


Longman

English

Grammar

L. G. Alexander

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L G.Alexander

Consultant- R A. Close, CBE

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Louis Alexander is best known as the author of innovative works like *First Things First* (1967), which set new standards in course-design. He has written

Courses, such as *New Concept English* (1967), *Look, Listen and Learn* (1968-71), *Target* (1972-74), *Mainline* (1973-81), *Follow Me* (1979-80) and *Plain English* (1987-88).

Language Practice Books such as *A First Book in Comprehension* (1964), *Question and Answer* (1967) and *For and Against* (1968).

Readers, such as *Operation Mastermind* (1971), *K's First Case* (1975), *Dangerous Game* (1977) and *Foul Play* (1983).

He created the blueprint for the self-study series in modern languages, *Survive* (1980-83) and has published language courses in the field of computer-assisted language learning.

The *Longman English Grammar* is the culmination of more than thirty years' work in English as a foreign language.

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### **Acknowledgements**

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L G A

# Introduction

## **Aims and level**

Grammatical descriptions of English which are addressed to learners are often oversimplified and inaccurate. This is the inevitable result of lack of time in the classroom and lack of space in course books and practice books. Badly expressed and inaccurate rules, in turn, become enshrined in grammar books directed at teachers and students. The misrepresentation of English grammar gives a false view of the language, perpetuates inaccurate 'rules', and results in errors in communication. It is against this background that the *Longman English Grammar* has been written.

The primary aim of this book is to present a *manageable* coverage of grammar at intermediate and advanced levels, which will serve two purposes:

- 1 To present information which can be consulted for *reference*
- 2 To suggest the range of structures that a student would need to be familiar with receptively and (to a lesser extent) productively to be able to communicate effectively

In other words, the book aims to be a true pedagogical grammar for everyone concerned with English as a foreign language. It attempts to provide reasonable answers to reasonable questions about the workings of the language and to define what English as a Foreign Language *is* in terms of grammar.

## **Rationale**

Many learners approach the study of English already in possession of a fair knowledge of the grammar of their own languages. They are the product of their own learning traditions, which have often equipped them with a 'grammatical consciousness'. Native-speaking teachers of English gradually acquire the grammatical consciousness of their students through the experience of teaching, so that they, too, learn 'English as a foreign language'. This book assumes the existence of such a consciousness. The grammar has been written, as it were, through the eyes of the user. It has been informed by the common errors made by learners and as a result has been written as precisely as possible for their requirements. This awareness of the learner will be apparent in the way the book has been organized and written, and in the use of technical terms.

## **Organization**

Complex forms of organization, often found in modern grammars, have been avoided. Before they begin the study of English, many students are familiar with the idea of sentence formation and word order and the



idea of 'parts of speech' the use of nouns, verbs, prepositions, and so on And this is the pattern this grammar follows A glance at the Contents pages will give the user an overview of the way the book has been organized

The main chapters are followed by an Appendix, which contains useful lists (e g of phrasal verbs) that would otherwise clutter the text and make it unreadable Or they contain detailed notes on e g prepositions, dealing with such problems as the similarities and differences between *over* and *above*, which there is not normally room for in a grammar of this size

### **Style**

Writing about language is difficult because the object of study (language) is also the medium through which it is discussed There has been a conscious avoidance of passive constructions so that the descriptions of how the English language works are as simple and direct as possible, given the complexity of the subject

The usual sequence in each section is to present *form* first, followed by *use* Paradigms, where they occur, are given in full, in traditional style, as this may be the way students have already encountered them in their own languages These are often followed by notes which focus on particular problems 'Rules' are descriptive, rather than prescriptive, and are written as simply and accurately as possible

### **Technical terms**

The book defines common technical terms, such as *noun*, *verb*, etc that are probably familiar to the user While it avoids complex terms, it does introduce (and define) terms which are necessary for an accurate description of what is happening The index uses the symbol D to refer the user to the point where such terms are defined An intelligent discussion of English requires the use of terms like *determiner*, *stative verb*, *the causative*, *the zero article*, and so on If we avoid such terms, descriptions will be unnecessarily wordy, repetitive and/or inaccurate For example, to speak of 'the omission of the article' in e g 'Life is difficult' is a misrepresentation of what happens We *actively* use the zero article here, we do not 'omit' anything

### **Retrieving information**

Page headings and numbered subsections indicate at every point what features of the language are being discussed Users can make their own connexions through the extensive cross-referencing system, or they can find what they want in the detailed index

### **Ease of use**

Attempting to write a grammar that is up-to-date, accurate and readable is one thing, making a book out of the material is quite another Through careful presentation and design, we have tried to create a work that will be a pleasure to use We also hope that it will prove to be a reliable and indispensable companion to anyone interested in the English language

## Pronunciation and spelling table

consonants		vowels	
key word	other common spellings	key word	other common spellings
p	pen happy	i:	sheep field team key scene
b	back rubber	ə	amoeba
t	tea butter walked doubt	i	ship savage guilt system
d	day ladder called could	ʊ	women
k	key cool soccer lock	e	bed any said bread bury friend
g	get bigger ghost	æ	bad plaid laugh (AmE)
tʃ	cheer match nature	calf (AmE)	
ʃ	question cello	ɑ:	father calm heart
dʒ	jump age edge soldier gradual	laugh (BrE) bother (AmE)	
f	fat coffee cough physics	o	pot watch cough (BrE)
h	half	laurel (BrE)	
v	view of navy	ɔ:	caught ball board draw four
θ	thing	floor cough (AmE)	
ð	then	ʊ	put wood wolf could
s	soon city psychology mess	u:	boot move shoe group
ʒ	scene listen	flew blue rude	
z	zero was dazzle	ʌ	cut some blood does
example (/gz/)		ə:	bird burn fern worm earn
ʃ	fishing sure station tension	journal	
ˈvɪʃəs	chevron	ə	cupboard the colour actor
ʒ	pleasure vision rouge	nation danger asleep	
h	hot whole	ei	make pray prey steak vein
m	sum hammer calm bomb	gauge	
n	sun funny know gnaw	əʊ	note soap soul grow sew toe
ŋ	sung sink	ai	bite pie buy try guide sigh
l	led balloon battle	ɑʊ	now spout plough
r	red marry wriggle rhubarb	oi	boy poison lawyer
j	yet onion use new Europe	iə	here beer weir appear fierce
w	wet one when queen (/kw/)	ɛə	there hair bear bare their prayer
x	loch	ʊə	poor tour sure
		eiə	player
		əʊə	lower
		aiə	tire
		ɑʊə	tower
		oiə	employer

from *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

## Symbols and conventions

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
Not * *	likely student error
0	zero article
( )	optional element
/ /	phonetic transcription
[> ]	cross-reference
[> App]	Appendix reference
D	definition of technical terms (used only in the index)
' (as in 'progress)	stress mark

# 1 The sentence

## Sentence word order

### 1.1 Inflected and uninflected languages

Many modern European languages are **inflected**. Inflected languages usually have the following characteristics

- 1 Nouns have endings which change depending on whether they are, for example, the subject or object of a verb
- 2 There are complex agreements between articles, adjectives and nouns to emphasize the fact that a noun is, for example, subject or object, masculine or feminine, singular or plural The more inflected a language is (for example, German or Greek), the more complex its system of endings ('inflexions')
- 3 Verbs 'conjugate', so that it is immediately obvious from the endings which 'person' (first, second, third) is referred to and whether the 'person' is singular or plural

English was an inflected language up to the Middle Ages, but the modern language retains very few inflexions Some survive, like the genitive case in e g *lady's handbag* where *lady* requires 's to show singular possession, or like the third person in the simple present tense (*I work ~ He/She/It works*) where the -s ending identifies the third person, or in the comparative and superlative forms of many adjectives {*nice nicer nicest*) There are only six words in the English language which have different subject and object forms *I/me he/him she/her we/us they/them* and *who/whom* This lack of inflexions in English tempts some people to observe (quite wrongly) that the language has 'hardly any grammar' It would be more accurate to say that English no longer has a grammar like that of Latin or German, but it has certainly evolved a grammar of its own, as this book testifies

In inflected languages we do not depend on the word order to understand which noun is the subject of a sentence and which is the object the endings tell us immediately In English, the order of words is essential to the meaning of a sentence We have to distinguish carefully between the subject-group and the verb-group (or **predicate**) The **predicate** is what is said about the subject, i e it is all the words in a sentence except the subject

---

subject group	verb group (predicate)
<i>The dog</i>	<i>bit the man</i>
<i>The man</i>	<i>bit the dog</i>

---

As these examples show, a change in word order brings with it a fundamental change in meaning, which would not be the case if the nouns had endings This means that English is far less flexible in its word order than many inflected languages

## 1.2 The sentence: definitions of key terms

No discussion of the sentence is possible without an understanding of the terms **finite verb**, **phrase**, **clause** and **sentence**

A **finite verb** must normally have

- a **subject** (which may be 'hidden') e.g.  
*He makes **They** arrived **We** know*  
*Open the door (i.e. **You** open the door)*
- a **tense** e.g. ***He has finished** **She will write** **They succeeded***

So, for example, *he writes she wrote* and *he has written* are finite, but *written*, by itself, is not. *Made* is finite if used in the past tense and if it has a subject (*He made this for me*), but it is not if it is used as a past participle without an auxiliary (*made in Germany*). The infinitive (e.g. *write*) or the present and past participles (e.g. *writing written*) can never be finite. Modal verbs [> Chapter 11] are also finite, even though they do not have tense forms like other verbs e.g. *he must (wait) he may (arrive)*, as are imperatives e.g. *Stand up!* [> 9.51-56]

A **phrase** is a group of words which can be part of a sentence. A phrase may take the form of

- a **noun phrase** e.g. *a tube of toothpaste*
- a **prepositional** (or **adverbial**) **phrase** e.g. *over the bridge*
- a **verb phrase**, e.g. a single verb-form *built (in stone)* or a combination of verbs e.g. *will tell have done*
- a **question-word + infinitive** e.g. *what to do when to go*

A **clause** is a group of words consisting of a **subject + finite verb (+ complement** [> 1.9] or **object** [> 1.4, 1.9] if necessary)

A **sentence** which contains one clause is called a **simple sentence**

*Stephen apologized at once* [> 1.7]

Or it may contain more than one clause, in which case it is either a **compound sentence** [> 1.17]

*Stephen realized his mistake **and** (he) apologized at once*

or a **complex sentence** [> 1.21]

***When** he realized his mistake Stephen apologized at once*

A **sentence** can take any one of four forms

- a **statement** *The shops close/don't close at 7 tonight*
- a **question** *Do the shops close at 7 tonight?*
- a **command** *Shut the door!*
- an **exclamation** *What a slow tram this is!*

A sentence is a complete unit of meaning. When we speak, our sentences may be extremely involved or even unfinished, yet we can still convey our meaning through intonation, gesture, facial expression, etc. When we write, these devices are not available, so sentences have to be carefully structured and punctuated. A written sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop (.), a question mark (?) or an exclamation mark (!).

One-word or abbreviated utterances can also be complete units of

meaning, particularly in speech or written dialogue e.g. *All right<sup>1</sup> Good<sup>1</sup> Want any help?* However, these are not real sentences because they do not contain a finite verb

### 1.3 Basic word order in an English sentence

Although variations are possible [> 1.6], the basic word order in a sentence that is not a question or a command is usually

subject group		verb group (predicate)		adverbials [usually optional > 7.1 ]		
subject		verb	object	manner	place	time[>7.19.1 7.22]
<i>I</i>		<i>bought</i>	<i>a hat</i>			<i>yesterday</i>
<i>The children</i>		<i>ran</i>			<i>home</i>	
<i>The taxi driver</i>		<i>shouted at</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>angrily</i>		
<i>We</i>		<i>ate</i>	<i>our meal</i>	<i>in silence</i>		
<i>The car</i>		<i>stopped</i>		<i>suddenly</i>		
<i>A young girl</i>		<i>walked</i>		<i>confidently</i>	<i>across</i>	
<i>with long</i>					<i>the room</i>	
<i>black hair</i>						

### 1.4 Word order: definitions of key terms

A **subject** is normally a noun, pronoun or noun phrase, it usually goes before the verb. The verb must 'agree' with the subject, so the subject dictates the form of the verb (e.g. *I wait John waits I am you are I have the new edition has*). This 'agreement' between subject and verb is often called **concord**. An **object** is normally a noun, pronoun or noun phrase, it usually goes after the verb in the **active**. It can become the subject of a verb in the **passive** [> 12.1-2]

	subject	predicate
<b>active</b>	<i>They</i>	<i>drove him away in a police car</i>
<b>passive</b>	<i>He</i>	<i>was driven away in a police car</i>

A sentence does not always require an object. It can just be

- **subject + verb** *We all laughed*
- **subject + verb + adverb** *We laughed loudly*

Some verbs do not take an object [> 1.9-10]

### 1.5 Making the parts of a sentence longer

We can lengthen a subject or object by adding a clause or a phrase

- lengthening the **subject**  
*The man ran away*  
*The man who stole the money ran away*
- lengthening the **object**  
*I bought a raincoat*  
*I bought a raincoat with a warm lining*

## 1.6 Some common variations on the basic word order

We normally avoid separating a subject from its verb and a verb from its object [e.g. with an adverb > 1.3], though there are exceptions even to this basic rule [> 7.16]. However, note these common variations in the basic subject/verb/(object)/(adverbial) order

- questions [> Chapter 13]  
***Did you take your car in for a service?***  
***When did you take your car in for a service?***
- reporting verbs in direct speech [> 15.3n4]  
*You've eaten the lot' **cried Frank***
- certain conditional sentences [> 14.8, 14.18.3]  
***Should you see him please give him my regards***
- time references requiring special emphasis [> 7.22, 7.24]  
***Last night we went to the cinema***
- -ly adverbs of manner/indefinite time [> 7.16.3, 7.24]  
*The whole building **suddenly** began to shake*  
***Suddenly** the whole building began to shake*
- adverbs of indefinite frequency [> 7.40]  
*We **often** played dangerous games when we were children*
- adverb phrases [> 7.19.2, 7.59.2]  
***Inside the parcel** (there) was a letter*
- adverb particles (e.g. *back*) and *here there* [> 7.59.1]  
***Back came the answer - no'***  
***Here/There is your coat Here/There it is.***
- negative adverbs [> 7.59.3]  
***Never in world history has there been such a conflict***
- 'fronting'  
 Items in a sentence can be put at the front for special emphasis  
***A fine mess** you've made of this!*

## The simple sentence

### 1.7 The simple sentence

The smallest sentence-unit is the simple sentence. A simple sentence normally has *one* finite verb [but see 1.16]. It has a subject and a predicate.

subject group	verb group (predicate)
<i>I</i>	<i>ve eaten</i>
<i>One of our aircraft</i>	<i>is missing</i>
<i>The old building opposite our school</i>	<i>is being pulled down</i>

### 1.8 Five simple sentence patterns

There are five simple sentence patterns. Within each of the five groups there are different sub-patterns. The five patterns differ from each other according to what (if anything) follows the verb.

- 1 subject + verb  
*My head aches*

## The simple sentence

### 2 subject + verb + complement

*Frank is clever/an architect*

### 3 subject + verb + direct object

*My sister enjoyed the play*

### 4 subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

*The firm gave Sam a watch*

### 5 subject + verb + object + complement

*They made Sam redundant'chairman*

The examples listed above are reduced to a bare minimum To this minimum, we can add adjectives and adverbs

*His old firm gave Sam a beautiful gold watch on his retirement*

## 1.9 Sentence patterns: definitions of key terms

Any discussion of sentence patterns depends on a clear understanding of the terms **object** [> 1.4] (**direct** or **indirect**), **complement**, **transitive verb** and **intransitive verb**

A **direct object** refers to the person or thing affected by the action of the verb It comes immediately after a transitive verb

*Please don't annoy **me***

*Veronica threw **the ball** over the wall*

An **indirect object** usually refers to the person who 'benefits' from the action expressed in the verb someone you give something to, or buy something for It comes immediately after a verb

*Throw **me** the ball*

*Buy **your father** a present*

A **complement** follows the verb *be* and verbs related to *be*, such as *seem* [> 10.23-26], which cannot be followed by an object A complement (e.g. adjective, noun, pronoun) completes the sense of an utterance by telling us something about the subject For example, the words following *is* tell us something about *Frank*

*Frank is **clever** Frank is **an architect***

A **transitive verb** is followed by an object A simple test is to put *Who(m)?* or *What?* before the question-form of the verb If we get an answer, the verb is transitive [> App 1]

	Wh-	question-form	object
<i>I met <b>Jim</b> this morning</i>	<i>Who(m)</i>	<i>did you meet?</i>	<b>Jim</b>
<i>I'm reading <b>a book</b></i>	<i>What</i>	<i>are you reading?</i>	<b>A book</b>

Most transitive verbs can be used in the passive Some transitive verbs consist of more than one part e.g. *listen to* [> Apps 28-30, 32-33, 37]

An **intransitive verb** is not followed by an object and can never be used in the passive [> App 1] Some intransitive verbs consist of more than one part e.g. *touch down* [> App 36]

*My head **aches** The plane **touched down***

Some verbs, like *enjoy*, can only be used transitively and must always be followed by an object, others, like *ache*, are always intransitive



## 1 The sentence

Verbs like *open* can be used transitively or intransitively [> App 1.3]

- verb + object (transitive)      *Someone **opened the door***
- verb without object (intransitive)      *The door **opened***

### 1.10 Pattern 1: subject + verb

*My head + aches*

Verbs used in this pattern are either always intransitive or verbs which can be transitive or intransitive, here used intransitively

#### 1.10.1 Intransitive verbs [> App 1.2]

Examples *ache appear arrive come cough disappear fall go Quick<sup>1</sup> The train's **arrived** It's **arrived** early*

Some intransitive verbs are often followed by an adverb particle {*come in get up run away sit down* etc } or adverbial phrase

- verb + **particle** [> 7.3.4]      *He came **in** He sat **down** He stood **up***
- verb + **adverbial phrase** [> 7.3.3]      *A crowd of people came **into the room***

#### 1.10.2 Verbs which are sometimes intransitive [> App 1.3]

Many verbs can be used transitively with an object (answering questions like *What did you do?*) and intransitively without an object (answering the question *What happened?*) *break burn close drop fly hurt move open ring shake shut understand*

- **with** an object      *I **rang the bell** I **rang it** repeatedly*
- **without** an object      *The phone **rang** It **rang** repeatedly*

Other examples

*The fire **burnt** furiously Your essay **reads** well*

Sometimes the object is implied

*William **smokes/eats/drinks** too much*

### 1.11 Pattern 2: subject + verb + complement

*Frank + is + clever/an architect*

The verb in this pattern is always *be* or a verb related to *be*, such as *appear become look seem sound and taste* [> 10.23-26]

#### 1.11.1 Subject + 'be' + complement

The complement may be

- an **adjective**      *Frank is **clever***
- a **noun**      *Frank is **an architect***
- an **adjective + noun**      *Frank is **a clever architect***
- a **pronoun**      *it's **mine***
- an **adverb of place or time**      *The meeting is **here/at 2.30***
- a **prepositional phrase**      *Alice is **like her father***

### 1.12 Pattern 3: subject + verb + direct object

*My sister + answered + the phone*

Most verbs in the language can be used in this pattern [> App 1.1] The direct object may take a variety of forms, some of which are

- a **noun** [> 2.1]      *We parked **the car** in the car park*
- a **pronoun** [> 4.1]      *We fetched **her** from the station*

The simple sentence

- a **reflexive pronoun** [> 4.24]    *We enjoyed **ourselves** at the party*
- an **infinitive** [> 16.13]        *I want **to go home** now*
- an **-ing form** [> 16.42]        *I enjoy **sitting in the sun***

### 1.12.1 Verb + object + 'to' or 'for' + noun or pronoun [> 1.9.1, 13.2-3]

The following verbs can have a direct object followed by *to* + noun or pronoun, or (where the sense permits) *for* + noun or pronoun. They do not take an indirect object: *admit announce confess confide declare demonstrate describe entrust explain introduce mention propose prove repeat report say state and suggest*

subject	verb	object	(to + noun or pronoun)
<i>Martin</i>	<i>introduced</i>	<i>his guests</i>	<i>to Jane</i>

The noun or pronoun following *to* or *for* cannot be put after the verb, so we cannot say '*explain me this*' as, for example, we can say *give me this* where the indirect object can immediately follow the verb [> 1.13]

*Gerald **explained the situation to me*** (Not '*explained me*')  
*He **explained it to me*** (Not '*explained me*')  
*Say **it to me*** (Not '*say me*')  
*I can't describe this. Would you **describe it for me** please?*

The passive is formed as follows [compare > 1.13.2]

*The guests **were introduced to Jane***

*The situation **was explained to me***

*To* + noun or pronoun normally precedes a *that*-clause or an indirect question when the object is very long

*Catherine explained **to me what the situation was***

### 1.13 Pattern 4: subject + verb + indirect object + direct object

*They + gave + him + a watch*

#### 1.13.1 General information about Pattern 4 [compare > 12.3n4]

Verbs like *bring buy* and *give* can have two objects. The indirect object always follows the verb and usually refers to a person

*The firm gave **Sam a gold watch***

*Sam* is an indirect object. However, the direct object can come after the verb if we wish to emphasize it. When this is the case, the indirect object is replaced by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* or *for*

*The firm gave **a watch with a beautiful inscription on it to Sam***

*They bought **a beautiful gold watch for Sam***

The indirect object does not have to be a person

*I gave **the car a wash***

If the direct object is a pronoun (very often *it* or *them*) it normally comes immediately after the verb. The indirect object is replaced by a prepositional phrase

*They gave **it to Sam**. They gave **it to him***

However, if both direct and indirect objects are pronouns, some verbs such as *bring buy fetch give hand pass send show* and *teach* can be used as follows, particularly in everyday speech

*Give **me it**. Show **me it***

*Give **it me**. Show **it me***

### 1 The sentence

*Give me it* is more common than *Give it me* The pattern *give it me* does not often occur with verbs other than *give* The use of the object pronoun *them* {*Give them me*} is very rare

