

My children have begged my husband for years to build them a tree house. He has said "No," for a long time, but in 2013, for some reason(1), he changed his mind. I always agreed with the kids, because secretly, I think it would be very exciting to have a tree house. So, when he told us that he wanted our ideas about the project, we were all surprised and excited. The kids drew all sorts of designs, some realistic, and some pure fantasy. As Tom and the boys were going to do all of the building, the plans had to be very clear and simple. Each person had to know what his job was(2). Also, Tom decided to cut the cost(3) by using unwanted wood and fallen trees from land owned by relatives. So off he and the boys would go in the truck to search for wood. They would come back a few hours later, with the trailer full off tree trunks. One by one they would carry them to the back garden. It was heavy, hard work for the boys, but they're all big and strong, and if they wanted a tree house, they had to work for it. Gradually, the building started to take shape(4). The support wood went in the ground first, then the floor was placed on top of that. It seemed that in a few days the walls went up, and then the roof appeared. This all took place towards the end of November, because Tom knew that usually we get snow right at the beginning of December. Well, that didn't happen this year at all. We've had a snowless winter. Because it hasn't been too cold, the kids have already been playing in the house. Inside it you'll find a mattress, a lantern, and a stash (5)of food which went missing from my kitchen. My little squirrels must have transported it up into the tree house for their winter supply.

1. 'For some reason' is like saying 'I don't know why'.

a. I called her three times, but for some reason she didn't pick up the phone.

b. He's highly qualified, but for some reason he can't find a job.

2. The use of the verb at the end of the sentence shows that it's not a question. We would not say, 'Each person had to know what was his job'; that would be incorrect because that has the structure of a question.

a. He asked me what time it was/ what the time was.

(We would not say 'He asked me what was the time').

b. I need to know how much the cakes cost.

(We would not say 'I need to know how much cost the cakes').

3. 'To cut the cost' means to make a project cheaper.

a. The council is cutting the cost of lighting the streets by turning on only half of the street lamps.

b. We cut the cost of painting our house by having our friends help us.

4. 'To take shape' is a phrase we use that describes the progress of a project. It can be used figuratively as well.

a. The garden shed is half finished; it's really taking shape.

b. We're planning the wedding reception; it's really taking shape.

5. 'A stash' is a collection of food or other substances that are hidden for some future use/ secret use.

a. I cleaned my son's bedroom and found a stash of chocolates under his bed.

b. The police came across a stash of marijuana in the boys' locker room in the High School.