

Grammar Guide - version 1.11 for Windows.

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Using the Grammar Guide

998 - Adjective Index

To read about adjectives, see:

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003 - Adjective Order

order; usage

1) When we use more than one adjective in a phrase, they usually follow this order:

	age	colour	origin	material	purpose	
a	new	red	Swiss	plastic	army	knife

We can have other types of adjectives which we put before the age. These are general adjectives about the size, the shape and our opinion of the noun. Often we can change the order of these adjectives but we usually put the most important first. Here we are concerned with taste:

	opinion	size	
a	tasty	big	sandwich

But if we think the most important thing about the sandwich is its size, we can say:

	size	opinion	
a	big	tasty	sandwich

2) When you write, it is best not to use too many adjectives. Certainly, never more than two or, at most, three in a phrase:

the **sharp, Swiss army** knife

a **big, thick** sandwich

See also:

[Adjective](#)
[Index](#)

001 - Adjectives

Adjectives are words we use to describe a noun. They usually come before it:

a **big, red, boring** book

The noun in this phrase is *book* and the adjectives tell us what size it is (*big*), what colour it is (*red*) and what we think of it (*boring*).

Adjectives never change their form; they are always the same:

the **ugly** woman and the **ugly** man

the **ugly** football team and the **ugly** goalkeeper

the **ugly** dog and the **ugly** scenery

See also:

[Adjective](#)
[Index](#)

002 - Adjective Position #1

attributive position; subject complements; object complements; complex pronouns

1) When we put adjectives with nouns, they usually come before the noun:

{adjective(s)} + {noun}

a **dirty, old** man

some **large blue** whales

2) When the adjective is a subject complement, we put it after the verb:

{verb} + {adjective(s)}

The Atlantic Ocean is **big**.

The man seemed **old, infirm and drunk**.

3) When the adjective is an object complement, we put it after the noun phrase:

{noun phrase} + {adjective(s)}

They called him **fat**.

I painted the old car **yellow and purple**.

4) When we use compound pronouns ending with *-body*, *-one*, *-thing* and *-where*, the adjective follows:

{compound pronoun} + {adjective(s)}

Give me something **cool and strong** to drink.

Anybody **brave** can do it.

See also:

Adjective
Index

006 - Adjective Position #2

attributive & predicative; attributive only; predicative only

1) Some adjectives can only come before a noun. These are called **attributive** adjectives:

{attributive adjective} + {noun}

Other adjectives can only come after a verb. These are called **predicative** adjectives:

{verb} + {predicative adjective}

For example, *alone* is a predicative adjective; it can only follow:

I feel **alone**.

~~He is an **alone** man.~~

In the second example, we can use instead an attributive adjective and say:

He is a **lonely** man.

2) When we use a noun as an adjective, it is usually attributive only:

{noun as attributive adjective} + {noun}

a **table** leg

football hooligans

Common attributive-only adjectives include:

attributive only	predicative
elder	older
live	alive
sheer	-
mere	-
sure	-
plain	-

Notes

- a) *live* is attributive only when it means *not dead*; it can be predicative when it has other meanings.
- b) Intensifying adjectives such as *sheer* and *sure* are usually attributive only.

3) Common predicative-only adjectives include:

attributive	predicative only
floating	afloat

frightened	afraid
-	alight
similar	alike
live - living	alive
lonely	alone
sleeping	asleep
-	awake
-	lit
elder - older	older
-	present

Notes

- a) Many words in this list begin with *a-*
- b) *present* is attributive only when it means *in this or that place*

See also:

Adjective
Index

004 - Adjectives as Nouns; Nouns as Adjectives

adjectives; nouns

1) We can use an adjective as a noun by using this pattern:

{**the**} + {adjective}

We use this to talk about a group of people:

The rich get richer while **the poor** get poorer.

We can also use it to talk about an abstract idea:

the new, the old, the infinite

2) We can also put two nouns together. When we do this, the first noun acts like an adjective and gives us more information about the second noun:

[determiner] + {noun} + {noun}

computer programs

some **record** players

See also:

Adjective
Index

005 - Participles as Adjectives

We can often make an adjective from a verb. We do this by using the *-ing* and *-ed* participles:

verb	<i>-ed</i> participle	<i>-ing</i> participle
interest	interested	interesting

We use the *-ed* participle as a subject adjective; it describes how the subject of a sentence feels:

She was **interested** in the programme.

The **disappointed** candidate felt cheated by the result.

We use the *-ing* participle as an object adjective; it describes the object of the sentence:

The programme was **interesting** (for her).

The candidate objected to the **disappointing** result.

See also:

Adjective
Index

995 - Adverb Index

To read about adverbs, see:

[Adverbs](#)

[Adverb Groups](#)

[Adverbs of Time](#)

[Adverbs of Place](#)

[Adverbial Clauses](#)

[Adverbs of Degree](#)

[Adverbs of Manner](#)

[Adverbs of Frequency](#)

[Adverb Order](#)

028 - Adverb Order

If we have more than one adverb in an adverb phrase, we generally use this order:

	manner	place	time
you must go	quickly	into the kitchen	after lunch

See also:

Adverb
Index

029 - Adverbial Clauses

conjunctions; adverbial clause; present participle; perfect

1) We can join two clauses using a simple conjunction:

She heard the door open **while** she was watching television.

2) The second clause can be turned into an adverbial clause by using the present participle:

She heard the door open **while watching** television.

3) We can use the present participle by itself to show something happening simultaneously or just previously to the main event:

Watching tv, she heard the door open.

Laughing, I walked out.

Standing up, he introduced himself.

4) Using perfect forms makes the construction more formal:

Standing up, he introduced himself.

Having stood up, he introduced himself.

Perfect forms can also replace clauses of reason:

Not knowing, can't say.

Drunk, we got lost.

But these are more written than spoken.

See also:

Adverb

Index

022 - Adverb Groups

manner; degree; frequency; time; place; intensifying

1) Adverbs of manner tell us *how* something happens:

They fought **bitterly**.

We sang **happily**.

2) Adverbs of degree tell us *how much* something happens, i.e. to what extent. They usually go with other adjectives, adverbs and verbs:

She is **totally** insane.

I am **completely** bewildered.

3) Adverbs of frequency tell us *how often* something happens:

He **never** phones.

They **often** argue.

4) Adverbs of time tell us *when* things happen:

He has **just** arrived.

They came **recently**.

5) Adverbs of place tell us *where* things happen:

He came **here**.

I went **there** last June.

6) Intensifying adverbs make things stronger or weaker

I am **really** tired.

She plays the violin **very** well.

See also:

[Adverb](#)
[Index](#)

023 - Adverbs of Degree

We use adverbs of degree to tell us *how much* something happened:

Is there **enough** wine?

She can **hardly** sing.

We usually put them before the adjective or adverb they describe:

too high

extremely quickly

Many of these adverbs end in *-ly*.

See also:

[Adverb Index](#)

024 - Adverbs of Frequency

We use adverbs of degree to tell us *how often* something happened.

I **rarely** eat meat.

I **often** go to the cinema.

We usually put them before the main verb:

She **seldom** speaks.

They **occasionally** go out.

Many of these adverbs do not have any special form. A typical list from always to never:

always
often
frequently
usually
normally
sometimes
occasionally
seldom
rarely
never

See also:

[Adverb Index](#)

025 - Adverbs of Manner

We use adverbs of manner to tell us *how* something happened. They describe the way or style of doing something:

You can dance **well**.

She sang that song **badly**.

We usually put them at the end of the sentence, though sometimes they come before the main verb:

That book was written **badly**.

That book was **badly** written.

Many of these adverbs end in -ly:

awkwardly, badly, coldly, desperately...

Common irregular adverbs of manner include:

high, late, near, well

See also:

Adverb

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026 - Adverbs of Place

We use adverbs of place to tell us where something happened.

I saw him **at the cinema**.

They met me **here** yesterday.

We usually put them at the end of the sentence. *place* comes before *time* in the end position:

We left **there** at midnight.

Do you come **here** often?

Sometimes we can put them at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis:

In the middle of the road there was a dead cat.

Many of these adverbs do not have any special form and they are often phrases of prepositions and place.

See also:

Adverb Index

027 - Adverbs of Time

We use adverbs of time to tell us when something happened.

I saw him **last Sunday**.

They met me here **yesterday**.

We usually put them at the end of the sentence:

I'll telephone **on Thursday**.

We met **one year ago today**.

Sometimes we can put them at the beginning for emphasis:

Next week is my birthday.

Many of these adverbs do not have any special form. They are often preposition phrases.

See also:

[Adverb Index](#)

021 - Adverbs

We use adverbs to give us more information about an adjective, a verb or the sentence as a whole:

The **only** red bike.

She swam **beautifully**.

Unfortunately it is raining so I cannot visit the zoo.

However, we also use adverbs in many other ways; many people see adverbs as the group of words in English which do not fit into any other category (such as noun, verb, etc.).

We can use adverbs to give more information about *how*, *how often*, *when* or *where* something happened:

He wrote **crookedly** in the diary.

I **regularly** go to the gym.

I've been ill **lately**.

Go **away**!

Adverbs can also make the description stronger or weaker:

She is **totally** insane.

I **hardly** knew him.

Many, but not all, adverbs end in *-ly*; we make adverbs from adjectives by adding *-ly* to the end:

He is a **bad** driver; he drove **badly**.

It is a **clear** day; she can see **clearly**.

See also:

[Adverb Index](#)

994 - American & British English Index

To read about American & British English, see:

[American & British English](#)

[AmE & BrE Grammar #1](#)

[AmE & BrE Grammar #2](#)

[AmE & BrE Vocabulary](#)

042 - AmE & BrE Grammar #1

present perfect & past simple; have & have got; irregular verbs.

1) BrE sometimes uses the present perfect while AmE use the past simple:

BrE: **Have** you **eaten** all those biscuits?

AmE: **Did** you **eat** all those cookies?

BrE: **Have** you ever **seen** the film,
Casablanca?

AmE: **Did** you ever **see** the movie,
Casablanca?

2) BrE uses *have got* while AmE tends to use *have*:

BrE: **Have** you **got** new training
shoes?

AmE: **Do** you **have** new sneakers?

BrE: **I've got** some wellington boots you can
borrow.

AmE: **I have** some rubbers you can borrow.

BrE: **I haven't got** time for a holiday this
year.

AmE: **I don't have** time for a vacation this
year.

3) There are some differences in irregular verbs between AmE and BrE. Two major differences are:

BrE: dive - **dived** - She **dived** into the pool.
dived

AmE: dive - **dove** - She **dove** into the pool.
dived

BrE: get - got - **got** The baby has **got** a lot bigger.

AmE: get - got - **gotten** The baby has **gotten** a lot
bigger.

See also:

American & British English Index

AmE & BrE Grammar #2

043 - AmE & BrE Grammar #2

prepositions; shall; question tags; collective nouns; informal adverbs; double imperatives.

1) BrE uses *from...to/till/until* while AmE uses *from...through*:

BrE: The optician is open **from** eight **till** four.
AmE: The optometrist is open **from** eight **through** four.

There are also a number of other differences in BrE and AmE prepositions, e.g. *different to/than, at/on the weekend, ten past/after midnight*.

2) BrE can use *shall* for offers and suggestions while AmE uses *should*:

BrE: **Shall** I call a taxi?
AmE: **Should** I call cab?

3) BrE uses a lot of question tags. AmE does not; instead it uses words like *right* and *ok*:

BrE: I'll park on the verge, **shall I?**
AmE: I'll park on the shoulder, **right?**

4) BrE can use a singular or plural verb for collective nouns while AmE uses only a singular verb:

BrE: The team **are** playing badly.
AmE: The team **is** playing badly.

5) In informal speech, AmE sometimes use adverbs without the *-ly* ending:

BrE: Autumn was **really** cold this year.
AmE: Fall was **real** cold this year.

6) With double imperatives beginning with *go*, AmE sometimes drops the joining *and*:

BrE: **Go and** open the door.
AmE: **Go** open the door.

See also:

American & British English Index

044 - AmE & BrE Vocabulary

miscellaneous words; road & traffic; clothes & accessories.

1) Miscellaneous words:

AmE	BrE	BrE	AmE
alumnus	graduate	anywhere	anyplace
anyplace	anywhere	autumn	fall
apartment	flat	barrister, solicitor	attorney
attorney	barrister, solicitor	biscuit	cookie
baby-carriage	pram	caretaker	janitor
bar	pub	chemist's	drug store
billboard	hoarding	condom	rubber
broiler	grill	cooker	stove
call-collect	reverse charge	cot	crib
can	tin	cotton	thread
candy	sweets	crisps	potato chips
checkers	draughts	cupboard	closet
closet	cupboard	draughts	checkers
cookie	biscuit	drawing pin	thumbtack
corn	maize	dummy (for a baby)	pacifier
crib	cot	estate agent	realtor
dish-towel	tea-towel	external tap	spigot
drug store	chemist's	flat	apartment
elevator	lift	graduate	alumnus
eraser	rubber	grill	broiler
faculty	staff (university)	ground floor	first floor
fall	autumn	hoarding	billboard
faucet	tap	holiday	vacation
first floor	ground floor	jug	pitcher
flashlight	torch	lift	elevator
garbage	rubbish	maize	corn
hobo	tramp	maths	math
janitor	caretaker	nowhere	nowhere
kerosene	paraffin	nursing home	private hospital
liquor store	off-licence	oculist, optician	optometrist
mail	post	off-licence	liquor store
math	maths	paraffin	kerosene
mean	vicious	post	mail
nowhere	nowhere	pram	baby-carriage
optometrist	oculist, optician	pub	bar
pacifier	dummy (for a baby)	push-chair	stroller
pitcher	jug	railway	railroad
potato chips	crisps	reel	spool
private	nursing home	reverse charge	call-collect

hospital			
railroad	railway	rubber	eraser
realtor	estate agent	rubbish	garbage
rest room	toilet	rubbish	trash
rubber	condom	school, college, university	school
rubbers	wellington boots	shop	store
school	school, college, university	somewhere	someplace
someplace	somewhere	staff (university)	faculty
spigot	external tap	sweets	candy
spool	reel	tap	faucet
store	shop	tea-towel	dish-towel
stove	cooker	tin	can
stroller	push-chair	toilet	rest room
subway	underground	torch	flashlight
thread	cotton	tramp	hobo
thumbtack	drawing pin	underground	subway
trash	rubbish	vicious	mean
vacation	holiday	wellington boots	rubbers

Note

In BrE *fag* is an informal word for cigarette. In AmE *fag* is an offensive term for a homosexual.

2) Words for road & traffic

AmE	BrE	BrE	AmE
automobile	car	bonnet	hood
cab	taxi	boot (of a car)	trunk
detour	diversion	bumper, mudguard	fender
divided highway	dual carriageway	car	automobile
expressway	motorway	caravan	trailer
fender	bumper, mudguard	crash	wreck
flat	puncture, flat tyre	crossroads	intersection
freeway	motorway	diversion	detour
gas	petrol	dual carriageway	divided highway
gear-shift	gear-stick, gear-lever	engine	motor
highway	main road	gear-stick, gear-lever	gear-shift
hood	bonnet	main road	highway
intersection	crossroads	motorway	expressway
motor	engine	motorway	freeway
muffler	silencer	pavement	sidewalk
oil pan	sump	petrol	gas
patrolman	policeman	policeman	patrolman

pavement	road surface	puncture, flat tyre	flat
sedan	saloon car	road surface	pavement
shoulder	verge	roundabout	traffic circle
sidewalk	pavement	saloon car	sedan
traffic circle	roundabout	silencer	muffler
trailer	caravan	sump	oil pan
truck	van, lorry	taxi	cab
trunk	boot (of a car)	toll motorway	turnpike
turnpike	toll motorway	van, lorry	truck
windshield	windscreen	verge	shoulder
wreck	crash	windscreen	windshield

3) Words for clothes & accessories

AmE	BrE	BrE	AmE
billfold	wallet	braces	suspenders
coin-purse	purse	handbag	pocketbook, purse
cuffs	turn-ups (on trousers)	nappy	diaper
diaper	nappy	purse	coin-purse
pants	trousers	tights	panty-hose
panty-hose	tights	training shoes	sneakers
pocketbook, purse	handbag	trousers	pants
shorts	underpants	turn-ups (on trousers)	cuffs
sneakers	training shoes	underpants	shorts
suspenders	braces	vest	undershirt
undershirt	vest	waistcoat	vest
vest	waistcoat	wallet	billfold
zipper	zip	zip	zipper

See also:

[American & British English Index](#)

041 - American & British English

American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) are almost the same. The biggest difference between the two is with pronunciation.

There are, however, a few differences in spelling, vocabulary and grammar.

In general, there are very few problems or misunderstandings when AmE speakers and BrE speakers talk together.

See also:

[American & British English](#)

[Index](#)

997 - Comparison Index

To read about comparison, see:

Comparison

Comparison Phrases

Comparative & Superlative

#1

Comparative & Superlative

#2

Comparative & Superlative

#3

053 - Comparatives & Superlatives #1

comparative & superlative; two items; more than two; form

1) When we want to compare two nouns or two verbs, we use the comparative and superlative forms of their adjectives or adverbs. These follow the same usage as the adjectives and adverbs they replace.

2) To compare two items, we use the comparative:

I am **big**, he is **bigger**.

She works **carefully**, he works **more carefully**.

We often use this form in this pattern:

{comparative} + {**than**}

He is **taller than** me.

We are **more efficient than** you.

3) To compare more than two items, we use the superlative:

Jupiter is **the biggest** planet in the solar system.

In the company, Sandra works **the most carefully**.

4) Small words add *-er* and *-est* to make the comparative and superlative. Large words use *the* and *more* and *most*:

	comparative	superlative
small	smaller	the smallest

extensive	more	the most
e	extensive	extensive

See also:

Comparison Index

Comparatives & Superlatives

#2

054 - Comparatives & Superlatives #2

incomplete comparison; present perfect.

1) If the context is clear, we do not need to use a complete comparison. We can say:

This book is **less interesting**.

They dance **less enthusiastically**.

The rest of the sentence is implied:

This book is **more difficult** (than that book).

2) We often use the superlative with the present perfect:

{superlative} ... {present {**ever**} perfect}

It was the **most boring** film I have **ever** seen.

That was the **most disgusting** meal I have **ever** had to eat.

See also:

Comparison Index

Comparatives & Superlatives

#3

055 - Comparatives & Superlatives #3

irregular forms; notes.

1) Some words make their comparative and superlative in an irregular way:

adjective/adverb	comparative	superlative
	e	ve
good/well	better	the best
bad/badly	worse	the worst
far	farther	the farthest
far	further	the furthest
many/much/a lot of	more	the most
a little	less	the least
old	older	the oldest

old elder the eldest

2) Notes

2a) We use *old* - *older* - *the oldest* when we talk about objects or people and we use *old* - *elder* - *eldest* for family relationships

2b) Some words can take both forms:

friendly - friendlier - the friendliest

friendly - more friendly - the most friendly

Other examples include: *clever*, *common*, *dirty*, *easy*, *funny*, *gentle*, *happy*, *noisy*, *narrow*, *polite*, *quiet*, *shallow*, *silly*, *simple* and *stupid*.

See also:

Comparison

Index

051 - Comparison

introduction; nouns; verbs; phrases

1) When we compare two or more items, we have different ways to do it depending on the items we are comparing. We can change the form of the word or use a phrase.

2) To compare nouns, we can change the adjective describing them by using comparative and superlative adjectives:

Enid is **pretty** though Aleka is **prettier**; Aleka is **prettier than** Enid.

But Olga is **the prettiest** of them all.

3) To compare verbs, we can change the adverb describing them by using comparative and superlative adverbs:

Olga works **carefully** though Aleka works **more carefully**.

But Enid works **the most carefully** of them all.

4) We can also use different phrases to make comparisons. For example:

He is **as tall as** me.

He is **the tallest man** I have ever seen.

He **looks as if** he is the tallest man in the room.

He is **so tall that** he has to bend to get through the door.

See also:

[Comparison Index](#)

052 - Comparison Phrases

similarity; difference; ability/inability.

1) To show similarity, we can use these phrases:

1a) {**as**} + {adjective/adverb} + {**as**}

He is **as tall as** me.

They work **as slowly as** I do.

In positive sentences we can use *as...as*, in negative sentences we use *as...as* or *so...as*

They are not **so** clever **as** **us**.

They are not **as** clever **as** **us**.

1b) {**the same**} + [noun phrase] + {**as**}

This colour is **the same as** that colour.

This is **the same colour as** that.

1c) We use the following expressions when we are explaining something we have seen or noticed:

{subject} + {verb} + {**as**} + {**if/though**} ...

I am very tired. I feel **as if** I haven't slept for a week.

The weather is cold. It looks **as though** it is going to snow.

like means the same but it is very informal:

Their clothes were ripped. They looked **like** they had been in a fight.

1d) When two people or objects are similar, we can use *like* or *as*:

He looks **like** you.

No one drives **as** the Italians do.

2) To show difference, we can use this phrase:

{**different**} + {**from**}

They are different from us.

3) To show ability or inability, we can use these phrases:

3a) {**such**} + {noun phrase} + {**that**}

He is **such a good player that** he will play for the national team.

It was **such bad weather that** they cancelled the excursion.