The verbs in Pattern 4 can fall into three categories

#### 1.13.2 Pattern 4: Category 1: verbs that can be followed by 'to'

---

subject + verb	+ indirect object	+ direct object
He	showed	me the photo

---

subject + verb	+ direct object	+ to + noun or pronoun
He	showed	the photo to me

---

In the passive the subject can be the person to whom something is 'given' or the thing which is 'given', depending on emphasis

*I was shown the photo*

***The photo was shown to me***

Here is a selection of verbs that can be used in this way *bring give grant hand leave* (= bequeath), *lend offer owe pass pay play, post promise read recommend sell send serve show sing take teach tell throw* and *write*

#### 1.13.3 Pattern 4: Category 2: verbs that can be followed by 'for'

---

subject + verb	+ indirect object	+ direct object
He	bought	Jane a present

---

subject + verb	+ direct object	+ for + noun or pronoun
He	bought	a present for Jane

---

These sentences can be put into the passive in two ways

***Jane was bought a present***

***A present was bought for Jane***

Here is a selection of verbs that can be used in this pattern Normally only *bring* and *buy* can have a person as a subject in the passive *bring build buy call catch change choose cook cut do fetch find fix get keep leave make order prepare reach reserve save sing*

In Categories 1 and 2, *to* or *for* + noun or pronoun can be used when we wish to emphasize the person who benefits from the action or when the indirect object is longer than the direct object

*Barbara made a beautiful dress for her daughter*

*He bought a gift for his niece who lives in Australia*

*For* can be ambiguous and its meaning depends on context The emphasis can be on 'the recipient'

*Mother cooked a lovely meal for me* (= for my benefit)

or on the person acting on the recipient's behalf

*/// I cook the dinner for you* (= on your behalf/instead of you)

*For* can be ambiguous when used after most of the verbs listed in 1.13.3, *for* can refer to the person acting on the recipient's behalf when used after most of the verbs in 1.13.2

**1.13.4 Pattern 4: Category 3: verbs that can be used without 'to' or 'for'**

subject	+ verb	+ indirect object	+ direct object	
I	// tell	you	the truth	soon
subject	+ verb	+ indirect object only		
I	// tell	you		soon

The passive can be formed in two ways

**You will be told the truth soon**

**The truth will be told to you soon**

The direct object may often be omitted but is implied after *ask bet forgive grant owe pay promise show teach tell write*

*I'll write you I bet you I grant you I'll promise you etc*

**1.14 Pattern 5: subject + verb + object + complement**

*They + appointed + him + chairman*

Verbs used in this pattern are often in the passive Here is a selection of common ones *appoint baptize call consider christen crown declare elect label make name proclaim pronounce vote*

*They appointed him chairman He was appointed chairman*

*They made Sam redundant Sam was made redundant*

The complement is usually a noun, though after *call consider declare make pronounce* it can be an adjective or a noun

*They called him foolish/a fool*

Here are a few verbs that combine with an object + adjectival complement *drive (me) crazy/mad/wild get (it) clean/dirty dry/wet open/shut find (it) difficult/easy hold (it) open/still keep (it) cool/fresh/shut leave (it) clean/dirty open/shut like (it) hot make (it) easy/plain/safe open (it) wide paint (it) brown/red prefer (it) fried pull (it) shut/tight push (it) open want (it) raw wipe (it) clean/dry Loud music drives me crazy I'm driven crazy by loud music*

**1.15 Joining two or more subjects**

The subjects of two simple sentences can be joined to make one simple sentence with conjunctions like *and but both and either or neither nor* and *not only but also* Note the agreement between subject and verb in the following [compare > 5.31]

*The boss is flying to Paris His secretary is flying to Paris*

*The boss and his secretary are flying to Paris*

*Both the boss and his secretary are flying to Paris*

*The boss is flying to Rome His secretary is not flying to Rome*

*The boss but not his secretary is flying to Rome*

*The boss may be flying to Berlin His secretary may be flying to Berlin (One of the two may be flying there )*

*Either the boss or his secretary is flying to Berlin*

*The boss isn't flying to York His secretary isn't flying to York*

*Neither the boss nor his secretary is flying to York*

### 1.16 Joining two or more objects, complements or verbs

The objects of two simple sentences may be joined to make one simple sentence with conjunctions such as *and*, *both* and:

*I met Jane I met her husband*  
*I met Jane **and** her husband*  
*I met **both** Jane **and** her husband*

*I didn't meet Jane I didn't meet her husband*  
*I didn't meet **either** Jane **or** her husband*  
*I met **neither** Jane **nor** her husband*

Adjective complements can be joined in the same way:

*It was cold It was wet*  
*It was cold **and** wet*  
*It wasn't cold It wasn't wet*  
*It wasn't cold **or** wet It was **neither** cold **nor** wet*

Two or more finite verbs can be joined to make a simple sentence:

*We sang all night We danced all night*  
*We sang **and** danced all night*

## The compound sentence

### 1.17 The compound sentence

We often need to join ideas. One way we can do this is to link simple sentences to form compound sentences. This linking is achieved by any of the following:

- a **semi-colon**:  
*We fished all day, we didn't catch a thing*
- a **semi-colon**, followed by a **connecting adverb** [> App 18]:  
*We fished all day, **however**, we didn't catch a thing*
- a **co-ordinating conjunction** (e.g. *and*, *but*, *so* *yet*) often preceded by a comma:  
*We fished all day **but** (we) didn't catch a thing*

In a compound sentence, there is no single main clause with subordinate clauses depending on it [> 1.21]: all the clauses are of equal importance and can stand on their own, though of course they follow a logical order as required by the context. We often refer to clauses in a compound sentence as **co-ordinate main clauses**.

### 1.18 Word order and co-ordinating conjunctions

The word order of the simple sentence is generally retained in the compound sentence:

---

subject	verb	object	conjunction	subject	verb	complement
Jimmy	fell off	his bike,	<b>but</b>	(he)	was	unhurt

---

The co-ordinating conjunctions which can be used to form compound sentences are: *and*, *and then*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, *yet*, *either* or *neither* *nor* , *not only* *but* (*also/as well/too*). These can be used for

## The compound sentence

the purposes of addition (*and*), contrast (*but*, *yet*), choice (*or*), reason (for), continuation (*and then*) and consequence or result (so). However, a single conjunction like *and* can serve a variety of purposes to express:

- **addition:** *We were talking **and** laughing* (= in addition to)
- **result:** *He fell heavily **and** broke his arm* (= so)
- **condition:** *Weed the garden **and** I'll pay you £5* (= If...then)
- **sequence:** *He finished lunch **and** went shopping* (= then)
- **contrast:** *Tom's 15 **and** still sucks his thumb* (= despite this)

### 1.19 Joining sentence patterns to make compound sentences

The five simple sentence patterns [ > 1 8] can be joined by means of co-ordinating conjunctions (P1 = Pattern 1, etc.):

subject <i>Frank</i>	verb <i>worked hard</i>	manner (P1)		+	(subject) <i>and (he)</i>	verb <i>became</i>	complement (P2) <i>an architect</i>
subject <i>I</i>	verb <i>have got</i>	object (P3) <i>a cold</i>		+	subject <i>so I</i>	verb <i>m going</i>	place (P1) <i>to bed</i>
subject <i>They</i>	verb <i>made</i>	object <i>him</i>	complement (P5) <i>chairman</i>	+	(subject) <i>but (they)</i>	verb <i>didn't increase</i>	object (P3) <i>his salary</i>
subject <i>Her birthday</i>	verb <i>is</i>	complement (P2) <i>next Monday</i>		+	subject <i>so I</i>	verb <i>must buy</i>	object object (P4) <i>her a present</i>

### 1.20 The use of co-ordinating conjunctions

When the subject is the same in all parts of the sentence, it is usual not to repeat it. We do not usually put a comma in front of *and*, but we generally use one in front of other conjunctions:

#### 1.20.1 Addition/sequence: 'and'; 'both...and'; 'not only...but...(too/as well)'; 'not only...but (also)...'; 'and then'

*He washed the car He polished it*  
*He washed the car **and** polished it*  
***He not only washed** the car, **but polished it (too/as well)***  
*He washed the car **and then** polished it*

When the subjects are different, they must both be used:

***You** can wait here **and** I'll get the car*  
***Jim** speaks Spanish, **but his wife** speaks French*

#### 1.20.2 Contrast: 'but'; 'yet'

*He washed the car He didn't polish it*  
*He washed the car **but didn't polish it***  
*She sold her house She can't help regretting it*  
*She sold her house, **but/yet (she) can't help** regretting it*

#### 1.20.3 Alternatives: 'either...or...'; 'neither...nor...'

*He speaks French Or perhaps he understands it*  
*He **either speaks** French, **or understands it** (I'm not sure which)*  
*He doesn't speak French He doesn't understand it*  
*He **neither speaks** French, **nor understands it***

**1.20.4 Result: 'so'**

*He couldn't find his pen He wrote in pencil*  
*He couldn't find his pen **so he wrote** in pencil*  
(The subject is usually repeated after so)

**1.20.5 Cause: 'for'**

*We rarely stay in hotels We can't afford it*  
*We rarely stay in hotels **for we can't** afford it*  
Forgives the reason for something that has already been stated Unlike *because* [> 1.48], it cannot begin a sentence The subject must be repeated after *for* This use of *for* is more usual in the written language

**1.20.6 Linking simple sentences by commas, etc.**

More than two simple sentences can be joined by commas with only one conjunction which is used before the final clause The use of a comma before *and* is optional here

*I found a bucket put it in the sink() **and** turned the tap on*  
*I took off my coat searched all my pockets **but** couldn't find my key*

Sometimes subject and verb can be omitted In such cases, a sentence is simple, not compound [> 1.15-16]

*The hotel was cheap **but clean***  
*Does the price include breakfast only **or dinner as well?***

A second question can be avoided by the use of *or not*  
*Does the price include breakfast **or not?*** (= or doesn't it?)

## The complex sentence: introduction

**1.21 The complex sentence**

Many sentences, especially in written language, are complex They can be formed by linking simple sentences together, but the elements in a complex sentence (unlike those of a compound sentence) are not of equal importance There is always one independent (or 'main') clause and one or more dependent (or 'subordinate') elements If removed from a sentence, a main clause can often stand on its own

Complex sentences can be formed in two ways

1 by joining subordinate clauses to the main clause with conjunctions

*The alarm was raised (main clause) **as soon as** the fire was discovered (subordinate clause)*  
*If you're not good at figures (subordinate clause) it is pointless to apply for a job in a bank (main clause)*

2 by using infinitive or participle constructions [> 1.57] These are non-finite and are phrases rather than clauses, but they form part of complex (not simple) sentences because they can be re-expressed as clauses which are subordinate to the main clause

***To get into university** you have to pass a number of examinations*  
(= If you want to get into university )  
***Seeing the door open**, the stranger entered the house*  
(= When he saw the door open )

## The complex sentence noun clauses

Many different constructions can be present in a complex sentence

- (a) *Free trade agreements are always threatened* (main clause)
- (b) *when individual countries protect their own markets*  
(subordinate clause dependent on (a))
- (c) *by imposing duties on imported goods*  
(participle construction dependent on (b))
- (d) *to encourage their own industries*  
(infinitive construction dependent on (c))

The subject of the main clause must be replaced by a pronoun in a subordinate clause if a reference is made to it

**The racing car** went out of control before **it** hit the barrier

A pronoun can occur in a subordinate clause before the subject is mentioned. This is not possible with co-ordinate clauses

When **she** got on the tram **Mrs Tomkins** realized *she had made a dreadful mistake*

Co-ordinate and subordinate clauses can combine in one sentence

*The racing car went out of control **and** hit the barrier several times before it came to a stop on a grassy bank*

The five simple sentence patterns [ > 1.8 ] can be combined in an endless variety of ways. Subordinate clauses can be classified under three headings

- **noun clauses**                      *He told me **that the match had been cancelled***
- **relative (or**                      *Holiday resorts **which are very crowded***
- adjectival) clauses**           *are not very pleasant*
- **adverbial clauses**           *However **hard I try** I can't remember*

*people's names*

## The complex sentence: noun clauses

### 1.22 How to identify a noun clause

Compare

*He told me about **the cancellation of the match***

*He told me **that the match had been cancelled***

*Cancellation* is a noun, *that the match had been cancelled* is a clause (it has a finite verb). The clause is doing the same work as the noun, so it is called a **noun clause**. Like any noun, a noun clause can be the subject or (far more usually) object of a verb, or the complement of the verb *be* or some of the verbs related to *be*, such as *seem* and *appear*.  
*I know **that the match will be cancelled*** (object)

***That the match will be cancelled** is now certain* (subject of *be*)

### 1-23 Noun clauses derived from statements

Noun clauses derived from statements are usually *that*-clauses (sometimes *what*-clauses), though the conjunction *that* is often omitted. Look at the following statement

*Money **doesn't** grow on trees*



## 1 The sentence

By putting *that* in front of a statement, we turn it into a subordinate noun clause which can be joined to another clause. As such, it will do the same work as a noun and can be used as follows

### 1.23.1 Noun clause as the subject of a verb

*Money doesn't grow on trees. This should be obvious.*

***That money doesn't grow on trees should be obvious.***

We tend to avoid this construction, preferring to begin with *It*, followed by *be seem*, etc

*It is obvious (that) money doesn't grow on trees*

Such clauses are not objects, but are 'in apposition' to the 'preparatory subject' *it* [> 4.13]. *That* cannot be omitted at the beginning of a sentence, but can be left out after many adjectives [> App 44] and a few nouns such as (*it's*) *a pity a shame*

### 1.23.2 Noun clause as the object of a verb

*That* is often omitted before a noun clause which is the object of a verb, especially in informal style

*Everybody knows (that) money doesn't grow on trees*

After many verbs (e.g. *believe know think*) the use of *that* is optional. After some verbs (e.g. *answer imply*) *that* is generally required. *That* is also usual after 'reporting verbs', such as *assure inform*, which require an indirect object [> App 45.2]. *That* is usually obligatory in longer sentences, especially when the *that*-clause is separated from the verb.

*The dealer told me how much he was prepared to pay for my car and that I could have the money without delay.*

A *that*-clause cannot follow a preposition

*He boasted about his success = He boasted that he was successful*

However, a preposition is not dropped before a noun clause that begins with a question-word [> 1.24.2]

*He boasted about how successful he was*

### 1.23.3 Noun clauses after 'the fact that', etc.

By using expressions like *the fact that* and *the idea that* we can avoid the awkwardness of beginning a sentence with *that*

***The fact that his proposal makes sense should be recognized***

***The idea that everyone should be required to vote by law is something I don't agree with***

*His proposal makes sense. This should be recognized*

These expressions can be used after verbs such as *to face*

***We must face the fact that we might lose our deposit***

*The fact that* also follows prepositions and prepositional phrases [> App 20.3] like *because of in view of on account of owing to due to in spite of despite and notwithstanding* (formal)

*His love of literature was due to the fact that his mother read poetry to him when he was a child*

***In spite of/Despite the fact that hotel prices have risen sharply the number of tourists is as great as ever***

#### 1.23.4 Noun clauses after adjectives describing feelings

Many adjectives describing personal feelings (e.g. *afraid glad happy pleased sorry*) or certainty (e.g. *certain sure*) **can be followed by that** (optional) [> App 44]

*I'm afraid (that) we've sold out of tickets*

#### 1.23.5 Transferred negatives after verbs of thinking and feeling

**After verbs like believe imagine suppose think**, we can transfer the negative from the verb to the *that*-clause without really changing the meaning [compare 'contrasting negatives' > 16.14] So, for example, these pairs of sentences have almost the same meaning

*I don't believe she'll arrive before 7*

*I believe she won't arrive before 7*

*I don't suppose you can help us*

*I suppose you can't help us*

#### 1.24 Noun clauses derived from questions

Noun clauses can be derived from Yes/No questions and question-word questions [> Chapter 13]

##### 1.24.1 Noun clauses derived from Yes/No questions [> 15.17-18]

Here is a direct Yes/No question

*Has he signed the contract?*

By putting *if* or *whether* in front of it and by changing the word order to subject-predicate, we turn it into a subordinate noun-clause that can be used

- as a **subject**

*Whether he has signed the contract (or not) doesn't matter*

{*if* is not possible)

- as a **complement** after **be**

*The question is whether he has signed the contract*

{*if* is not possible)

- as an **object** after **verbs**, especially in indirect questions [> 15.18n5]

*I want to know whether/if he has signed the contract (or not)*

- as an **object** after a **preposition**

*I'm concerned about whether he has signed the contract (or not)*

{*if* is not possible)

*Whether* is obligatory if the clause begins a sentence, it is obligatory after *be* and after prepositions. Either *whether* or *if* can be used after a verb and after a few adjectives used in the negative, such as *not sure* and *not certain* [> App 44]. If there is doubt about the choice between *whether* and *if* as subordinating conjunctions, it is always safe to use *whether*. Note how *or not* can be used optionally, particularly with *whether*.

##### 1.24.2 Noun clauses derived from question-word questions [> 15.19-23]

Here is a direct question-word question

*How soon will we know the results?*

Question-word questions (beginning with *who(m) what which when*

## 1 The sentence

*where why and how* plus a change in word order) can function as noun clauses and can be used

- as a **subject**                      *When he did it is a mystery*
- after *be*                              *The question is when he did it*
- after **reporting verbs**    *I wonder when he did it* [> 16.24]
- after **verb + preposition** or **adjective + preposition**  
   *It depends on when he did it*  
   *I'm interested in when he did it*

We can use *what* (not *that which*) instead of *the thing(s) that* to introduce a noun clause *What* may be considered to be a relative pronoun [> 1.27] here

*What matters most is good health* (i.e. the thing that matters)  
Compare the use of *What* as a question word (when it does not have the meaning 'the thing(s) that') in direct and indirect questions  
*What made him do it? I wonder what made him do it*

## The complex sentence: relative pronouns and relative clauses

### 1.25 How to identify a relative clause

**Compare**

*Crowded holiday resorts are not very pleasant*

*Holiday resorts which are crowded are not very pleasant*

The word *crowded* in the first sentence is an adjective *which are crowded* is a clause (it has a finite verb *are*) The clause is doing exactly the same work as the adjective it is describing the holiday resorts (or qualifying the noun *holiday resorts*) So we can call it an adjectival clause or (more usually) a relative clause because it relates to the noun, in this case by means of the word *which* Relative clauses (like adjectives) can describe persons things and events

### 1.26 The use and omission of commas in relative clauses

There are two kinds of relative clauses in the written language

- 1 Relative clauses without commas (sometimes called **defining restrictive** or **identifying**) They provide essential information about the subject or object

*What kind of government would be popular?*

- *The government which promises to cut taxes*

- 2 Relative clauses with commas (sometimes called **non-defining non-restrictive** or **non-identifying**) They provide additional information which can be omitted

*The government which promises to cut taxes will be popular*

The inclusion or omission of commas may seriously affect the meaning of a sentence Compare

*The government which promises to cut taxes will be popular*

*The government, which promises to cut taxes, will be popular*

The first sentence refers to *any* government which may come to power in the future The second is making a statement about the popularity of

## The complex sentence relative pronouns and clauses

the government that is actually in power at the moment Whatever it does this government will be popular Among other things it promises to cut taxes Alternative punctuation, such as dashes, would further emphasize the introduction of additional information

*The government - which promises to cut taxes - will be popular*  
Or we could use brackets

*The government (which promises to cut taxes) will be popular*  
In speech, a break in the intonation pattern indicates these markings e.g. when reading aloud or delivering a news bulletin

Not *all* relative clauses need be rigidly classified as defining or non-defining The inclusion or omission of commas may be at the writer's discretion when it does not result in a significant change in meaning

*He asked a lot of questions ( ) which were none of his business ( ) and generally managed to annoy everybody*

### 1.27 Form of relative pronouns in relative clauses

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#### Relative pronouns as subject:

People	He is the man <b>who</b> (or <b>that</b> ) lives next door
Things	This is the photo <b>which</b> (or <b>that</b> ) shows my house
Possession	He is the man <b>whose</b> car was stolen

#### Relative pronouns as object:

People	He is the man {who/whom/that} I met
People	He is the man ( - ) I gave the money to
Things	This is the photo ( <b>which/that</b> ) I took
Things	This is the pan { - } I boiled the milk in
Possession	It was an agreement the details of <b>which</b> could not be altered

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### 1.28 Relative pronouns relating to people

Relative pronouns which can be used with reference to people are *who whom* and *that* and the possessive *whose* Don't confuse the relative pronoun *that* with the subordinating conjunction [> 1.23]

### 1.29 Relative pronoun subject of relative clause: people

*Who* and *that* can be used in place of noun subjects or subject pronouns ( / *you he*, etc ) [> 4.3] When they refer to the subject they cannot normally be omitted We never use a subject pronoun and a relative pronoun together to refer to the subject Not "*He is the man who he lives next door*" *Who* and *that* remain unchanged whether they refer to masculine feminine, singular or plural

masculine	He is <b>the man who/that</b> lives next door
feminine	She is <b>the woman who/that</b> lives next door
plural masculine	They are <b>the men who/that</b> live next door
plural feminine	They are <b>the women who/that</b> live next door

We can use *that* in place of *who*, but we generally prefer *who* when the reference is to a person or persons as subject of the verb

**1.29.1 Typical defining relative clause with 'who' as subject**

*Who* or *that* is possible in the relative clause

*A doctor examined **the astronauts** **They** returned from space today*

*A doctor examined the astronauts **who** returned from space today*

**1.29.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with 'who' as subject**

*Who* must be used in non-defining clauses *that* is not possible

***The astronauts** are expected to land on the moon shortly **They** are reported to be very cheerful*

*The astronauts **who** are reported to be very cheerful are expected to land on the moon shortly*

**1.30 Relative pronouns relating to things and animals**

Relative pronouns which can be used with reference to things and animals are *which* and *that* [but compare > 4.8]

**1.31 Relative pronoun subject of relative clause: things/animals**

*Which* and *that* can be used in place of noun subjects that refer to things or animals, or in place of the subject pronouns *it* or *they* When *which/that* refer to the subject, they cannot normally be omitted We never use a subject pronoun and a relative pronoun together to refer to the subject Not \* *The cat which it caught the mouse*\* *Which* and *that* remain unchanged whether they refer to the singular or the plural

**singular**      *This is **the photo which/that** shows my house*

*This is **the cat which/that** caught the mouse*

**plural**      *These are **the photos which/that** show my house*

*These are **the cats which/that** caught the mice*

**1.31.1 Typical defining relative clause with 'which' as subject**

*Which* or *that* are possible in the relative clause

***The tiles** fell off the roof **They** caused a lot of damage*

*The tiles **which** fell off the roof caused serious damage*

**1.31.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with 'which' as subject**

*Which* must be used in non-defining clauses *that* is not possible

***The Thames** is now clean enough to swim in *It* was polluted for over a hundred years*

*The Thames **which** is now clean enough to swim in, was polluted for over a hundred years*

**1.32 'Whose' as the subject of a relative clause: people/things**

*Whose* can be used in place of possessive adjectives {*my your his her, etc* } [> 4.19] It remains unchanged whether it refers to masculine, feminine, singular or plural

**masculine**      *He is **the man whose** car was stolen*

**feminine**      *She is **the woman whose** car was stolen*

**plural masculine**      *They are **the men whose** cars were stolen*

**plural feminine**      *They are **the women whose** cars were stolen*

*Whose* can replace the possessive adjective *its*

*This is the house **whose** windows were broken*

## The complex sentence relative pronouns and clauses

However, this use of *whose* is often avoided by native speakers who regard *whose* as the genitive of the personal *who*. Instead of this sentence, a careful speaker might say

*This is the house where the windows were broken*

Where the context is formal, *of which* should be used, not *whose*

*It was an agreement the details of which could not be altered*

Or *of which the details could not be altered*

### 1.32.1 Typical defining relative clause with 'whose' as subject

*The millionaire has made a public appeal. His son ran away from home a week ago.*

*The millionaire whose son ran away from home a week ago has made a public appeal.*

### 1.32.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with 'whose' as subject

*Sally Smiles has resigned as director. Her cosmetics company has been in the news a great deal recently.*

*Sally Smiles, whose cosmetics company has been in the news a great deal recently, has resigned as director.*

## 1.33 Relative pronoun object of relative clause: people

*Who(m)* and *that* can be used in place of noun objects that refer to people, or in place of object pronouns (*me you him*, etc.) [ > 4.3] When they refer to an object, they are usually omitted, but only in **defining** clauses. When included, *whom* is commonly reduced to *who* in everyday speech. We never use an object pronoun and a relative pronoun together to refer to the object. Not *\*He is the man (that) I met him\**. *Who(m)* and *that* remain unchanged whether they refer to masculine, feminine, singular or plural.

