll either make them do it or force them *to* do it, and if they don't _____ to our verbal commands it may be necessary to use threats or physical force.

18. In many cases, there's no single right word, so whichever one you choose _____ the meaning clear and changes the context.

19&20. _____ exercises like these takes time, especially when the grammar rules don't _____ perfection in every case.

21-24. If a man grabs you by the hand and won't _____ you go, say, "_____ me go!" And if necessary, use *kung fu* to _____ him to _____ go of you.

25&26. When trying to walk through a crowd, saying, "让! 让!" is equivalent to yelling, "_____ me through!" or "_____ way!"

27-30. That movie always _____ me too scared to watch it. I don't think small children should be _____ to watch it alone unless parents sign a form _____ them to. In any case, I'm sure parents wouldn't _____ it to be shown in schools.

31-33. While many Chinese parents buy everything their kids need, most American parents _____ their kids do chores to earn an allowance so as to _____ them to "learn the value of a dollar" and _____ them spend responsibly from an early age.

34-37. The trade negotiators only _____ to Chinese demands after _____ them have personal commissions of 1% on all goods sold, a percentage that wouldn't _____ them rich but would hopefully keep them from _____ others bribe them to get around the fees.

38&39. "Don't _____ me mad, or I'll _____ 'em have it!" the gunman warned the police, holding the gun closer to his captives.

40-42. Having never _____ smoking in his bakery, the owner needed convincing before _____ his bakers to bake "edibles" for customers who wanted marijuana in their brownies, since the drug was _____ legal in several U.S. states since the 2010s.

43.-50. Think that was easy? Here's a challenge that might _____ some native speakers scratch their heads: _____ kids to learn when they'd rather play is like not _____ water to flow. First, you've got to build a "dam" of some kind to hold their attention. Only after you've _____ them calm down will they _____ you to teach them in a way that _____ actual results. And if the "dam" _____, sometimes all you can do is give up and "_____ kids be kids."