3b) {**so**} + {adjective} + {**a/an**} + {non-countable noun phrase} + {**that**}

He is **so good a player that** he will play for the national team.

They are **so bad a team that** they will all be sacked.

3c) {**so**} + {adjective} + {**that**}

He is **so good that** he will play for the national team.

The weather was **so bad that** they cancelled the excursion.

3d) {**too**} + {adjective} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

This is **too good to be** true!

He is **too small to be** a policeman.

We are **too old to fight**.

3e) {**too**} + {adjective} + {**for**} + {person} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

It was **too distant for me to see**.

He is **too good for me**.

He is **too good for me to beat**.

3f) {adjective} + {**for**} + {person} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

That was **easy for you to say**.

It was **difficult for me to do**.

See also:

Comparison Index

993 - Conditional Index

To read about conditionals, see:

[Conditionals](#)

[Conditional 1](#)

[Conditional 2](#)

[Conditional 1 or 2?](#)

[Conditional 3](#)

[Miscellaneous Conditionals](#)

[Conditional Clauses](#)

077 - Conditional Clauses

In the examples for the [conditional](#), the conditional clauses have been like this:

{[subject](#)} + {**will/would**} + {[verb](#)}

However, we can use other [modal verbs](#) in place of *will* and *would*.

If it rains like this all day, the river **will** flood.

If it rains like this all day, the river **might** flood.

If it rains like this all day, the river **could** flood.

might means *will possibly* and *could* means *will be able to*.

See also:

[Conditional](#)
[Index](#)

072 - Conditional 1

We use the first conditional to talk about situations in the future which we think they will probably happen or which are perfectly reasonable and likely:

If we leave at 9.00, we **will** catch the train.

If you stop crying, I **will** give you a sweet.

To make the first conditional we use two [clauses](#). The if-clause is in the [present](#), the conditional clause uses *will* and the [infinitive](#):

{**if**} + {[present](#)} | {**will**} + {[infinitive](#)}

There are two clauses: the if-clause can come first or second. When it comes first, we usually put a comma between the two.

If you **work** hard, you **will make** lots of money.

You **will lose** lots of money if you **keep** gambling.

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

[Conditional 1 or Conditional 2?](#)

074 - Conditional 1 or Conditional 2?

Sometimes it is difficult to know when to use the first conditional and when to use the second conditional. If you want to talk about something which is likely to happen, use Conditional 1; if the idea is unlikely, use Conditional 2. Obviously sometimes we can use either of these types.

If I **work** too much, I **will** hurt myself.

If I **worked** too much, I **would** hurt myself.

The first example suggests that I think I work too much and I ought to stop; the second example suggests I don't want to work too hard and this is why not.

Using the first or second conditional depends on the point of view of the speaker:

a pessimist says if I **won**...

an optimist says if I **win**...

a pessimist says if my house **is** on fire...

an optimist says if my house **were** on fire...

The first conditional uses the present tense and the second conditional uses the past tense, but both of these conditionals can talk about the present or future - the tense does not show time but likelihood.

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

[Conditional 1](#)

[Conditional 2](#)

073 - Conditional 2

We use the second conditional to talk about possible but unlikely situations in the future and whether they will happen or not, or imaginary present situations:

If you met the President, what would you say?

If you had a million pounds, what would you do with it?

To make the second conditional we use two clauses. The if-clause is in the past tense, the conditional clause uses *will* and the infinitive:

{if} + {past} | {**would**} + {infinitive}

There are two clauses: the if-clause can come first or second. When it comes first, we usually put a comma between the two.

If you **wrote** a bestseller, you **would make** lots of money.

You **would earn** lots of money if you **worked** harder.

We also use it for giving advice. This is very common:

If I **were** you, I **would**...

Note

We use *I were* instead of *I was* because we are actually using the subjunctive; many people nowadays, however, say *if I was*...

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

075 - Conditional 3

We use the third conditional to talk about situations in the past which cannot be changed; we talk about how the results might be different:

If Baggio had scored, Italy would have won the match.

(But Baggio did not score and Italy lost.)

To make the third conditional we use two clauses. The if-clause is in the past perfect tense and the conditional clause uses *would have* and the past participle:

{if} + {past perfect} | {**would**} + {**have**} + {past participle}

There are two clauses: the if-clause can come first or second. When it comes first, we usually put a comma between the two.

If Blucher **had not arrived**, Napoleon **would have won** at Waterloo.

France **would have been** the most powerful country in Europe if Napoleon **had won** at Waterloo.

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

071 - Conditionals

A conditional is a kind of sentence which uses a word such as *if*. It talks about situations which are not real.

There are three main types of conditional sentences:

We use Conditional 1 to talk about probable situations in the future.

We use Conditional 2 to talk about possible but unlikely situations in the future.

We use Conditional 3 to talk about past situations which did not happen.

type	if clause	conditional clause
conditional 1	if we leave now	we will catch the train
conditional 2	if we left now	we would catch the train
conditional 3	if we had left earlier	we would have caught the train

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

076 - Conditionals Miscellaneous

eternal truths; giving orders; offers, advice; suggestions; improbable future; *if + will, would; if* alternatives; deleting *if*; happen to

1) When we talk about eternal truths (situations which are always true) such as scientific facts, we can use this pattern:

{if} + {present tense} | {present tense}

If water **reaches** 100, it **turns** into steam.

If you **go**, I **go**.

2) When we give orders, we use:

{if} + {present tense} | {imperative}

If the car breaks down, telephone me.

Let me know if you are in trouble.

3) When we offer or give advice we can use:

{if} + {present continuous/present perfect} | {modal}

If the car is acting up, you should telephone me.

You ought to let me know if you are thinking of moving to London.

4) When we give suggestions we can use:

{if} + {modal} | {modal}

If the can't get your perfect job, you should for anything.

5) When we talk about improbable future actions we can use:

{if} + {**should**} | {modal/imperative}

If the car should break down, telephone me.

You ought to let me know if you should change your mind.

6) When we talk about willingness or wishing, we can use *if + will*. This is often used to make offers:

{if} + {will/would} | {modal}

If you **will** come with me, I can show you the way.

If you **wouldn't** mind, I'd like to talk to you.

In these examples, *will* has nothing to do with future meaning.

7) We can also make conditionals by using words other than *if*.

If we had more money, we could buy a new car.

Supposing we had more money, what would you buy?

Take the umbrella **in case** it rains.

Don't leave **unless** I tell you to.

supposing	= if
in case	= if by chance
unless	= if ... not

8) We can also leave out *if* in informal situations:

You make any more trouble (and) I'll call the police!

Should the car break down, call me straight away.

9) We can use *happen to* to suggest that something happens by chance:

If you **happen to** see Kevin, tell him to call me.

We can also use it with *should* when there is even less chance of something happening:

If you **should happen to** bump into the Prime Minister, tell him to give me a tax rebate.

See also:

[Conditional Index](#)

Determiner Index

To read about determiners, see:

[Determiners](#)

[Articles #1](#)

[Articles #2](#)

[Articles #3](#)

[Articles #4](#)

[Demonstrative Adjectives](#)

[Possessives](#)

096 - Demonstrative adjectives

We use demonstrative adjectives to talk about specific examples of a noun.

When we talk about a singular or non-countable noun, we use *this* if the noun is close to us (in space or time), or *that* if the noun is far away (in space or time):

Look at **this** picture here.

Can you see **that** mountain?

I'm going on holiday **this** week.

That was a long time ago.

When we talk about a plural noun, we use *these* if the noun is close to us (in space or time), or *those* if the noun is far away (in space or time):

Look at all **these** pictures here.

Can you see **those** mountains?

I've been feeling quite ill **these** days.

I remember all **those** summer days when I was young.

See also:

Determiner
Index

091 - Determiners

Determiners are words we put in front of a noun or noun phrase. They tell us about the number of items we are talking about; they often restrict the use of the noun. For example:

determiner	noun	...
	cats	sleep a lot
a	cat	sleeps a lot
the	cat	sleeps a lot
my	cat	sleeps a lot
most	cats	sleep a lot
some	cats	sleep a lot

Determiners usually come before the noun, at the beginning of the noun phrase, and we can generally only use one determiner for a noun phrase.

These are the classes of determiners:

example	see
a - an - the	<u>articles</u>

my - your - his...

whose - which - what

some - any

enough

this - that - these - those

every - each

much

either - neither

all - both - half

double - twice - three
times...

one-quarter - two-thirds...

first - second - third...

one - two - three...

many - more - most

few - fewer - fewest

little - less - least

several

possessives

some - any

enough

demonstrative
adjectives

each - every

much

either - neither

predeterminers

fractions

ordinal numbers

cardinal numbers

many

few

little

See also:

Determiner Index

092 - Articles

There are three articles in English:

	the zero article
a/an	the indefinite article
the	the definite article

We use these articles with nouns.

I like drinking **water**.

I like **a cup of tea** before bed.

I like **the taste** of malt whisky.

When we talk about a group of nouns in general, we use the zero article. Here we are talking about *all cats*:

Cats like sleeping.

When we talk about one example of a group we use the indefinite article. Here we are talking about *one cat from many*:

There is **a cat** in the garden.

When we talk about one specific example of the group, we use the definite article. Here we are talking about *one special cat*:

The cat with the grey and black coat is mine.

Note

The zero article means that we do not use anything; it is useful to help to explain how we use the other articles.

See also:

[Determiner Index](#)

093 - Group Articles

zero articles; definite articles; non-countable nouns

1) When we want to talk about *all* the nouns in a group, we use the zero article (i.e. nothing):

Dogs bark and **cats** purr.

In this example, we are making a general comment about *all* cats and *all* dogs.

2) When we talk about a sub-group of nouns, we use the definite article, *the*:

The men from Nagasaki chew tobacco.

Compare this with:

Men are often paid more than **women** for the same job.

We often use *the* when we have adjectives or other qualifications of the noun which restrict it:

Flowers make a house brighter.

I prefer **the red flowers**.

I am impressed with **the flowers in your garden**.

3) We can also use the definite article with a singular noun to mean *all* nouns:

Bananas have a curious design.

The banana has a curious design.

Both of these mean the same thing.

4) When we use non-countable nouns, we treat them like plural nouns. This is because non-countable nouns have the idea of a large amount:

Water is essential for healthy crops.

The water in this river is very polluted.

5) Sometimes we can choose whether to use an article or not. Both of these are possible:

People in my town always vote Conservative.

The people in my town always vote Conservative.

The article we use here depends on the point of view of the speaker.

See also:

[Determiner Index](#)

094 - Single Articles

indefinite articles; definite articles; indefinite to definite; one

1) When we want to talk about a single example of a noun, we can use the definite or indefinite article. When we talk about one noun in general, and it does not matter which one, we use the indefinite article *a* or *an*:

Can you lend me **a pen** please?

I saw **an elephant** playing in the garden.

In the first example it makes no difference which pen is lent; the speaker does not mind if it is red or blue or old or new, etc. In the second example, the important fact is that there is an elephant in the garden; the speaker is not concerned whether the elephant is old or young, a bull or a cow.

Note

We use *a* before a consonant sound and *an* before a vowel sound. Be careful with words like *hour* which are spelt with a consonant but start with a vowel sound - *an hour*. Also take care with words like *union* which are spelt with a vowel but start with a consonant sound - *a union*.

2) When we talk about a specific example of a group, we use the definite article, *the*:

Which pen do you want? - I want **the red pen**, please.

In this example, the speaker does not want any pen, but a special or specific one.

3) When we are speaking, we often introduce a new subject with *a...* and then, when we talk about it again, we use *the...*

Elephants are annoying! I saw **an elephant** climb into my garden this morning and then **the elephant** ate all my tomatoes.

In this example, the speaker firstly talks about elephants in general (zero article), then about an example of the genre (indefinite article) and finally about the previously mentioned example (definite article). We use *the* to talk about a noun we already know about. This can be mentioned previously (as above) or be obvious from the context:

You look upset; what's **the problem**?

4) The meaning of *a/an* is *one*. We do not use *one* unless we want to specify exactly how many we want.

Can you lend me **one pound** please, I don't need any more.

Did you see two cats in the garden? - No, I only saw **one cat**.

In general, we do not use *one* very much and mostly use *a* or *an*.

See also:

Determiner Index

095 - Article Usage

prepositions; institutions; indefinite articles; definite articles; zero articles

1) When we use a noun with a preposition, we often do not use an article:

I went **to school** but left my books **at home**. Mother was **in church** and father **at sea**; Grandfather came **to dinner** later **by train** and Grandmother managed to escape **from prison** to join us.

2) When we talk about *school* as an institution, we use the zero article. When we talk about it as a building, we use *the*:

He was taken to **court** to be tried; in **the court** he met an old friend.

Nouns in this group include: *bed, church, class, college, court, home, hospital, market, prison, school, sea, town, university, work*.

3) The indefinite article. We use *a* or *an* when we talk about:

jobs He is an artist and his wife is a plumber.

beliefs He is a Buddhist and his wife is an atheist.

nationalities He is an American and she is a Swede.

We never use the indefinite article with non-countable nouns:

~~I swam in a clean water and ate a pasta.~~

4) The definite article. We use *the* when we talk about:

oceans, seas the Pacific, the Black Sea

inventions the wheel, the internal combustion engine

titles the Queen, the President, the chairperson

rivers & canals the Thames, the Nile, the Suez.

public buildings the Sheraton, the Red Lion, the Natural History Museum

newspapers The Independent, The Daily Mirror

superlatives the best, the worst.

families the Smiths

countries of union the United States, the West Indies

mountain chains the Alps, the Highlands

instruments the piano, the bagpipes

ships the Bismarck, the Lusitania

5) The zero article. We use the zero article when we talk about:

years	1961, 1995, 2000
people	Joe, Mrs Smith
seasons & months	Winter, February
festivals	Easter
continents	Africa, Asia, America, Europe
days	Monday, Tuesday
parts of day/night	midnight, midday, noon, night
magazines	Cosmopolitan, Time
countries	America, Britain, Arabia
cities & towns	London, New York, Tokyo, Sydney, Cairo
streets	Acacia Avenue, Pall Mall, Sunset Boulevard
buildings	Buckingham Palace, Number 10
airports	Heathrow, Gatwick
mountains	Everest, K2, Mont Blanc
games	football, tennis, bar billiards

Exceptions include: *the Hague; the Matterhorn; the Mall; the White House*

See also:

Determiner Index

Possessives

introduction; places; of; apostrophe s; noun & apostrophe; prepositions; preposition or apostrophe?

1) There are several ways to show who owns or possesses something in English.

Erica has a book which he bought. The book belongs to Erica. To show that Erica is the owner, we use an apostrophe s added to the owner and make a noun-phrase:

Erica's book

Because *Erica* is a feminine name, we can use a feminine pronoun and because *Erica's* is possessive, we must use the possessive adjective:

her book

We also use possessive adjectives to talk about parts of the body:

your hands, your head

We can also use a possessive pronoun which refers to the whole phrase:

hers

Putting these together, we have:

This book belongs to Erica.

This is **Erica's book**.

This is **her book**.

This is **hers**.

If the noun already ends in s we can add an apostrophe s or just the apostrophe:

This book belongs to James.

This is **James's' book**.

This is **James' book**.

It is perhaps neater to add just the apostrophe.

If the noun is plural, we only add an apostrophe, not s as well:

These books belong to these **boys**.

These are the **boys' books**.

2) When we talk about places, we often use the possessive:

I went to the butcher's.

I stayed with the Watson's.

Meaning: *the butcher's shop, the Wilson's house.*

3) With inanimate objects, we normally use *of* to show possession rather than an apostrophe s:

The side of the car

~~The car's side.~~

We also use *of* when the possessive noun has a describing clause following it:

I saw the man's dog.

I saw the dog of the man in the blue hat.

~~I saw the man in the blue hat's dog.~~

We don't use *of* for time adverbs:

Yesterday's news is today's history.

It was ten minutes' drive.

4) We can make the noun possessive by adding an apostrophe -s:

[determiner] + {possessive} + {noun}

my **brother's** old records

a **dog's** life

5) Sometimes we can have very similar noun phrases using a noun or a possessive:

my **computer** program

my **computer's** program

In the first example, *computer* gives us more information about *program* which is the root of the phrase.

The noun phrase is all about *my program*.

In the second example, *program* tells us what belongs to *computer's*. The noun phrase is all about *my computer*.

6) We can also make possessive noun phrases using prepositions:

[determiner] + {noun phrase} + {preposition} + [determiner] + {noun phrase}

that book **about** fossil fuel

the names **of** some cities

7) Sometimes we can have two types of noun phrase which mean the same thing:

the people's decision

the decision of the people

Generally, we use a possessive when the noun is animate, i.e. it is a person or animal, and we use a preposition when the noun is inanimate, i.e. it is a thing. There are a lot of exceptions to this rule, though and many times we can use either pattern.

See also:

[Determiner Index](#)

996 - Noun Index

To read about nouns, see:

[Nouns](#)

[Noun Groups](#)

[Common & Proper Nouns](#)

[Noun Phrases](#)

[Noun Phrase Patterns](#)

[Singular & Plural Nouns #1](#)

[Singular & Plural Nouns #2](#)

[Countable & Non-Countable Nouns](#)

[Quantity with Countable & Non-](#)

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[Pronouns](#)

[Personal Pronouns](#)

[Reflexive Pronouns](#)

[Gender](#)

[Gerunds](#)

[Adjectives as Nouns](#)

[Apposition](#)

113 - Common & Proper Nouns

concrete & abstract common nouns; proper nouns

1) When we talk about nouns, we can divide them into two different groups. We use common nouns to talk about objects or concepts:

objects	table, hill, water, atom, elephant
events	lesson, revolution
feelings	fear, hate, love
time	year, minute, millennium
concepts	warfare, brotherhood, causation

Note

We can divide common nouns into two further groups. We talk about *concrete* nouns when we refer to objects and we talk about *abstract* nouns when we refer to concepts which are mental rather than physical (i.e. we cannot see, hear, taste, smell or touch them).

2) The second group of nouns are called proper nouns. The big difference between these and common nouns is that proper nouns are spelt with a capital letter. A proper noun is the name of a person, a place

or a title:

Queen Victoria, Cleopatra, Buddha, London, Australia, Mars, Asia

When we talk about a place which does not have a name, we use a common noun; if it has a name we use a proper noun. For example, we say *prison*, *hospital* and *house*, but we talk about *Wandsworth Prison*, *St Guy's Hospital* and *The White House*.

See also:

Noun Index

120 - Apposition

When we use two noun phrases together, this is called apposition:

{noun phrase} + {noun phrase}

Diane, doyen of the peripatetic world, got on her bike.

Ace reporter Clark Kent leapt into a phone booth.

In the first example, we do not need *doyen of the peripatetic world* to understand *Diane*, so we use commas to separate the two phrases. The sentence would still be acceptable without the second phrase:

Diane got on her bike.

In the second example, *ace reporter* needs *Clark Kent* to make the sentence understood so no commas are used. The sentence would not make sense without the second phrase:

~~Ace reporter leapt into a phone booth.~~

See also:

Noun Index

114 - Countable & Non-Countable Nouns

introduction; countable; non-countable and common mistakes

1) There are two main groups of nouns in English. It is important to know the difference between these two groups as there are different grammar rules for each. Note that *non-countable* nouns are sometimes known as *mass* nouns.

2) Most nouns are *countable*; this means we can count the object (or concept) they refer to. We can, for example, stand in a field and count:

four goats and three cows

A countable noun has two forms: singular and plural. We use the singular form when we talk about one object (or concept), and we use the plural form when we talk about more than one object (or concept). We can say:

There is one **book** on the table, and three **books** on the chair.

I have one **house**, but the Queen has fifteen **houses**.

When the countable noun is the subject of the sentence, the verb is singular or plural, depending on the noun (this is called subject-verb agreement):

The **book is** on the table.

The **cars are** in the garage.

3) Some objects (or concepts) cannot be counted. We cannot stand on the beach and count:

~~four sands and three waters~~

sand and *water* are examples of non-countable nouns and they only have a singular form:

The **sand is** hot.

The **water is** cold.

Common non-countable nouns include:

liquids	beer, cola, juice, lemonade, milk, tea, water, whiskey, wine
foodstuffs	butter, cheese, grain, meat, pepper, rice, salt, sugar, wheat
miscellaneous	advice, furniture, hair, knowledge, luggage, money, news,
us	pasta, progress, research, spaghetti, toothpaste

If the non-countable noun is the subject of a sentence, we use it with a singular verb:

My **money is** in my wallet.

Milk **is** very good for babies.

This butter **has** melted.

This whiskey **tastes** awful!

4) Students often make mistakes with these non-countable nouns:

furniture, hair, money, news, research, spaghetti

Remember, non-countable nouns have a singular verb and do not have a plural form:

He gave me some **information** about flights to Rome.

The **news is** not good.

The **spaghetti is** ready now.

I've got a lot of **work** to do.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

115 - Quantity with Countable & Non-Countable Nouns

introduction; plurals; non-countable nouns; container

1) When we talk about quantity with countable and non-countable nouns, there are a number of different ways we can do this.

2) To express quantity with a countable noun, we can use a number and a plural noun:

There are **three** bananas on the table.

He had **twenty-seven** sheep on the farm.

If the number is *one*, we usually use an article instead:

He has **a** cold.