**masculine** *He is the man who(m)/that I met on holiday.*

*He is the man I met on holiday.*

**feminine** *She is the woman who(m)/that I met on holiday.*

*She is the woman I met on holiday.*

**plural masculine** *They are the men who(m)/that I met on holiday.*

*They are the men I met on holiday.*

**plural feminine** *They are the women who(m)/that I met on holiday.*

*They are the women I met on holiday.*

### 1.33.1 Typical defining relative clause with ('who(m)/that') as object

When the reference is to a person or persons as the object of the verb, we often use *that*. Alternatively, we omit the relative pronoun to avoid the choice between *who* and *whom*.

*That energetic man works for the EEC. We met him on holiday.*

*That energetic man (who(m)/that) we met on holiday works for the EEC.*

### 1.33.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with 'who(m)' as object

*Who(m)* must be used in non-defining clauses; *that* is not possible.

*The author of 'Rebels' proved to be a well known journalist I met him at a party last week.*

*The author of 'Rebels', who(m) I met at a party last week, proved to be a well known journalist.*

### 1.34 Relative pronoun object of relative clause: things/animals

*That* and *which*, referring to things and animals, are interchangeable in the object position. However, both are commonly omitted, but only in **defining** clauses. We never use an object pronoun and a relative pronoun together to refer to the object: Not "*This is the photo (which) I took it*". *That* and *which* remain unchanged whether they refer to singular or plural:

**singular:**      *This is the photo that/which I took*

*This is the photo I took*

*This is the cat that/which I photographed*

*This is the cat I photographed*

**plural:**      *These are the photos that/which I took*

*These are the photos I took*

*These are the cats that/which I photographed*

*These are the cats I photographed*

#### 1.34.1 Typical defining relative clause with 'that' or 'which' as object

*The shed has begun to rot. We built it in the garden last year.*

*The shed (that/which) we built in the garden last year has begun to rot.*

#### 1.34.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with 'which' as object

*Which* must be used in non-defining clauses; *that* is not possible:

*The shed in our garden has lasted for a long time. My father built it many years ago.*

*The shed in our garden, which my father built many years ago, has lasted for a long time.*

### 1.35 Relative pronoun object of a preposition: people

When we wish to refer to a person, only *whom* (not *that*) can be used directly after a preposition. In this position, *whom* cannot be omitted and cannot be reduced to *who* or be replaced by *that*. This use is formal and rare in everyday speech:

*He is the man to whom I gave the money.*

The preposition can be moved to the end-position. If this happens, it is usual in speech to reduce *whom* to *who*; it is also possible to replace *who(m)* by *that*:

*She is the woman whom (or who, or that) I gave the money to.*

However, the most usual practice in informal style, when the preposition is in the end-position, is to drop the relative pronoun altogether, but only in **defining** clauses:

*They are the people I gave the money to.*

*There's hardly anybody he's afraid of.*

#### 1.35.1 Typical defining relative clause with a preposition

*That person is the manager I complained to him.*

*The person to whom I complained is the manager.*

*The person who(m)/that I complained to is the manager.*

*The person I complained to is the manager.*

**1.35.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with a preposition**

*Who(m)* must be used in non-defining clauses: *that* is not possible:

*The hotel manager refunded part of our bill I complained to him about the service*

*The hotel manager, to whom I complained (or who(m) I complained to) about the service, refunded part of our bill*

**1.36 Relative pronoun object of a preposition: things/animals**

When we wish to refer to things or animals, only *which* (not *that*) can be used directly after a preposition. When used in this way, *which* cannot be omitted. This use is formal and rare in speech:

*This is the pan in which I boiled the milk*

The preposition can be moved to the end-position. If this happens, it is possible to replace *which* by *that*:

*This is the pan that (or which) I boiled the milk in*

However, the relative is usually dropped altogether when the preposition is in the end-position, but only in **defining** clauses:

*This is the pan I boiled the milk in*

*These are the cats I gave the milk to*

**1.36.1 Typical defining relative clause with a preposition**

*The agency is bankrupt We bought our tickets from it*

*The agency from which we bought our tickets is bankrupt*

*The agency which/that we bought our tickets from is bankrupt*

*The agency we bought our tickets from is bankrupt*

**1.36.2 Typical non-defining relative clause with a preposition**

*Which* must be used in non-defining clauses; *that* is not possible:

*The Acme Travel Agency has opened four new branches Our company has been dealing with it for several years.*

*The Acme Travel Agency, with which our company has been dealing (or which our company has been dealing with) for several years, has opened four new branches*

**1.37 'Whose' + noun with a preposition**

*Whose* + noun can be used as the object of a preposition. The preposition may come before *whose* or at the end of the clause:

*He is the man from whose house the pictures were stolen*

*He is the man whose house the pictures were stolen from*

**1.37.1 Typical defining relative clause using 'whose' with a preposition**

*In 1980 he caught a serious illness He still suffers from its effects*

*In 1980 he caught a serious illness from whose effects he still suffers (or the effects of which he still suffers from).*

**1.37.2 Typical non-defining relative clause using 'whose' with a preposition**

*Mr Jason Matthews died last night A valuable Rembrandt was given to the nation from his collection of pictures*

*Mr Jason Matthews, from whose collection of pictures a valuable Rembrandt was given to the nation, died last night*



### 1.38 Relative clauses of time, place and reason

Defining and non-defining relative clauses of time, place and reason are possible in which *when*, *where* and *why* are used in place of relative pronouns. They can also replace words like *the time*, *the place* and *the reason*. Though we can say *the time when*, *the place where* and *the reason why*, we cannot say '*the way how*' [> 1.47.1]. Note that *when* follows only 'time' nouns, such as *day*, *occasion*, *season*; *where* follows only 'place' nouns, such as *house place*, *town*, *village*; *why* normally follows the noun *reason*.

- 1.38.1 Time defining:** 1979 was **the year (in which)** my son was born  
1979 was **(the year) when** my son was born
- non-defining:** The summer of 1969, **the year (in which)** men first set foot on the moon, will never be forgotten  
The summer of 1969, **(the year) when** men first set foot on the moon, will never be forgotten.
- 1.38.2 Place defining:** This is **the place in which** I grew up  
This is **the place which** I grew up in  
This is **the place** I grew up in  
This is **(the place) where** I grew up
- non-defining:** **The Tower of London, in which** so many people lost their lives, is now a tourist attraction  
**The Tower of London, (the place) where** so many people lost their lives, is now a tourist attraction
- 1.38.3 Reason defining:** That's **the reason (for which)** he dislikes me  
That's **(the reason) why** he dislikes me
- non-defining:** **My success in business, (the reason) for which** he dislikes me, has been due to hard work  
**My success in business, the reason why** he dislikes me, has been due to hard work (The reason cannot be omitted before *why*.)
- 1.38.4 ('That') in place of 'when', 'where', 'why'**  
That is possible (but optional) in place of *when*, *where* and *why* but only in defining clauses:  
I still remember the summer **(that)** we had the big drought ((That) can be replaced by *when* or *during which*.)  
I don't know any place **(that)** you can get a better exchange rate ((That) can be replaced by *where* or *at which*.)  
That wasn't the reason **(that)** he lied to you ((That) can be replaced by *why* or *for which*.)  
For relatives after *it* [> 4.14].

### 1.39 Relative clauses abbreviated by 'apposition'

We can place two noun phrases side-by-side, separating the phrases by commas, so that the second adds information to the first. We can

then say that the noun phrases are 'in apposition' [> 3.30]. This is more common in journalism than in speech. A relative clause can sometimes be replaced by a noun phrase in this way:

**My neighbour Mr Watkins** never misses the opportunity to tell me the latest news (defining, without commas)

**Mr Watkins, a neighbour of mine,** never misses the opportunity to tell me the latest news (non-defining, with commas)  
(= Mr Watkins, who is a neighbour of mine, ...)

#### 1.40 'That' after 'all', etc. and superlatives

*That* (Not '*which*') is normally used after words like *all any anything everything, a few* and *the only one* when they do not refer to people. Clauses of this kind are always defining:

**All that** remains for me to do is to say goodbye

**Everything that** can be done has been done

I'll do **anything (that)** I can

*Who* is used after *all, any* and *a few* when they refer to people:

God bless this ship and **all who** sail in her [> 5.24]

*That* is also common after superlatives. It is optional when it refers to the object [> 6.28.1]:

It's **the silliest argument (that)** I've ever heard

but not optional when it refers to the subject:

Bach's the greatest composer **that's (or who's)** ever lived.

#### 1.41 'Of' + relative referring to number/quantity

*Of* can be used before *whom* and *which* in non-defining clauses to refer to number or quantity after numbers and words like the following:

*a few several some, any, many much (of which), the majority, most all, none either/neither the largest/the smallest, the oldest/the youngest; a number half a quarter*

Both players **neither of whom** reached the final, played well

The treasure **some of which** has been recovered has been sent to the British Museum

#### 1.42 'Which' in place of a clause

*Which* can be used to refer to a whole clause, not just one word. In such cases, it can be replaced by *and this* or *and that*:

She married Joe **which** (= **and this/that**) surprised everyone

*Which*, in the sense of *this* or *that*, can also be used in expressions **such as in which case at which point, on which occasion, which** can refer back to a complete clause:

I may have to work late, **in which case** I'll telephone

The speaker paused to examine his notes, **at which point** a loud crash was heard

*Which*, in the sense of *this* or *that*, can replace a whole sentence and, in informal style, can even begin a sentence:

He was fined £500 **Which** we all thought served him right

## 1 The sentence

**1.43 Reference in relative clauses**

A relative clause follows the person or thing it refers to as closely as possible to avoid ambiguity Compare

*I cut out **the advertisement which you wanted** in yesterday's paper* (an unambiguous reference to the advertisement)

*I cut out **the advertisement** in yesterday's **paper which you wanted*** (which could refer either to the advertisement or the paper)

A sentence can contain more than one relative

*It's the only building (**which**) I've ever seen **which** is made entirely of glass* (The first *which* would normally be omitted)

**The complex sentence: adverbial clauses****1.44 How to identify an adverbial clause**

**Compare**

*I **try hard**, **but** I can never remember people's names*

***However hard I try** I can never remember people's names*

*Hard* is an adverb, *however hard I try* is an adverbial (or adverb) clause it is telling us something about (or 'modifying') *can never remember*. Adverbs can often be identified by asking and answering the questions *When? Where? How? Why?*, etc [ > 7.2] and adverbial clauses can be identified in the same way

<b>time</b>	<i>Tell him <b>as soon as he arrives</b></i>	<b>(When?)</b>
<b>place</b>	<i>You can sit <b>where you like</b></i>	<b>(Where?)</b>
<b>manner</b>	<i>He spoke <b>as if he meant business</b></i>	<b>(How?)</b>
<b>reason</b>	<i>He went to bed <b>because he felt ill</b></i>	<b>(Why?)</b>

**1.45 Adverbial clauses of time****1.45.1 Conjunctions in adverbial clauses of time**

These clauses broadly answer the question *When?* and can be introduced by the following conjunctions *when after as as long as as soon as before by the time (that) directly during the time (that) immediately the moment (that) now (that) once since until/till whenever*, and *while*. We generally use a comma when the adverbial clause comes first

*You didn't look very well **when you got up this morning***

***After she got married** Madeleine changed completely*

*I pulled a muscle **as I was lifting a heavy suitcase***

*You can keep these records **as long as you like*** [compare *as long as* in conditional sentences > 14.21]

***Once you've seen one penguin** you've seen them all*

*He hasn't stopped complaining **since he got back from his***

***holidays*** [compare *since* in clauses of reason > 1.48]

*We always have to wait **till/until the last customer has left***

**1.45.2 Tenses in adverbial clauses of time: 'no future after temporals'**

When the time clause refers to the future, we normally use the simple present after *after as soon as before by the time directly immediately*

*the moment till until* and *when* where we might expect a simple future, or we use the present perfect where we might expect the future perfect. These two tenses are often interchangeable after temporal conjunctions

*The Owens will move to a new flat **when their baby is born** (or **has been born**)*

The present perfect is often used after *once* and *now that*

**Once** (= when) **we have decorated the house we can move in**  
**Now that we have decorated the house** (action completed) **we can move in**

#### 1.45.3 'Will' after 'when'

Though we do not normally use the future in time clauses *will* can be used after *when* in noun clauses [> 1.24.2]

*The hotel receptionist wants to know **when we will be checking out tomorrow morning***

*When* meaning 'and then' can be followed by present or future

*I shall be on holiday till the end of September **when I return** (or **when I shall return**) to London*

#### 1.46 Adverbial clauses of place

These clauses answer the question *Where?* and can be introduced by the conjunctions *where wherever anywhere* and *everywhere*

Adverbial clauses of place normally come *after* the main clause

*You can't camp **where/wherever/anywhere you like these days***

*Anywhere everywhere* and *wherever* (but not usually *where*) can begin a sentence, depending on the emphasis we wish to make

**Everywhere Jenny goes she's mistaken for Princess Diana**

*Where* generally refers to a definite but unspecified place [> 1.38]

*The church was built **where there had once been a Roman temple***

*Wherever anywhere* and *everywhere* suggest 'any place'

*With a special tram ticket you can travel **wherever/anywhere/ everywhere you like** in Europe for just over £100*

#### 1.47 Adverbial clauses of manner

##### 1.47.1 'As' [> App 25.25] and 'in the way (that)'

These clauses answer the question *How?* and can be introduced by the conjunction *as*. Adverbial clauses of manner normally come after the main clause

*Type this again **as I showed you a moment ago** (i.e. in the way I showed you)*

*This fish isn't cooked **as I like it** (i.e. in the way I like it)*

*How* and *the way* can be used colloquially in place of *as*

*This steak is cooked just **how/the way** I like it*

Clauses of manner can also express comparison when they are introduced by expressions like *(in) the way (in) the way that the way in which (in) the same way (in) the same way as*

*She's behaving **(in) the same way her elder sister used to***

**1.47.2 'As if and as though' after 'be', 'seem', etc.**

Adverbial clauses of manner can also be introduced by the conjunctions *as if* and *as though* after the verbs *be act appear behave feel look seem smell sound taste*

*I feel as if/as though I'm floating on air*

Note also constructions with *It*

*It sounds as if/as though the situation will get worse*

*It feels as if/as though it's going to rain* (i.e. I feel that this is going to happen)

*As if as though* can be used after any verbs describing behaviour

*Lillian was trembling as if/as though she had seen a ghost*

*She acted as if she were mad* [> 11.75.1n2]

**1.48 Adverbial clauses of reason**

**1.48.1 Conjunctions in adverbial clauses of reason**

These clauses broadly answer the question *Why?* and can be introduced by the following conjunctions *because as seeing (that)* and *since*

*As/Because/Since there was very little support the strike was not successful* [compare *since* in time clauses > 1.45.1]

*I'm afraid we don't stock refills for pens like yours because there's little demand for them*

**1.48.2 The relative position of clauses of reason and main clauses**

As a general rule, whatever we want to emphasize (reason or main clause) comes at the end

We often begin sentences with *as* or *since* because the reasons they refer to may be known to the person spoken to and therefore do not need to be emphasized

*As/Since you can't type the letter yourself you'll have to ask Susan to do it for you*

*Because* generally follows the main clause to emphasize a reason which is probably not known to the person spoken to [see *for* > 1.20.5]

*Jim's trying to find a place of his own because he wants to feel independent*

*Because* can always be used in place of *as since* and *for* to give a reason or reasons, but these conjunctions cannot always be used in place of *because*

**1.49 Adverbial clauses of condition** [> chapter 14]

These clauses can be introduced by conjunctions such as *assuming (that) if on condition (that) provided (that) providing (that) so/as long as* and *unless*

**1.50 Adverbial clauses of concession**

Adverbial clauses of concession introduce an element of contrast into a sentence and are sometimes called **contrast clauses**. They are introduced by the following conjunctions *although considering (that) though even though even if much as while whereas however*

## The complex sentence adverbial clauses

*much/badly/good etc no matter how, etc , no matter how much, etc*  
*Even though* is probably more usual than *though/although* in speech  
***Although/Though/Even though I felt sorry for him I was secretly pleased that he was having difficulties***  
*We intend to go to India even if air fares go up again between now and the summer*  
***Much as I'd like to help there isn't a lot I can do***  
***While I disapprove of what you say I would defend to the death your right to say it***

*However* combines with numerous adjectives and adverbs  
***However far it is I intend to drive there tonight***

*No matter* can combine with question words (*who when where, etc*) to introduce clauses of concession

***No matter where you go you can't escape from yourself***  
Compounds with *-ever* can introduce clauses of concession in the same way as *No matter*

***Whatever I say I seem to say the wrong thing (No matter what )***

We can use *may* in formal style in place of the present after all conjunctions introducing clauses of concession

***However brilliant you are/may be you can't know everything***  
***Whatever you think/may think I'm going ahead with my plans***

As and *though* to mean 'regardless of the degree to which' can be used after some adjectives, adverbs and verbs to introduce clauses of concession in formal style

***Unlikely as it sounds/may sound what I'm telling you is true*** (i.e. Though it sounds/may sound unlikely )  
***Beautiful though the necklace was we thought it was over-priced so we didn't buy it*** (i.e. Though the necklace was beautiful )  
***Try as he might he couldn't solve the problem*** (i.e. Though he tried he couldn't )

### 1.51 Adverbial clauses of purpose

#### 1.51.1 Conjunctions in adverbial clauses of purpose

These clauses answer the questions *What for?* and *For what purpose?* and can be introduced by the following conjunctions *so that in order that in case lest* and *for fear (that)*

*So as to* and *in order to* also convey the idea of purpose, but they are variations on the to-infinitive, not conjunctions. They do not introduce a group of words containing a finite verb [ > 1.21n2]. Constructions with *to so as to* and *in order to* are much simpler than those with *that* and are generally preferred [ > 16.12.1]

#### 1.51.2 Sequence of verb forms in adverbial clauses of purpose

When the verb in the main clause is in the present, present perfect or future, *so that* and *in order that* can be followed by *may can* or *will*. *So that* is more common than *in order that*

*I've arrived early so that/in order that I may/can/will get a good view of the procession*

## 1 The sentence

So *that* and *in order that* may also be followed by the present:

*Let us spend a few moments in silence **so that/in order that** we remember those who died to preserve our freedom*

When the verb in the main clause is in the simple past, the past progressive, or the past perfect, *so that* and *in order that* are followed by *should could might or would*:

*I arrived early **so that/in order that** I should/could/might/would get a good view of the procession*

Note the negative after *so that* and *in order that*:

*I arrived early **so that/in order that** I might not miss anything*  
(*Should not* and *would not* would be possible, but not *could not*)

Infinitive constructions with *not to* so as *not to* and *in order not to* are more natural [ > 16.12.1]:

*I arrived early **so as not to** miss anything*  
*They must have worn gloves **in order not to** leave any fingerprints*

### 1.51.3 'In case', 'lest' and 'for fear'

*Should might* or the present must be used after *in case* when there is a future reference:

*We've installed an extinguisher next to the cooker **in case there is ever (there should/might ever be)** a fire*  
*I'm taking a raincoat with me **in case I need it**.*

*Should* is optional after (the relatively rare) *lest*:

*We have a memorial service every year **lest we (should) forget** our debt to those who died in battle* (i.e. *so that/in order that* we might not forget...)