Or we can be non-specific and talk about approximate numbers:

There are **some** people in the office.

There are **a few** problems.

3) To express quantity with a non-countable noun, we cannot use a number and a plural form:

~~There are three rices in the bowl.~~

~~Can you give me four informations?~~

Instead, we must use *some*, *any*, *much*, *little* and a singular form:

Here is **some** sugar.

There isn't **much** wine in the bottle.

4) When we talk about a non-countable noun, we can use an expression which shows an amount or a container:

{quantity} + {amount/container} + {of}

There is **one box of** rice in the cupboard.

He drank **three glasses of** wine.

I'd like **a pound of** cheese, please.

Some other common expressions include: **bar**, **bottle**, **box**, **cup**, **jar**, **kilo**, **loaf**, **metre**, **mile**, **packet**, **piece**,

pound, sheet, slice, tin, ton, tube, yard.

See also:

Noun Index

Countable & Non-Countable

non-countable to countable; different meanings; speaking generally & specifically.

1) When we use non-countable nouns, we often use them in expressions:

three **cups of** tea

two **glasses of** whiskey

With some common expressions, we can delete the container and make the non-countable noun, countable:

three **teas**

two **whiskies**

2) Some nouns are countable and non-countable but with different meanings:

He suffers badly from **the cold**.

I have **a cold**.

In the first example, *cold* is non-countable and refers to cold weather and low temperature; in the second example, *a cold* refers to a blocked nose and lots of sneezing.

3) Often when we talk about an example of a non-countable noun then we make the noun countable:

I'd like some **wine**, please.

This is **a fine wine**.

In the first example we are talking about wine in general; in the second we are talking about a specific wine, an example of the whole.

See also:

Noun Index

112 - Noun Groups

countable & non-countable; pronouns; concrete abstract & proper; noun phrases and gerunds.

1) Some nouns can be counted; you can count the number of books in the room and the number of words on a page, etc. These are **countable** nouns:

There are **fifteen books** in the room.

There are **one hundred and fifty words** on this page.

However, some nouns cannot be counted. You cannot, for example, count *water*:

~~There is **one** water in the sea.~~

~~There are **two** waters in the sea.~~

This is because *water* is a **non-countable** noun; we cannot put a number in front of it. Non-countable nouns are sometimes known as uncountable nouns or mass nouns.

2) Sometimes we use a **pronoun** to replace a noun in a sentence. We do this so we do not have to repeat the same words again and again:

Brian opened **the door**, **Brian** paused by **the door**, and then **Brian** closed **the door** quietly.

becomes:

Brian opened the door, **he** paused by **it**, and then **he** closed **it** quietly.

In this case, *he* and *it* are pronouns; they mean *Brian* and *the door*.

3) It is easy to see a book; because we can see it, we call it a **concrete** noun. Sometimes it is impossible to see a noun; for example these are also nouns but you cannot see them:

love, happiness, life

These are **abstract** nouns and they refer to concepts rather than objects. We also talk about **proper** nouns which are people's names:

Peter, Buddha

4) Look at these sentences:

The man ate the cake.

The big man ate the cake.

The very big man ate the cake.

The very big Australian man ate the cake.

We have taken a simple noun, *man*, and added other words to it to make a **noun phrase**. A noun phrase works in the same way as a single noun.

5) When we have a verb which we want to use as a noun, we can use a **gerund** (a verbal noun). This is made using the *-ing* form of the verb:

Skiing is fun.

He liked **walking** and **cycling**.

See also:

Noun Index

119 - Noun Phrase Patterns

simple; determiner; adjectives; nouns; noun phrases

1) The simplest pattern for a noun phrase is the noun standing alone:

I

Eric

cats

2) Very often we use a determiner with a noun. Determiners are added to the front of the phrase:

{determiner} + {noun}

the man

a dog

some people

{determiner} + {noun phrase}

the old man

a dog and a bone

some fifty thousand people

3) We can add adjectives to a noun; they usually come before the noun:

[determiner] + {adjective[s]} + {noun}

the **old grey** whistle

happy people

good work

4) We can put two nouns together; the first noun acts like an adjective and gives us more information about the second noun:

[determiner] + {noun} + {noun}

computer programs

some **record** players

5) When we put two nouns together to make a noun phrase we can use this pattern:

{noun} + [noun(s)] + {**and**} + {noun}

When the noun phrase has *and* then it is plural and takes a plural verb:

Jimmy, Eric and Pete are friends.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

118 - Noun Phrases

When we use nouns, we often use them with one or more other words to make a noun phrase.

A noun phrase is a group of words which acts just like a single noun in a sentence. All these sentences follow the same pattern:

{noun phrase} + {verb
phrase}

I	smiled
	.
The man	smiled
	.
The man in the big hat	smiled
	.
The man in the big white hat	smiled
	.
The old man in the big white hat	smiled
	.

Very often we put a determiner in front of the noun to make a noun phrase:

{determiner} + {noun}

a banana

the house

some people

And we often add adjectives to tell us more about the noun:

{determiner} + {adjective} + {noun}

a **big** banana

the **old** house

some **angry** people

See also:

Noun Index

111 - Nouns

When we want to talk about something, we use a noun. A noun is the name of the thing we can see. Here are some common nouns:

[book](#), [telephone](#), [aeroplane](#), [teacher](#)

There are only two forms of nouns: singular and plural. *book* is a singular noun, this means it refers only to one book. If we want to talk about more than one book, we must use a plural noun:

[books](#), [telephones](#), [aeroplanes](#), [teachers](#)

To make a plural noun, we usually add -s to the end of the singular noun.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

123 - Personal Pronouns

table; subject pronouns; object pronouns; possessive pronouns; reflexive pronouns; one; you & one.

1) This is a full table of personal pronouns:

	subject	object	reflexive	possessive	possessive
sing	I	me	myself	my	mine
sing	you	you	yourself	your	yours
sing masc	he	him	himself	his	his
sing fem	she	her	herself	her	hers
sing neut	it	it	itself	its	its
sing neut	one	one	oneself	one's	one's
plural	we	us	ourselves	our	ours
plural	you	you	yourselves	your	yours
plural	they	them	themselves	their	theirs

2) We can replace the subject of a sentence with a personal pronoun:

Alice looked at the cat.

She looked at the cat.

3) We can replace the object of a sentence:

Alice looked at **the cat**.

Alice looked at **it**.

4) We can replace the reflexive noun of a sentence:

Alice washed **Alice**.

Alice washed **herself**.

5) We can replace the possessive determiner and its noun:

The Queen looked at the **Queen's** cat and Alice looked at **Alice's** cat.

The Queen looked at **her** cat and Alice looked at **hers**.

6) We can use *one* as a pronoun to replace *anybody* and we use it to talk about people in general but it is not used very much these days and is very formal:

One must accept that **one** has limitations.

To truly know **oneself** requires great commitment.

One must obey **one's** superiors.

Note that the possessive takes an apostrophe.

7) We use the pronoun *you* in two ways:

7a) we can use *you* to refer to the person we are talking to:

Do **you** want to come with me?

Where did **you** go last night?

7b) We can also use *you* to talk about people in general:

You can't get a good job without qualifications.

What **you** need to do is increase public spending to reduce inflation.

When we are talking about people in general, we can also use *one* instead of *you*. This is more formal and less common in everyday speech:

One can't get a good job without qualifications.

What **one** needs is a change in leadership.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

124 - Reflexive Pronouns

definition; examples; emphatic use

1) We use reflexive pronouns to talk about the same person or thing that was mentioned in the subject:

Alice looked at **herself** in the mirror.

They enjoyed **themselves** at the beach.

We use reflexive pronouns when the person who does something, and the person who has something done, are the same.

Note the difference between:

They looked at **each other**.

They looked at **themselves**.

In the first example, each person looked at the other people; in the second example the each person looked only at himself or herself.

2) These are some examples of the reflexive use:

2a) *enjoy yourself*

enjoy yourself = have a good time

I hope you **enjoy yourself** on holiday.

2b) *help yourself*

help yourself = take some

Can I have a biscuit, please? - Go on, **help yourself**.

2c) *behave yourself*

behave yourself = be good

I'm going out now, children, so **behave yourselves**.

3) We use reflexive pronouns to give emphasis to the subject, to stress that the subject worked alone. We use it either at the end of the sentence or after the noun it refers to.

I **myself** did all this work.

She designed all the decorations **herself**.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

122 - Pronouns

definition; personal pronouns

1) Pronouns are used in place of nouns in a sentence.

William took the ball and then **William** kicked **the ball**.

We replace nouns that are repeated by pronouns:

William took the ball and then **he** kicked **it**.

The type of pronoun we use depends on the type of noun we replace:

2) When we replace proper nouns, we use personal pronouns:

Alice looked at **Alice's** reflection in the mirror before washing **Alice**.

Alice looked at **her** reflection in the mirror before washing **herself**.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

117 - Gender

overview; family relations; animals; jobs; gender-specific nouns; gender-specific pronouns; animals, cars & countries.

1) When many languages use nouns, the nouns are often grouped as masculine, feminine or neuter. In English these groups are very simple to make:

masculine	men and boys
neuter	
feminine	women and girls
neuter	everything else including animals

2) Family relations have masculine and feminine forms:

masculine	feminine
bridegroom	bride
brother	sister
father	mother
husband	wife
nephew	niece
son	daughter
uncle	aunt
widower	widow

3) Animals have masculine and feminine forms; these are some common ones:

masculine	feminine
bull	cow
cock	hen
dog	bitch
drake	duck
fox	vixen
gander	goose
lion	lioness
stallion	mare
tiger	tigress

4) Some jobs have masculine and feminine forms; these are some common ones:

masculine	feminine
actor	actress
author	authoress
duke	duchess
hero	heroine
king	queen

male nurse	nurse
manager	manageress
monk	nun
policeman	policewoman
spokesman	spokeswoman
steward	stewardess
waiter	waitress

5) A word like *doctor* can apply to a man or a woman; the word is not gender-specific. However, a word like *nun* can only apply to a woman which makes it gender-specific.

Some people think that some gender-specific words are sexist. To avoid being gender-specific, we can use alternatives:

spokesperson

police officer

Or we can use one of the forms for both men and women:

She became company **manager** after her promotion.

My mother is the **author** of several popular romance novels.

Both Eric and Jane worked as **nurses** in the same hospital.

6) When we talk about a member of a mixed group of people we can say:

A good scientist must keep careful notes of **his or her** work.

This, however, is not very elegant. One popular alternative is to use a masculine pronoun as a neuter pronoun:

A good scientist must keep careful notes of **his** work.

But this is sexist; it implies that scientists are men. A better alternative is to use the pronoun *their* instead:

A good scientist must keep careful notes of **their** work.

7) When we talk about an object, it is neuter. However, if we give the object a personality, we can make the noun masculine or feminine.

7a) This happens with pet animals, or animals we know well:

The dog stayed in **her** bed and did not eat anything; I think **she** is ill.

Note *dog* is a masculine and neuter noun

7b) It also happens with cars and ships which are often female:

The Titanic sank on **her** maiden voyage; **she** hit an iceberg.

My car wouldn't start - I think **she** is ready for the scrap heap.

7c) Countries are sometimes female:

Britain called on **her** allies to help fight the threat.

People sometimes talk about their countries as being the *motherland* or the *fatherland*.

See also:

Noun Index

121 - Gerunds

Sometimes we need to use a verb as the subject or object of a sentence. In this case we can use the gerund.

We make the gerund by adding *-ing* to the verb. It has exactly the same form as the present participle of the verb:

Walking keeps me fit.

I like **fishing**.

See also:

Noun Index

991 - Passive Voice Index

To read about the passive voice, see:

[Passive Voice](#)

[Passive Verbs](#)

[Passives Forms](#)

[Passive *by...*](#)

[Causative Form](#)

[Passive Object Clauses](#)

[Passive Two Objects](#)

[Passive Object](#)

[Complements](#)

[Passive Use](#)

137 - Passive Voice

information order; form

1) The most important information in a sentence usually comes first. We use the passive voice to change the order of the information in a sentence:

active **Elsa ate the cake.**
passive **The cake was eaten by Elsa.**

2) We usually use the active voice rather than the passive. These are the two forms:

active {subject} + {verb} + {object}
passive {object} + {be} + {past participle} + {**by**} + {subject}

There are three steps to making a passive sentence:

2a) make the object of the active sentence (*the cake*), the subject of the passive sentence:

active **Elsa ate the cake.**
passive **The cake**

2b) make the verb passive; we do this by using *be* and the past participle:

active **Elsa ate the cake.**
passive **The cake was eaten**

2c) make the subject of active sentence (*Elsa*) the object of the passive sentence - we introduce it with *by*:

active **Elsa ate the cake.**
passive **The cake was eaten by Elsa.**

See also:

[Passive Voice Index](#)

142 - Causative Form

use; form

1) The causative form is used when we speak about a professional service which someone has done for us.

She is having her typewriter repaired.

2) We make the causative form:

{subject} + {*have*} + {object} + {past participle}

I had my hair cut.

She will have her house decorated.

They are having their garden landscaped.

He is going to have his car resprayed.

We can use the same pattern to talk about an often bad experience:

She had her house burgled.

We had our money stolen.

We had our car vandalised.

We can also use *get* instead of *have* but this is informal.

See also:

[Passive Voice Index](#)

141 - Passive *by...*

Sometimes it is not necessary to put the *by...* part of the sentence in a passive voice:

active	{ <u>subject</u> } + { <u>verb</u> } + { <u>object</u> }
passive	{object} + {verb} + [by + subject]

This can happen if we do not know who the subject is:

[The money was stolen.](#)

- by someone, I don't know who.

Or we can leave it out if we do not want to say who the subject is:

[The window was broken.](#)

- I know who broke the window (it was me) but I don't want to admit it!

We can also leave out the *by...* part of the sentence if it is not important to know who the subject is, or if it is obvious:

[My house was painted last June.](#)

[Tin has been mined in Cornwall since before the Romans invaded.](#)

See also:

[Passive Voice Index](#)

143 - Passive Object Clauses

When we use an object clause, we can have a special passive structure:

active {subject} + {verb phrase} + [that] + {object clause}
passive {it} + {passive verb} + [that] + {object clause}

active People say **Churchill was a clever man.**
passive It is said that **Churchill was a clever man.**

We can make a passive like this when the object verb is present simple or past simple:

active {subject} + {verb phrase} + {object} + {object verb} ...
passive {object} + {passive verb} + {passive infinitive} ...

active People say Churchill **is** a clever man.
passive Churchill is said **to be** a clever man.
active People say Churchill **was** a clever man.
passive Churchill is said **to have been** a clever man.

This happens when you talk about an opinion, suggestion or belief which uses a verb like: *believe, claim, estimate, say, think* and so on.

We often use these patterns with reporting verbs such as: *agree, arrange, announce, believe, consider, decide, expect, fear, feel, find, hope, intend, know, mention, regret, report, say, suppose, think, understand.*

See also:

Passive Voice Index

144 - Passive Object Complements

In many situations we use an object complement:

Many people consider Churchill **the greatest British statesman.**

Churchill is the most important part of the sentence, so we make a passive sentence to bring it to the front:

Churchill is considered the greatest British statesman.

The pattern for this is:

active {subject} + {verb} + {object} + {object complement}
passive {object} + {passive verb} + {object complement}

See also:

Passive Voice Index

145 - Passive Two Objects

Sometimes you can make two different passive sentences if the original sentence has two objects:

{subject} + {verb} + {direct object} + {indirect object}

The boy gave **the stale cream cake** to **the teacher**.

{direct object} + {passive verb} + {indirect object} ...

The stale cream cake was given to the teacher [by the boy].

{indirect object} + {passive verb} + {direct object} ...

The teacher was given the stale cream cake [by the boy].

We usually make the person the subject (i.e. the last example).

See also:

Passive Voice Index

139 - Passive Use

general; writing

Usually, we put the most important information in a sentence at the beginning.

{subject} + {verb} + {object}

The subject is the theme of the sentence. Sometimes, however, we want to stress the object in the sentence. This can happen when the object is more important than the subject.

A man shot the President.

In this case, the fact that the President is dead is very important, while the assassin is less so. It is not important who did the action; it is the result that we wish to emphasise:

The President has been shot.

In other situations, we may not know who did the action. Someone broke the window in my house but I don't know who it was:

The window has been broken.

(I could say: **Someone broke the window**, but again I am more concerned with the wind whistling through my house than a vandal.)

Finally, we might be talking about public opinion:

Pelé is said to be the greatest footballer ever.

In this case I really do not care who says this. I want to talk about Pelé, not football enthusiasts and their

opinions.

2) In your writing, try not to use the passive voice too much. Generally we use it for technical documents, manuals and weather forecasts.

The liquid should be placed in a beaker and heated to 75.

(Note that in this grammar guide we have used the active voice instead of the passive. This is because the active is easier to understand.)

See also:

[Passive Voice Index](#)

140 - Passive Verbs

passive forms; modal & auxiliary verbs; passive infinitives; uncommon forms; *get -be*

1) We make the passive voice by changing the positions of the subject and object and using a passive verb:

active {subject} + {verb} + {object}
passive {object} + {be} + {past participle} + {by} + {subject}

To make the verb passive, we use these patterns:

active Eric kisses Amanda.

simple tenses: {be} + {past participle}
 Amanda **is kissed** by Eric.
 Amanda **was kissed** by Eric.

continuous tenses: {be} + {being} + {past participle}
 Amanda **is being** kissed by Eric.
 Amanda **was being** kissed by Eric.

perfect tenses: {have} + {been} + {past participle}
 Amanda **has been** kissed by Eric.
 Amanda **had been** kissed by Eric.

2) When we use auxiliary verbs, we add them to the front of the structures above:

{modal/auxiliary/be going to} + {be} + {past participle}
Amanda **could be** kissed by Eric.

Amanda **is going to be** kissed by Eric.

{modal/auxiliary/be going to} + {be} + {being} + {past participle}

Amanda **might be being** kissed by Eric.

{modal/auxiliary/be going to} + {have} + {been} + {past participle}

Amanda **will have been** kissed by Eric.

Amanda **ought to have been** kissed by Erica.

3) To make the passive infinitives:

active
{to} + {infinitive}
Someone ought **to help** him.

passive
{to} + {be} + {past participle}
He ought **to be helped**.

{to} + {have} + {past participle}

Someone ought **to have helped** him.

{to} + {have} + {been} + {past participle}

He ought **to have been helped**.

4) Occasionally you may see these, but they are not very common:

perfect continuous:

{have} + {been} + {being} + {past participle}

Amanda **has been being kissed** by Eric.

Amanda **had been being kissed** by Eric.

future perfect continuous:

{modal/auxiliary/be going to} + {have} + {been} + {being} + {past part.}

Amanda **will have been being kissed** by Eric.

5) Sometimes you can use *get* instead of *be* to make the sentence a little more informal:

The phone box **was vandalised** last night.

The phone box **got vandalised** last night.

This is generally used in speech rather than writing.

See also:

[Passive Voice Index](#)

138 - Passives Forms

using *by...*; two objects; object clauses; causative form

1) Sometimes it is not necessary to use the *by...* part of the passive:

The cat **was kidnapped** **by someone**.

The cat **was kidnapped**.

2) When the active sentence has two objects, we can make two passives:

active: She **gave** Amanda a box of chocolates.

passive: Amanda **was given** a box of chocolates.

passive: A box of chocolates **was given** to Amanda.

3) Also, if the active sentence has an object clause, we can make a special passive:

active: People think he was a genius.
passive: It is thought he was a genius.
passive: He is thought to have been a genius.

4) When someone does a professional service for us, we use the causative form. It is also used for a bad experience:

I am having my car resprayed.

I had my wallet stolen.

See also:

Passive Voice Index

990 - Preposition Index

To read about prepositions, see:

Prepositions

Prepositions of Place

Prepositions of Time

Word & Phrase + Preposition

156 - Word & Phrase + Preposition

Some words and phrases very often take the same preposition in a sentence. This is a list of common structures:

word	prep
afraid	of
apologise	for
arrange	for
bored	with
care	for
different	from
fond	of
good	at
insist	on
intention	of
interested	in
keen	on
look	at
ready	for
succeed	in, at
take part	in
tired	of
worry	about
intend	to

See also:

[Preposition Index](#)

155 - Prepositions

We use prepositions in many different ways.

1) Prepositions of place tell us where something is or happens:

on the sofa

under the bed

2) We use prepositions of time to tell us when something happens:

at Christmas

in July

3) Some words are often followed by the same prepositions:

listen **to**

succeed **in**

4) Some verbs take a preposition to make a new verb. These are called phrasal verbs:

put **up** with

hand **out**

See also:

[Preposition Index](#)

157 - Prepositions of Place

There are two types of place preposition. Static prepositions are stationary, they refer to a place. Mobile prepositions imply movement; they suggest moving from one place to another:

He lived **in** London.

He moved **to** London.

Whether the preposition is static or mobile usually depends on the meaning of the verb.

These are common prepositions of place and their uses - there are a number of exceptions though:

1) *at*: the place where something happens

He lives **at** 13 Acacia Avenue.

He's **at** the theatre, sitting **at** the back.

We'll stop **at** Aylsham en route to London.

2) *in*: something all around

We sat **in** silence **in** the cinema.

We live **in** Aylsham.

He lives **in** Spain.

3) *into/out of*: movement from outside to inside a place or vice versa

We walked **out of** the kitchen and **into** the dining room.

I drove **out of** Buxton and **into** Aylsham.

4) *on*: the top surface

The book is **on** the table.

The boat is **on** the sea.

5) *onto/off*: movement to the top surface of an object from another object

The cat jumped **off** the table and **onto** the chair.

I climbed **off** the roof and **onto** the ladder.

6) Other prepositions of place include: *above, across, along, around, behind, below, beside, by, in, in front of, into, near, next to, on, opposite, out of, over, past, round, through, to, towards, under.*

See also:

[Preposition Index](#)

158 - Prepositions of Time

We use these prepositions to talk about time:

{**in**} + {year/month/season/time of day (except night)}

[in 1976](#)

[in March](#)

{**on**} + {day/date}

[on Monday](#)

[on the 15th of July](#)

{**at**} + {clock time/night}

[at ten o'clock](#)

[at midnight](#)

See also:

[Preposition Index](#)

171 - Reported Speech

introduction; statements; questions; reporting verbs; questions; pronouns

1) We use reported speech to report what someone has said earlier. Reported speech is sometimes known as indirect speech (what the person actually says is known as direct speech).

2) When we report statements, we use this pattern:

{person} + {reporting verb} + [**that**] + {past statement}

"We will go out this evening."

He said [that] we would go out this evening.

or less commonly:

{past statement} + {person} + {reporting verb}

{past statement} + {reporting verb} + {person}

We would go out this evening, he said.

We would go out this evening, said he.

Reporting verbs include: *agree, answer, be sure, explain, explain, interrupt, know, mention, say, tell, think, write.*

4) With questions, we do not invert the subject and verb:

"Where is it?" asked Pete.

Pete asked **where it was**.

Reporting verbs include: *ask, enquire, want to know, wonder*

5) If the reporting verb is in the present tense, the verb in direct speech does not change:

"I **like** it," says Jeff.

Jeff **says** he **likes** it.

If the reporting verb is in the past tense, then the direct verb goes into the past:

"I **like** it," says Jeff.

Jeff **said** he **liked** it.

If the direct verb is in the past tense, then it stays the same:

"I **liked** it," says Jeff.

Jeff **says** he **liked** it.

or

"I **liked** it," says Jeff.

Jeff **said** he **liked** it.

Would, could, should, might, & ought to stay the same:

"I **might** go," said Jeff.

Jeff said he **might** go.

If the reporting verb is in the past, we change the direct verb to the past also. But if the statement is still true, we can optionally keep it in the present:

"I **like** you," said Pete.

Pete said he **likes** me.

In reporting questions with a yes/no answer, we use if/whether. Verbs change as per statements:

"Do you want to go?" asked Eric.

Eric asked **if/whether** I wanted to go.

6) Pronouns change like this in reported speech:

I - he/she

my - his/her

here - there

next day - tomorrow

7) We report orders:

{**tell**} + {direct object} + {infinitive}

He told me to go.

8) With requests we use this pattern:

{ask} + {object} + {infinitive}

He asked me to leave.

or *ask for*

9) When we use a reporting verb with direct speech, we can invert the subject-verb order:

"Hello," **Peter said.**

"Hello," **said Peter.**

There is no difference in meaning between the two forms. We often invert when the subject is long:

"Hello," **cried the rather heavy gentleman with the cigar.**

We do not usually invert when we use pronouns as this sounds old fashioned:

"Hello," **said he.**

9) For *that..* clauses, we often use 'should' in reported speech orders etc:

He said that we **should** go.

401 - say & tell

introduction; optional objects; direct speech; indirect speech

1) *tell* must have an indirect object, *say* does not.

{**say**} + {something}

She **said** she was leaving.

{**tell**} + {somebody} + {something}

She **told me** she was leaving.

2) *tell* can be used with an optional direct object in these expressions and *say* cannot:

tell (someone) a lie, the truth, a story, the time

tell (someone's) fortune

say can be used with an object in these expressions and *tell* cannot:

say someone's name

3) *say* can be used in direct speech, while *tell* is used only for orders, instructions or pieces of information in direct speech:

I said, "Hi!"

I told him, "Get off my land!"

I told him, "The train leaves at five-fifteen."

125 - Singular & Plural Nouns #1

regular; irregular; same plurals; alternative plurals

1) Most nouns in English are regular. To make them plural we add -s to the end:

singular	plural
1 book	2 books
1 car	4 cars
1 house	8 houses

2) Some nouns have two very different words for the singular and the plural:

singular	plural
1 tooth	2 teeth
1 goose	2 geese
1 foot	2 feet
1 child	2 children
1 ox	2 oxen
1 oasis	2 oases
1 axis	2 axes
1 man	2 men
1 woman	2 women
1 mouse	2 mice
1 medium	2 media

3) Some nouns are the same whether they are singular or plural:

singular	plural
1 sheep	2 sheep
1 salmon	2 salmon
1 aircraft	2 aircraft
1 trout	2 trout

4) Some nouns have alternative plurals:

singular	plural
1 penny	2 pence/pennies
1 person	2 persons/people
1 fish	2 fish/fishes

See also:

Noun Index

Singular & Plural Nouns #2

126 - Singular & Plural Nouns #2

no singular; singular plurals; singular & plural; collective; measurement; pair nouns

1) Some nouns have a plural but no singular, for example:

clothes, contents, earnings, goods, riches, savings, thanks, troops

These nouns take a plural verb:

The contents **are** labelled on the jar.

His savings **were** wiped out in the crash.

2) Some nouns look plural but are, in fact, singular, for example:

athletics, gymnastics, mathematics, measles, news, politics

The verb is singular here:

His measles **is** spreading.

Politics **is** boring!

3) Some words are either plural or singular, for example:

headquarters, means, works (= factory/workshop, etc.)

The verb can be either singular or plural; there is no real difference:

Their headquarters **are** situated in central London.

Their headquarters **is** situated in central London.

4) A collective noun describes a group of nouns describing the same thing, for example:

army, Arsenal, audience, class, club, committee, company, crowd, gang, group, Microsoft, public, team, the BBC

We use singular verb if we think of the group as a whole:

Arsenal **is** playing well today.

Or plural if we are thinking of the individuals:

Arsenal **are** a mixed bunch of players.

Some groups, however, are always plural:

The police **are** coming!

The cattle **are** lowing.

5) When we have a noun phrase of measurement, we use a singular verb:

Twenty kilos **is** the maximum weight for suitcases.

Six feet six inches **is** tall for a man.

6) When we talk about a pair of things, we always use the plural, for example:

a pair of: **glasses, jeans, scissors, trousers**

We use a plural verb:

Your jeans **are** ripped.

See also:

[Noun Index](#)

989 - Verb Index

To read about verbs, see:

[Verbs](#)

[Verb Forms](#)

[Verb Tenses](#)

[Verb Patterns](#)

[Verb Phrases](#)

[Irregular Verbs](#)

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252 - Verb Tenses

Infinitives

Future

Imperatives

Present Simple #1

Present Continuous #1

Past Simple #1

Past Continuous #1

Present Perfect Simple #1

Present Perfect Continuous

#1

Past Perfect Simple #1

Past Perfect Continuous #1

Present Simple #2

Present Continuous #2

Past Simple #2

Past Continuous #2

Present Perfect Simple #2

Present Perfect Continuous

#2

Past Perfect Simple #2

Simple or Continuous?

Present Perfect Continuous or Present Perfect Simple?

Present Perfect Simple or Past Simple?

286 - Simple or Continuous?

Introduction; non-continuous verbs; meaning changes

1) Students sometimes confuse a simple tense with a continuous tense. This topic looks at the differences between the two tenses.

We use the continuous to talk about things which are happening over a period of time. The simple tenses are used to talk about things which happen and finish; the duration of these events is not important.

2) Some verbs contain in their meaning an idea of permanency. For example, when we use the verb *like*, we are talking about a feeling we have which will last for a long time:

I **like** football.

She does not **like** boring books.

Do they **like** living in London?

For this reason, we do not usually use *like* in a continuous tense. There are other verbs generally used only in simple tenses, for example:

2a) verbs of mental activity: **know, understand, think**

2b) verbs of emotions: **like, love, hate, desire**

2c) verbs of senses: **see, smell, touch, taste, hear**

2d) verbs of possession: **own, belong, possess, have**

2e) verbs of reporting: **say, tell, ask, answer**

2f) miscellaneous verbs: **need, contain, depend, consist, seem**

Note: with verbs of perception we can often use *can*:

I **can** hear him but I **cannot** see him.

Can you smell the roses?

3) We can use some of the verbs listed above in continuous tenses but their meaning changes when we do.

In general, the simple form refers to a long-term mental state; it is about a belief. The continuous form refers to what is happening right now; it is an active effort:

What **do** you **think**? - I **think** you are wrong.

What **are** you **thinking**? - I **am thinking** about our holiday.

We never use *have* in a continuous way to mean possession. In the next example, we use *have* to mean making an active effort:

I **have** long hair.

I **am having** my hair cut.

Simple tenses generally refer to actions which are permanent, while continuous tenses usually talk about things which are happening for a while only - they will stop sometime.

I **live** in London.

I **am living** in London.

In the first example, the speaker was probably born in London. London is their home and they have no intention of leaving.

In the second example, the speaker perhaps has just moved to London, or is living there for a short while only before moving somewhere else.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

988 - Sentence Index

To read about sentences, see:

[Sentences](#)

[Sentence Types](#)

[Predicates](#)

[Subjects](#)

[Complements](#)

[Objects](#)

[Direct & Indirect Objects](#)

[Statement Patterns](#)

[Short Answers](#)

[Exclamations](#)

182 - Sentence Types

statements; negatives; questions; imperatives; exclamations; short answers

1) We use statements to give information:

I read the book.

She lives in China.

2) A negative is a negative statement; it usually talks about something not happening:

I did not read the book.

They can't run very fast.

3) We use questions to ask someone for some information:

Did you read the book?

Have you seen the news?

4) We use imperatives to give orders to people:

Shut up!

Get out!

5) We use exclamations when we are surprised or angry:

Help!

What a load of rubbish!

6) When someone asks us a simple *yes* or *no* question, we can give a short answer:

Yes, I do.

No, I don't.

See also:

[Sentence Index](#)

181 - Sentences

In every sentence there is a subject. The subject is the *theme* of the sentence; it is what we are talking

about.

Along with the subject, we also have the predicate. This is what we want to say about the subject.

In a statement, these two parts usually follow this pattern:

{subject} + {predicate}

A sentence always starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark.

See also:

Sentence Index

183 - Complements

overview; subject complements; object complements.

1) A complement describes a noun phrase. It can describe the subject of a sentence or an object.

2) When the complement describes the subject, we usually use the verb *be*:

{subject} + {verb} + {complement}

I am **English**.

She is **tall**.

Though we can use other verbs:

I **feel** ill.

She **has grown** very tall.

Verbs include: *be, become, feel, get, look, seem, smell, sound* and *taste*.

3) When the complement describes the object, it usually follows straight on from the object:

The wine got me **drunk**.

Eating too much has made her **fat**.

Verbs include: *call, find, get, hate, have, leave, like, make, paint* and *want*.

See also:

Sentence Index

189 - Short Answers

When the answer to a question is *yes* or *no* or we have a subject question, we often use a short answer.

Are you rich? - **No, I'm not!**

Does he smoke? - **Yes, he does.**

Who killed the dog? - **He did.**

We can answer with *yes* or *no*, but this is less usual than a short answer.

For the verb *be* and modal or auxiliary verbs, the pattern is:

{**yes/no**} + {subject} + {auxiliary}

Are we happy? - No, **we aren't!**

Can you swim? - Yes, **I can.**

Do you like it? - Yes, **we do.**

With subject questions:

{subject} + {modal/auxiliary}

Who found it? - **I did.**

What was found? - This **was.**

How many have left? - Seventeen **have.**

Note that when the answer is *yes/no* + *be*, we **never** abbreviate the verb:

~~Yes, I'm.~~

No, he's.

See also:

Sentence Index

188 - Statement Patterns

simple; object; complement; adverbial

1) In the most basic statement predicate, we use just a verb phrase to tell us what the subject does:

{subject} + {verb phrase}

Paint **dries**.

Queen Victoria **was sleeping**.

The man in the large hat **had been dancing**.

2) With an object predicate, the subject does something to another noun phrase (the object):

{subject} + {verb phrase} + {object}

I painted **the wall**.

Queen Victoria told **a joke**.

The man in the large hat **clapped his hands**.

3) With complements, we use a predicate to describe the subject in more detail:

{subject} + {verb phrase} + {complement}

I feel **ill**.

Victoria was **Queen of England**.

The man in the large hat became **a professional dancer**.

4) By using an adverbial predicate, we can give more information about the verb or the whole statement:

{subject} + {verb phrase} + {adverbial}

The answer is **in the back of the book**.

Queen Victoria reigned **during the 19th century**.

The man in the large hat danced **on a stage**.

See also:

[Sentence Index](#)

987 - Question Index

To read about questions, see:

[Questions](#)

[Question Words #1](#)

[Question Words #2](#)

[Question Tags](#)

[Subject Questions](#)

[Direct & Indirect](#)

[Questions](#)

[Negative Questions](#)

185 - Subject Questions

Question words ask about the object of a statement:

statement: I work in **London**.
question: **Where** do I work?
answer: In **London**.

But we can also ask about the subject. To do this we replace the subject with a question word:

statement: {subject} + {verb} ...
question: {question word} + {verb} ...

statement: **Winter** is coming.
question: **What** is coming?
answer: **Winter** is.

statement: **John's** father has joined the army.
question: **Whose** father has joined the army?
Answer: **John's** father.

We **cannot** use *when* or *where* to ask questions about the subject.

See also:

[Question Index](#)

185 - Subjects

The subject in a sentence, is the 'star actor' of the sentence; it is the theme. The sentence tells us all about the subject:

Patricia likes dancing.

The man in the big hat enjoys watching the television.

Subjects can be one word or a phrase. The subjects of these sentences are *Patricia* and *The man in the big hat*.

The subject of a sentence is a noun phrase and in a statement it comes before the predicate:

{subject} + {predicate}

My father was a soldier.

Ice melts at room temperature.

The subject is either singular or plural. If the subject is singular, so is the verb; if the subject is plural, so is the verb:

One man **is** enough for this job.

Fifteen pirates **are** here!

See also:

Sentence Index

186 - Objects

The subject of a sentence does something to an object. The object is the thing or person who is affected by the subject and the verb.

Patricia ate **the cake**.

The subject of this sentence is *Patricia*. She is the 'star actor'. The verb is *ate* and this tells us what she does. The object of the sentence is *the cake* and this is the thing affected by Patricia's action.

The object is a noun phrase and it usually comes after the verb in a sentence:

The king captured **the castle**.

I kicked **the ball**.

He has made **another record**.

They are watching **television**.

See also:

Sentence Index

184 - Predicates

The predicate of a sentence tells us about the subject of a statement:

Plato **thought**.

My dog **is called Bert**.

Predicates can be just one word or a phrase. The subjects of these examples are *Plato* and *my dog*. The predicates tell us more about *Plato* and more about *my dog*.

The predicate of a sentence always has a verb and in a statement it usually comes after the subject:

{subject} + {predicate}

My father **was a soldier**.

Ice **melts at room temperature**.

The predicate consists of a verb and we can also include other information in it to describe the whole statement, the subject, the object etc.:

{predicate} = {verb} + [object/complement/adverbial]

See also:

Sentence Index

986 - Miscellaneous Index

See also the following:

Punctuation

The Alphabet

Polite Offers & Requests

Conjunctions

Using the Grammar Guide

331 - Punctuation

attributive adjectives; predicative adjectives; sentences

1) When we have a list of adjectives and each adjective describes the noun, we use commas to separate the adjectives. Both *big* and *quiet* are equally important in this example:

the big, bad wolf

When an adjective describes another adjective, we do not use commas. In this example, we are talking about the *big* bad wolf as oppose to the *small* bad wolf:

the big bad wolf

Note that we do not use a comma between the last adjective and the noun:

~~the big, bad, wolf~~

the big, bad wolf

2) When the adjectives follow the noun or verb (i.e. the adjectives are predicative) we separate the adjectives with commas and use *and* to separate the final two:

He appeared angry, disturbed and lonely.

3) All sentences start with a capital letter and they usually end with a full stop:

The film has finished.

When we make a question, we use a question mark instead of a full stop:

Has the film finished?

When we make an exclamation, we use an exclamation mark instead of a full stop:

The film has already finished!

332 - The Alphabet

form; extra information

1) The English alphabet contains 26 letters. These can be divided into vowels and consonants.

The vowels are: a,e,i,o,u

The consonants are: b,c,d,f,g,h,j,k,l,m,n,p,q,r,s,t,v,w,x,y,z

Every word has at least one vowel. There are a few exceptions such as:

fly, hymn, why

These words use the letter y instead of a vowel.

The alphabet has upper case (or capitals):

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

and lower case:

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

2) The word alphabet comes from *alpha* and *beta*, the first two letters of the Greek alphabet. The word *vowel* comes from the Latin word *vowis* meaning *voice*; the word *consonant* comes from the Latin word *consonare* meaning *sound together*.

A very few words contain all five vowels in alphabetical order:

facetious, abstemious

There are a few sentences which contain all twenty six letters of the alphabet. The most famous (with 35 letters) is:

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

333 - Polite Offers & Requests

We use a number of standard phrases when we make polite offers or requests:

Would you like a cup of tea?

I will carry your bags.

Do you happen to know the time?

Do you mind if I open the window?

Would you mind helping me?

Please don't smoke.

I'd rather you didn't smoke in here.

Why don't you ask her yourself?

187 - Direct & Indirect Objects

Sometimes we can have a sentence with two objects. We call these objects **direct** and **indirect**.

The subject gives the direct object to the indirect object.

{subject} + {verb} + {direct object} + {indirect object}

subject	verb	direct object	indirect object
I	bought	my sister	a present.
The man in the hat	took	the mechanic	the broken car.

We can also change the positions of the direct and indirect object. When we do this, we add *to* or *for*:

{subject} + {verb} + {indirect object} + {to/for} + {direct object}

subject	verb	indirect object	to	direct object
I	bought	a present	for	my sister.
The man in the hat	took	the broken car	to	the mechanic.

We can use *to* with: *give, hand, lend, offer, owe, pass, pay, promise, read, sell, send, show, take, teach, tell, and write*.

We can use *for* with: *buy, cook, fetch, find, get, leave, make, order, reserve, and save*.

We can use *to* or *for* with *bring*:

I brought the problem **to** Martin.

I brought the problem **for** Martin.

In the first example, I let Martin look at the problem; in the second example I handed the problem to Martin - he has to deal with it now.

See also:

Sentence Index

216 - Direct & Indirect Questions

We can ask a direct question:

What time is it?

Or, to be more formal or polite, we can ask an indirect question:

Do you know what time it is?

We make an indirect question by using a phrase and then a statement. Note that even though this is a question, **we do not invert the subject and verb or use an auxiliary verb**:

{indirect phrase} + {statement}

Can you remember where you put them?

Do you know how long the flight will be?

When the question can be answered with *yes* or *no*, we use *if*.

{indirect phrase} + {**if**} + {statement}

Would you ask him **if** the train has arrived yet?

Could you tell me **if** this is Athens station?

We can also use question words to make indirect statements:

{indirect phrase} + {question word} + {statement}

I don't know **what** you saw in her!

She can't decide **where** to go on holiday.

See also:

Question Index

190 - Exclamations

use; form; question words.

1) We use exclamations to express surprise, anger etc.:

What an idiot!

How fantastic!

2) There are a few main forms of exclamations:

{**what**} + {non-countable noun phrase}

What luck!

{**what**} + {article} + {countable noun phrase}

What a lunatic!

{**how**} + {adjective}

How incredible!

How curious.

3) When we use a question word in an exclamation, we do not invert the subject and verb:

What a brilliant goal!

Look **how big** it is!

See also:

Sentence Index

214 - Question Tags

use; form; notes.

1) We use question tags at the end of sentences when we want check something, when want someone to do something or when we show surprise:

You're English, **aren't you?**

You've got five minutes to spare, **haven't you?**

You're not going to leave, **are you?**

2) For positive statements we use the negative particle *not*:

{statement} + {auxiliary/modal} + [**not**] + {subject}

If there is no auxiliary or modal, we use do:

{statement} + {*do*} + [**not**] + {subject}

She was not here, **was she?**

It cannot be verified, **can it?**

We will win, **won't we?**

She likes me, **doesn't she?**

They didn't stay, **did they?**

3) We use question tags in three ways:

3a) to verify information; when we are fairly certain of a fact and want merely to check it, we can use a

question tag:

You're a Sagittarius, **aren't you**?

She isn't French, **is she**?

3b) to ask someone to do something; often this is used when we want someone to agree with what we say:

He's ugly, **isn't he**?

You're clever, **aren't you**? Can you help me with my homework?

3c) to show surprise in a negative way when we cannot really believe something is true - we use this only in negative sentences:

You're not marrying her, **are you**?

She isn't still talking, **is she**?

4) After *let's...* and offers & suggestions we use *shall*:

Let's go, **shall we**?