The subjunctive [ > 11.75.1n2] could also be used after *lest*:

*I avoided mentioning the subject **lest he be offended***  
*I asked them to ring first **lest we were out***

*For fear* is usually followed by *might*, but the same idea can be expressed more easily with *in case* + past:

*I bought the car at once **for fear (that) he might change** his mind*  
*I bought the car at once **in case he changed** his mind*

## 1.52 Adverbial clauses of result

### 1.52.1 Conjunctions and sequence of verb forms in clauses of result

These clauses describe **consequences**. They can be introduced by *that* after *so* + adjective to answer, e.g. *How (quick) ?* :

*His reactions are **so quick (that) no one can match him***

and by *that* after *so* + adverb to answer, e.g. *How (quickly) ?* :

*He reacts **so quickly (that) no one can match him***

They can also be introduced by *that* after *such* (a) + noun (or adjective + noun) to answer questions like *What's (he) like?*:

*He is **such a marvellous joker (that) you can't help laughing***

*They are **such wonderful players (that) no one can beat them***

*When that* is omitted informally, a comma is sometimes used:

*His reactions are so quick() no one can match him*

*Such* + obligatory *that* can be used in formal English as follows:

*His reactions are **such that no one can match him***

Result clauses with and without *that* can also be used after *so + much many, few, little, etc.*:

*There was **so much** to lose (**that**) **we couldn't take any risks***

They can also be used after *such a lot of* :

*There was **such a lot of** rain (**that**) **we couldn't go out***

*So* and *such* (heavily stressed in speech) can be used without *that*, so a *that*-clause may be strongly implied:

*He was **so** angry' (i.e. that there were consequences)*

*The children made **such** a mess! (i.e. that there were consequences)*

In colloquial English *that* is sometimes heard in place of *so*:

*It was **that** cold, (**that**) I could hardly get to sleep*

*The roads were **that** icy! (i.e. that there were consequences)*

#### 1.52.2 Clauses of purpose compared with clauses of result

In a purpose clause we can always replace *so that* by *in order that* which we cannot do in a result clause:

*We arrived early **so that** (or **in order that**) **we could/should/might/would get good seats** (i.e. we arrived early for that purpose)*

*We arrived early **so (that) we got good seats** (i.e. we got good seats as a result of arriving early)*

Or: *We arrived **so early that we got good seats***

A further difference is that a result clause always follows the main clause, whereas a purpose clause can precede the main clause:

***So that I shouldn't worry** he phoned me on arrival*

In the spoken language there are differences in intonation between *so that* (purpose) and *so that* (result).

#### 1.53 Adverbial clauses of comparison [compare > 4.7.3, 6.27.1]

These clauses often answer *How?* followed by or implying *in relation to* or *compared with* (*How quick is he in relation to/compared with ?*).

They involve the use of *as + adjective + as* (*as quick as*), *as + adverb + as* (*as quickly as*) *not so/as as -er than, more than, less than 'the. the*. When continuing with the same verb in the same tense, we can omit the second verb, so the clause of comparison is implied:

*He is as quick in answering **as his sister (is)***

*He answers as quickly **as his sister (does)***

*He is not so/as quick in answering **as his sister (is)***

*His sister is quicker **than he (is)***

*He moves more slowly **than his sister (does)***

***The more you practise the better you get***

There are instances when we can drop both subject and verb:

*When I spoke to him on the phone this morning, he was more agreeable **than** (he was) **last night***

Adverbial clauses of comparison can involve the use of *as* (or *so*) *much + noun + as* and *as many + noun + as*. Words like *half, nearly* and *nothing like* will often combine with *as* or *so*:

*He didn't sell **half as/so many** videos **as he thought he would***

Words like *just, twice/ten times* will combine only with *as*:

*You've made **just as** (Not \*so\*) many mistakes **as I have***



### 1.54 Limiting clauses

A main clause can be qualified or limited by clauses introduced by *in that*, *in so far as* and *inasmuch as*

*The demonstration was fairly peaceful **in that/in so far as there were only one or two clashes with the police***

*Inasmuch as* can be used like *in so far as* but is formal and rare

### 1.55 Abbreviated adverbial clauses

Most kinds of clauses can be abbreviated by deleting the subject and the verb *be* after the conjunction

**time** *While (she was) **at college** Delia wrote a novel*  
**place** *Where (it is) **necessary** improvements will be made*  
**manner** *He acted **as if** (he was) **certain** of success*  
**condition** *If (it is) **possible** please let me know by this evening*  
**concession** *Though (he was) **exhausted** he went to bed very late*

Clauses of reason cannot be abbreviated in this way. However, they can often be replaced by participle constructions. Such constructions also have the effect of shortening clauses [ > 1.58]

## The complex sentence: participle constructions

### 1.56 Form of participles [compare > 16.41]

	present	perfect	past
<b>active</b>	<i>finding</i>	<i>having found</i>	-
<b>passive</b>	<i>being found</i>	<i>having been found</i>	<i>found</i>

### 1.57 Joining sentences with participles

Simple sentences can be combined into one sentence that contains a main clause + a participle or an infinitive construction [ > 1.58, 16.12.1]  
 Participle constructions are generally more typical of formal style than of informal, though they can easily occur in both

**simple sentences** *He walked out of the room. He slammed the door behind him.*  
**compound sentence** *He **walked** out of the room and slammed the door behind him.*  
**participle construction** *He **walked** out of the room slamming the door behind him.*

**simple sentences** *You want to order a vehicle. You have to pay a deposit.*  
**complex sentence** ***If** you **want** to order a vehicle you have to pay a deposit.*  
**infinitive construction** ***To** order a vehicle you have to pay a deposit.*  
**participle construction** *When ordering a vehicle you have to pay a deposit.*

Participle constructions can come before or after the main clause, depending on the emphasis we wish to make

***Making sure*** I had the right number I phoned again  
Or 'I phoned again ***making sure*** I had the right number

More than one participle construction is possible in a sentence  
After ***looking up*** their number in the phone book and ***making sure*** I had got it right I phoned again

#### 1.58 Present participles in place of clauses

##### 1.58.1 Participle constructions in place of co-ordinate clauses

The co-ordinating conjunction *and* must be dropped  
*She lay awake all night **and recalled** the events of the day*  
*She lay awake all night **recalling** the events of the day*

##### 1.58.2 Present participle constructions in place of clauses of time

Present participles can be used after the time conjunctions *after*, *before*, *since*, *when* and *while*. They cannot be used after the conjunctions *as*, *as soon as*, *directly*, *until*, etc.  
***Since I phoned you*** this morning I have changed my plans  
***Since phoning you*** this morning I have changed my plans  
We cannot use this construction when *since* = *because* [> 1.48]

*On* and *when* can be used to mean 'when' and 'while'  
***On finding*** the front door open I became suspicious  
(i.e. When/At the moment when I found )  
***In/While trying*** to open the can I cut my hand  
(i.e. During the time when I was trying )

##### 1.58.3 Present participle constructions in place of clauses of reason

*As I **was** anxious to please him I bought him a nice present*  
***Being*** anxious to please him I bought him a nice present

##### 1.58.4 Present participle constructions in place of conditionals

The present participle can be used after *if* and *unless*  
***If you are travelling*** north you must change at Leeds  
***If travelling*** north you must change at Leeds  
***Unless you pay*** by credit card please pay in cash  
***Unless paying*** by credit card please pay in cash

##### 1.58.5 Present participles in place of clauses of concession

The present participle can be used after the conjunctions *although*, *even though*, *though* and *while*  
***While he admitted*** that he had received the stolen jewellery he denied having taken part in the robbery  
***While admitting*** that he had received the stolen jewellery he denied having taken part in the robbery

##### 1.58.6 Present participle constructions in place of relative clauses

The present participle can be used in place of defining [> 1.26] clauses in the simple present or present progressive after relative pronouns  
***The train which is arriving*** at Platform 8 is the 17.50 from Crewe  
***The train arriving*** at Platform 8 is the 17.50 from Crewe

### 1.59 Perfect participle constructions

Perfect participle constructions can be used in place of clauses in the present perfect and past perfect and the simple past. The action described in the perfect participle construction has always taken place before the action described in the main clause.

**active** ***We have invited him** here to speak so we'd better go to his lecture*  
***Having invited him** here to speak we'd better go to his lecture*  
**passive** ***I have been made** redundant so I'm going abroad*  
***Having been made** redundant I'm going abroad*

### 1.60 Participle constructions with 'being' and 'having been'

The present participle form of be (*being*) can be used in place of the finite forms *is/are/was/were*, the perfect participle form *leaving/been* can be used in place of the finite forms *have been* and *had been*. These participle constructions are rare in everyday speech and only likely to occur in formal writing.

***He is so ill** he can't go back to work yet*  
***Being so ill** he can't go back to work yet*  
***He was so ill** he couldn't go back to work for a month*  
***Being so ill** he couldn't go back to work for a month*  
***He has (or had) been ill** for a very long time so he needs/needed more time to recover before he can/could go back to work*  
***Having been ill** for a very long time he needs/needed more time to recover before he can/could go back to work*  
 These forms occur in passive constructions [ > 12.2]

Participle constructions with *it* and *there* occur in formal style

***It being a bank holiday** all the shops were shut (i.e. As it was )*  
***There being no further business** I declare the meeting closed*  
 (As there is no further business, I declare the meeting closed )  
 Participle constructions are common after *with/without* [ > App 25.36]  
***The crowds cheered** The royal party drove to the palace*  
***With the crowds cheering** the royal party drove to the palace*  
***They debated for hours** No decision was taken*  
***They debated for hours without a decision being taken***

### 1.61 Avoiding ambiguity with present participle constructions

The participle must relate to the subject of both verbs

***Reading my newspaper, I** heard the doorbell ring*  
 ( =/ was reading my newspaper and / heard the doorbell ring )

Now compare *"Reading my newspaper, the doorbell rang "*\*

This sentence suggests that the doorbell is the subject and *it* was reading my newspaper. *Reading* is here called an 'unrelated participle' and the sentence is unacceptable. However, this rule does not apply to a number of fixed phrases using 'unrelated participles', e.g. *broadly/ generally/strictly speaking considering judging supposing taking everything into account*

The complex sentence participle constructions

**Strictly speaking, you ought to sign the visitors book before entering the club** (you are not strictly speaking)

**Judging from past performances he is not likely to do very well in his exams** (he is not judging)

When the participle construction follows the object it must be related to the object and then the sentence is acceptable

*I found **him lying on the floor*** (= He was lying on the floor)

## 1.62 Past participle constructions in place of clauses

Past participle constructions are more likely to occur in formal and literary style than in conversation

### 1.62.1 Past participle constructions in place of the passive

The past participle can be used *without* any conjunction in front of it in place of the passive

**When it was viewed from a distance** the island of Nepenthe looked like a cloud

**Viewed from a distance** the island of Nepenthe looked like a cloud

### 1.62.2 Past participle constructions in place of adverbial clauses

The past participle can also be used *with* a conjunction in front of it to replace a passive

**Although it was built** before the war the engine is still in perfect order

**Although built** before the war the engine is still in perfect order

**If you are accepted** for this post you will be informed by May 1st

**If accepted** for this post you will be informed by May 1st

**Unless it is changed** this law will make life difficult for farmers

**Unless changed** this law will make life difficult for farmers

*After before since on* and *in* cannot be followed directly by a past participle they require *being* + past participle

**After/When we were informed** the flight would be delayed we made other arrangements

**After/On being informed** the flight would be delayed we made other arrangements

### 1.62.3 Past participle constructions in place of relative clauses

Past participle constructions can be used in place of defining clauses [ $> 1.26$ ] deleting *which* + *be*

**The system which is used** in this school is very successful

**The system used** in this school is very successful

## 1.63 Avoiding ambiguity with past participle constructions

Same subject, therefore acceptable [compare  $> 1.61$ ]

**Seated in the presidential car, the President** waved to the crowd

Unrelated, therefore unacceptable

'**Seated in the presidential car** the crowd waved to the President '

Past participle related to the object

We preferred **the house painted white**

(Not 'Painted white, we preferred')

## One-word nouns

### 2.1 What a noun is and what it does

A noun tells us what someone or something is called. For example, a noun can be the name of a person (*John*), a job title (*doctor*), the name of a thing (*radio*), the name of a place (*London*), the name of a quality (*courage*), or the name of an action (*laughter/laughing*). Nouns are the names we give to people, things, places, etc. in order to identify them. Many nouns are used after a determiner, e.g. *a the this* [ > 3.1] and often combine with other words to form a **noun phrase** e.g. *the man the man next door that tall building the old broom in the cupboard*. Nouns and noun phrases answer the questions *Who?* or *What?* and may be

- the subject of a verb [ > 1.4]  
***Our agent in Cairo** sent a telex this morning*
- the direct object of a verb [ > 1.9]  
*Frank sent **an urgent telex** from Cairo this morning*
- the indirect object of a verb [ > 1.9]  
*Frank sent **his boss** a telex*
- the object of a preposition [ > 8.1]  
*I read about it in **the paper***
- the complement of *be* or a related verb like *seem* [ > 1.9]  
*Jane Forbes is **our guest***
- used 'in apposition' [ > 1.39, 3.30]  
***Laura Myers, a BBC reporter** asked for an interview*
- used when we speak directly to somebody  
***Caroline** shut that window will you please?*

### 2.2 Noun endings

Some words function only as nouns (*desk*), others function as nouns or verbs (*work*), while others function as nouns or adjectives (*cold*). We cannot identify such words as nouns from their **endings** or **suffixes**. However, many nouns which are related to verbs or adjectives have characteristic endings. For example, *-er*, added to a verb like *play*, gives us the noun *player*, *-ity*, added to the adjective *active*, gives us the noun *activity*. There are no easy rules to tell us which endings to use to make nouns. A dictionary can provide this kind of information, but [ > App 2].

### 2.3 Noun/verb contrasts

Some words can be either nouns or verbs. We can often tell the difference from the way they are stressed and pronounced.

## Compound nouns

### 2.3.1 Nouns and verbs distinguished by stress

eg *discount entrance export import object* [> App 3.1]

When the stress is on the first syllable, the word is a noun, when the stress is on the second syllable, it is a verb

The meanings are generally related

**noun** *We have finished Book 1 We have made good 'progress*

**verb** *We are now ready to pro'gress to Book 2*

but can be different

**noun** *My son s 'conduct at school hasn t been very good*

**verb** *Mahler used to con'duct the Vienna Philharmonic*

### 2.3.2 Nouns distinguished by pronunciation:

/s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/

When the ending is pronounced with no voice, it is a noun, when it is pronounced 'hard', it is a verb. Sometimes this difference is reflected in the spelling

/s/ and /z/ *abuse/abuse advice/advice house/house use/use*

/f/ and /v/ *belief/believe proof/prove shelf/shelve*

/θ/, /ð/ *cloth/clothe teeth/teethe*

Exceptions /s/ only in *practice (noun)/practise (verb)* and *licence (noun)/license (verb)*

And note words like *associate graduate* and *estimate* where the pronunciation of the noun is different from that of the verb

*I m not a university graduate /grædʒə'tæt/ yet*

*I hope to graduate /grædʒə'teɪ/ next summer*

### 2.3.3 Nouns and verbs with the same spelling and pronunciation

e g *answer change dream end hope offer trouble* [> App 3.2]

## Compound nouns

### 2.4 Compound nouns

Many nouns in English are formed from two parts (*classroom!*) or, less commonly, three or more (*son-in-law stick in the mud*). Sometimes compounds are spelt with a hyphen, sometimes not [> 2.11]. They are usually pronounced with the stress on the first syllable, but there are exceptions noted below

### 2.5 Single-word compound nouns

There are many words which we no longer think of as compounds at all, even though they are clearly made up of two words

e g *a 'cupboard a 'raincoat a 'saucepan the 'seaside a 'typewriter*

### 2.6 Nouns formed with adjective + noun

e g *a 'greenhouse a 'heavyweight 'longhand a 'redhead*

Note the difference in meaning when these words are rearranged as adjective + noun

*a 'heavyweight (= a boxer)*

*a 'heavy 'weight (= a weight that is heavy)*

## 2 Nouns

### 2.7 Nouns formed with gerund + noun

e g 'drinking water a 'frying pan a 'walking stick [> 2.11n3]

The meaning is 'something which is used for doing something'

e g a 'frying pan (hyphen optional, = a pan that is used for frying)

Compare other *ing* + noun combinations which are not compound nouns and where the *-ing* form is a participle used as an adjective. These combinations are not 'fixed', are not spelt with a hyphen, and are stressed in both parts 'boiling 'water (= water that is boiling) [> 6.2, 6.3.1 6.14 16.38 16.39.3]

### 2.8 Nouns formed with noun + gerund

e g 'horse-riding 'sight seeing 'sunbathing [> 2 11.n.3]

Here the meaning is 'the action of ' horse-riding (= the action of riding a horse)

### 2.9 Nouns formed with adverb particles

These compound nouns are combinations of verbs and adverb particles e g 'breakdown 'income 'make up [> Apps 31.35]

### 2.10 Nouns formed with noun + noun

When two nouns are used together to form a compound noun, the first noun (**noun modifier**) usually functions like an adjective and is nearly always in the singular. This is the largest category of compound nouns and it can be considered under several headings

#### 2.10.1 Compound nouns in place of phrases with 'of

e g a 'car key a 'chair leg a 'door knob a 'typewriter key

When we want to say that one (non-living) thing is part of another, we can use *of the key of the car* [> 2.47]. However, this can sound rather emphatic so we often use a compound noun instead (e g a car key) for things which are closely associated

#### 2.10.2 Compound nouns which refer to place

The first word refers to a place and the second word to something that is in that place. Both words are closely associated and are stressed but not hyphenated

e g the 'bank 'safe a 'personal com'puter a 'kitchen 'sink

Also note place names 'London 'Airport 'Moscow 'Stadium, etc

#### 2.10.3 Compound nouns which refer to streets and roads

Where the word *street* occurs, the stress is on the first syllable e g 'Baker Street 'Oxford Street. Where the word *road* occurs, both parts are stressed e g 'Canterbury 'Road the 'Oxford 'road. Compound place names are not hyphenated

#### 2.10.4 Compound nouns which tell us about purpose [compare > 2.7]

e g a 'bookcase a 'can opener a 'meeting point a 'sheep dog

The second word suggests a use relating to the first (hyphen normally optional). A can opener is 'a device for opening cans'

## Compound nouns

### 2.10.5 Compound nouns which tell us about materials and substances

e g a 'cotton 'blouse a 'gold 'watch a 'plastic 'raincoat

The first word refers to a substance or material, the second to something made of that substance or material [> 6.13]

### 2.10.6 Compound nouns which 'classify types'

e g a 'horror film a 'headlamp a 'seat belt

The first word answers the question *What kind of* ? These combinations can be extended to people and the things they do, as in a 'bookseller a 'factory worker a 'taxi driver

Note the difference between an 'English teacher (i.e. one who teaches English) and an English 'teacher (i.e. one who is English) Other compounds refer to pieces of apparatus and what operates them, as in a 'gas boiler a 'pressure cooker a 'vacuum cleaner

Note the many combinations with shop a 'flower shop a 'shoe shop, etc For combinations like 'butchers (shop) [> 2.51.3, 20.4]

### 2.10.7 Compound nouns which refer to 'containers'

e g a 'biscuit tin a 'coffee cup a 'teapot a 'sugar bowl

The second item is designed to contain the first [> 2.18.2]

### 2.10.8 Compound nouns which relate to time

A number of combinations relate specifically to the time at which an activity takes place or to its duration e.g. 'afternoon 'tea 'morning 'coffee the 'Sunday 'lunch a 'two-hour 'walk **Also note other nouns relating to time** an 'evening 'dress a 'night 'nurse

### 2.10.9 Compound nouns formed with 'self', 'man', 'woman' and 'person'

**self-** (stress on some part of the second word)

eg self-'consciousness self-con'trol self den'ial self res'pect

**man/woman** (stress on first word)

e g an 'airman a 'fireman a 'gentleman/woman a 'man-eater a 'man-hour a 'horseman/woman a 'policeman/woman a 'workman

Some people replace *man* by *person* in a few nouns when the reference is to either sex a chairperson a salesperson [> 2.40.4]

### 2.10.10 Proper nouns with two or more parts

eg a 'Ford 'car an 'IBM com'puter 'Longman 'Books 'Shell 'Oil a 'North Sea 'oil rig a/the 'Tate 'Gallery Exhibition

## 2.11 A note on hyphens

There are no precise rules, so the following are brief guidelines

- 1 When two short nouns are joined together, they form one word without a hyphen (a *teacup*) We do not join two short nouns if this leads to problems of recognition *bus stop* (Not "*busstop*")
- 2 Hyphens are often used for verb + particle combinations (*make up*) [> App 31.35] and *self* combinations (*self-respect*)
- 3 When a compound is accepted as a single word (e.g. it has an entry in a dictionary) the tendency is to write it as one word (*sunbathing*) In other cases, the use of the hyphen is at the discretion of the writer (*writing paper* or *writing paper*), but the tendency is to avoid hyphens where possible



## Countable and uncountable nouns

### 2.12 Types of nouns

---

	proper	<i>India</i>	
countable noun			concrete <i>a book</i>
			abstract <i>an idea</i>
	common		concrete <i>clothing</i>
		uncountable	abstract <i>courage</i>

### 2.13 Proper nouns and common nouns

All nouns fall into one of two classes They may be either **proper nouns** or **common nouns**

#### 2.13.1 Proper nouns

A proper noun (sometimes called a 'proper name') is used for a particular person, place, thing or idea which is, or is imagined to be unique It is generally spelt with a capital letter Articles are not normally used in front of proper nouns, but [> 3.9.4 3.31] Proper nouns include for example

Personal names (with or without titles) *Andrew Andrew Smith*  
*Mr Andrew Smith President Kennedy*  
 Forms of address *Mum Dad Auntie Uncle Fred*  
 Geographical names *Asia Berkshire India Wisconsin*  
 Place names *Madison Avenue Regent Street*  
 Months, days of the e g *April Monday Easter Christmas*  
 week festivals and Seasons are usually spelt with a small  
 seasons [> Apps 24 48] letter but sometimes with a capital  
*spring or Spring*

For other names [> 3.22 3.27 3.31]

First names commonly used in other languages often have their English equivalents (e g *Charles* for Carlos, Karl, etc ) Well-known foreign place names are normally anglicized e g *Cologne* for Koln, *Prague* for Praha *Rome* for Roma, *Vienna* for Wien

#### 2.13.2 Common nouns

Any noun that is not the name of a particular person, place, thing or idea is a common noun We can use *a/an the* or the zero article in front of common nouns [> Chapter 3]

### 2.14 How to identify countable and uncountable nouns

All common nouns fall into one of two sub-classes they may be either **countable nouns** (sometimes known as **unit** or **count** nouns) or **uncountable nouns** (sometimes known as **mass** or **non-count** nouns) The distinction between countable and uncountable nouns is

fundamental in English, for only by distinguishing between the two can we understand when to use singular or plural forms and when to use the indefinite, definite and zero articles *a/an the* and 0 [> 3.2-3] or the appropriate quantifier *a few much many*, etc [> 3.1,5.1]

Unfortunately, we cannot always rely on common sense (using the idea of counting as a guide) to tell us when a noun is countable or uncountable. For example, the noun *information* is uncountable in English, but its equivalent in another language may refer to an item or items of information and will therefore be countable [> 2.17]

*Experience* is uncountable, but we can refer to *an experience* to mean an event which contributes to *experience*

*They want someone with **experience** for this job*

*I had **a strange experience** the other day*

Many nouns which are normally uncountable can be used as countables in certain contexts [> 2.16.3]. This suggests that strict classifications of nouns as countable or uncountable are in many cases unreliable. It would be better to think in terms of countable and uncountable *uses* of nouns. For detailed information about individual nouns, consult a good dictionary.