After imperatives we use *will/would/can/could*:

Leave us for a moment, **would you**?

See also:

[Question Index](#)

212 - Question Words #1

As well as inversion and using *do*, we can also use special question words to make questions. These look for extra information.

statement: She lives in Rome.
question: Does she live in Rome?
question: Where does she live?
answer: Rome.

To make this kind of question, we use this pattern:

{question word} + {modal/auxiliary} + {subject} + {infinitive}

question word	used for	example
who	people	Who is your brother?
what	things	What is your name?
where	places	Where do you live?
when	time	When are you leaving?
why	reason	Why did I fail?
how	explanation	How does this work?
whose	possession	Whose car is this?
which	things	Which one is yours?

See also:

[Question Index](#)

[Question Words #2](#)

213 - Question Words #2

which & what; formal & informal; why & what...for; what kind; what...like; how

1) When we ask in general, we can use *what*:

What are you going to buy?

When there is a limited choice, we use *which*:

Which one are you going to buy? The red or the green?

which and *what* can also both be followed by noun phrases to ask for specific information:

{which/what} + {noun phrase} ...

What time is it?

Which doctor did you go to?

2) formal and informal:

Who did you vote for?

For **whom** did you vote?

and

What is he working on?

On **what** is he working?

We can use *whom* or *what* after a preposition; it is very formal.

3) Instead of using *why* we can often use *what...for*:

Why are you here?

What are you here **for**?

4) To be very specific, we can say *what kind of*:

What kind of car did you buy?

5) To make a general enquiry, we can use *what...like*:

What was Paris **like**?

What will your new job be **like**?

6) For more information we can use:

{**how**} + {adjective/adverb}

How big is the house?

How much was the coat?

How far is London?

How often do you watch television?

See also:

[Question Index](#)

211 - Questions

introduction; inversion; using *do*; intonation; alternative questions

1) All questions begin with a capital letter and end with a question mark. There are two main ways of

asking questions in written English: inversion and using *do*:

statement: You are Spanish.
question: **Are you Spanish?**

statement: You speak Spanish.
question: **Do you speak Spanish?**

2) If the verb in a sentence is *be*, we use inversion to make a question. This means we change the positions of the subject and the verb:

statement: {subject} + {*be*} ...
question: {*be*} + {subject} ...

statement: **They were** Spanish.
question: **Were they** Spanish?

We also use inversion to make questions with modal and auxiliary verbs:

statement: {subject} + {auxiliary/modal} + [auxiliary] + {main verb}
question: {auxiliary/modal} + {subject} + [auxiliary] + {main verb}

statement: You **can see** England from here.
question: **Can you see** England from here?

statement: They **should be arriving** soon.
question: **Should they be arriving** soon?

3) When the verb in a sentence is not *be* or modal or auxiliary, we use *do* to make questions.

statement: {subject} + {verb}
question: {*do*} + {subject} + {infinitive}

statement: You **know** Simon.
question: **Do you know** Simon?

statement: He **likes** pizza.
question: **Does he like** pizza?

statement: She **broke** the record.
question: **Did she break** the record?

Notice that *do* changes for the past tense and when we talk about *he*, *she* or *it* in the present tense:

Do you like...

Does she like...

Did she like...

4) We can also make questions by using a rising intonation at the end of a statement. This is very common in spoken English:

statement: You're going. [falling intonation]

question: You're going? [rising intonation]

5) Alternative questions. These questions are the same as above and use *or* before the last alternative:

Is she wearing blue **or** green?

Should we take a bus, the car **or** a taxi?

See also:

[Question Index](#)

985 - Negative Index

To read about negation, see:

[Negatives](#)

[Negative Words](#)

[Negative Questions](#)

[Antonymic Phrases](#)

229 - Antonymic Phrases

use; form.

1) We use antonymic phrases to give different sentences the same meaning:

He **remembered** and so did she.

He **didn't forget** and neither did she.

2) We can use the opposite word (an *antonym*) and a negative:

{word} = {**not**} + {antonym}

He **failed**.

He **didn't pass**.

Sometimes we must turn a phrase into a negative meaning:

Is this **the only way**?

Isn't there **another way**?

and

He was **almost deaf**.

He could **hardly hear**.

In this case, we use an alternative time adverbial:

I **couldn't leave in time** to see the match.

I **wasn't early enough** to see the match.

In this case we need to use *there is* to avoid a double negative:

I **would do anything** for you.

~~I **wouldn't do nothing** for you.~~

There's **nothing I wouldn't do** for you.

See also:

Negative Index

228 - Negative Questions

We can use negative questions to

1) ask for information:

Who **doesn't** want some?

Who **hasn't** got a ticket?

2) to make suggestions:

Why **don't** we have a party?

Why **not** leave now?

3) to express surprise

Haven't you **finished yet**?

Isn't she **coming**?

4) to ask for confirmation:

Didn't we **stay here once before**?

Isn't he the famous actor?

5) with a falling intonation, for exclamations

Didn't she do well!

See also:

[Negative Index](#)

[Question Index](#)

227 - Negative Words

We can make negatives by using negative words:

1) no

There are some people.

There are **no** people.

2) none

There isn't any left.

There is **none** left.

3) neither...nor

Either Pete or Jeff will help.

Neither Pete **nor** Jeff will help.

4) no one, nothing, nobody, nowhere

There is someone in the room.

There is **no one** in the room.

Using *no* is stronger than saying *isn't any*.

See also:

[Negative Index](#)

226 - Negatives

overview; not; do not; modal & auxiliary; apostrophes; notes

1) We make negatives in two ways. Either using *not* or by using *do not*:

I am **not** going to answer that question.

He **did not** telephone me in time.

2) When the verb we are using is *be* we make the negative by adding the negative particle, *not*:

{*be*} + {**not**}

She **is not** English

They **were not** here.

3) With other verbs, we make negatives by using *do not* or *does not* and the infinitive:

{*do*} + {**not**} + {infinitive}

I **do not live** in London.

She **does not live** in London.

They **did not** telephone.

The *do* verb shows the tense and number of the main verb which is in the infinitive:

positive

I **live** here.

She **lives** here.

He **lived** here.

negative

I **do not** live here.

She **does not** live here.

He **did not** live here.

4) When we use a modal or auxiliary verb, we add *not* after the first part of the verb:

{auxiliary/modal} + [auxiliary] + [auxiliary] + {infinitive}

I **can** dance but she **can not** dance.

I **will not be seeing** him next week.

Arsenal **have not won** a match this season.

5) In informal situations, we usually use *n't* instead of *not*:

is not = isn't
are not = aren't
would not =
wouldn't
have not = haven't
had not = hadn't

There are exceptions:

I am not = I'm not
will not = won't
shall not = shan't

6) The negative of *can* is *can not*. This is sometimes made into one word, *cannot*:

can not = cannot = can't

Sometimes we change words from positive to negative use:

positive	negative
I have a lot of money.	I don't have much money.
I have already gone.	I haven't gone yet .
I want some too .	I don't want any either .
I have some money.	I have no money.

See also:

Negative Index

334 - Conjunctions

overview; form

1) When we join clauses together, we use conjunctions. These show the relationship between the two clauses:

If I win the lottery, I will spend all the money on myself.

I'll tell you **when** the time comes.

Because of you, I lost my job!

2) The conjunction is attached to the sub-clause. The main clause can come first or second:

{main clause} + {conjunction + sub-clause}

You will not beat me **no matter** how hard you try.

{conjunction + sub-clause} + {main clause}

No matter how hard you try, you will not beat me.

If the sub clause comes first, we separate the two clauses with a comma.

240 - Inversion #1

Inversion is when we change the normal order of a statement when we put the verb before the subject:

Only when I saw the price **did I** realise my mistake.

Under no circumstances **will we** tolerate this kind of behaviour.

{auxiliary} + {subject} + {main verb}

I had hardly walked in before the police arrived.

Hardly had I walked in before the police arrived.

When there is no auxiliary verb, we use *do*:

I understood what she meant **only then**.

Only then did I understand what she meant.

Inversion is used a lot when we make questions, exclamations and short answers. It is also very common to use inversion when we report direct speech.

See also:

Inversion #2

241 - Inversion #2

adverbs; conditionals; comparison; only; negative adverbials

1) With adverbs of place, we often use inversion; this is common in descriptions. Here we do not use an auxiliary *do*, but the whole verb is put before the subject:

A young man stood against the wall.

Against the wall **stood a young man**.

2) We can replace *if* in a conditional sentence with an inversion when we use *were*, *had* or *should*:

If **you were** younger, you could get in free.

Were you younger, you could get in free.

or

If **I had** seen you, I would have asked you to the party.

Had I seen you, I would have asked you to the party.

or

If **you should** want anything, please call me.

Should you want anything, please call me.

3) When we make comparisons with the conjunction *as*, we can use inversion:

She is beautiful, as **her daughter is**.

She is beautiful, as **is her daughter**.

4) When we use an adverbial starting with *only* at the beginning of a sentence, we use inversion:

Only when I saw him, **did I realise** how much he had grown.

Only in England **does it rain** on bank holidays.

With *not only*, we often use *but also*:

Not only had we lost our coats **but also** our wallets.

5) Many negative adverbials take inversion:

Under no circumstances will she...

Seldom have I...

Rarely do we...

Never have I...

Never before has it...

On no account must you...

Not until I...did I...

Hardly had I...when...

Scarcely had we...than...

No sooner had she...than...

So {adjective} was he...that...

We also use inversion with *neither*, *nor* & *so*.

335 - Using the Grammar Guide

usage; format

1) The Grammar Guide is made up of several hundred entries on different topics. To see a list of all the entries go to the main **index**; to see the topics organised according to main grammar groups, click on the **contents** button.

2) This guide uses certain styles:

2a) All examples are shown in this colour.

2b) An example with a line through it means that it is not acceptable English; there is a mistake in the example:

~~The bigger mans eaten the cakes all.~~

2c) We use curly brackets {} to show the pattern for a structure and the class of word which can fit in:

{subject} + {verb} ...

The three dots mean other words can follow.

2d) When the word in curly brackets is in *italics*, it means a form of the word can be used:

{*be*} = {be} or {is} or {am} or {are} or {being} or {been}

2e) When a word is in **bold type** it means the word must be used *as is* and cannot be altered.

2f) If a word or phrase is in [square brackets], it means it is optional and does not have to be used:

{subject} + {say} + [**that**] ...

He said **that** he saw a ghost.

He said he saw a ghost.

Bold type in examples is used to highlight a word.

2g) A straight vertical line | separates clauses:

If you go | it will be a bad time for us all.

2h) If a word has a line underneath it, this means you can click on the word to go to a separate topic about that word.

2i) If a word is underlined like this, it means you can click on the word to get a definition of it.

280 - Modal Ability

usage; questions.

1) To show degrees of ability, we can use modal verbs. These show:

1a) ability or opportunity in the present:

She **can** play the piano.

She **is able to** play the piano.

1b) ability or opportunity in the past:

She **could** play the piano.

She **was able to** play the piano.

1c) ability in the future:

He **could** do your job given the opportunity.

I **will** never **be able to** lift that cupboard alone.

1d) to show ability; we often use *can* or *be able to* with verbs of perception:

I **can** hear him but I **cannot** see him.

I **am able to** hear him but I **am not able to** see him.

1e) *can* v. *be able to*:

In most situations, *be able to* is more formal than *can*.

1f) *could* v. *be able to*:

I **could** leave.

I **was able to** leave.

Both examples say I had the opportunity or ability to leave, but *could* means I did not leave and *was/were able to* means I did leave.

When we talk about a real past action we use *was/were able to* and when we talk about a hypothetical course of action we use *could*.

1g) When we talk about a skill, *could* and *was/were able to* are interchangeable:

I **could** swim when I was four.

I **was able to** swim when I was four.

1h) Note that in conditional sentences also, *could* and *be able to* are interchangeable.

2) With questions:

Can I open the window?

Could I open the window?

Am I able to open the window?

In questions, *can* and *could* are requests, while *be able to* asks about ability.

See also:

Verb Index

281 - Modal Necessity

usage; questions.

1) 100% necessity:

You **must** leave straight away.

You **have [got] to** leave straight away.

must v. *have [got] to*

Generally, *must* shows what the speaker feels and it is the speaker's authority; *have [got] to* is when the speaker uses an external force which they cannot control:

doctor to patient: You've got to stop smoking.

patient to himself: I must stop smoking.

2) 0% necessity:

We **don't have to** pay to get in.

We **have not got to** see the boss after all.

We **needn't** stay late.

These have an element of being optional, i.e. *we needn't stay late but we can if we want to*.

3) obligation:

You **ought to** call your mother.

You **should** call your mother.

These show that calling your mother is the right thing to do. There is no real difference between *ought to* and *should*, but *ought to* is perhaps a little stronger.

4) We use *needn't* to show an action is optional - I can do it if I want to. We use *mustn't* to say an action is forbidden - I have no choice.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

282 - Modal Offers

To show degrees of offers, we can use modal verbs:

I **will** give you hand with that case.

Shall I give you a hand with that case?

Can I give you a hand with that case?

We use *shall* as *let's* but the person has a chance to refuse:

Shall we go to the cinema?

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

283 - Modal Permission

To show degrees of permission, we can use modal verbs:

1) permission

You **cannot** leave yet.

You **are not allowed to** leave yet.

You **may** not leave yet.

You **must** not leave yet.

can is more friendly than *may* which is quite formal.

needn't v. *mustn't*

We use *needn't* to show an action is optional - I can do it if I want to. We use *mustn't* to say an action is forbidden - I have no choice.

2) giving orders:

You **will** not leave yet.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

284 - Modal Possibility

To show degrees of possibility, we can use modal verbs:

1) imagining things:

That **would** be nice.

2) *can* v. *may*

It **can** get very tense in some of these meetings.

It **may** get very tense in some of these meetings.

To talk generally about something we use *can*, but talking about a specific set of something, we use *may*. In the first example the speaker makes a general comment about the meetings; in the second example the speaker is talking about a specific group of future meetings only.

3) logical certainty

He **will** be in Rome by now.

He **must** be in Rome by now.

4) degrees of possibility in the present and future

He **could** be upstairs.

He **might** be upstairs.

He **may** be upstairs.

could which is least sure.

may is almost the same as *might* though perhaps *might* is a little less sure.

5) to show something the speaker thinks is unlikely or impossible or illogical:

He **couldn't** have got lost.

He **can't** have got lost.

It **can't** be raining!

He **wouldn't** still be at work, **would** he?

6) prediction:

She **might** win.

She **will** win.

She **may** win.

She **could** win.

will is certain.

7) suggestions in the future:

We **could** go to the cinema.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

285 - Modal Requests

To show degrees of requests, we can use modal verbs:

1) polite requests

Can I see you in your office, please?

Could I see you in your office, please?

May I see you in your office, please?

could is more polite than *can*.

2) we can use *will* to make requests, but it is more direct than *can* or *could*:

Would you tell me the time, please?

Could you tell me the time, please?

Can you tell me the time, please?

Will you tell me the time, please?

3) making requests:

Would you mind coming with me?

Would you mind if I left now?

Would you rather I left now?

See also:

Verb Index

279 - Modal Verbs

form; gerund; participle; phrases; use

1) There are not many modal verbs: *can, could, dare, may, might, must, need, shall, should, will, would*.
There are also modal constructions: *be able to, ought to, be allowed to*

They always come first in a verb formation, before other auxiliaries and the main verb:

{modal} + {auxiliary} + {main verb}

Note that modal verbs do not take a final -s for the third person singular. The verb which follows is always in the infinitive form:

He might **be**...

They should **stay**...

She could **have**...

2) We can use them with the gerund to show continuous modality:

{modal} + {**be**} + {gerund}

He might be **working** late.

The should be **coming** soon.

He must be **having** a party.

3) We can use them with the past participle to show past modality:

{modal} + {**have**} + {past participle}

He might have been **working** late.

The should have seen him.

He must have gone away.

4) We can use *be able to, be allowed to and have [got] to* after modals:

{modal} + {phrase}

I will be able to...

She might not be allowed to...

They should have to...

Note that we do not use these in continuous forms.

5) We use modal verbs to show:

5a) what we think or feel about a situation:

They **should** not have gone.

They **might** have been working hard.

5b) ability to do something:

They can't speak fluently.

He could beat the record easily.

5c) necessity:

He must stop.

They should stop.

5d) possibility:

He **could** be there.

They **might** not win.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

269 - Past Continuous #2

form; use; sentence patterns

1) We make the past continuous by using the past form of *be* and the present participle:

{subject} + {**was/were**} + {present participle} ...

I **was walking** down the street...

He **was singing**...

They **were talking** when...

2) We use the past continuous for three situations:

2a) to provide the background for the story. It tells us what is happening before the main action occurs:

We **were all talking** when the boss walked in.

In this example, we started talking before the boss came in. We talked for some time and then the door opened and the main action happened - the boss came in and got angry because we were not working. Here the past continuous tells us about an action that was interrupted.

2b) to talk about a temporary and continuous action in the past:

I **was working** at home all last week.

The factory **was turning** out thousands of uniforms during the war.

2c) for arrangements in the past:

They **were leaving** on the six o'clock train.

Of course he was nervous, he **was flying** to the moon the next morning.

3) We often use these sentence patterns with the past continuous:

{past continuous} + {**when**} + {past simple}

{past simple} + {**when/while**} + {past continuous}

I was sleeping when the alarm clock woke me up.

The alarm clock woke me up when/while I was sleeping.

See also:

Verb Index

271 - Past Perfect Simple #2

form; use

1) We make the past perfect simple by using *had* and the past participle:

{subject} + {**had**} + {past participle}

I **had seen** the film six times already and I didn't want to see it again.

She **had been** to the dentist earlier in the day so she felt ill that night.

We often use the tense in conjunction with the past simple.

2) We use the past perfect simple tense:

2a) to provide the background to an event; it tells us what happened before the main action:

She was tired because she **had been** at work all day.

2b) to provide information about the order of events:

The detective ran into the room but the evil gangsters **had already gone**.

2c) when we want to provide a simple sequence of events, we can use the past simple or the past perfect with the past simple:

The King **died**. The Queen **died** three days later.

The Queen **died** three days after the King **had died**.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

267 - Past Simple #2

form; use

1) We make the past simple tense by using the past form of the verb:

{subject} + {past form} ...

I **worked** very hard last week.

I **rode** to work on my bike this morning.

With regular verbs the past is formed by adding *-ed* to the end of the verb.

2) We use the past simple:

2a) when we talk about an action or event which started in the past and finished in the past.

I **drank** two cups of coffee for breakfast this morning.

The Big Bang **happened** over ten thousand million years ago.

It does not matter when the event or action happened; it can be one minute ago or a million years ago. We often use it with a past adverb.

2b) to make polite requests and suggestions:

I **wondered** if you might like to go out tonight?

I **hoped** you would say yes.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

265 - Present Continuous #2

form; use

1) We make the present simple by using a form of the verb *be* and the present participle form of the verb:

{subject} + {*be*} + {present participle} ...

I **am working** now.

She **is talking** to her friend.

They **are running** for the bus.

2) We use the present continuous tense in three ways:

2a) when we talk about a situation that is happening right now as we speak.

I **am listening** to some music right now.

Why is he in bed? - He **is not feeling** well today.

What's that noise? **Are** those cats **fighting** again?

2b) about things happening around now but maybe not right at the moment we speak. This is a temporary situation:

I **am getting** divorced.

The baby **is not sleeping** well these days so I can't sleep at night.

Are the team **playing** well this season?

Remember that these are temporary situations:

At this moment I **am talking** to you; but these days **we are painting** the house; we will finish this job soon.

2c) we also use this tense to talk about fixed future plans - it is a good idea to imagine that these are plans you can write in your diary. Often we add a time adverb:

I **am going** to Spain next year.

Sheila **is not marrying** Pete till next month.

Are they playing Arsenal next week?

See also:

Verb Index

274 - Present Perfect Continuous #2

form; use

1) We make the present perfect continuous by using *have/has been* and the present participle form of the verb:

{subject} + {**have/has**} + {**been**} + {present participle} ...

I have been working ...

She **has been doing** her homework.

2) We use the present perfect continuous in two ways.

2a) to talk about an even which started in the past and is continuing now:

I have been learning English for six years.

They **have been living** in Paris since July.

We often use the words *for* and *since* with this tense.

2b) to talk about an event which lasted for some time and recently finished; the effects of this event are still apparent:

Why are you puffing? - **I have been running**.

I have been painting the house this weekend.

See also:

Verb Index

276 - Present Perfect Simple #2

form; use; patterns; been & gone; just.

1) We make the present perfect simple by using *have/has* and the past participle:

{subject} + {*have*} + {past participle} ...

I have seen this film.

She **has gone** to the dentist.

We do not use this tense with an adverb telling us when the event happened:

~~I **have argued** with my boss yesterday.~~

~~I **have seen** you last week.~~

2) We use the present perfect simple tense in several ways:

2a) from the past to the present; an event started in the past and continues till now, possibly carrying on into the future:

I **have lived** here all my life.

She **has known** me for five years.

2b) recent events, strongly affecting the present:

I **have lost** my wallet - quickly, call the police.

I **have found** it!

This last example affects the present because everyone else can stop looking.

2c) headline news:

A train **has crashed**, killing 40 people.