#### 2.14.1 Countable nouns

If a noun is countable

- we can use *a/an* in front of it *a book **an** envelope*
- it has a plural and can be used in the question *How many?*  
***How many** stamps/envelopes? - Four stamps/envelopes*
- we can use numbers ***one** stamp **two** stamps*

#### 2.14.2 Uncountable nouns

If a noun is uncountable

- we do not normally use *a/an* in front of it ***Sugar** is expensive*
- it does not normally have a plural and it can be used in the question *How much?* ***How much** meat/oil? - A lot of meat/A little oil*
- we cannot normally use a number (*one two*) in front of it

### 2.15 Concrete and abstract nouns

Many **countable nouns** are **concrete** (having an individual physical existence) for example

Persons, animals, plants	<i>a girl a horse a geranium</i>
Objects	<i>a bottle a desk a typewriter</i>
Groups	<i>an army a crowd a herd</i>
Units of measurement	<i>a franc a kilo a litre a metre</i>
Parts of a mass	<i>a bit a packet a piece a slice</i>

**Concrete uncountable nouns** (sometimes having physical but not 'individual' existence) include words like

Materials, liquids, gases	<i>cotton milk air</i>
'Grains' and 'powder'	<i>barley rice dust flour</i>
Activities	<i>camping drinking eating sailing</i>
Languages	<i>Arabic Italian Japanese Turkish</i>

## 2 Nouns

A few countable nouns are **abstract**: e.g. *a hope, an idea a nuisance a remark a situation*. A number of abstract nouns can be used *only* as countables: e.g. *a denial a proposal a scheme a statement*. Many uncountable nouns are abstract: e.g. *anger, equality, honesty*

### 2.16 Nouns which can be either countable or uncountable

Some nouns may be countable or uncountable depending on their use.

#### 2.16.1 Nouns we can think of as 'single items' or 'substances'

e.g. *a chicken/chicken an egg/egg. a ribbon/ribbon*

When we use these as **countables**, we refer to them as **single items**; when we use them as **uncountables**, we refer to them as **substances**.

<b>countable</b> (a single item)	<b>uncountable</b> (substance/material)
<b>He ate a whole chicken!</b>	<b>Would you like some chicken?</b>
<b>I had a boiled egg for breakfast</b>	<b>There's egg on your face</b>
<b>I tied it up with a ribbon</b>	<b>I bought a metre of ribbon</b>

#### 2.16.2 Nouns which refer to objects or material

e.g. *a glass/glass an ice/ice, an iron/iron, a paper/paper*

When we use such nouns as **countables**, we refer to e.g. a thing which is made of the material or which we think of as being made of the material; when we use them as **uncountables**, we refer only to the material.

<b>countable</b> ('thing')	<b>uncountable</b> ('material')
<b>I broke a glass this morning</b>	<b>Glass is made from sand.</b>
<b>Would you like an ice?</b>	<b>Ice floats</b>
<b>I've got a new iron</b>	<b>Steel is an alloy of iron</b>
<b>What do the papers say?</b>	<b>Paper is made from wood</b>

#### 2.16.3 Normally uncountable nouns used as countables

Many nouns which are normally uncountable can be used as countables if we refer to particular varieties. When this occurs, the noun is often preceded by an adjective (a *nice wine*) or there is some kind of specification (a *wine of high quality*);

*This region produces an excellent wine* (i.e. a kind of wine which. . .)  
*Kalamata produces some of the best olive oil in the world, it's an oil of very high quality* (i.e. a kind of oil which...)  
*The North Sea produces a light oil which is highly prized in the oil industry*

Normally uncountable nouns used exceptionally as countables can also occur in the plural:

*This region produces some awful wines as well as good ones*  
*I go out in all weathers*

Note also many words for drinks, which are uncountable when we think of them as substances:

**Beer/coffee/tea** is expensive these days

## Countable and uncountable nouns

However, we can sometimes use *a/an* to mean e.g. *a glass of*, etc. [> 2.18] or numbers in front of these words, or we can make them plural, for example when we are ordering in a restaurant:

**A** (or **One**) **beer** please **Two teas** and **four coffees**, please

### 2.16.4 Nouns which can refer to something specific or general

e.g. *an education/education, a light/light, a noise/noise*

**As countables**, these nouns refer to something specific (He *has had a good education* I *need a light* by my bed). **As uncountables**, the reference is general (*Standards of education* are falling *Light* travels faster than *sound*).

countable ('specific')	uncountable ('general')
<i>A good education</i> is expensive	<i>Education</i> should be free
Try not to make <i>a noise</i>	<i>Noise</i> is a kind of pollution

Some countable nouns like this can be plural (*a light/lights, a noise/noises*). Other nouns (*education knowledge*) cannot be plural; as countables they often have some kind of qualification (*a classical education, a good knowledge of English*).

### 2.16.5 Nouns ending in '-ing'

e.g. *a drawing/drawing, a painting/painting, a reading/reading*

*-ing* forms are generally uncountable [> 16.39.1], but a few can refer to a specific thing or event.

countable ('specific')	uncountable ('general')
Are these <i>drawings</i> by Goya?	I'm no good at <i>drawing</i>
He has <i>a painting</i> by Hockney	<i>Painting</i> is my hobby
She gave <i>a reading</i> of her poems.	<i>Reading</i> is taught early

A few *-ing* forms (*a thrashing, a wedding*) are only countable.

### 2.16.6 Selected uncountable nouns and their countable equivalents

Some uncountables cannot be used as countables to refer to a single item or example. A quite different word must be used:

uncountable	equivalent countable
<i>bread</i>	<i>a loaf</i>
<i>clothing</i>	<i>a garment</i>
<i>laughter</i>	<i>a laugh</i>
<i>luggage</i>	<i>a case, a bag</i>
<i>poetry</i>	<i>a poem</i>
<i>money</i>	<i>a coin, a note</i>
<i>work</i> [but > 2.31, 2.33]	<i>a job</i>

Nouns for *animals* are countable; nouns for *meat* are uncountable:  
*a cow/beef a deer/venison a pig/pork, a sheep/mutton*

## 2.17 Nouns not normally countable in English

A number of nouns which are countable in other languages (and are therefore used in the singular and plural in those languages) are

## 2 Nouns

usually uncountable in English (and therefore not normally used with *a/an* or in the plural). A few common examples are: *baggage, furniture, information, macaroni, machinery, spaghetti* [> App 4]:

*We bought (some) **new furniture** for our living room recently  
I'd like **some information** please.*

### 2.18 Partitives: nouns which refer to part of a whole

We can refer to a single item (a *loaf of bread*), a part of a whole (a *slice of bread*) or a collection of items (a *packet of biscuits*) by means of **partitives**. Partitives are useful when we want to refer to specific pieces of an **uncountable** substance, or to a limited number of **countable** items. They can be singular (a *piece of paper*; a *box of matches*) or plural (*two pieces of paper*; *two boxes of matches*) and are followed by *of* when used before a noun. The most useful are:

#### 2.18.1 General partitives

Words such as *piece* and (less formal) *bit* can be used with a large number of uncountables (concrete or abstract):

**singular:** a *piece of/bit of chalk/cloth/information/meat/plastic*

**plural:** *pieces of/bits of chalk/cloth/information/meat/plastic.*

#### 2.18.2 Specific partitives

Here is a brief summary, but [> App 5] for more examples:

Single items or amounts:

*a ball of string, a bar of chocolate, a cube of ice,  
a lump of sugar; a sheet of paper, a slice of bread*

A few of these can be re-expressed as compounds:

e.g. *a sugar lump, ice cubes*

'Containers' used as partitives:

*a bag of flour; a box of matches, a cup of coffee; a jar of jam,  
a packet of biscuits, a pot of tea; a tube of toothpaste*

Most of these can be re-expressed as compounds: e.g. a *jam-jar* a *matchbox*, a *teapot*, to describe the container itself. Thus a *teapot* describes the container (which may be full or empty), while a *pot of tea* describes a pot with tea in it [> 2.10.7].

Small quantities: *a drop of water, a pinch of salt*

Measures: *a kilo of sugar, a metre of cloth*

'a game of: *a game of football*

Abstract concepts: *a period of calm, a spell of work*

Types and species: *a make of car, a sort of cake*

'a pair of: *a pair of gloves, a pair of jeans* [> App 5.8]

### 2.19 Collective nouns followed by 'of

These describe groups (or 'collections') of people or things:

People: *an army of soldiers a board of directors*

Animals, birds, insects: *a flock of birds/sheep, a swarm of bees*

Plants and fruit: *a bunch of flowers; a crop of apples*

Things: *a set of cutlery, a suit of clothes*

For more examples [> App 6]. For other collective nouns [> 2.28].

## Number (singular and plural)

### 2,20 Singular and plural forms of nouns

regular spelling		singular	plural	
-s after most nouns:		<i>cat</i>	<i>cats</i>	
		<i>tub</i>	<i>tubs</i>	
-es after nouns ending in	-o	<i>potato</i>	<i>potatoes</i>	[> 2.25]
	-s:	<i>class</i>	<i>classes</i>	
	-x:	<i>box</i>	<i>boxes</i>	
	-ch:	<i>watch</i>	<i>watches</i>	
	-sh:	<i>bush</i>	<i>bushes</i>	
consonant + -y becomes	-ies:	<i>country</i>	<i>countries</i>	
Note that vowel + , -y adds -s:		<i>day</i>	<i>days</i>	
	-ey:	<i>key</i>	<i>keys</i>	
	-oy:	<i>boy</i>	<i>boys</i>	
	-uy:	<i>guy</i>	<i>guys</i>	
Proper nouns ending in -y add -s in the plural:		<i>Fry</i>	<i>the Frys</i>	[> 2.36]
		<i>Kennedy</i>	<i>the Kennedys</i>	
irregular spelling				
Some endings in -f/-fe take	-ves:	<i>wife</i>	<i>wives</i>	[> 2.23]
Internal vowel change		<i>man</i>	<i>men</i>	[> 2.26]
Nouns with plurals in	-en:	<i>ox</i>	<i>oxen</i>	[> 2.26]
No change:		<i>sheep</i>	<i>sheep</i>	[> 2.27]
Foreign plurals, e.g.		<i>analysis</i>	<i>analyses</i>	[> 2.34]

### 2.21 Pronunciation of nouns with regular plurals

The rules for pronunciation are the same as those for the 3rd person

/s/ after simple present of regular verbs [> 9.7].

/f/ *chiefs, coughs, proofs* [> 2.23]

/k/ *cakes, forks, knocks*

/p/ *drops, taps, tapes*

/t/ *pets, pockets, skirts*

/z/ after /θ/ *depths, months, myths* [> 2.22]

/b/ *tubs, tubes, verbs*

/d/ *friends, hands, roads*

/g/ *bags, dogs, legs*

/l/ *bells, tables, walls*

/m/ *arms, dreams, names*

/n/ *lessons, pens, spoons*

/ŋ/ *songs, stings, tongues*

vowel + /R/: *chairs, doors, workers*

vowel sounds: *eyes, ways, windows*

Note that e is not pronounced in the categories above when the plural ends in -es: e.g. *cakes, clothes, stones, tapes, tubes*

Nouns ending in the following take an extra syllable pronounced /iz/:

/z/ *mazes, noises,* /ʃ/ *bushes, crashes, dishes*

*noses*

/dʒ/ *bridges, oranges,* /tʃ/ *matches, patches, speeches*

*pages* /ks/ *axes, boxes, taxes*

/s/ *buses, classes*

*masses*

## 2.22 Nouns with regular spelling/irregular pronunciation

The ending of the following nouns is pronounced /z/ in the plural  
*baths mouths oaths paths truths wreaths youths*  
 The plural of *house* (*houses*) is pronounced /haʊzɪz/

## 2.23 Nouns with irregular pronunciation and spelling

The following thirteen nouns with spellings ending in -*fe* (pronounced /f/) in the singular, are all spelt with -*ves* in the plural (**pronounced /vz/**) *calf/calves elf/elves half/halves knife/knives leaf/leaves life/lives loaf/loaves self/selves sheaf/sheaves shelf/shelves thief/thieves wife/wives wolf/wolves*

The following nouns have regular and irregular plural pronunciation and spellings

*dwarf/dwarfs ordwarves hoof/hoofs orhooves scarf/scarfs or scarves wharf/wharfs or wharves*

But note the following nouns which have regular spelling, but both regular and irregular pronunciation in the plural (/fs/ or /vs/)  
*handkerchief/handkerchiefs roof/roofs*

## 2.24 Nouns with plurals ending in -'s

There are a few instances where s is commonly used to form a plural

- **after letters** *Watch your p s and q s*

After the following, the plural is normally formed with the addition of but s also occurs

- **years** *the 1890s or 1890s the 1980s or 1980s*  
 - **abbreviations** *VIPs or VIP s (Very Important Persons) MPs or MPs (Members of Parliament) Note the finals is a small letter*

## 2.25 The plural of nouns ending in -o

Many commonly used nouns *techo hero potato tomato* ) ending in -o are spelt oes in the plural The following are spelt with -oes or -os  
*buffalo cargo commando grotto halo mosquito tornado volcano*  
 All these endings are pronounced /əʊz/

The following have plurals spelt with os

- nouns ending in vowel + -o or *double o* *bamboos folios kangaroos oratorios radios studios videos zoos*  
 - **abbreviations** *kilos (for kilograms), photos (for photographs)*  
 - **Italian musical terms** *e g concertos pianos solos sopranos*  
 ~ **proper nouns** *Eskimos Filipinos*

## 2.26 Irregular spelling: internal vowel change

The following nouns form their plurals by changing the internal vowel(s) (this is a survival from old English) *foot/feet goose/geese louse/lice man/men mouse/mice tooth/teeth woman/women*  
 Compound nouns formed with *man* or *woman* as a suffix form their

Number (singular and plural)

plurals with *-men* or *-women* *policeman/policemen policewoman policewomen* Both *-man* and *men* in such compounds (but not *-woman/women*) are often pronounced /man/

Other survivals from the past are a few nouns which form their plurals with *-en* *brother brethren child/children ox/oxen Brethren* is used in religious contexts, otherwise *brothers* is the normal plural of *brother* *Penny* can have a regular plural *pennies* when we are referring to separate coins (*ten pennies*) or a collective plural, *pence*, when we are referring to a total amount (*tenpence*)

## 2.27 Nouns with the same singular and plural forms

Some nouns do not change in form These include

- names of certain animals, birds and fish *deer grouse mackerel plaice salmon sheep trout*

*This **sheep is** from Australia These **sheep are** from Australia*

- *craft* and *aircraft/hovercraft/spacecraft*

*The **craft was** sunk All the **craft were** sunk*

(But compare **Arts and crafts are** part of the curriculum )

- certain nouns describing nationalities e g a *Chinese a Swiss a Vietnamese* [> App 49]

*He **is a Vietnamese** The **Vietnamese are** noted for their cookery*

Note that some names of fish, etc can form a regular plural

***Herrings were** (or **Herring were**) once very plentiful*

*Fish* is the normal plural of *fish* (singular), but *fishes* can also be used, especially to refer to species of fish

*My goldfish **has** died (one) My goldfish **have** died (more than one)*

*You'll see many kinds of **fish(es)** in the fish market*

## 2.28 Collective noun + singular or plural verb

### 2.28.1 Collective nouns which have plural forms

Some collective nouns such as *audience class club committee*

*company congregation council crew crowd family gang*

*government group jury mob staff team and union* can be used with singular or plural verbs They are singular and can combine with the relative pronouns *which/that* and be replaced by *it* when we think of them in an impersonal fashion, i e as a whole group

*The present **government, which hasn't** been in power long **is trying** to control inflation **It isn't** having much success*

They are plural and can combine with *who* and be replaced by *they* or *them* when we think of them in a more personal way, i e as the individuals that make up the group

*The **government, who are** looking for a quick victory **are calling** for a general election soon **They expect** to be re-elected A lot of people are giving **them** their support*

These collective nouns can also have regular plural forms

***Governments** in all countries **are trying** to control inflation*

For plural nouns in a collective sense (e g *the workers*) [> 3.19.4]

Some proper nouns (e g football teams) can be used as collectives

***Arsenal is/are** playing away on Saturday*



### 2.28.2 Collective nouns which do not have plural forms

The following collective nouns have no regular plural but can be followed by a singular or plural verb: *the aristocracy, the gentry the proletariat, the majority, the minority, the public, the youth of today*

*Give the public what **it wants/they want***

*Offspring* has no plural form but can be followed by a singular verb to refer to one or a plural verb to refer to more than one:

*Her **offspring is** like her in every respect* (one child)

*Her **offspring are** like her in every respect* (more than one child)

*The youth of today* (= all young people) should not be confused with *a/the youth* (= a/the young man), which has a regular plural *youths*.

***The youth of today is/are** better off than we used to be*

*The witness said he saw **a youth/five youths** outside the shop*

*Youth* (= a time of life) is used with singular verbs:

***Youth is** the time for action; **age is** the time for repose*

### 2.29 Collective noun + plural verb

The following collective nouns must be followed by a plural verb; they do not have plural forms: *cattle, the clergy the military, people the police, swine vermin*

***Some people are** never satisfied*

***The police/the military have** surrounded the building*

*People* should not be confused with *a/the people*, meaning 'nation' or 'tribe', which is countable:

*The British are **a sea-faring people***

*The English-speaking **peoples** share a common language*

For *the* + adjective + plural verb (e.g. *the blind*) [> 6.12.2].

### 2.30 Nouns with a plural form + singular verb

The following nouns, though plural in form, are always followed by a verb in the singular:

- the noun *news*, as in: ***The news** on TV **is** always depressing*
- games, such as *billiards, bowls, darts dominoes*  
***Billiards is** becoming more and more popular*
- names of cities such as *Athens Brussels Naples*  
***Athens has** grown rapidly in the past decade*

### 2.31 Nouns with a plural form + singular or plural verb

The following nouns ending in *-ics* take a singular verb:

*athletics gymnastics, linguistics mathematics and physics:*

***Mathematics is** a compulsory subject at school*

However, some words ending in *-ics*, such as *acoustics, economics ethics, phonetics* and *statistics* take a singular or plural verb. When the reference is to an academic subject (e.g. *acoustics* = the scientific study of sound) then the verb must be singular:

***Acoustics is** a branch of physics*

When the reference is specific, (e.g. *acoustics* = sound quality) then the verb must be plural:

***The acoustics in the Festival Hall are** extremely good.*

## Number (singular and plural)

Plural-form nouns describing illnesses [> 3.15] have a singular verb:

**German measles is a dangerous disease for pregnant women**

However, a plural verb is sometimes possible:

**Mumps are (or is) fairly rare in adults**

Some plural-form nouns can be regarded as a single unit (+ verb in the singular) or collective (+ verb in the plural). Examples are:

*barracks, bellows, crossroads, gallows gasworks headquarters kennels, series, species and works (= factory).*

- single unit: **This species of rose is very rare**

- more than one: **There are thousands of species of butterflies**

The word *means* (= a way to an end) is followed by a singular or plural verb, depending on the word used before it:

**All means have been used to get him to change his mind**

**One means is still to be tried**

### 2.32 Nouns with a plural form + plural verb

Nouns with a plural form only (+ plural verb) are:

- nouns which can combine with a *pair of* [> App 5.8]:

**My trousers are torn**

Used with a *pair of*, these words must have a singular verb:

**A pair of glasses costs quite a lot these days**

We cannot normally use numbers in front of these words, but we can say *two*, etc. *pairs of*:

**Two pairs of your trousers are still at the cleaner s**

Some of these nouns can have a singular form when used in compounds: e.g. *pyjama top, trouser leg*

**Where did I put my pyjama top?**

- a few words which occur only in the plural and are followed by a plural verb. Some of these are: *Antipodes belongings, brains* (= intellect), *clothes, congratulations, earnings, goods, greens* (= green vegetables), *lodgings, looks* (= good looks), *means* (= money or material possessions), *oats odds* (in betting), *outskirts particulars quarters* (= accommodation), *remains, riches, stairs suds surroundings thanks, tropics*  
**All my belongings are in this bag**

### 2.33 Nouns with different singular and plural meanings

Some nouns have different meanings in the singular and plural.