Three men **have climbed** Mount Everest.

2d) general experiences in life:

I **have never** seen such a fantastic sight.

Have you ever been to France?

2e) with actions we are expecting to happen; we often use this with *yet*:

Have you seen Bill **yet**?

He hasn't gone **yet**.

3) Often we will continue with the past simple so we can specify the time when an event happened:

{present perfect} + {past simple}

My boss **has** just **gone**. She left five minutes ago.

4) The verb *go* is used with two past participles, *gone* and *been*:

They have **gone** to Paris.

They have **been** to Paris.

In the first example they are not here now; in the second they went and then returned.

5) We often use the present perfect with *recently*, *lately* and *just* to talk about something done very recently.

{**have/has**} + {**recently/just/lately**} + {past participle}

{**have/has**} + {past participle} ... {**recently/lately**}

I have **just** seen Bill.

They have **recently** got divorced.

I have been talking to John **lately**.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

263 - Present Simple #2

form; use

1) We make the present simple by using the present form of the verb. With most verbs this is the same as the infinitive form. Remember that the third person singular adds -s to the end:

{subject} + {present form}

I **work**...

She **wishes**...

It **barks**...

2) We use the present simple in 7 main ways:

2a) talking about habits and routines; things we do regularly:

I **go** to the cinema at least once a week.

We **do not wake** up before 8 o'clock in the morning.

Do the children **go** to bed at nine o'clock every night?

2b) talking about a situation that lasts for a long time:

He **draws** maps for a living.

She **is** not married.

Does she **work** in the wool factory?

2c) talking about a situation which is permanent:

Venus and Mercury **are** closer to the Sun than the Earth.

Metal **does not float** in water.

Do all mammals **breathe** oxygen?

2d) talking about feelings, thoughts and characteristics:

I **believe** in Father Christmas.

She **doesn't like** you.

How **does** it smell?

2e) giving instructions:

You **walk** out the door and then you **turn** left.

You **don't do** it like this, you **do** it like that!

Note: we more often use the imperative in this situation.

2f) talking about a future timetabled arrangement:

She **leaves** tomorrow.

It **starts** next Thursday.

We often use this with a time adverb.

2g) to tell a dramatic story, a joke or give a commentary:

This man **is** in a hospital bed. The doctor **walks** in and **says** "There's some good news and some bad news."

"Give me the bad news," **says** the man.

"We've had to cut off both your legs," **says** the doctor.

The man **screams** a bit and **gets** upset but after a while the doctor **calms** him down.

"What's the good news?" he **asks** the doctor.

"The man in the next bed wants to buy your shoes."

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

268 - Past Continuous #1

We most often use the past continuous to make descriptions in the past, to set the scene:

It **was raining** when I went home. The phone **was ringing** when I walked into my house. I picked it up and someone **was screaming** on the other end of the line...

We make the past continuous by using *was/were* and the *-ing* form of the verb:

{subject} + {**was/were**} + {present participle}

I **was working** when you called.

You **were working** when I called.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Past Continuous #2](#)

272 - Past Perfect Continuous #1

We use the past perfect continuous to talk about a continuous temporary event which started happening in the past before another past event:

I **had been learning** English for six years before I went to England.

They **had both been living** in Paris for some time when they met.

We make the past perfect continuous by using *had*, *been* and the *-ing* form of the verb (the present participle):

{subject} + {**had**} + {**been**} + {present participle}

I **had been working** for some time before I realised my mistake.

Before I arrived, she **had been doing** her homework.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

270 - Past Perfect Simple #1

The past perfect simple is used to talk about a past time before another time in the past.

We did not all passed the exam though we **had studied** hard.

The Queen died of a broken heart after the King **had left** her.

We make the past perfect simple by using *had* and the *-ed* form of the verb (the past participle):

{subject} + {**had**} + {past participle}

I **had worked** hard for a long time before I completed the work.

She **had attended** many interviews before she found the right job.

See also:

Verb Index

Past Perfect Simple #2

266 - Past Simple #1

We often use the past simple to tell a story. We use this tense a lot.

He **walked** into the room and **looked** around. There **was** a knock on the door. He **opened** it and **saw**...

We make the past tense of regular verbs by adding *-ed* to the end. There is no change for the third person singular:

{subject} + {past form}

I **worked** hard.

She **walked** to the supermarket.

They **laughed** at the joke.

See also:

Verb Index

Past Simple#2

264 - Present Continuous #1

We use the present continuous tense to talk about actions which are happening as we speak and actions taking place around now:

Someone **is ringing** the door bell.

She **is working** in the library.

Can you be quiet, please. I **am watching** television.

We make the present continuous by using *be* and the *-ing* form of the verb:

{subject} + {*be*} + {present participle}

I'm working.

You're bleeding!

It's raining.

They're talking.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Present Continuous #2](#)

273 - Present Perfect Continuous #1

We use the present perfect continuous to talk about an even which started in the past and is continuing now:

I **have been learning** English for six years.

They **have been living** in Paris for the last eight months.

We make the present perfect continuous by using *have/has*, *been* and the *-ing* form of the verb (the present participle):

{subject} + {**have/has**} + {**been**} + {present participle}

I **have been working**...

She **has been doing** her homework.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Present Perfect Continuous #2](#)

278 - Present Perfect Continuous or Present Perfect Simple?

Both tenses are used for an action which finished a short while ago. The simple tense tells us the action is completed and the result can be seen, the continuous that the action went on for some time.

I've **been reading** War & Peace and I **have almost finished** it.

I've **read** War & Peace but I found the end boring.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Present Perfect Continuous #1](#)

[Present Perfect Simple #1](#)

275 - Present Perfect Simple #1

The present perfect simple tense is used to talk about a past time which has very strong meaning for the present.

The President **has just been shot**; the police are looking for the assassin.

Where's Jane? - She **has gone** out; if you run you can catch her.

We make the present perfect simple by using *have/has* and the *-ed* form of the verb (the past participle):

{subject} + {**have/has**} + {past participle}

I **have worked** hard today and now I'm tired.

She **has found** a good job and she will start work next Monday.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Present Perfect Simple #2](#)

277 - Present Perfect Simple or Past Simple?

The past simple is used for a completed action in the past; the present perfect has a much closer link to the present.

Napoleon **fought** many battles.

The American army **has fought** many battles.

In the second example, we can assume that the American army will continue to fight. They have not stopped completely yet.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

[Present Perfect Simple #1](#)

[Past Simple #1](#)

262 - Present Simple #1

We use the present simple to talk about our habits and routines (things we do regularly) and situations which last for a long time:

I **visit** my mother once a month.

She **works** for a bank.

The Earth **is** spherical.

We use the present form of the verb. Remember to use the final *-s* with the third person:

{subject} + {present form}

I **live** in Scotland.

He **plays** football at the weekend.

They **go** out every night.

See also:

Verb Index

Present Simple #2

287 - Auxiliary Verbs

overview; making different tenses; making negatives; making questions; lexical verbs.

1) There are three auxiliary verbs: *be*, *have* and *do*. We put them before the main verb to make different tenses, negatives and questions. We can use one or more auxiliary verbs together.

2) Different tenses are made thus:

{auxiliary} + [auxiliary] + {main verb}

She **has been** waiting for three hours.

We **had** talked for over an hour.

The only tenses where we do not use an auxiliary verb are the present simple and the past simple.

3) Negatives are made thus:

{auxiliary} + {**not**} + [auxiliary] + {main verb}

They **have not been** to Hollywood yet.

He **is not** living here anymore.

4) To make questions:

{auxiliary} + {} + [auxiliary] + {verb}

Do you want a cup of tea?

Has he **been** watching television?

5) We also use *be*, *do* and *have* as lexical verbs:

I **am** English.

She **did** it!

They **have** thirteen cats in their house.

See also:

Verb Index

be

do

have

261 - Verb + Preposition

When we use a preposition, we can follow it with the gerund:

{verb phrase} + {preposition} + {gerund}

He **coughed before beginning** to speak.

They **succeeded in breaking** the door down.

With most prepositions this is no problem. However, when we use the preposition *to*, students often confuse it with the *to* + infinitive structure.

I object **to work**.

~~I object **to work** at night.~~

In the first example, *work* is a noun and *to* a preposition; in the second example, *work* is a verb.

If you do not know whether *to* is with the infinitive or gerund, try putting a noun after it:

I object **to bananas**.

This is acceptable so *to* is a preposition and must be followed by the gerund.

I object **to working** at night.

In the following case, *to* is not a preposition so we do not follow it with the gerund:

I expect **to...**

~~I expect **to bananas**.~~

I expect **to eat** bananas for breakfast.

See also:

Verb Index

255 - Verb Forms

infinitive & present form; 3rd person; participles & gerund; past form; past participle

1) The infinitive is the base form of the verb. These are infinitives:

be, have, go, walk

In English, the infinitive is nearly always the same as the present tense. The only exception is the verb *be*:

I am, I have, I go, I walk

Note that some grammars regard the infinitive as *to + base form*; in this grammar guide the infinitive is without the *to*.

2) When we use *he*, *she* or *it* in the present tense, regular verbs add -s to the end. This is the third person singular:

I have	she has
I go	he goes
I walk	it walks

3) We make the present participle of regular verbs by adding *-ing* to the end of the infinitive:

be	being
have	having
go	going
walk	walking

The gerund has the same form as the present participle. Both the present participle and the gerund are known as the *-ing* form.

4) When we talk about the past, we use the past form of the verb (this does not change for the third person singular). To make the past form with regular verbs, we add *-ed*:

today	yesterday	past participle
I walk	I walked	walked
I cry	I cried	cried

In regular (and many irregular) verbs, the past participle is the same as the past form.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

Verb Patterns

We use different patterns when we join two verbs. These are some of the more common patterns:

1) {verb} + {to} + {infinitive}

I **managed to leave**.

If you **happen to see** them, say hello' for me.

Verbs include: *afford, agree, appear, arrange, ask, attempt, be, bear, beg, begin, care, choose, consent, dare, decide, determine, expect, fail, forget, happen, hate, have, help, hesitate, hope, intend, learn, like, love, manage, mean, need, neglect, offer, ought, plan, prefer, prepare, pretend, promise, propose, refuse, regret, remember, seem, start, swear, threaten, trouble, try, used, want, wish.*

2) {verb} + [object] + {to} + {infinitive}

I would **advise you to go**.

I **want you to leave**.

Verbs include: *advise, allow, ask, bear, beg, cause, command, compel, encourage, expect, forbid, force, get, hate, help, instruct, intend, invite, leave, like, mean, need, oblige, order, permit, persuade, prefer, press, promise, recommend, request, remind, teach, tell, tempt, trouble, want, warn, wish.*

3) {verb} + [object] + {infinitive}

I could **feel him watch** me.

I **made them go**.

In the passive, we use the *to* + *infinitive* pattern:

He was **made to feel** unwelcome.

They were **seen to enter** the building after dark.

In this group we include most (but not all) of the modal auxiliary verbs and verbs of senses. Verbs include: *could, feel, hear, help, let, make, may, might, must, notice, see, shall, should, watch, will, would.*

4) {verb} + {gerund}

I **considered retiring**.

I **enjoy running** first thing in the morning.

Verbs include: *admit, advise, appreciate, avoid, can't help, can't stand, consider, contemplate, delay, deny, detest, dislike, endure, enjoy, escape, excuse, face, feel like, finish, forgive, give up, go on, imagine, involve, keep, leave off, mention, mind, miss, postpone, practise, prefer, put off, resent, resist, risk, stop, suggest, understand.*

5) Some verbs can take either the gerund or the infinitive. There is very little difference between these two:

I like **skiing**.

I like **to ski**.

In general, the gerund refers to a general activity while the infinitive refers to a specific case.

There are some important exceptions though:

Remember **to visit** my mother.

Remember **visiting** my mother.

In this case, the gerund refers to what happened before the main verb and the infinitive what happened after the main verb.

Remember visiting my mother = you visited her in the past and now I am asking you to remember it.

Remember to visit my mother = you must remember now that you will visit my mother in a while.

Verbs in this category include: *advise, allow, attempt, begin, can't bear, continue, forbid, forget, go on, hate, hear, intend, like, love, permit, prefer, propose, regret, remember, see, start, stop, try, watch.*

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

253 - Verb Phrases

A verb phrase is a group of words which can replace a verb in a sentence.

All these sentences follow the same pattern:

{noun phrase} + {verb phrase} + {noun phrase}

The elephant	ate	the cake.
The elephant	was eating	the cake.
The elephant	had already eaten	the cake.
The elephant	would have eaten	the cake.
The elephant	should have been eating	the cake.

We can make a verb phrase like this:

[auxiliary/modal verb] + [auxiliary verb] + [auxiliary verb] + {**main verb**}

See also:

Verb

Index

251 - Verbs

When we want to say what the subject of a sentence does, we use a verb. Verbs tell us about an action. Here are some simple verbs:

run, walk, read, talk

1) When we use verbs, we can change their tense and form to change the meaning:

I **work**; She **works**; I **worked**; I **have worked**; I **am working**

This change tells us when something happens (past, present, future).

2) To make some tense changes, we use different forms of the verb:

I **was working**.

I **worked**.

I **work**.

3) Some verbs are continuous, and some are simple; they have the same time reference but have different meanings:

I **was working** yesterday.

I **worked** yesterday.

4) We can also use modal verbs to tell us about *how* we feel about something happening:

You **should** see a doctor.

It **must** rain soon.

5) Some verbs always go with the same preposition:

I **succeeded in** passing my driving test.

She **listened to** the radio last night.

6) When we join two verbs to make a verb phrase, we use certain patterns:

I **want to go**.

I **must go**.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

256 - Irregular Verbs

Most verbs are regular; this is a list of the irregular verbs in English (those in **bold type** are common irregular verbs):

infinitive	past	past participle
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awoke	awoken
be	was	been
bear	bore	borne
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
befall	befell	befallen
beget	begot	begotten
begin	began	begun
behold	beheld	beheld
bend	bent	bent
bereave	bereft - bereaved	bereft - bereaved
beseech	besought	besought
bestride	bestride	bestride
bet	bet	bet
bid	bid	bid
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
breed	bred	bred
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast
build	built	built
burn	burnt	burnt
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
can	see: <u>can</u>	
cast	cast	cast
catch	caught	caught
chide	chid	chid
choose	chose	chosen
cleave	cleft - clove	cleft - clove
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn

dream	dreamt	dreamt
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
dwelt	dwelt	dwelt
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forbear	forbore	forborne
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forecast	forecast	forecast
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung - hanged	hung - hanged
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hew	hewed	hewn - hewed
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt	knelt
knit	knit	knit
know	knew	known
lead	led	led
lean	leant	leant
leap	leapt	leapt
learn	learnt	learnt
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lit - lighted	lit - lighted
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
may	see: <u>may</u>	

mean
meet
mislead
mistake
misunderstand
mow
outdo
outgrow
overbid
overcome
overdo
overfeed
override
overrun
overtake
pay
put
quit
read
rend
rewind
rid
ride
ring
rise
run
saw
say
see
seek
sell
send
set
sew
shake
shall
shear
shed
shine
shit
shoot
show
shrink
shut
sing
sink
sit
slay

meant
met
misled
mistook
misunderstood
mowed
outdid
outgrew
overbid
overcame
overdid
overfed
overrode
overran
overtook
paid
put
quit
read
rent
rewound
rid
rode
rang
rose
ran
sawed
said
saw
sought
sold
sent
set
sewed
shook
see: shall
sheared
shed
shone
shit - shat
shot
showed
shrank
shut
sang
sank
sat
slew

meant
met
misled
mistaken
misunderstood
mown - mowed
outdone
outgrown
overbid
overcome
overdone
overfed
overridden
overrun
overtaken
paid
put
quit
read
rent
rewound
rid
ridden
rung
risen
run
sawn - sawed
said
seen
sought
sold
sent
set
sewn - sewed
shaken

shorn - sheared
shed
shone
shit - shat
shot
shown - showed
shrunk
shut
sung
sunk
sat
slain

sleep

slide

sling

slink

slit

smell

smite

sow

speak

speed

spell

spend

spill

spin

spit

split

spoil

spread

spring

stand

steal

stick

sting

stink

strew

stride

strike

string

strive

swear

sweat

sweep

swell

swim

swing

take

teach

tear

tell

think

thrive

throw

thrust

tread

unbend

unbind

underbid

undergo

slept

slid

slung

slunk

slit

smelt

smote

sowed

spoke

sped

spelt

spent

spilt

span

spat

split

spoilt

spread

sprang

stood

stole

stuck

stung

stank

strewed

strode

struck

strung

strove

swore

sweat

swept

swelled

swam

swung

took

taught

tore

told

thought

throve

threw

thrust

trod

unbent

unbound

underbid

underwent

slept

slid

slung

slunk

slit

smelt

smitten

sown - sowed

spoken

sped

spelt

spent

spilt

spun

spat

split

spoilt

spread

sprung

stood

stolen

stuck

stung

stunk

strewn - strewed

strode

struck

strung

striven

sworn

sweat

swept

swollen - swelled

swum

swung

taken

taught

torn

told

thought

thrived

thrown

thrust

trodden

unbent

unbound

underbid

undergone

understand

undertake

undo

unwind

uphold

upset

wake

wear

weave

wed

weep

wet

will

win

wind

withdraw

withhold

withstand

wring

write**understood**

undertook

undid

unwound

upheld

upset

woke

wore

wove

wed

wept

wet

see: will**won**

wound

withdrew

withheld

withstood

wrung

wrote**understood**

undertaken

undone

unwound

upheld

upset

woken

worn

woven

wed

wept

wet

won

wound

withdrawn

withheld

withstood

wrung

written

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

257 - Future

We have different ways to talk about the future in English.

Sometimes we use the present continuous tense to talk about the future:

I **am seeing** her tomorrow.

See: Present Continuous #1

When we talk about intentions or predictions based on what we can see now, we use *be going to*:

I **am going to** pass my test, I'm sure of that!

See: be going to

When we make predictions and promises, we use *will*:

It **will** rain, you wait and see.

See: will

Sometimes it is difficult to choose between *be going to* and *will*:

It **will** be fine tomorrow.

It **is going to** be fine, tomorrow.

See: be going to - will

When we make promises and offers for the future, sometimes we use *shall*:

You **shall** go to the ball, Cinderella.

See: Shall

See also:

Verb Index

258 - Imperatives

use; form; imperative as subject; double imperatives.

1) We use the imperative form of the verb:

1a) to give orders:

Stop!

Shut the door!

1b) to give instructions:

Add a pinch of salt and **boil** for fifteen minutes.

Go out the door and **turn** left.

1c) to make informal offers or invitations:

Have a drink?

Want a ride?

1d) to give warnings:

Don't take lifts from strangers.

Do try to take care!

2) The form of the imperative is the same as the infinitive.

To be polite, we add *please* to the end of the sentence:

Shut the door, **please**.

To tell someone we want something very much, we put *please* or *do* at the beginning:

Do tell me!

Please tell me!

3) We can use the imperative as a subject of a sentence. We often follow it with *and*:

{imperative} + {**and**} + {clause}

Get this done and you can leave early.

Complain again and we will leave.

4) Some imperatives are joined by *and*:

Come **and** sit here!

Wait **and** see.

In AmE, *go* can be followed by the imperative without *and*:

Go get him.

Go wait in the car.

5) We can also join two imperatives:

Be sure **to** do this...

Be sure **and** do this...

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

259 - Infinitives

The infinitive is the base form of the verb:

be, have, walk...

We use the infinitive with *to* to express reason:

{**to**} + {infinitive}

To pay for the mortgage, he took a second job.

A common question and answer expressing purpose is like this:

statement: I'm packing now.

Question: **What for?**

Answer: **To save** time later.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

260 - Phrasal Verbs

overview; form; objects; three-part phrasal verbs.

1) In modern English there are many words which have a Latin origin. A lot of these are verbs, for example:

maintain - *manu tenere*

tolerate - *tolerare*

succeed - *succedere*

For many Latin based verbs, there are also English phrasal verbs. These are verbs + prepositions:

maintain = **keep up**

tolerate = **put up**

with

succeed = **come off**

There are many phrasal verbs. They are used in everyday speech and informal writing. Latin based verbs are more scientific and formal.

2) Phrasal verbs consist of a verb followed by a preposition or adverb:

{verb} + {preposition/adverb}

run into

look after

pull off

3) The meaning of a phrasal verb is very different from the meaning of the two words taken together:

go = **leave**

off = **from**

but

go off = **become bad, mouldy**

4) The same phrasal verb can also have several very different meanings:

take off = **remove**

take off = **imitate**

take off = **leave the ground**

5) Some phrasal verbs can stand alone or be followed by a direct object:

{phrasal verb} + [direct object]

She took off **her coat**.

The plane took off.

When a phrasal verb takes a direct object, the two parts of the verb can usually be separated; the adverb or preposition can be put before or after the object:

She **took** her coat **off**.

She **took off** her coat.

But if the object is a pronoun, it must break the phrasal verb in two:

She **took** it **off**.

She ~~**took off**~~ it.

6) Some phrasal verbs consist of three parts:

{verb} + {adverb} + {preposition}

She **did away with** her husband.

You must not **go back on** your promise.

Three part phrasal verbs are not split.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

402 - *shall*

We use *shall* as a modal verb. It is used in several different ways:

1) a formal future alternative to *will* in first person singular and plurals:

I **shall** leave tomorrow.

We **shall** never be defeated!

2) a formal promise:

You **shall** go to the ball, Cinderella.

3) making offers & suggestions for first person singular and plural:

Shall I make some tea?

Shall we take my car?

but:

Will you drive or **shall** I?

4) to get ideas from other people:

What **shall** we do now?

Where **shall** we meet?

5) The short form of the negative is *shan't*:

I **shall** never leave you!

I **shan't** ever leave you!

See also:

Modal Verbs

403 - **should**

We use *should* as a modal verb. It is used in several different ways:

1) obligation:

We should always love our neighbours.

2) advice:

You should give up smoking.

3) in conditionals.

If I should be late, call the police.

See also:

Modal Verbs

404 - **so that**

When we join two clauses the first event (main-clause) *must* happen to allow the second event (sub-clause) to happen:

{first event} + {**so that** + second event}

The second clause often has this format:

{**so that**} + {subject} + {could/would/will/can/needn't...} ...

*He had to make other financial sacrifices **so that** he could pay for the car.*

See also:

Conjunctions

405 - **so, therefore, consequently**

When we join two clauses the second event (sub-clause) is the result of the first event (main clause):

{first event} + {**so/therefore/consequently** + second event}

*He arrived late **so/therefore/consequently** we missed the start of the show.*

See also:

Conjunctions

406 - **so, too, neither, nor, either**

When we make a positive addition to a statement, we use:

{**so**} + {modal/Auxiliary} + {subject}

{subject} + {modal/auxiliary} + {**too**}

I like swimming.

- **So do I.**

- **I do, too.**

With negative statements:

{**neither/nor**} + {modal/aux} + {subject}

{subject} + {modal/aux} + {**not**} + {**either**}

I don't like X.

- **Neither do I.**

- **Nor do I.**

- **I don't either.**

We can also replace an entire clause with so:

I think he must have gone on ahead.

- **I think so (too).**

Or so or *not* in negative forms after think, suppose, expect, imagine:

I think he must have gone on ahead.

- **I don't think so.**

- **I think not.**

407 - ***some more***

We use *some more* to mean an extra amount of non-countable noun. When someone first arrives we ask:

Would you like **some** tea?

And after they have drunk a cup, we ask:

Would you like **some more** tea?

For countable nouns, we use *another*.

408 - **some, any**

When we want to talk about a number of objects, but we do not know exactly how many, we use *some* as a determiner:

There are **some people** here, perhaps twenty or thirty.

There is **some furniture** upstairs, I don't know exactly what is there, though.

We usually use *some* when we talk about plural nouns and non-countable nouns. For singular nouns, we use *a/an*:

I have **a** new car.

There have been **some** developments recently in the motor industry.

I need to buy **some** petrol.

We can also use *some* as a pronoun:

Have you got any money? - Yes, here's **some**.

If we use *some* with another determiner, it follows this pattern:

{**some**} + {**of**} + {determiner} ...

I've seen **some of those** new cars you were talking about.

Some of the people here are ugly!

Something, somebody, someone and *somewhere* are used in the same way as *some*; they are all singular:

There is **something** under the bed.

There is **somebody** in the kitchen.

Somewhere out there is **someone** for me.

If the statement is positive we use *some*

If the statement is negative, we use *any* or *no* instead of *some*:

{verb} + {**no**}

{verb} + {**not**} + {**any**}

There **aren't any people** here; where is everyone?

There are **no people** here; where is everyone?

There **isn't any furniture** upstairs; it's empty.

There is **no furniture** upstairs; it's empty.

When we make questions, we usually use *any*:

Are there **any** people here?

Is there **any** furniture upstairs?

We normally use *some* to make a statement, but we use *any* if the statement has a negative meaning:

Hurry! There is hardly **any** time left.

No one is allowed to touch **any** of my records.

We normally use *any* to make a question, but if we expect the answer to be yes, then we use *some*:

Can I have **some water**, please? - Yes, of course.

Will you pass me **some pieces of paper**, please? - Yes, certainly.

And if we use an if-clause, we can use either *some* or *any*:

If you want **any/some** money, you'll have to earn it.

If there is **any/some** left, I'll have it.

We can also use *some* and *any* as pronouns. When we use *no*, it becomes *none* as a pronoun:

Can you lend me some money? I haven't got any.

I've got some.

409 - *still* & *yet*

We use *yet* to talk about something which has not happened but which we are waiting for and expecting soon. It is generally used in questions and negatives and comes at the end of the sentence:

Haven't they arrived **yet**?

He hasn't phoned **yet**.

We use *still* to talk about something which is going on longer than expected. It follows the *is* in mid-position in statements and questions, and after the subject in negatives:

He is **still** on the phone!

Are they **still** quarrelling?

I **still** haven't heard from him.

410 - *the first time*

We use this phrase to talk about something never done before:

I have never seen Paris; this is **the first time** I have ever been here.

We often use this phrase with the present perfect:

{**it is the first time**} + [that] + {subject} + {present perfect} ...

It is the first time [that] I have [ever] done this.

411 - *the last time*

We use this phrase to talk about the most recent occasion when something happened. We often use it with the present perfect:

{**the last time**} ... {was} + [**in**] + {date}

{subject} + {present perfect} + {**since**} + {date}

{subject} + {present perfect} + {**for**} + {time}

The last time it rained was 1976.

It hasn't rained since 1976.

It hasn't rained for X years.

412 - *there is & there are*

We often use *there is* or *there are* to describe places and talk about the existence of something.

There is tells us about singular nouns and non-countable nouns:

There is a man in the street.

There is a lot of wine left in the bottle.

There are tells us about plural nouns:

There are a lot of good films on the television this weekend.

We most often use *is/are*, but we can also use all forms of *be*:

There **were** many people around.

There **have been** a lot of casualties.

Be prepared - there **might be** some trouble.

413 - *they*

To talk about a group of people whose identity is unimportant

They're doing some work in the street.

To talk about the government & authority:

They are watching you.

We can use this to talk about general opinion:

They say...

People say...

414 - *try as I might*

We use this phrase thus:

I tried very hard but could not succeed.

Try as I might, I could not succeed.

415 - *used to*

We use *used to* in two different situations. The first talks about the present and something we are familiar with, the other about a past situation which no longer happens:

I **am used to** driving long distances.

I **used to** drive long distances.

This is used for situations in the present which we are familiar with; they cause us no problems:

{*be*} + {**used to**} + {noun phrase}

They **are used to walking**; they go walking in the mountains every year.

I **was used to living** on my own when I was young; I left home at sixteen.

Don't worry about the new job, you'll **get used to it** in no time.

This is used for situations and habits which were true in the past, but do not happen now:

{**used to**} + {infinitive}

I **used to cry** when I was a baby, but I don't now.

We use the present simple to talk about habits now; habits from the past which are no longer true use *used to*:

She **smokes** 20 cigarettes a day.

She **smoked** 20 cigarettes a day when she was twenty.

She **used to smoke** 20 cigarettes a day when she was twenty.

Past actions which only happened once use the past simple:

I **used to cycle** to school every day but **once I took** a taxi.

We can make the negative in two ways:

I **didn't used to**...

I **used not to**...

The first is more common.

416 - **when, as soon as**

When we join two clauses, the second event (main clause) happens *just after* the first event (sub-clause):

{second event} + {**when/as soon as** + first event}

I will call you **when** he leaves.

We left **as soon as** we could.

See also:

Conjunctions

417 - **whereas, while**

When we join two clauses:

{main clause} + {**whereas/while** + sub-clause}

Jack could not eat fat **whereas/while** his wife could not eat lean meat.

See also:

Conjunctions

418 - **while**

When we join two clauses, the second event (main clause) happens *at the same time* as the first event (sub-clause):

{main clause} + {**while** + sub clause}

We played football **while** they sat on the beach.

See also:

Conjunctions

419 - **will**

We use *will* as a modal verb.

We use *will* in several different ways:

1) for certain predictions for the future, present and past in future:

Arsenal **will** lose again.

He **will** be on the plane by now.

2) for events that will be completed at a time in the future:

{**will**} + {**have**} + {past participle}

This time next month we **will** have been married ten years.

3) when we use it for prediction, we talk about events we cannot influence. We often use it for the distant future:

In the year 2500 mankind **will** rely entirely on machines.

4) {will} + {be} + {present participle}

We use this form to talk about fairly certain events in the future - it is almost the same as the present continuous used to talk about the future.

He **will be leaving** tomorrow at six.

We also use it to talk about continuous events in the future:

We **will be lying** on the beach next week.

5) to show intention:

You stay there, I**ll** do it.

I**ll** carry your bags if you like.

6) to ask for something:

Will you give me a hand?

What **will** I do?

7) to show refusal:

He **won't** come out of his room.

It **will** not work.

8) to make promises & threats:

I **will** always love you.

I **will** kill you!

9) making decisions on the spur of the moment:

Is that the phone? - I**ll** get it.

I think I**ll** have the roast beef.

10) to give orders:

You **will** do what I say.

You **will** be a good boy from now on.

11) to make invitations:

Will you sit down, please.

Won't you sit down, please.

In informal writing, we often we abbreviate the verb *will* with an apostrophe:

she will = she'll

The short form of the negative is *won't*:

I **will** not leave yet.

I **won't** leave yet.

No, I won't is usually considered impolite. A politer way of refusing is to say: *I'm afraid I can't*.

See also:

Modal Verbs

420 - *wish*

use; form

1) We use *wish* as a formal word in place of *want* or *would like*:

I **want** to go home.

I **would like** to leave now.

I **wish** to depart soon.

We also use *wish* to say how we would like a situation to be different. It shows desire or regret.

I wish I were handsome.

I wish they would stop shouting.

I wish you had never come into my life.

2) The tense following *wish* is usually one tense behind the situation:

It is Tuesday; I **wish it was** Sunday again.

She left yesterday; I **wish she had never left**.

She has gone; I **wish she had never gone**.

We use *wish...would* when we are insistent:

I **wish you would** shut up!

We can use either *was* or *were* after *wish*:

I wish I **was** rich.

I wish I **were** rich.

If only is stronger than *wish*.

421 - **would**

We use *would* as a modal verb.

We use *would* in several different ways:

1) conditionals:

It **would** be better if you came.

If we had not lost, we **would** be champions now.

If I were you, I **would** leave straight away.

2) wishing:

I'd like to go to Mars.

I wish she would look in this direction.

3) + *like* to ask for something:

What **would** you **like** to do?

I **would like** some information, please.

4) the past tense of *will*:

I am late because the car **would** not start.

5) invitations:

Would you come with me, please?

Would you like some tea?

6) preferences

I'd rather have tea than coffee.

7) imagining things:

A holiday **would** be nice.

Wouldn't it be nice to get on with my neighbours.

In informal writing, we often we abbreviate the verb *would* with an apostrophe:

she would = she'd

We can use *would* as a polite form of *will*:

Would you tell them to come in, please?

We use *would like* as a polite form of *want*:

I want a cup of tea.

I **would like** a cup of tea, please.

It is also an invitation:

Would you **like** a cup of tea?

Would you **like** to go to the cinema?

The short form is *d*:

I'd like to know what is going on.

See also:

Modal Verbs

422 - **rather**

We can use *rather* to show our preference:

I **would rather** you left.

I would like to go **rather than** stay and listen.

When we compare two alternatives, we use *rather than*:

{alternative 1} + {**rather than**} + {alternative 2}

She likes singing **rather than** dancing.

I want to go **rather than** [to] stay.

I want the red one **rather than** the blue one.

When we use *rather* as an alternative to *prefer*:

{**would**} + {**rather**} + {infinitive}

I **would rather** go.

When we show preference, the clause after *rather* is usually one tense behind the meaning (see *wish* for

more on this):

I **would rather** you **stopped** smoking.

I **would rather** she **hadn't driven** over the cat.

423 - **Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms & Madam**

We use these titles before a person's name when we are talking to them or about them. They are used in formal or polite situations.

Title	Use
Mister or Mr	men
Mrs	married women
Miss	unmarried women/girls
Ms	women
Madam	women (very formal)

All these words come before the person's name:

Good morning, **Mister** Blake. How are you today?

Can I speak to **Mrs** Blake, please?

Will **Miss** Blake please come to reception?

Take this letter to **Ms** Blake's office.

Dear **Madam**, thank you for your letter...

When we talk about a married couple, we often say:

Mister and **Mrs** Smith...

We can also use *Mr* or *Madam* before the title of someone very important when we are talking to him:

But **Madam President**, this would mean war!

I wish to object, **Mister Chairman**.

424 - *much* & *not nearly*

When there is a big difference between adjectives, we can use *much* and *not nearly*:

The Earth is **much** closer to the sun than Pluto.

Pluto **isn't nearly** as close to the sun as the Earth is.

425 - *much though*

When we join two clauses the first situation (sub-clause) is true but this does not allow the second event (main clause) to happen:

{**much though** + first event} + {second event}

Much though I trust him, I don't want to lend him any money.

must

We use *must* in several different ways:

1) to give commands or strong advice:

You **must** never take lifts from strangers.

You **must** never hit a superior officer.

2) to show necessity:

We **must** go now.

You **must** put on your socks before your shoes.

3) to show logical certainty in general, the past and the present:

It **must** be awful to break one's leg in three places.

It **must** have been very tiring for you to drive so far.

He **must** be upstairs.

4) to show something which is not allowed:

You **must** not forget your homework.

You **must** not fight in the classroom.

427 - *need*

We use *need* as a modal verb to show when something is not necessary:

{**need**} + {**not**}

You **needn't** be so rude.

They **needn't** have come so early.

need is also a lexical verb showing necessity:

{**need**} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

I **need** to leave.

428 - *neither...nor*

When we join two clauses, this is used for negative sentences with two alternatives (clauses):

{**either**} + {clause} + {**or**} + {clause}

Neither King Charles **nor** his advisors knew what to do.

429 - *on the other hand*

When we join two clauses:

{main clause} + {sub-clause + **on the other hand**}

Jack could not eat fat, his wife could not eat lean meat **on the other hand**.

We often use this phrase to begin a contrasting paragraph; unlike *while* and *whereas* we do not use very often as a simple conjunction.

430 - *once*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) happens and then the second event (main clause) can happen:

{**once** + first event} + {second event}

Once the guests leave we can clear up.

431 - **one & ones**

We use *one* and *ones* as pronouns to refer to one or more of a number of things:

Which record would you like?

I'd like this **one**, please.

Which sweets would you like?

I'd like some green **ones**, please.

We use them:

after an adjective in a noun phrase

after *the*

after *every*

after *each* but this is optional

after a demonstrative adjective, especially *this* and *that*

after *which*

it can replace a noun with *a/an*

432 - *only by, so long as*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) needs to happen before the second event (main clause) will happen:

{**only by/so long as** + first event} + {second event}

We often use this pattern:

{**only by**} + {noun phrase} ... {inversion}

Only by continual study will you succeed.

So long as you study hard, you will succeed.

433 - *or*

When we join two clauses, this is used for positive sentences:

{clause} + [clause(s)] + {**or**} + {clause}

Take the left, the right **or** the middle course.

434 - *ought to* & *should*

We often use *should* and *ought to* to give advice:

You **should** stop drinking so much.

You **ought to** see a doctor about your problem.

{**should**} + {infinitive}

{**ought**} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

There is no big difference between *should* and *ought to*. However, *ought to* has a very slight meaning of outside influence, i.e. *should* is advice, *ought to* is common sense.

See also:

Modal Verbs

435 - own

We use own to stress ownership by one person:

This is my dog.

This is my own dog.

436 - **prevent**

When we do not allow something to happen, we *prevent* it from happening; we do not allow it to start.

{**prevent**} + {something/someone} + {**from**} + {doing something}

Rough seas **prevented** the ferry from leaving.

Strong bars **prevented** the prisoners from climbing out of the windows.

437 - *prefer*

We use *prefer* to show our preferences:

I would **prefer** to eat at home rather than go to a restaurant.

I would **prefer** eating at home to going to a restaurant.

When we talk generally, we tend to use:

{**prefer**} + {gerund}

When we are talking about a specific instance, we tend to use:

{**prefer**} + {**to**} + {infinitive}

Comparison

When we make comparisons with prefer:

{**prefer**} + {gerund} + {**to**} + {gerund}

I prefer driving to walking.

{**prefer**} + {**to**} + {infinitive} + {**rather**} + {**than**} + {gerund}

I prefer to drive rather than walking.

{**prefer**} + {**to**} + {infinitive} + [**rather**] + {**than**} + {infinitive}

I prefer to drive (rather) than walk.

438 - ***pride***

We use the word differently depending on whether it is an adjective, noun or verb:

I **am proud of** you.

I **have pride in** you.

She **prides herself on** her looks.

adjective: {be} + {**proud**} + {of} + {something}
noun: {have/take} + {**pride**} + {in} + {something}
verb: {pride} + {reflexive pronoun} + {**on**} +
{something}

439 - *probability*

He **probably** missed the bus.

In all probability he missed the bus.

{subject} + {**probably**} + {verb...}

{**in all probability**} + {subject} + {verb...}

440 - *a little, quite, & nearly*

When there is a small difference between adjectives, we can use *a little*, *quite* and *nearly*:

The Earth is **a little** closer to the sun than Mars.

The Earth doesn't travel **quite** so close to the sun as Mars does.

Mars **is nearly** as close to the sun as the Earth is.

441 - *according to*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) suggests why the second event (main clause) will happen:

{**according to** + first event} + {second event}

According to Proudhon, property is theft.

442 - *after*

When we join two clauses, the second event (main clause) happens *any time after* the first event (sub-clause):

{second event} + {**after** + first event}

They left **after** we did.

443 - *already*

We use *already* to talk about something which happens sooner than expected:

Is he already here? We weren't expecting him till later.

We use it mostly in positive statements and questions where it has a mid position; we can use it at the end of the sentence for emphasis:

I've told you once already! Now, go away!

445 - *although, though, even though*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) happened to cause the second event (main clause) but the second event was not successful:

{**although** + first event} + {second event}

Although she gave a good interview, she did not get the job.

446 - *always*

We use *always* with the present continuous tense to show when something happens too often.

{*be*} + {**always**} + {present participle}

He **is always asking** me to lend him money and I'm getting fed up with it.

She **is always complaining**! I wish she would stop it!

Are they **always fighting**? - No, they **aren't always arguing**, either.

447 - *and, as well as, both...and, not only...but also*

When we join two clauses with both clauses working together:

{clause} + {**and...**} + {clause}

I arrived **and** the party began.

448 - *another*

We use *another* to mean one extra countable noun. When someone first arrives we ask:

Would you like **a** biscuit?

And after they have eaten it, we ask:

Would you like **another** biscuit?

For non-countable nouns, we use *some more*.

449 - *any longer* & *any more*

We use *any longer* and *any more* to talk about something coming to an end.

We use them in negative statements where they come at the end:

He doesn't live here **any longer**.

He doesn't work there **any more**.

450 - *any, each & every*

We use *every* to talk about a group, *each* to talk about individuals in a group and *any* to talk about one single non-specific individual from a group:

Every one was there.

Each person was given a medal.

Any of them could be the culprit.

In the first example, *every* talks about the whole group together. In the second example, *each* talks about the individuals of a group. In the third example, *any* talks about one member of the group whose identity is unknown.

We tend to use *any* in negative sentences and questions.

We also use the same difference with compound words such as everyone, anybody, nothing, everywhere, anything, etc.

451 - *apologise*

When we say we are sorry for doing something, we apologise.

{**apologise**} + [**to** + someone] + {**for**} + {something}

I **apologise** for being rude to you.

We **apologise** for all the trouble we made.

They **apologised** to me for breaking my fence.

In the first example, *being* is the gerund, this is the *-ing* form of the verb which acts as a noun. We usually use *apologise* with the gerund.

452 - as a result of

When we join two clauses the second event (main clause) is the result of the first event (sub-clause):

{**as a result of** + first event} + {second event}

As a result of the bad weather, he missed his connecting flight.

This conjunction usually comes in the front position.

453 - *as, since*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) causes the second event (main clause) to happen:

{**since/as** + first event} + {second event}

Since/as your usual teacher is away, I shall be teaching you today.

We usually put these conjunctions at the beginning of the sentence.

454 - *be*

overview; present & past; use; form; apostrophes

1) The verb *be* is very important. It is used as a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb. It is irregular and it is very useful to learn the different forms thoroughly.

2) The table shows the form of the verb *be* in the present and past:

	person	present	past
		t	
singular	I	am	was
singular	you	are	were
singular	he/she/it	is	was
plural	we/you/ they	are	were

3) We use the verb *be* when we give information about the identity or qualities of a noun:

Eric **is** a marvellous swimmer.

They **are** good friends.

Was she here last night?

They **weren't** very happy with us.

4) The form is:

infinitive	be
present	am/are/ is
present participle	being
gerund	being
past	was/ were
past participle	been

5) In informal writing, we often we abbreviate the verb *be* with an apostrophe:

I am = I'm

you are = you're

he is = he's

I was not = I wasn't

You were not = you weren't

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

455 - *be able to*

We use *be able to* as a modal verb in several different ways:

1) to show ability or opportunity in the present:

We **are able to** use this room.