**Typical examples:** *air/airs, ash/ashes content/contents*

*custom/customs, damage/damages drawer/drawers fund/funds*

*glass/glasses look/looks, manner/manners, minute/minutes,*

*pain/pains scale/scales saving/savings spectacle/spectacles*

*step/steps, work/works* **Sometimes the meanings are far apart**

*(air/airs), sometimes they are quite close (fund/funds).*

**One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind**

**You can only reach that cupboard with a pair of steps**

**Of course, the countable nouns in the above list have their own**

**plurals: dirty looks five minutes sharp pains, two steps, etc.**

## 2.34 Nouns with foreign plurals

There is a natural tendency to make all nouns conform to the regular rules for the pronunciation and spelling of English plurals. The more commonly a noun is used, the more likely this is to happen. Some native English speakers avoid foreign plurals in everyday speech and use them only in scientific and technical contexts.

### 2.34.1 Nouns of foreign origin with anglicized plurals, e.g.

*album, albums, apparatus/apparatuses, genius/geniuses*

### 2.34.2 Nouns with both foreign and anglicized plurals, e.g.

**-us:** *cactus/cacti/cactuses, -a: antenna/antennae/antennas*

**-ex/ix:** *index/indices/indexes appendix/appendices/appendixes*

**-um:** *medium/media/mediums, -on: automaton/automata/automa'*

**-eu/-eau:** *adieu/adieux/adieus, plateau/plateaus/plateaux (IzI).*

Alternative plurals can have different meanings: e.g. *antennae* is a biological term; *antennas* can describe e.g. radio aerials.

### 2.34.3 Nouns with foreign plurals only, e.g.

**-us:** *alumnus/alumni; -a: alumna/alumnae, -um: stratum/strata,*

**-is:** *analysis/analyses, -on: criterion/criteria*

*Media* + singular or plural verb is used to refer to the press, TV, etc., *data* is used with a singular or plural verb; *agenda* is a foreign plural used in the singular in English with a regular plural, *agendas*.

## 2.35 Compound nouns and their plurals

### 2.35.1 Plural mainly in the last element

The tendency is to:

- put a plural ending (-s -es, etc.) on the second noun in noun + noun combinations: *boyfriends, flower shops, matchboxes*, etc. and in gerund + noun combinations: *frying pans*
- put a plural ending on the noun: *onlookers lookers-on, passers*
- put a plural ending on the last word when no noun is present: *breakdowns forget-me-nots, grown-ups, lay-offs*, etc.

### 2.35.2 Plural in the first element in some compounds

*attorney general/attorneys general, court-martial/courts-martial*  
*man-of-war>men~of-war, mother-in-law/mothers-in-law* (but *in laws* in general references: *Our in-laws are staying with us*)  
*notary public/notaries public, spoonful/spoonsful* (or *spoonfuls*).

### 2.35.3 Plural in the first and last element

When the first element is *man* or *woman*, then both elements change *man student/men students woman student/women students*, but note compounds with *lady* *lady friend lady friends*.

Other compounds with *man* and *woman* form their plurals only in the second word: *man-eaters, manholes, woman-haters*, etc. [> 2.10.9]

## 2.36 The plural of proper nouns

Plural surnames occur when we refer to families:

+ -s; *The Atkinsons/The Frys are coming to dinner*

+ -es; *They're forever trying to keep up with the Joneses*

## Gender

Other examples with proper nouns are:

*There are **three Janes** and **two Harrys** in our family*

*We've had **two very cold Januarys** in a row* [not -ies > 2.20]

We do not add -(e)s to the spelling where this would suggest a false pronunciation: *three King Louis the Dumas father and son*

### 2.37 Numbers and their plurals [> APP 47]

#### 2.37.1 Dozen(s), hundred(s), etc.

The word *dozen* and numbers do not add -s when they are used in front of plural nouns: *two dozen eggs three hundred men ten thousand pounds*, etc. They add -s before *of* (i.e. when the number is not specified):

***Hundreds of people** are going to the demonstration*

***Thousands of pounds** have been spent on the new hospital*

*I said it was a secret but she s told **dozens of people***

#### 237-2 'A whole amount'

When the reference is to 'a whole amount' a plural subject is followed by a singular verb, with reference to:

Duration: ***Three weeks is** a long time to wait for an answer*

Money: ***Two hundred pounds is** a lot to spend on a dress*

Distance: ***Forty miles is** a long way to walk in a day*

### 2.38 Two nouns joined by 'and'

Nouns that commonly go together such as *bacon and eggs*, *bread and butter*, *cheese and wine* *fish and chips*, *lemon and oil*, *tripe and onions*, *sausage(s) and mash* are used with verbs in the singular when we think of them as a single unit. Noun combinations of this kind have a fixed order of words:

***Fish and chips is** a popular meal in Britain*

If we think of the items as 'separate', we use a plural verb:

***Fish and chips make** a good meal*

## Gender

### 2.39 General information about gender

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people:	<i>man. actor.</i>	<i>he</i>
	<i>woman, actress-</i>	<i>she</i>
	<i>guest, student, teacher-</i>	<i>he or she</i>
animals:	<i>bull, cow</i>	<i>it</i>
things:	<i>chair, table.</i>	<i>it</i>

---

In many European languages the names of things, such as *book* *chair*, *radio*, *table* have **gender**: that is they are classified grammatically as masculine, feminine or neuter, although very often gender doesn't relate to sex. Grammatical gender barely concerns nouns in English. It mainly concerns personal pronouns, where a distinction is drawn between *e.g. he she* and *It*; possessive

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adjectives, *his*, *her* and *its* [> 4.1]; and relative pronouns, where a distinction is drawn between *who* and *which* [> 1.27]. The determiners [> 3.1] we use do not vary according to gender in front of nouns. We can refer to **a man a woman a box**, **the man, the woman, the box** **many men, many women, many boxes**

### 2.40 Identifying masculine and feminine through nouns

A few nouns are automatically replaced by masculine or feminine pronouns, or by *it*. Some of these are as follows:

#### 2.40.1 Contrasting nouns describing people (replaceable by e.g. 'he/she')

*bachelor/spinster, boy/girl, brother/sister, father/mother  
gentleman/lady, grandfather 'grandmother, grandson/granddaughter  
husband'wife, king/queen, man/woman monk/nun, Mr/Mrs,  
nephew/niece sir/madam, son/daughter, uncle/aunt*

#### 2.40.2 Contrasting nouns describing animals (normally replaceable by 'it')

*bull/cow, cock (or rooster)/hen, dog/bitch gander/goose pig'sow  
ram/ewe stallion'mare*

#### 2.40.3 '-ess' endings and other forms indicating sex/gender

A common way of indicating sex or gender is to change the ending of the masculine noun with the suffix -ess-

*actor/actress god/goddess heir/heiress host/hostess,  
prince/princess steward/stewardess, waiter/waitress.*

This distinction is becoming rarer so that words like *author instructor* and *manager* are now commonly used for both sexes. Some words, such as *poetess*, are falling into disuse because they are considered disparaging by both sexes. In a few cases, -ess endings are used for female animals, e.g. *leopard/leopardess, lion/lioness, tiger/tigress* Or *he-'she-* (stressed) is used as a prefix in e.g. *he-goat/she-goat, or wolf/she-wolf*

Similar references can be made with other endings, etc. as well:

*bndegroom/bride hero/heroine, lad/lass, landlord/landlady  
male'female, masseur/masseuse usher/usherette widower/widow*

#### 2.40.4 Identifying masculine and feminine by 'man', 'woman', etc.

Certain nouns ending in *-man* refer to males: e.g. *dustman, policeman postman, salesman* Others, ending in *-woman*, refer to women: e.g. *policewoman, postwoman, saleswoman* A few, such as *chairman*, can be used for men and women [> 2.10.9].

We tend to assume that words like *model* and *nurse* refer to women and words like *judge* and *wrestler* refer to men. If this is not the case and we wish to make a point of it, we can refer to a *male model* or a *male nurse*, or to a *woman judge* or a *woman wrestler*

### 2.41 Identifying masculine or feminine through pronouns

With many nouns we don't know whether the person referred to is male or female until we hear the pronoun:

**My accountant says he is moving his office**

**My doctor says she is pleased with my progress**

## The genitive

This applies to nouns such as: *adult, artist comrade, cook cousin darling, dear doctor enemy foreigner, friend guest journalist, lawyer librarian musician neighbour orphan, owner, parent, passenger, person pupil, relation relative, scientist, singer, speaker spouse stranger student teacher tourist traveller visitor writer*. Sometimes we can emphasize this choice by using both pronouns:

*If a student wants more information he or she should apply in writing*. However, this is becoming less acceptable. The tendency is to avoid this kind of construction by using plurals [compare > 4.40]:

*Students who want more information should apply in writing*

## The genitive

### 2.42 Form of the genitive

Add 's to singular personal nouns:	<i>child</i>	+ s	<i>child's</i>
Add 's to singular personal nouns ending in -s.	<i>actress</i>	+ s	<i>actress's</i>
Add 's to the plural of irregular personal nouns:	<i>children</i>	+ s	<i>children's</i>
Add 'to the plural of personal nouns ending in -s:	<i>girls</i>	+ '	<i>girls'</i>
Add 's to some names ending in -s:	<i>James</i>	+ 's	<i>James's</i>

### 2.43 The survival of the genitive in modern English

The only 'case-form' for nouns that exists in English is the **genitive** (e.g. *man's*), sometimes called **the possessive case** or **the possessive form**. The -es genitive ending of some classes of nouns in old English has survived in the modern language as 's (apostrophe s) for some nouns in the singular and s' (s apostrophe) for some nouns in the plural, but with limited uses.

### 2.44 When we add s and s'

We normally use 's and s' only for people and some living creatures [> 2.48]. The possessive appears before the noun it refers to. However, it can be used without a noun as well [> 2.51]:

*I'll go in Frank's car and you can go in Alan's*

The simplest rule to remember is: 'add s to any personal noun unless it is in the form of a plural ending in -s - in which case, just add an apostrophe ('). In practice, this means:

#### 2.44.1 Singular and plural common nouns and names not ending in -s

- add s to singular nouns and to names not ending in -s:

*a child's dream, the dog's kennel, Frank's new job*

If two names are joined by *and*, add 's to the second:

*John and Mary's bank balance Scott and Amundsen's race*

- add 's to singular nouns ending in -s:

*an actress's career, a waitress's job*

- add 's to irregular plural nouns:

*children's games the men's club, sheep's wool*

- add an apostrophe (') after the s of regular plurals:

*boys' school, girls' school Cheltenham Ladies' College*

#### 2.44.2 's with compound nouns

With compound nouns the s comes after the last word:

*My **sister-in-law's** father is a pilot*

The rule also applies to titles, as in: *Henry the Eighth's marriages*  
*the Secretary of State's visit*

Two genitives are also possible, as in:

*My **brother's neighbour's** sister is a nurse*

#### 2.44.3 The use of the apostrophe after names ending in -s

We add 's to names ending in -s: *Charles's address Doris's party*

However, we can sometimes use ' or s: *St James' (or St James's)*

*Park, Mr Jones (or Jones's) car St Thomas' (or St Thomas's)*

*Hospital*. No matter how we write the genitive in such cases, we

normally pronounce it as /ɪz/. With some (especially famous) names

ending in -s we normally add an apostrophe after the -s (pronounced

/s/ or /ɪz/: *Keats' works Yeats' poetry*

We can show possession in the plural forms of names ending in -s by

adding an apostrophe at the end: *the Joneses' houses*, etc.

With ancient Greek names we add an apostrophe after the -s, but

there is no change in pronunciation, *Archimedes'* being pronounced

the same as *Archimedes- Archimedes' Principle*

Initials can be followed by s when the reference is singular: *an MP's*

*salary* (= a Member of Parliament's salary), or s' when the reference

is plural: *MPs salaries* [> 2.24].

#### 2.45 The pronunciation of s and s'

The pronunciation of s and s' depends on the sound that precedes

them and follows the same rules as for plural nouns [> 2.21]: e.g.

/s/: *Geoff's hat Jack's job a month's salary. Pat's handbag*

/z/. *Ben's opinion Bill's place Bob's house the workers' club*

/ɪz/: *an actress's career, the boss's office, Mrs Page's jam*

#### 2.46 The use of 's/s' for purposes other than possession

While the genitive is generally associated with possession (usually

answering the question *Whose* ?), apostrophe s serves other

purposes as well, for example:

Regular use: *Father's chair* (= the one he usually sits on)

Relationship: *Angela's son* (i.e. Angela has a son)

+ favourite: *Fish and chips is John's favourite dish*

Actions: *Scott's journey* (i.e. the journey Scott made)

Purpose: *A girls' school* (= a school for girls)

Characteristics: *John's stammer* (i.e. John has a stammer)

Others: *Building oil rigs is a man's work* (= suitable for)

*Mozart is a composer's composer* (= appreciated by)

#### 2.47 The use of 's and s' compared with the use of 'of

The 's construction is not possible in e.g. *the key of the door* or *the*

*leg of the table* because we do not normally use 's with non-living

things [> 2.10.1, 2.44]. When-s indicates ownership, every 's

construction can have an of equivalent, but not every of-construction can have an 's equivalent. So:

*a man's voice can be expressed as the voice of a man*

*Keats' poetry can be expressed as the poetry of Keats*

**And instead of the leg of the table, we can say the table-leg**

## 2.48 The use of s and s' with living things

We may use s or s' after:

**Personal names:** *Gus's Restaurant Jones's car*

**Personal nouns:** *the doctor's surgery man's future*

**Indefinite pronouns:** *anyone's guess, someone's responsibility*

**Collective nouns:** *the army's advance, the committee's decision*

**'Higher animals':** *the horse's stable, the horses' stables*

**Some 'lower animals':** *an ant's nest, a bee's sting*

When we refer to material which is produced or made by a living animal, 's is generally required (stress on first word): a *'bird's nest* *'cow's milk* *'lamb's wool*, etc. Where the source of a material is an animal that has been slaughtered, 's is not generally used (varied stress): *'beef* *'broth* *'cowhide*, a *'ham sandwich* *'sheepskin*, etc.

## 2.49 The use of s and s' with non-living things

We may use s/s' or the of-construction with the following:

**Geographical reference:** *America's policy, Hong Kong's future*

**Institutional reference:** *the European Economic Community's exports*

's or s' are normally used with the following:

**Place noun + superlative:** *New York's tallest skyscraper*

**Churches and cathedrals:** *St Paul's Church, St Stephen's Cathedral*

**Time references:** *a day's work, an hour's delay, a month's salary, today's TV, a year's absence, a week or two's time, two days' journey*

**'Money's worth':** *twenty dollars' worth of gasoline*

**Fixed expressions:** *(keep someone) at arm's length, (be) at death's door the earth's surface for goodness sake, (to) one's heart's content journey's end, the ship's company*

An s is sometimes used with reference to cars, planes and ships:

*the car's exhaust the plane's engines the ship's propeller*

We can only learn from experience when to use s with non-living things. When in doubt, it is best to use the of-construction.

## 2.50 The use of the of-construction' to connect two nouns

We normally use the of-construction (not 's/s) when referring to:

Things (where a compound noun [ > 2.10.1] is not available):

*the book of the film, the shade of a tree*

**Parts of things:** *the bottom/top/side inside of the box*

**Abstract reference:** *the cost of living, the price of success*



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The of-construction can be used to suggest *be/behave/look like* in e.g. *an angel of a child, that fool of a ticket-inspector*. We also use this construction when the noun in the of-phrase is modified by an additional phrase or clause:

*Can't you look at **the book of the boy behind you?***

*This was given to me by **the colleague of a friend of mine***

The of-construction can be used with plural nouns to avoid ambiguity. *The advice of the specialists* may be preferable to *the specialists advice* (more than one specialist), which could be confused with *the specialists advice* (only one specialist).

A noun + *of* can sometimes be used in place of an infinitive:

*It's forbidden **to remove books** from this reference library*

***The removal of books** from this reference library is forbidden*

### 2.51 Omission of the noun after 's and s'

The 's/s' construction can be used on its own when we refer to:

- a noun that is implied:

*We need a ladder. We can borrow **our neighbour's***

- where someone lives:

*I'm staying **at my aunt's**. I'm a guest **at the Watsons'***

- shops and businesses: e.g. *the butcher's, the hairdresser's*

*Would you mind going to **the chemist's** for me?*

- medical practitioners: e.g. *the dentist's, the doctor's*

*I've got an appointment **at the dentist's** at 11.15*

When we refer to well-known stores (e.g. *Macy's Harrod's*), an apostrophe before the s is optional, but is usually omitted.

*You can't go to London without visiting **Harrods/Harrod's***

When we refer to well-known restaurants by the name of the owner or founder (e.g. *Langan's, Scott's*) s is included.

Churches and colleges (often named after saints) are frequently referred to in the same way, always with 's:

*They were married in **St Bartholomew's***

### 2.52 The double genitive

The 's construction can be used after the of-construction in: e.g. *a friend of my fathers, a play of Shakespeare's* (= one of my father's friends; one of Shakespeare's plays). This can happen because we usually put only one determiner in front of a noun [> 3.4], so, for example, we would not use *this* and *my* together in front of e.g. *son*. Instead, we have to say *this son of mine*. And note other possessive pronouns: *a friend of yours, a cousin of hers*, etc. We can use *a this that, these those some any, no*, etc. in front of the noun, but not *the*:

*Isn't Frank Byers **a friend of yours?***

*He's a friend of mine* is more common than *He is my friend*, which implies he is my special or only friend. *He's no friend of mine* can mean 'I don't know him' or 'He's my enemy'.

The use of demonstratives [> 4.32-36] often suggests criticism:

***That silly uncle of yours** has told me the same joke five times*

# 3 Articles

## General information about 'a/an', 'the' and the zero article

### 3.1 Determiners: what they are and what they do

We use a number of words in front of common nouns (or adjective + common noun) which we call **determiners** because they affect (or 'determine') the meaning of the noun. Determiners make it clear, for example, which particular thing(s) we are referring to or how much of a substance we are talking about. Singular countable nouns must normally have a determiner in front of them. There are two classes:

1 Words which help us to **classify** or **identify**:

- **indefinite article**: *I bought **a** new shirt yesterday*  
(but it's not necessary to say which)
- **definite article**: ***The** shirt I am wearing is new.*  
(i.e. I am telling you which)
- **demonstratives** [> 4.32]: *I bought **this/that** shirt yesterday*  
(i.e. the one I am showing you)
- **possessives** [> 4.19]: *Do you like **my** new shirt?*  
(i.e. the one that belongs to me)

2 Words which enable us to indicate **quantity**:

- **numbers** [> App 47]: *I bought **two** new shirts yesterday*  
(i.e. that's how many I bought)
- **quantifiers** [> 5.1]: *I didn't buy **many** new shirts yesterday*  
(i.e. not a great number)  
*There wasn't **much** material in the shop*  
(i.e. not a great quantity)

Proper nouns [> 2.13] do not generally require identification, but for place names, etc. [> 3.22, 3.31]:

*John is flying to **Helsinki** on **Tuesday**.*

### 3.2 Indefinite ('a/an'), definite ('the'), or zero (0)?

In most European languages there are rules about when to use (or not to use) indefinite and definite articles. These rules generally depend on the gender of the noun and on whether it is singular or plural. In English, gender does not affect our choice [> 2.39], but whether a word is singular or plural may do so.

We often use no article at all in English. This non-use of the article is so important that we give it a name, **the zero article** [> 3.24]. The problems of choice can be summarized as follows:

- whether to use *a/an* or *the*-
- whether to use *a/an* or nothing (zero).
- whether to use *the* or nothing (zero).

### 3 Articles

In addition we have to decide:

- whether to use *zero* or *some*.
- whether to use *the* or *some*.

Because articles don't have gender or special plural forms in English, their use seems easy to learners at first. However, choice is complicated by three factors:

- whether a noun is countable or uncountable.
- whether we are making general statements.
- whether we are referring to something the listener or reader can positively identify or not.

#### 3.3 'A/an', 'the' or zero before countables and uncountables

The distinction between countable and uncountable nouns [> 2.14] must be clearly understood because it affects our choice of article.

The rules for the use of *a/an*, *the* and *zero* + countable or uncountable can be summarized as follows:

<i>a/an</i> is used only in front of a singular countable:	<i>a hat</i>
<i>the</i> can be used in front of	a singular countable: <i>the hat</i>
	a plural countable: <i>the hats</i>
	an uncountable: <i>the water</i>
<i>zero</i> : we often use no article in front of	a plural countable: <i>hats</i>
	an uncountable: <i>water</i>

Putting it in another way, we can use:

<i>a/an</i> or <i>the</i> +	singular countable: <i>a hat - the hat</i>
<i>the</i> or <i>zero</i> +	plural countable: <i>the hats - hats</i>
<i>the</i> or <i>zero</i> +	uncountable: <i>the water - water</i>

Examples of **a singular countable** preceded by:

*a- The man who lives next door is a doctor*  
*an My sister is an architect*  
*the- The architect who designed this block won a prize*

Examples of **a plural countable** preceded by:

*zero The people who work next door are architects*  
*the. The architects who designed this block won a prize*

Examples of **an uncountable** preceded by:

*zero- Sugar is bad for you*  
*the. The sugar you bought yesterday has got damp*

#### 3.4 Word order and determiners

We usually put only one determiner in front of a noun or noun phrase; and the determiner is nearly always the first word in a noun phrase:

e.g. *a new pen*. We can never use two of the following before a noun:

*a, the, this, that, these, those, my your, his, her, Susan's*, etc.

So, for example, we can say:

*the pen* or *my pen*

but we cannot use *the* and *my* together in front of a noun or noun phrase. Some words (called **pre-determiners**) can come before articles and other determiners: for example *both* and *all* [> 5.18].