She **is able to** play the piano.

2) ability or opportunity in the past:

I **was able to** name every American state when I was at school.

She **was able to** play the piano very well when she was ten.

3) to show ability; we can use *be able to* with verbs of perception:

I **am able to** hear him but I **am not able to** see him.

See also:

[Modal Verbs](#)

4566 - *be about to*

We use this to talk about events in the very near future:

Sorry I can't stop, I**m about to** go out.

He **was about to** step into the bath when the doorbell rang.

457 - *be allowed to*

We use *be allowed to* as a modal verb to show permission:

You **are allowed to** smoke.

We **weren't allowed to** smoke.

458 - **be going to**

be going to: form; use; going to go; questions; negatives

1) {subject} + {**be going to**} + {infinitive}

I **am going to** be a lawyer when I leave college.

She **is going to** be a star one day.

2) We use *be going to*:

2a) to talk about our future intentions:

I **am going to** make a cake.

He **is going to** start his own company soon.

2b) to talk about predictions which are based on what we see now.

Look at those clouds - I think it **is going to** rain this afternoon.

Arsenal are playing very badly - they **are going to** lose the match.

2c) to talk about past intentions or predictions:

I **was going to** call you earlier but I forgot.

I thought he **was going to** start his own company but I was wrong.

3) When the main verb in the sentence is *go*, we say:

I **am going to go** on holiday next week.

going to go is, however, not very elegant. Instead we often use:

I **am going** on holiday next week.

This is using the present continuous with a future meaning.

4) We make questions in this way:

{*be*} + {subject} + {**going to**} + {infinitive}

Are you going to help me or not?

Is she going to apply for that job?

5) We make negatives thus:

{subject} + {be} + {not} + {going to} + {infinitive}

He **is going to** win the game.

He **isn't going to** win the game.

459 - *be going to* - *will*

We use *will* to talk about things in the future we cannot control and decisions made at the moment we speak.

We use *be going to* to talk about our planned intentions and predictions based on what we can see now.

Note

The difference between these two forms is not very great and in everyday spoken English it is not that important.

460 - *be to*

We use this tense to talk about official arrangements. It is formal:

The president **is to** visit Spain this week. There the two leaders **are to** meet and discuss the upcoming congress.

461 - *because, because of, as a result of, owing to, due to*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) causes the second event (main clause) to happen:

{second event} + {**because** + first event}

The police came **because** someone had called them.

We can use this pattern also:

{second event} + {**because of/as a result of/owing to/due to**} + {noun phrase}

We came home late **because of** the traffic.

462 - *before*

When we join two clauses, the second event (main clause) happens *before* the first event (sub-clause):

{second event} + {**before** + first event}

I called you **before** I left the house.

463 - *by far*

When we are talking about superlatives, we can use *by far* to show a big difference:

Saturn is **by far** the largest planet in the solar system.

464 - *by mistake & on purpose*

When we accidentally do something wrong, we can say:

{by} + {mistake}

{on} + {purpose}

I did it **by mistake**.

I didn't do it **on purpose**.

465 - *by myself & on my own*

These have the same meaning.

466 - **can**

We use *can* as a modal verb in several different ways to show:

1) ability and opportunity in the present:

I **can** drive.

Can you hear me?

2) permission:

You **can** borrow my car if you want.

We **cannot** allow you to behave in such a manner.

3) to show impossibility:

He **can't** have won!

You **can't** be serious!

4) to ask for or offer something:

Can you help me?

Can you open the window, please?

Can I give you a hand?

See also:

Modal Verbs

467 - **could**

We use *could* as a modal verb in several different ways:

1) to talk about ability in the past:

I **could** drive when I was fifteen.

Could you hear me properly?

2) to make requests:

Could you help me, please?

Could I have a light?

3) to talk about ability in the future:

Could you swim across this river?

Could you lift that weight?

4) to show possibility in the present & future:

He **could** be at work, but I'm not certain.

If I were rich, I **could** go the Bahamas for a holiday.

5) to make suggestions for the future:

We **could** have a party.

You **could** see your mother and then go out afterwards.

6) to ask politely for something:

Could you give me some help here?

Could you come here, please?

7) to show permission politely:

You **could** come on Thursday, if you like.

The boss said you **couldn't** leave early.

8) as the past tense of *can*:

I **could** run much faster when I was younger.

Women and children **could** work in the mines in the last century.

See also:

Modal Verbs

468 - dare

We can use *dare* as a modal verb:

Dare you do something? - no I **daren't**!

They **dared** not go.

or as a lexical verb:

Do you **dare** to do something? - no I don't!

They did not **dare** to go.

We use *dare* mostly in questions and negatives.

See also:

Modal Verbs

469 - **do**

The verb *do* is very important. It is a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb. It is irregular and it is very useful to learn the different forms thoroughly.

The table shows the form of the verb *do* in the present and past:

	person	present	past
singular	I/you	do	did
singular	he/she/it	does	did
plural	we/you/they	do	did

We use the verb *do*:

1) to talk about an action when we do not know what it is or do not want to say what it is:

What **did** you do last night?
I **have done** something terrible!

2) meaning *work at, finish*:

He's **doing** marvels in the kitchen.
We've **done** a lot of work on the house.

See also:

[Verb Index](#)

470 - *either...or*

When we join two clauses, this is used for positive or negative sentences with two alternatives (clauses):

{**either**} + {clause} + {**or**} + {clause}

Either listen to what I'm saying **or** leave me alone.

471 - ***either, neither***

We use these to talk about two noun phrases.

either means one or the other:

It doesn't matter which one you chose; **either** will be fine.

neither has a negative meaning:

Accept **neither** offer; both of them are too low.

{**either/neither**} + {countable noun phrase}

{**either/neither**} + {**of**} + {non-countable noun phrase}

I don't like **either of the** records.

I don't like **either** jam.

472 - **enough**

Think about this situation: There is a dinner party. There are ten guests but only nine chairs.

There aren't **enough** chairs.

enough means the amount you need or a sufficient amount.

{**enough**} + {noun}

{adjective/adverb} + {**enough**}

Is there **enough room**?

He isn't **big enough**.

We can follow the enough phrase with different patterns:

{enough phrase} + [**for** + person] + {**to**} + {infinitive}

Is there **enough room to sit** down?

He isn't **big enough to reach** the top shelf.

Is she **well enough for me to see** her?

She wasn't **near enough for me to hear** her.

{enough} + {of} + {noun phrase}

Is there **enough of that** wine left?

I've had **enough of you!** Get out!

I've seen **enough of her** to last me a lifetime!

enough can also be used as a pronoun:

There isn't **enough** to go round.

I've had **enough!**

473 - *despite, in spite of*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) happened and caused the second event (main clause) but the second event was not successful:

{second event} + {**despite/in spite of** + first event}

We often use this pattern with these conjunctions:

{**despite/in spite of**} + {gerund}

She did not get the job **despite/in spite of** giving a good interview.

These are often followed by a fact which makes the second clause surprising:

Despite his innocence, they executed him.

In spite of his innocence, they executed him.

474 - *few* - *little* - *many* - *much* - *a lot of* - *lots of*

When we talk about a quantity of something, we use these words.

Look at this table:

quantity	plural nouns	non-countable nouns
small	<i>a few</i>	<i>a little</i>
large	<i>many</i>	<i>much</i>
large	<i>a lot of</i>	<i>a lot of</i>
large	<i>lots of</i>	<i>lots of</i>

lots of = a lot of

We generally use *many* and *much* in questions and negative statements but we use *a lot of* in positive statements.

There are only *a few* people left; everyone else has gone home.

There is only *a little* bit of wine left; they drank most of it.

How *many* tourists visit Greece each year?

Not *many* people go there in Winter.

How *much* money do you have? - I don't have *much* money on me.

A lot of tourists go to Greece each year.

That man owes me *a lot of* money.

These words can also be used as pronouns. The use is as above but without the noun or noun-phrase:

Are there any people here? - No, only *a few*.

Is there any wine in the bottle? - Just *a little*.

How *many* tourists visit Greece each year? - *A lot* in Summer but not *many* in Winter.

How *much* money do you have? - Not *much*; I'm owed *a lot* though.

475 - **go**

We use

{**go**} + {present participle}

to talk about things we go out to do:

go dancing, go fishing

476 - *it*

We use it as a personal pronoun to replace a singular neuter noun. We also use it when we are asking or answering about the identity of a person:

Who is *it*? - *It's* me.

We use it as a subject of a sentence to talk about the time or the weather:

It's raining.

It's midnight.

As the subject of a sentence when the subject clause comes later in the sentence:

It's funny that we haven't seen them.

We use *it* as the subject of the sentence when we use a clause. Usually this happens with *that...* clauses which are not put at the beginning; we use it as an introductory subject:

That you do this is essential.

It is essential that you do this.

The same applies to infinitive subjects:

To err is human.

It is human to err.

477 - *it's high time*

We use the phrase *it's high time* to say that something should be done now; in fact there is not much time left to do it.

It's high time you got your hair cut.

It's high time we were leaving, the train goes in twenty minutes.

{*it's high time*} + {subject} + {past simple/continuous}

478 - *it was not so much...as*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) was not as important as the second event (main clause) in causing something to happen:

{**it was not so much** + first event} + {second event}

It was not so much anger as fear...

479 - *late* & *late*ly

late has the same form for an adjective or an adverb:

The bus arrived **late**.

He was a **late** arrival.

but *late*ly = recently

I've been worrying about money again **late**ly.

480 - *let's*

We use this to suggest ideas:

{**let's**} + {infinitive}

Let's go to the beach!

Let's have a party - right here!

481 - *matter*

When we join two clauses the first event (sub-clause) has no influence on the second event (main clause):

{**no matter/it does not matter** + first event} + {second event}

It does not matter how hard you try, you will not beat me.

No matter how hard you try, you will not beat me.

482 - *may*

We use *may* in several different ways:

1) to give permission:

You **may** leave when you are finished.

You **may** not talk during the exam.

2) possibility in the present & future:

It **may** rain.

He **may** have gone home, I don't know.

3) to ask for something:

May I open the window?

May I see your passport, please?

See also:

Modal Verbs

483 - *might*

We use *might* as a modal verb to show possibility in the present & future:

It **may** rain.

He **may** have gone home, I don't know.

The contraction of might not is unusual:

He might not be here.

~~He mightn't be here.~~

It is also unusual to see might as a question:

~~Might it be time to leave?~~

See also:

Modal Verbs

484 - **hard & hardly**

hard has the same form for an adjective or an adverb:

It was **hard** work.

We worked **hard**.

but

hardly = almost none:

He hurt his leg so badly he could **hardly** walk.

485 - *have*

overview; form; have got; use; questions & negatives; apostrophes

1) The verb *have* is very important. It is a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb. It is irregular and it is very useful to learn the different forms thoroughly.

2) The table shows the form of the verb *have* in the present and past:

	person	present	past
		t	t
singular	I/you	have	had
singular	he/she/it	has	had
plural	we/you/ they	have	had

3) When we speak and in informal writing, we use *have got* rather than *have*.

I've got no money.

She's got a large house in the country.

The form is identical to *have* but with the particle *got*:

{*have*} + {**got**}

Questions are either:

Do you have...

or

Have you got...

4) We use the verb *have* [*got*]:

4a) to talk about possession:

I **have** two sisters.

She **has** a headache.

They **had** a Porsche but it was stolen.

4b) to show necessity:

You **have** got to go now.

Have you got to make such a noise?

4c) to show lack of necessity:

You **don't have** to see the doctor today.

We **don't have** to pay to get in.

4d) to order food & then eat or drink:

I'll **have** a sandwich, what will you **have**?

4f) to describe an experience:

Are you **having** a good time?

We **had** a real laugh last night.

4g) *have a...*:

Did you **have** a go?

He **had** a look and didn't like what he saw.

4h) Causative form:

He's **having** his stairs repainted.

5) When we make questions or negatives with *have* as a lexical verb, we can use inversion or *do*:

{*have*} + {subject}

{*do*} + {subject} + {**have**}

It is more common to use *do*.

6) In informal writing, we often we abbreviate the verb *have* with an apostrophe:

I have = I've

he has = he's

they had =

they'd

See also:

Verb Index

486 - *here* & *there*

use; inversion

1) We use *here* to talk about somewhere near the speaker:

Is Josephine **here** at the party? There are so many people **here** I can't see her.

We use *there* to talk about somewhere further away:

Can you see him over **there** by the woods?

2) With short exclamations using *here* and *there*, we use inversion:

Here she comes!

There it is!

487 - *high* & *highly*

high has the same form for an adjective or an adverb:

They pay him a **high** salary.

He jumped **high** over the fence.

but *highly* = very

He is **highly** thought of in that company.

488 - *if only*

A normal conditional sentence has an if-clause and a conditional-clause. Instead of using *if*, we can use *if only* to add emotional emphasis to the clause or sentence. We usually use it with the second or third conditionals only:

If only we left now, we would catch the train.

If only we had left earlier, we would have caught the train.

The first example shows a strong desire to leave now, while the second shows regret that they left too late.

If only can also be used with just the if-clause as an exclamation.

"*If only* they would stop shouting!" cried the desperate teacher.

"*If only* you had listened to me!"

"*If only* he loved me," sighed the lovesick girl.

If and *only* can also be separated in some situations:

after <i>be</i>	<i>If you were only able to stop snoring!</i>
after the modal/auxiliary	<i>If you could only stop snoring!</i>
after the subject	<i>If you only stopped snoring at night!</i>

If only is a stronger form of *wish*. See also *wish*.

See also:

Conditional Index

489 - *in order to, so as to*

When we join two clauses the first event (main-clause) *must* happen so that the second event (sub-clause) can happen:

{*in order to/so as to* + second event} + {first event}

In order to pay for the car, he had to make other financial sacrifices.

These conjunction often comes at the beginning of the sentence.

We can also use the infinitive with *to* to show reason in the same way as the previous example:

To pay for the car, he had to make other financial sacrifices.

490 - *in the dark*

If you are *in the dark* about something, you do not know anything about it.

{be} + {in the dark} + {when it comes to} + {noun phrase}

I **know nothing** about moles.

I **am completely in the dark** when it comes to moles.

491 - *for* & *since*

As a time adverbial, *for* means over a period of time and *since* means from a point in time:

{**for**} + {time period}

I haven't seen him **for** ten years.

{**since**} + {point in time}

I haven't seen him **since** 1976.

492 - *whether...or*

We use *whether* to introduce two possibilities:

I want to know whether you want it or not.

I want to know whether we should stay or go

191 - *that...*

We can use a phrase beginning *that...* as the subject of a sentence:

That he will go is not important.

Often we use *it* as a preparatory subject:

It is not important that he will go.

493 - *due to*

due to can mean scheduled to:

The plane was *due to* leave at ten.

494 - *regret*

regret is often followed by the gerund:

I regret going.

I regret not going.

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A **question tag** is an expression like *isn't it?* or *will she?* which we add to the end of a question.

An **adjective** describes a noun, e.g. *big; red; old*.

A **noun** names an object or concept, e.g. *ball*; *Peter*; *sea*; *idea*.

A **verb** describes an action or state, e.g. *walk*; *run*; *be*; *have*.

The **subject** is the *main actor* in a sentence, e.g. *The man ate the cake. We love you.*

The **object** receives the *action* from the subject, e.g. *The man ate the cake. We love you.*

A **noun phrase** is a phrase made from a *noun* with a modifier such as an adjective, e.g. *the big man*; *all the king's horses*

A **subject complement** tells us something about the subject; it usually follows a verb like *be* or *seems*, e.g. *I am English. He feels ill.* An **object complement** tells us about the object and follows straight on from it: *They called him fat.*

A **participle** is a form of the verb. We have the *present* participle which ends in *-ing* (*walking, eating*) and the *past* participle which often ends in *-ed* (*walked, liked*). They are sometimes known as the *-ing* or *-ed* forms but many irregular verbs do not end in *-ed* such as *ate, gone, was*.

A ***pronoun*** is a word used to replace a noun in a sentence, e.g. *I; me; himself; they; one; something; it.*

The **present perfect simple** is formed with *have/has* and the *-ed* form: *He has departed. We have left.*
The **continuous** is formed with *have/has, been* and the *-ing* form: *She has been working. They have been running..*

The **present simple** is formed with the *infinitive*. *I know. She knows.* The **continuous** is formed with the verb *be* and the *-ing* form: *He is working. They are talking.*

A **regular** verb makes the past and past participle with -ed, e.g. *work - worked - worked*. **Irregular** verbs have different past and past participle forms (though often they are the same) e.g. *be - was - been*; *read - read - read*.

A **collective noun** is a noun which describes a group, e.g. *family; government; police; squad; team*.

The ***imperative*** is formed with the *infinitive* and used without a subject: *Go! Leave now!*

An **adverb** describes a verb, an adjective or a complete sentence, e.g. *unfortunately, yesterday, hopelessly.*

A **preposition** is a small word which precedes a noun phrase and shows us where or when something is, e.g. *in, on, by, with, for, at*.

A **determiner** comes at the beginning of a noun phrase and restricts the noun, e.g. *a, the, some, a few*.

The **past simple** is formed with the past form of the verb. In regular verbs this is -ed: *I walked. She laughed.* The **continuous** is formed with *was/were* and the -ing form: *They were walking. She was laughing.*

The ***infinitive*** is the base form of the verb, e.g. *walk, run, eat*.

The ***past perfect simple*** is formed with *had* and the *-ed* form: *I had gone. We had talked.* The ***continuous*** is formed with *had, been* and the *-ing* form: *I had been talking. We had been laughing.*

A **modal** verb is used to show probability: *It **might** happen. Things **could** be worse.* The modal verbs are: *can, could, dare, may, might, must, need, ought to, shall, should, will, would.*

A **conjunction** is a word used to join two clauses such as: *if, when, while, but, though*.

question words are *wh*- words used to make questions: *who, what, where, when, why, how*.

An **adverb phrase** is a phrase which can be used as an adverbial in a sentence: *yesterday morning*;
half past ten; *slowly and surely*.

A **gerund** is also known as a **verbal noun**. It is the *-ing* form of a verb used as a noun: *Walking is boring. Running tires me.*

A **countable** noun can be counted and has a plural form: *one car, two cars*. A **non-countable** noun has no plural form and cannot be counted: *rice; water; sugar*.

A **phrase** is two or more words which act together as a group; they are usually classified by their head word e.g. *noun phrase*; *verb phrase*.

A **preposition phrase** is a phrase which consists of a preposition and a noun phrase; together it acts as a prepositional phrase: *in the bathroom; on the dole; under the table.*

A **clause** is part of a sentence which contains a subject and a verb (in any form); it can be joined to another clause by a conjunction or act as a subject, etc.

There are three **articles** which are put before nouns. When we do not use an article, we say we use the **zero** article, e.g. *cats, ideas*. There is also the **indefinite** article, **a** or **an**: *a cat, an idea*. Finally there is the **definite** article: *the cat, the idea*.

A **proper noun** is the name of a person or place; it begins with a capital letter: *Peter; the Queen; Yugoslavia.*

A **possessive adjective** is used to show possession with a noun phrase: *my car; his house; it's bark.*

A **possessive pronoun** is used in place of a possessive pronoun and noun phrase: *mine, yours, his*.

A **lexical** verb is **not** an auxiliary verb or *will* or *can*. A lexical verb has meaning in itself.

A **perfect** verb is one made with *have*, *has* or *had* and a participle.

The **present** tenses are *the present simple, the present continuous, the present perfect simple, the present perfect continuous*.

The **past** tenses are *the past simple, the past continuous, the past perfect simple, the past perfect continuous*.

simple tenses are tenses whose main verb is in a simple form, i.e. not continuous: *walk; run; go*.

continuous tenses are tenses whose main verb ends in *-ing*. They are sometimes called **progressive** tenses: *running; walking; going*.

An **auxiliary** verb is used to form other tenses; they are *be*, *do* and *have*.

The **active voice** is the usual form of a sentence. The **passive voice** puts the active object at the beginning of the sentence: active: *Pierre kicked the policeman*. Passive: *The policeman was kicked by Pierre*.

A **verb phrase** is a main verb and one or more auxiliary or modal verbs; together they act as one unit:
has been working; will have gone.

inversion is when we reverse the usual order of *subject* + *verb* in a sentence: *had I known...*

The **comparative** form of an adjective or adverb is used to compare two items: *A is bigger than B; A is more intelligent than B.*

The **superlative** form of an adjective or adverb is used to compare three or more items: *A is the **biggest** in the world; A is the **most intelligent** in the world.*

A **conditional** sentence has an if-clause and a conditional clause: ***If I were a rich man, I would buy a Stradivarius violin.***

The ***predicate*** is the part of the sentence which tells us about the subject: *He is the fastest man on earth.*

A **subject question** asks for the identity of the subject of a sentence: *Who hit you? - Peter hit me.*

A **sub** (or **subordinate**) **clause** is a clause which is part of another clause: *I think that you should go.*

A **main clause** can be the whole sentence or part of a large sentence with a sub-clause: *I like you. I think that I like you.*

The **vowels** in English are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u*.

The **consonants** in English are *b, c, d, f, g...*

An **object clause** is a clause which acts as the object of a sentence: *I gave him what he wanted.*

A **reflexive** pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence: *She enjoyed herself. They prepared themselves.*

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