## The indefinite article: 'a/an'

### 3.5 Form and use of 'a/an', zero article and 'some'

*a/an* and *zero* for classification/identification [> 3.9]

singular	plural	singular	plural
<i>a book</i>	<i>books</i>	<i>It's a book</i>	<i>They're books</i>
<i>an egg</i>	<i>eggs</i>	<i>It's an egg</i>	<i>They're eggs</i>

*a/an* and *some* referring to quantity [> 3.10]

<i>a book</i>	<i>some books</i>	<i>I've got a book</i>	<i>I've got some books</i>
<i>an egg</i>	<i>some eggs</i>	<i>I've got an egg</i>	<i>I've got some eggs</i>

### 3.6 How we refer to singular and plural

To **classify** or **identify** something, we can say:

*It's a book* (*a/an* + singular noun)

The plural of this is:

*They're books* (*zero* + plural noun)

To refer to **quantity**, we can say:

*I've got a book* (*a/an* + singular noun)

In the plural, when the exact number is not important, we can use quantifiers like *some*, *a few*, *a lot of* [> 5.2], *Some/any* [> 5.10] are the commonest of these and can be said to be the plural of *a/an* when we are referring to unspecified number:

*I've got some books* (*some* + plural noun)

### 3.7 The pronunciation of 'a' and 'an'

*A* (pronounced /a/ in fluent speech) is used before consonant sounds (not just consonant letters); *an* /an/ is used before vowel sounds (not just words beginning with the vowel letters, *a*, *e*, *i* *o* *u*). This can be seen when we use *a* or *an* with the alphabet (e.g. *This is a U This is an H*).

(*This is*) *a* B, C, D, G, J, K P, Q, T U, V W, Y Z

(*This is*) *an* A, E, F, H, I, L M, N, O, R, S, X

Compare: *a fire* but *an F*      *a noise* but *an N*

*a house* but *an H*      *a radio* but *an R*

*a liar* but *an L*      *a sound* but *an S*

*a man* but *an M*      *a xylophone* but *an X*

*an umbrella* but *a uniform*

*an unusual case* but *a union*

*a year*, *a university*, *a European*, but *an eye*, *an ear*

*a hall* but *an hour*      (*h* not pronounced,

*a hot dinner* but *an honour*      see below)

A few words beginning with *h* may be preceded by *a* or *an* at the discretion of the speaker: e.g. *a hotel*, *a historian* or *an hotel*, *an historian* If such words are used with *an*, then *h* is not pronounced or is pronounced softly. *H* is not pronounced at all in a few words:

e.g. *an hen* *an honest man*, *an honour* *an hour*

Some common abbreviations (depending on their first letter) are preceded by *a*: *a B.A.* (a Bachelor of Arts), or by *an*: *an I.Q.* (an Intelligence Quotient).

The pronunciation /eɪ/ instead of /ə/ for *a* is often used when we are speaking with special emphasis, with or without a pause:

*He still refers to his record-player as 'a /eɪ/ gramophone'.*

Many native speakers disapprove of the strong pronunciation of *a*, commonly heard in the language of e.g. broadcasters, because it sounds unnatural.

### 3.8 Basic uses of 'a/an'

There is no difference in meaning between *a* and *an*. When using *a*, *an* we must always bear in mind two basic facts:

- 1 *A/an* has an indefinite meaning, (i.e. the person, animal or thing referred to may be not known to the listener or reader, so *a/an* has the sense of *any* or *I can't/won't tell you which, or it doesn't matter which*).
- 2 *A/an* can combine only with a singular countable noun.

These two facts underlie all uses of *a/an*. Some of the most important of these uses are discussed in the sections that follow.

### 3.9 Classification: 'a/an' to mean 'an example of that class'

#### 3.9.1 Classification: general statements and descriptive labels

When we say *a rose is a flower*, we mean that a rose is an example of a class of items we call *flowers*; *a daffodil* is another example; *a daisy* is another example, and so on. We use *a/an* in this way when we wish to **classify** people, animals or things. We can classify them in two ways:

- 1 By means of **general statements**:

*An architect is a person who designs buildings.*

*A clever politician never promises too much.*

- 2 By means of **labels** (*a/an* + noun after the verb *be*):

*Andrew Bright is an architect*

#### 3.9.2 Classification by means of general statements

General statements with *a/an* often take the form of **definitions**:

*A cat is a domestic animal.*

Definitions of this kind are possible because we can easily think of one cat at a time. If we make general statements with *cats*, we are referring to the whole species, not one example, but the meaning is the same [> 3.19.1, 3.26.1]:

*Cats are domestic animals.*

Many uncountable nouns can be used after *a/an* when we are referring to 'an example of that class' [> 2.16.3]:

*This is a very good coffee. Is it Brazilian?*

#### 3.9.3 Classification by means of descriptive labels [compare > 3.19.1]

We often wish to classify people in terms of the work they do, where they come from, etc. In English (unlike many other European languages) we need to use *a/an* when we are, as it were, attaching labels to people with regard to: e.g.

The indefinite article: 'a/an'

**Origins:** *He's a Frenchman/an American.* [> App 49]

**Occupation:** *She's a doctor/He's an electrician.*

**Religion:** *She's a Catholic/He's an Anglican*

**Politics:** *He's a Socialist/a Republican*

The plurals would be: *They're Frenchmen/doctors*, etc. Adjectival equivalents (where they exist) can be used in place of nouns for all the above examples except occupation:

*He's European/French/Catholic/Socialist* But:

*What does he do?* - *He's a taxi-driver*

We need *a/an* with any kind of 'labelling': e.g.

- with nouns: *You're an angel/a saint/a wonder*

- with adjective + noun: *You're a good girl/a real angel*

Things, animals, etc. can also be classified with *a/an*:

**Objects:** *It's a (kind of/sort of/type of) bottle-opener*

**Insects:** *It's a (kind of/sort of/type of) beetle*

**Plants:** *It's a (kind of/sort of/type of) rose*

*A kind of*, etc. is more specific when used with reference to things, etc. than when it is used for people:

*I'm a kind of (sort of/type of) engineer*

(= That's the nearest I can come to describing my job.)

*It's a kind of (sort of/type of) beetle*

(= It's a member of a particular class of beetle.)

### 3.9.4 The uses of 'a/an' to classify people, etc. [> 2.13.1]

*A/an* can be used freely to refer to 'an example of that class'. We can use *He's/It's a* + name for 'tangible examples': *He's a Forsyte; It's a Picasso; It's a Dickens novel*. Other examples are: *a Brecht play; a Laura Ashley dress; a Shakespeare sonnet; a Smith and Wesson revolver; a Titian; a Wren church*, [compare > 3.27.4]

### 3.9.5 The use of 'a/an' to refer to 'a certain person'

*A/an* can be used before titles (*Mr, Mrs, Miss*, etc.) with the sense of 'a certain person whom I don't know':

*A Mr Wingate phoned and left a message for you.*

*A Mrs Tadley is waiting to see you.*

The phrase *a certain*, to refer to people whose identity is not yet known, is common in fables and folk stories:

*Many years ago a certain merchant arrived in Baghdad*

## 3.10 Quantity: the use of 'a/an' to mean 'only one'

### 3.10.1 The use of 'a/an' with reference to quantity

The most common use of *a/an* is in the sense of 'only one' when we are not specifying any particular person or thing:

*I'd like an apple* (i.e. only one; it doesn't matter which)

When we express this in the plural, we use *some* or *any* [> 5.10]:

*I'd like some apples // don't want any apples* [compare > 3.28.8]

For *a/an* + uncountable to refer to 'only one' [> 2.16.3, 3.9.2].

### 3.10.2 The use of 'a/an' when something is mentioned for the first time

*A/an* is used before a countable noun mentioned for the first time: the speaker assumes the listener does not know what is referred to:

*I looked up and saw **a plane** (Mentioned for the first time - you don't know which plane I mean.) **The plane** flew low over the trees (You now know exactly which plane I mean and the plane is, in that sense, identified.)* [> 3.20.1]

This rule governing the choice between definite and indefinite article is common in European languages.

### 3.11 The difference between 'a/an' and 'one'

*One* and *a/an* cannot normally be used interchangeably. We use *one* when we are counting (*one apple*, as opposed to two or three):

*It was **one coffee** we ordered, not **two***

But we could not use *one* to mean 'any one' (not specified):

***A knife** is no good You need **a screwdriver** to do the job properly*

*One* is often used with *day*, *morning*, etc. in story-telling:

***One day**, many years later, I found out what had really happened*

*A/an* and *one* can be used interchangeably when we refer to:

Whole numbers: *a (or one) hundred, thousand, million* [> App 47]

Fractions: *a (or one) quarter, third, half*, etc.

Money: *a (or one) pound/dollar*, etc. We say '*One pound 50*

Weight/measure: *a (or one) pound/kilo, foot/metre*, etc.

*A/an* and *one* are interchangeable in some expressions (*with a/one blow*), but not in others (*a few*). For *one* as a pronoun [> 4.9-11].

### 3.12 The use of 'a/an' with reference to measurement

*A/an* is used when we refer to one unit of measurement in terms of another. If we want to emphasize 'each', we use *per* instead of *a/an*:

Price in relation to weight: *80p **a/per** kilo*

Distance in relation to speed: *40 km **an/per** hour*

Distance/fuel consumption: *30 miles **a/per** gallon*

Frequency/time: *twice **a/per** day*

### 3.13 The use of 'a/an' after 'what' and 'such'

*A/an* is used with countable nouns after *What* in exclamations:

***What a surprise! What an interesting story!***

*A/an* is used after *such* when we wish to emphasize degree [> 7.51.1]:

*That child is **such a pest!** My boss is **such an idiot!***

*What a lot* ' (Not "*How much/many...!*") is used for exclamations:

***What a lot of flowers! What a lot of trouble!***

### 3.14 The use of 'a/an' with pairs of nouns

Many nouns are 'paired', that is they are considered to accompany each other naturally, and *a/an* is used before the first noun of a pair:

*a cup and saucer, a hat and coat, a knife and fork-*

*It's cold outside Take **a hat and coat** with you*

If two words are used which are not considered to be a 'natural pair', the indefinite article must be used before each noun:

*When you go on holiday, take **a raincoat and a camera***

### 3.15 The use of 'a/an', etc. with reference to illnesses/conditions

The use of the indefinite and zero articles with illnesses can be defined in four categories:

- 1 Expressions where the use of the indefinite article is compulsory:  
e.g. *a cold, a headache, a sore throat a weak heart a broken leg*  
*I've got **a headache/a cold***
- 2 Expressions where the use of the indefinite article is optional:  
e.g. *catch (a) cold, have (a) backache/stomach-ache/toothache, (an) earache*  
*I've had **(a) toothache** all night*
- 3 With illnesses which are plural in form (e.g. *measles, mumps shingles*) no article is used [compare > 2.31]:  
*My children are in bed with **mumps***
- 4 With illnesses which are defined as 'uncountable' (e.g. *flu, gout hepatitis*, etc.) no article is used:  
*I was in bed with **flu** for ten days*

*The* will also combine with e.g. *flu, measles* and *mumps*-

*He's got **the flu/the measles/the mumps***

## The definite article: 'the'

### 3.16 Form of the'

**The** never varies in form whether it refers to people or things, singular or plural

singular:

<i>(he) man</i>	<i>He s</i>	<i>the man</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>
<i>the woman</i>	<i>She's</i>	<i>the woman</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>
<i>the book</i>	<i>That s</i>	<i>the book</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>

plural:

<i>the men</i>	<i>They re</i>	<i>the men</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>
<i>the women</i>	<i>They re</i>	<i>the women</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>
<i>the books</i>	<i>They're</i>	<i>the books</i>	<i>I was telling you about</i>

### 3.17 The pronunciation of 'the'

*The* is pronounced /ðə/ before consonant sounds: *the day, the key, the house, the way*

*The* is pronounced /ði/ before vowel sounds (i.e. words normally preceded by *an*): *the end, the hour, the inside, the outside, the ear, the eye, the umbrella*

When we wish to draw attention to the noun that follows, we use the pronunciation /ði:/ = 'the one and only' or 'the main one':

*Do you mean **the** Richard Burton, the actor?*

*If you get into difficulties, Monica is **the** person to ask.*

*Mykonos has become **the** place for holidays in the Aegean.*



Some common abbreviations are preceded by *the*, pronounced :  
/ðə/ *the BBC* (the British Broadcasting Corporation) or /ði/ *the EEC*  
(the European Economic Community). Compare *B.A.* [> 3.7]: we tend  
to use full stops with titles, but not with institutions, etc.

### 3.18 Basic uses of 'the'

When using *the*, we must always bear in mind two basic facts:

- 1 *The* normally has a definite reference (i.e. the person or thing referred to is assumed to be known to the speaker or reader).
- 2 *The* can combine with singular countable, plural countable, and uncountable nouns (which are always singular).

These two facts underlie all uses of *the*. Some of the most important of these uses are discussed in the sections that follow.

### 3.19 The use of 'the' for classifying

#### 3.19.1 Three ways of making general statements: 'the', zero, 'a/an'

- 1 With *the* + singular:

***The cobra is dangerous***, (a certain class of snakes as distinct from other classes, such as *the grass snake*)

- 2 With zero + plural:

***Cobras are dangerous***, (the whole class: all the creatures with the characteristics of snakes called *cobras*)

- 3 With *a/an* + singular:

***A cobra is a very poisonous snake***, (*a cobra* as an example of a class of reptile known as *snake*)

#### 3.19.2 The group as a whole: 'the' + nationality adjective [> App 49]

Some nationality adjectives, particularly those ending in *-ch*, *-sh* and *-ese* are used after *the* when we wish to refer to 'the group as a whole':  
e.g. *The British* = The British people in general.

However, we cannot say '*many British\**' or '*those two British\**', etc.

Plural nationality nouns can be used with *the* or the zero article to refer to the group as a whole: *the Americans* or *Americans*; or with numbers or quantifiers like *some* and *many* to refer to individuals: *two Americans*, *some Americans*:

***The British and the Americans have been allies for a long time.***

***The Japanese admire the traditions of the Chinese***

For the use of *the* + adjective {*the young*, *the old*, etc.) [> 6.12.2].

#### 3.19.3 The group as a whole: 'the' + plural names [compare > 3.22]

*The* + plural name can refer to 'the group as a whole':

Families: ***The Price sisters have opened a boutique.***

'Races': ***The Europeans are a long way from political unity.***

Politics: ***The Liberals want electoral reform***

Titles beginning with *the* are given to particular groups to emphasize their identity: e.g. *the Beatles*, *the Jesuits*.

#### 3.19.4 Specified groups: 'the' + collective noun or plural countable

We can make general statements about specified groups with *the* + collective nouns, such as *the police*, *the public* [> 2.28.2, 2.29]:

***This new increase in fares won't please the public***

The definite article, 'the'

Many plural countables can be used in a collective sense in the same way when particular groups are picked out from the rest of the human community: e.g. *the bosses*, *the unions* [compare > 2.28.1]:  
*Getting **the unions** and **the bosses** to agree isn't easy*

### 3.20 The use of 'the' for specifying

When we use *the*, the listener or reader can already identify what we are referring to, therefore *the* shows that the noun has been specified by the context/situation or grammatically. For example:

#### 3.20.1 Specifying by means of back-reference [compare > 3.10.2]

Something that has been mentioned is referred to again:

*Singleton is **a quiet village** near Chichester. **The village** has a population of a few hundred people.*

#### 3.20.2 Specifying by means of 'the' + noun + 'of' [compare > 3.26.2]

The topics referred to (e.g. *freedom*, *life*) are specified:

***The freedom of the individual** is worth fighting for.*

***The life of Napoleon** was very stormy.*

#### 3.20.3 Specifying by means of clauses and phrases

We can specify a person, thing, etc. grammatically by means of *the ...* + clause or *the ...* + phrase:

***The Smith you're looking for** no longer lives here.*

***The letters on the shelf** are for you.*

#### 3.20.4 Specifying within a limited context

*The* can be used in contexts which are limited enough for the listener or reader to identify who or what is referred to.

Reference can be made to:

- people: *Who's at the door? - It's **the postman***

- places [> Apps 21-23]:

*Where's Jenny? - She's gone to **the butcher's**.*

*- She's at **the supermarket/in the garden**.*

Most references of this kind refer to a single identifiable place.

However, in big towns and cities, it is a matter of linguistic convention to say *He's gone to the cinema/the doctor's*, etc. without referring to any specific one. This convention extends to locations *Wke the country*, *the mountains*, *the seaside*. Locations which are 'one of a kind' always require *the*: e.g. *the earth*, *the sea*, *the sky*, *the sun*, *the moon*, *the solar system*, *the galaxy*, *the universe* [compare > 3.22, 3.31].

- things: *Pass me **the salt**, please.*

- parts of a whole. When we know what is being referred to ('the whole') we can use *the* to name its parts. Assuming the listener or reader knows that we are talking about: e.g.

- a human being, we can refer to *the body*, *the brain*, *the head*, *the heart*, *the lungs*, *the mind*, *the stomach*, *the veins*.

- a room, we can refer to *the ceiling*, *the door*, *the floor*.

- an object, we can refer to *the back/the front*, *the centre*, *the inside/the outside*, *the top/the bottom*.

- a town, we can refer to *the shops*, *the street*.

- an appliance, we can refer to *the on/off switch*

### 3.21 The use of 'the' in time expressions [> App 48]

#### 3.21.1 The use of 'the' in time sequences

e.g. *the beginning, the middle, the end; the first/last; the next; the following day, the present, the past, the future*  
*In **the past**, people had fewer expectations*

#### 3.21.2 The use of 'the' with parts of the day [compare > 8.13]

e.g. *in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening, etc.:*  
*We spent **the day** at home In **the evening**, we went out.*

Note that though many time references require *the*, many do not:  
e.g. *next week, on Tuesday, last year*

#### 3.21.3 The use of 'the' with the seasons [> App 24]

*(The) spring/summer/autumn/winter. The is optional:*  
*We get a good crop of apples in **(the) autumn***

#### 3.21.4 The use of 'the' in dates [> App 47. 4]

Ordinal numbers usually require *the* when they are spoken, but not when they are written.

Compare:

*I'll see you on **May 24th*** (spoken as *May the 24th*)  
(e.g. on a letter): *24(th) May* (spoken as *the 24th of May*)

#### 3.21.5 The use of 'the' in fixed time expressions

*all the while, at the moment, for the time being, in the end, etc.:*  
*I'm afraid Mr Jay can't speak to you **at the moment**.*

### 3.22 The use of 'the' with unique items other than place names

We often use *the* with 'unique items' (i.e. where there is only one of a kind). A few examples [> 3.31 for place names]:

Institutions and organizations: *the Boy Scouts, the United Nations*

Compare items with zero: *Congress, Parliament*

Historical events, etc.: *the French Revolution, the Victorian age.*

Ships: *the Canberra, the Discovery, the Titanic.*

Documents and official titles: *the Great Charter, the Queen*

Political parties: *the Conservative Party, the Labour Party*

Public bodies: *the Army, the Government, the Police*

The press (*The* is part of the title): *The Economist, The New Yorker, The Spectator, The Times*

Note: *the press, the radio, the television.*

Compare: *What's on (the) television? What's on TV?*

Items with zero: *Life Newsweek, Punch, Time*

Titles (books, films, etc.: *The* is part of the title): *The Odyssey, The Graduate* Items with zero: *Exiles, Jaws*

Beliefs: *the angels, the Furies, the gods, the saints*

Compare *God. Muhammed*, etc. (proper nouns)  
[> 2.13, 3.27],

Climate, etc.: *the climate, the temperature, the weather*

Species: *the dinosaurs, the human race, the reptiles*

(Compare: *Man developed earlier than people think* )

### 3.23 Other references with 'the'

Examples of items with *the*:

- with superlatives [> 6.28]: *It's **the worst play I've ever seen***
- with musical instruments: *Tom plays **the piano/the flute/the violin***  
*The is often omitted in references to jazz and rock:*  
***This is a 1979 recording with Ellison on bass guitar***
- fixed phrases with *the* *the* [> 6.27.3]: *the sooner the better.*
- fixed expressions: *do the shopping, make the beds*

## The zero article

### 3.24 The zero article: summary of 'form' and use

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plural countables.	<b>0Girls</b> do better than <b>0 boys</b> at school Some people want <b>0 chips</b> with everything
uncountables (always singular):	<b>0Butter</b> makes you fat <b>0 Honesty</b> is the best policy
proper nouns:	<b>0 John</b> lives in <b>0 London</b>

---

The use of nouns on their own without an article is so fundamental in English that we should not regard this merely as 'the omission of the article', i.e. as something negative. We should think of the non-use of the article as something positive and give it a name: **the zero article**, which is usually given the symbol 0.

Abbreviations with **zero**, often **acronyms** (i.e. words made from the first letters of other words), include:

Organizations: NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

Chemical symbols:  $H_2O$  (water).

Acronyms which form 'real words': **BAS/C** (Beginners' All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code); **radar** (Radio

Detection And Ranging).

### 3.25 Basic uses of the zero article

We use the zero article before three types of nouns:

1 Plural countable nouns: e.g. *beans*.

2 Uncountable nouns (always singular): e.g. *water*.

3 Proper nouns [> 2.13]: e.g. *John*.

*The* can occur in front of plural countables and (singular)

uncountables in normal use to refer to specific items [> 3.20]:

**The pens** I gave you were free samples

**The water** we drank last night had a lot of chlorine in it

*The* can even occur in front of names [> 3.20.3]:

**The Chicago** of the 1920s was a terrifying place.

Compare: **Chicago** is a well-run city today

For *a/an* + uncountable [> 2.16.3].

Articles are frequently not used in general statements in English where they would be required in other European languages. Examples are given in the sections that follow.

### 3.26 The class as a whole: zero article + countable/uncountable

A few examples of general statements are [compare > 3.19.1]:

#### 3.26.1 Zero article + plural countable nouns

People: **Women** are fighting for their rights.  
 Places: **Museums** are closed on Mondays  
 Food: **Beans** contain a lot of fibre.  
 Occupations: **Doctors** always support each other.  
 Nationalities: **Italians** make delicious ice-cream. [> 3.19.2]  
 Animals: **Cats** do not like cold weather.  
 Insects: **Ants** are found in all parts of the world.  
 Plants: **Trees** don't grow in the Antarctic.  
 Products: **Watches** have become very accurate.  
 These can be modified by adjectives and other phrases: e.g. *women all over the world, local museums, broad beans, quartz watches.*

#### 3.26.2 Zero article + uncountable nouns (always singular)

Food: *Refined foods like **sugar** should be avoided.*  
 Drink: **Water** must be pure if it is to be drunk.  
 Substances: **Oil** is essential for the manufacture of **plastic**  
 Collections: **Money** makes the world go round.  
 Colours: **Red** is my favourite colour.  
 Activities (-ing): **Smoking** is bad for the health.  
 Other activities: **Business** has been improving steadily this year  
 Sports, games: **Football** is played all over the world.  
 Abstract: **Life** is short; **art** is long.  
 Politics: **Capitalism** is a by-product of free enterprise.  
 Philosophy: **Determinism** denies the existence of free will.  
 Languages: **English** is a world language.  
 These can be modified by adjectives and other phrases:  
 e.g. *purified water, oil from the North Sea, heavy smoking.*

### 3.27 Unique items: zero article + proper nouns

#### 3.27.1 Zero article + names of people

First names: **Elizabeth** was my mother's name.  
 Surnames: *These tools are made by **Jackson and Son***  
 Full names: **Elizabeth Brown** works for this company.  
 Initials: **J. Somers** is the pseudonym of a famous author.  
 Names can be modified by adjectives: *young Elizabeth, old Frank Robinson, Frank Robinson Jr (= Junior, AmE), Tiny Tim.*

#### 3.27.2 Zero article + titles

*Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr* (full stops may be used optionally after the abbreviations *Mr, Mrs* and *Dr*).  
*Mr* and *Mrs* are always followed by a surname or first name + surname (not just a first name!):  
**Mr and Mrs Jackson** are here to see you.  
*Mr* and *Mrs* cannot normally be used on their own as a form of address. *Miss* is also followed by a surname (*Miss Jackson*) but is used as a form of address by schoolchildren (*Please Miss!*)-  
 It is sometimes heard as a form of address by adults, though this is

## The zero article

not universally acceptable: *Can I help you, Miss?* *Ms* /mɒz/, a recent innovation, is rarely heard in speech, but is common nowadays in the written language to apply to both married and unmarried women.

*Dr* is usually followed by a surname and is abbreviated in writing (*This is Dr Brown*), but can also be used on its own as a form of address (written in full):

*It's my liver, Doctor*

Some other titles that can be used with surnames or on their own are:

*Captain, Colonel, Major, Professor.*

*May I introduce you to Captain/Colonel/Major Rogers?*

*Yes, Captain/Colonel/Major!*

**Headmaster** and **Matron** are not used with a name after them: *Thank you, Headmaster; Yes, Matron*

**Madam** and **Sir** are often used in BrE as a form of address (e.g. by shop-assistants in *Can I help you, Madam/Sir?*). *Sir* is common in AmE when we are speaking to strangers. In formal letter-writing we use **Dear Sir** and **Dear Madam** as salutations to address people whose names we do not know.

**Given titles (e.g. Sir + first name + surname or Lord + surname) are** peculiar to BrE: *Lord Mowbray, Queen Elizabeth, Sir* (unstressed) *John Falstaff* (*Sir John*, but not *\*Sir Falstaff\**). And note also: *Chancellor Adenauer, Pope John, President Lincoln*, etc.

The only titles applied to relations which can be used with names or on their own as forms of address are *uncle* and *aunt* (or *auntie*):

*Here comes Uncle Charlie/Aunt Alice* (Note: first names only.)

*Thank you, Uncle/Aunt/Auntie*

Some other titles that are used on their own as forms of address are:

*Mother, Mum* (BrE), *Mom* (AmE), *Mummy* (BrE), *Mommy* (AmE), *Father, Dad* (BrE), *Pop* (AmE), *Pa, Daddy, Granddad, Grandpa, Grandma, Baby*. Words like *cousin, sister, brother* are no longer used as forms of address with reference to relations. *Mother* and *Sister* can be used for nuns and *Brother* for monks. *Sister* can sometimes be used for nurses, like *Nurse*. *Mother* + surname occurs as a nickname (*Mother Reilly*) and *Father* is used as a form of address for Roman Catholic priests (*Father O'Brien*). People often refer to (but do not usually address) grandparents as *Grandpa Jenkins* or *Grandma Jenkins* to distinguish them from another set of grandparents with a different surname.

Adjectives can be used in front of many titles: *kind Aunt Lucy, old Mrs Reilly, mad Uncle Bill*, in some contexts, the adjective can be capitalized so that it is part of the name: *Old Mrs Reilly*. No article is required in familiar reference (*Good old/Poor old George*), but other adjectives need the definite article (*the illustrious Dr Schweitzer, the notorious Mr Hyde*). *The* is optional and often omitted when the title is a complement:

*Wilson became (the) President of the USA*

*The* is omitted when *as* is used or implied:

*Wilson was elected President of the USA.*

- 3.27.3 Zero article for days, months, seasons and holidays** [> Apps 24,48]  
***Mondays** are always difficult. **Monday** is always a difficult day*  
***June** is my favourite month. **Spring** is a lovely season*  
***Christmas** is the time for family reunions*  
 For next, last [> 3.21.2, 8.12]; for all [> 5.22.2],
- 3.27.4 Zero article for artists and their work** [compare > 3.9.4]  
 The names of artists can represent their work as a whole:  
 e.g. *Brahms, Keats, Leonardo, Lorca, Rembrandt:*  
***Bach** gives me a lot of pleasure* (i.e. Bach's music)  
***Chaucer** is very entertaining* (i.e. Chaucer's writing)  
 Adjectival combinations: *early Beethoven, late Schubert, etc.*
- 3.27.5 Zero article for academic subjects and related topics**  
*Art, Biology, Chemistry, Geography. History, Physics, etc.:*  
*According to Henry Ford, **History** is bunk'*  
***English** is a difficult language to learn well.*  
 Adjectival combinations: e.g. *Renaissance Art American History*
- 3.28 Other combinations with the zero article**
- 3.28.1 Zero article for times of the day and night** [> 8.11-13, App 48]  
 Combinations are common with *at, by, after* and *before*: *at dawn/daybreak, at sunrise/sunset/noon/midnight/dusk/night, by day/night, before morning, at/by/before/after 4 o'clock.*  
*We got up **at dawn** to climb to the summit*
- 3.28.2 Zero article for meals**  
*breakfast, lunch, tea, dinner, supper.*  
***Dinner** is served Michael's **at lunch** Let's have **breakfast***  
 The zero article is used after *have* [> App 42.1.1], but note the use of *the* where a meal is specified [> 3.20]:  
***The breakfast** I ordered still hasn't arrived*  
 and the use of *a* when classifying:  
*That was **a very nice dinner***
- 3.28.3 Zero article for nouns like 'school', 'hospital', etc.**  
 The following nouns are used with the zero article when we refer to their 'primary purpose', that is the activity associated with them:  
 e.g. *He's in bed* (for the purpose of sleeping): *bed, church, class, college, court, hospital, market prison, school, sea, town, university, work* [> 10.9.7, 10.13 4 *for home* ] They frequently combine with *be in/at, have been/gone to* [> Apps 21-23]:  
*He was sent **to prison** for four years*  
*The children went **to school** early this morning*  
 But note the use of *the* when the item, etc. is specified:  
*Your bag is under **the bed** There's a meeting at **the school** at 6*  
 Words such as *cathedral, factory, mosque, office, etc.* are always used with *a* or *the*.
- 3.28.4 Zero article for transport**  
*by air by bicycle, by bike, by boat, by bus, by car, by coach, by land, by plane, by sea, by ship, by tram, by tube, on foot-*  
*We travelled all over Europe **by bus***

## The zero article

*By + noun* is used in fixed expressions of this kind, but not where the means of transport is specified:

*I came here **on the local bus** You won't go far **on that old bike***

### 3.28.5 Zero article in fixed phrases

e.g. *arm in arm, come to light, face to face, from top to bottom, hand in hand, keep in mind, make friends, make fun of*

### 3.28.6 Zero article for 'pairs' joined by 'and' [compare > 2.38, 3.14, 6.12.2]

e.g. *day and night, father and son, husband and wife, light and dark, young and old, pen and ink, sun and moon*

*This business has been run by **father and son** for 20 years*

### 3.28.7 Zero article after 'what' and 'such' [> 3.13]

The noun is stressed after *What*; *such* is stressed before the noun:

- + plural countable:

***What fools** they are!*

*We had **such problems** getting through Customs!*

- + (singular) uncountable:

***What freedom** young people enjoy nowadays!*

*Young people enjoy **such freedom** nowadays!*

### 3.28.8 Zero article for unspecified quantity [> 3.6, 5.3, 5.10]

Sometimes we do not use *some* or *any* to refer to indefinite number or amount:

*I have **presents** for the children I have **news** for you*

*Are there **presents** for me too? Is there **news** for me too?*

## 3.29 Deliberate omission of 'a/an' and 'the'

There are many instances in everyday life when we deliberately omit both definite and indefinite articles to save space, time and money.

For example:

Newspaper headlines: *HOTEL FIRE DISASTER*

Nouns in The use of the zero article is very common in journalism:

apposition: e.g. *Film star Burt Lancaster War hero Douglas Bader, Miracle heart-swap man Keith Castle* (no commas)

'Small ads': *1st fl fit in mod blk close West End, dble recep* (= A first floor flat in a modern block close to the West End with a double reception room...)

Notes: *Causes of 2nd World War- massive re-armament, invasion Czechoslovakia, etc.* (= The causes of the Second World War: massive re-armament, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, etc.)

(Shopping) lists: *Cleaner's collect skirt*

*Supermarket: meat, eggs, sugar, melon*

Instructions: *Cut along dotted line* (= Cut along the dotted line.)

Notices: *Lift out of order* (= The lift is out of order.)

Labels: Beside e.g. a picture of a bicycle, an arrow pointing to the 'frame', with the label *FRAME* (for *the frame*)

Some dictionary *filling material used to fill cavity in tooth* (= filling: a definitions: material used to fill a cavity in a tooth.)



### 3 Articles

#### 3.30 'A/an', 'the', zero article + nouns in apposition

When two nouns or noun phrases are used in apposition [> 1.39], the use of the indefinite, definite and zero articles before the second noun or noun phrase sometimes affects the meaning:

*D H Lawrence, **an author** from Nottingham, wrote a book called 'Sons and Lovers'* (This implies that the reader may not have heard of D.H. Lawrence.)

*D H Lawrence, **the author** of 'Sons and Lovers', died in 1930* (This implies that many people have heard of D.H. Lawrence, or, if not, of 'Sons and Lovers'.)

*D H Lawrence, **author** of 'Sons and Lovers', died in 1930* (This implies that everyone has heard of D.H. Lawrence.)

#### 3.31 Zero article or 'the' with place names

Most place names are used with zero, but there is some variation. In particular, *the* is used when a countable noun like one of the following appears in the title: *bay, canal, channel, gulf, kingdom, ocean, republic, river, sea, strait, union*. *The* is often omitted on maps.

	zero	the
<b>Continents:</b>	<i>Africa, Asia, Europe</i>	-
<b>Geographical areas:</b>	<i>Central Asia Inner London, Lower Egypt, Outer Mongolia Upper Austria</i>	<i>the Arctic, the Balkans, the Equator, the Middle East the North Pole, the West</i>
<b>Historical references.</b>	<i>Ancient Greece, Medieval Europe, pre- war/post-war Germany, Roman Britain</i>	<i>the Dark Ages, the Renaissance, the Stone Age</i>
<b>Lakes</b>	<i>Lake Constance, Lake Erie, Lake Geneva</i>	
<b>Oceans/seas/ivers.</b>	-	<i>the Pacific (Ocean), the Caspian (Sea), the Nile (or the River Nile), the Mississippi (or the Mississippi River), the Suez Canal</i>
<b>Mountains:</b>	<i>Everest Mont Blanc</i>	<i>the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn</i>
<b>Mountain ranges:</b>	-	<i>the Alps, the Himalayas</i>
<b>Islands</b>	<i>Christmas Island, Delos, Easter Island</i>	<i>the Isle of Capri, the Isle of Man</i>
<b>Groups of islands.</b>	-	<i>the Azores, the Bahamas</i>
<b>Deserts.</b>	-	<i>the Gobi (Desert) the Kalahari (Desert), the Sahara (Desert)</i>

## The zero article

<b>Countries:</b>	<b>zero</b> <b>Most countries.</b> <i>Finland, Germany</i> <i>Turkey, etc.</i>	<b>the</b> <b>Unions and associations.</b> <i>the ARE (the Arab</i> <i>Republic of Egypt), the</i> <i>UK (the United Kingdom),</i> <i>the USA (the United</i> <i>States of America) the</i> <i>USSR (the Union of</i> <i>Soviet Socialist Republics)</i> <b>A few countries:</b> <i>the Argentine (or Argentina),</i> <i>the Netherlands, the</i> <i>Philippines, (the) Sudan,</i> <i>(the) Yemen</i>
<b>States/counties.</b>	<b>Most states/counties:</b> <i>Bavaria, Ohio, Surrey</i>	<i>the Vatican</i>
<b>Cities:</b> <i>Denver, London, Lyons</i>	<b>Most cities:</b> <i>Hague</i>	<i>the City (of London), The</i>
<b>Universities.</b>	<i>Cambridge University</i>	<i>the University of Cambridge</i>
<b>Streets, etc :</b>	<b>Most streets:</b> <i>London Road, Madison</i> <i>Avenue, Oxford Street,</i> <i>Piccadilly Circus</i>	<i>the High Street, the</i> <i>Strand, The Drive</i> <b>Note:</b> <i>the London road (= the road</i> <i>that leads to London)</i>
<b>Parks:</b>	<i>Central Park, Hyde Park</i>	-
<b>Addresses.</b>	<i>49 Albert Place, 3 West</i> <i>Street, 2 Gordon Square</i> <i>Crescent</i>	<i>25 The Drive, 74 The</i>
<b>Buildings.</b>	<i>Buckingham Palace,</i> <i>Westminster Abbey</i>	<i>the British Museum, the</i> <i>Library of Congress</i>
<b>Other locations'</b>	<b>The is sometimes part of the title, sometimes not:</b>	
<b>Bridges</b>	<i>London Bridge</i>	<i>The Golden Gate Bridge</i>
<b>Cinemas</b>	-	<i>The Gaumont</i> <i>The Odeon</i>
<b>Hospitals</b>	<i>Guy's (Hospital)</i>	<i>The London Hospital</i>
<b>Hotels</b>	<i>Brown's Hotel</i>	<i>The Hilton (Hotel)</i>
<b>'Places'</b>	<i>Death Valley</i> <i>Heaven, Hades</i>	<i>The Everglades</i> <i>The Underworld</i>
<b>Pubs</b>	-	<i>The White Horse</i>
<b>Restaurants</b>	<i>Leoni's (Restaurant)</i>	<i>The Cafe Royal</i>
<b>Shops</b>	<i>Selfndges</i> <i>Marks and Spencers</i>	<i>The Scotch House</i>
<b>Stations</b>	<i>Victoria (Station)</i> <i>Waterloo (Station)</i>	
<b>Theatres</b>	<i>Her Majesty's (Theatre)</i> <i>Sadler's Wells (Theatre)</i>	<i>The Phoenix (Theatre)</i> <i>The Coliseum (Theatre)</i>

# 4 Pronouns

## General information about pronouns, possessives and determiners

### 4.1 Form of personal/reflexive pronouns and possessives

	personal pronouns:		possessives:		reflexive
	subject	object	adjectives	pronouns	pronouns
singular:	<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>mine</i>	<i>myself</i>
	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>yours</i>	<i>yourself</i>
	<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>himself</i>
	<i>she</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>hers</i>	<i>herself</i>
	<i>it</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>its</i>	-	<i>itself</i>
	<i>one</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>(one's)</i>	-	<i>oneself</i>
plural:	<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>ours</i>	<i>ourselves</i>
	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>yours</i>	<i>yourselves</i>
	<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>their</i>	<i>theirs</i>	<i>themselves</i>

- demonstrative adjectives and pronouns: *this*/*that*/*these*-*those* [> 4.32].
- indefinite pronouns: *some*, *any* and their compounds [> 4.37].
- relative pronouns: *who* *whom*, *that*, *which* [> 1.27].
- possessive adjectives (*my*, etc. [> 4.19]) function as **determiners** rather than pronouns, but they are treated together with possessive pronouns (*mine*, etc.) because they are related in form and meaning.

### 4.2 The difference between pronouns and determiners

#### 4.2.1 Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that can be used in place of a noun or a noun phrase, as the word itself tells us: pro-noun. We do not normally put a noun after a pronoun except in special combinations such as *you students* *she-bear*, etc. We use pronouns like *he* *she*, *it* and *they* when we already know who or what is referred to. This saves us from having to repeat the name or the noun whenever we need to refer to it: *John arrived late last night. He had had a tiring journey* *I wrote to Kay and told her what had happened.* However, we normally use *I/me*, *you* and *we/us* for direct reference to ourselves or the person(s) addressed and not in place of nouns.

#### 4.2.2 Determiners [> 3.1] compared with pronouns

Determiners are always followed by a noun. Words such as *some* [> 5.10] and *this* [> 4.32] followed by a noun function as determiners. When they stand on their own, they function as pronouns:

- I want some milk,* (*some* + noun, functioning as **determiner**)
- I want some* (*some* on its own, functioning as **pronoun**)
- I want this book* (*this* + noun, functioning as **determiner**)
- I want this* (*this* on its own, functioning as **pronoun**)

## Personal pronouns

### 4.3 Form of personal pronouns

---

subject	[> 1.4]:	I	you	he	she	it	one	we	you	they
object	[> 1.9]:	me	you	him	her	it	one	us	you	them

---

### 4.4 Notes on the form of personal pronouns

- 1 Though these words are called **personal pronouns**, they do not refer only to people. For example:  
***Your breakfast** is ready **It** is on the table*  
We call them 'personal pronouns' because they refer to grammatical 'persons' (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and can be grouped like this:  
**1st person:** *I, we*  
**2nd person:** *you*  
**3rd person:** *he, she, it, one, they*
- 2 Most European languages have two forms of *you*, an informal one for family, close friends, children, etc. and a formal one for strangers, superiors, etc. In English, we do not make this distinction: the one word, *you*, is used for everybody. There aren't different singular and plural forms of *you* (except for *yourself yourselves*).
- 3 Note that the singular subject pronouns *he she* and *it* have the same plural form: *they*; and the singular object pronouns *him her* and *'* have the same plural form: *them*.
- 4 The choice of pronoun depends on the noun that is being replaced [> 2.39-40, 4.2.1]. Pronouns (except for *you*) agree with the nouns they replace in **number** (showing us whether they are referring to singular or plural). Some agree in **gender** (showing us whether they are referring to masculine, feminine or neuter):  
***John** is here **He** (replacing *John*) can't stay long*  
*The **windows** are dirty **I** must wash **them** (replacing *windows*)*  
*If you see **Joanna** please give **her** (replacing *Joanna*) this message*
- 5 We do not normally use a noun and a pronoun together:  
*My friend invited me to dinner* (Not *\*My friend, he... \**)  
*I parked my car outside* (Not *\*My car, I parked it... \**)

### 4.5 Subject pronouns

Subject pronouns nearly always come before a verb in statements. They are used when the person or thing referred to can be identified by both speaker and hearer:

***John** didn't find us in so **he** left a message*

In English, the subject of a sentence *must be expressed*. If it is not directly expressed, its presence is strongly implied [> 4.5.8]. This can be contrasted with some other European languages, where the use of subject pronouns can be optional.

#### 4-5.1 The first person singular: 'I'

The speaker or writer uses *I* when referring to himself or herself. This is the only personal pronoun which is always spelt with a capital letter.

#### 4 Pronouns

Note that *I* is written as a capital letter whether it's at the beginning of a sentence or not

*I think therefore I am John told me I needn't wait*

In polite usage it is usual to avoid mentioning yourself first

**Jane and I** have already eaten (in preference to *I and Jane*)

##### 4.5.2 The second person singular and plural: 'you'

We use this when we address another person, or two or more people

Are **you** ready **Jill**? Or Are **you** (both/all) ready?

*For you* in the sense of 'anyone in general' [> 4.9]

##### 4.5.3 The third person singular masculine: 'he' [compare > 4.8]

*He* stands for a male person who has already been mentioned

*Don't expect David to accept your invitation He's far too busy*

*He* is used in certain proverbial expressions to mean 'anyone'

*He who hesitates is lost*

##### 4.5.4 The third person singular feminine: 'she' [compare > 4.8]

*She* stands for a female person who has already been mentioned

Ask **Jennifer** if **she**'ll be home in time for dinner

##### 4.5.5 The third person singular neuter: 'it' [compare > 4.8]

*It* can refer to a thing, a quality, an event, a place, etc

*That vase is valuable It's more than 200 years old*

**Loyalty** must be earned *It can't be bought*

*I love swimming It keeps me fit*

*Last night I ran out of petrol It really taught me a lesson*

*You should visit Bath It's not far from Bristol*

We can use *it* to identify people

*There's a knock at the door Who is it? -It's the postman*

*Who's that? -It's our new next-door neighbour Mrs Smith*

Compare this request for information (not identification)

*Who's Mrs Smith? - She's our new next-door neighbour*

We also use *it* when we don't know the sex of a baby or child

*It's a lovely baby Is it a boy or a girl?*

We refer to an animal as *it* when the sex is not known or not worth identifying

*I'm fed up with that dog of yours It never stops barking*

##### 4.5.6 The first person plural: 'we' (two or more people)

We can include the listener or not

*Let's go shall we?* (including the listener)

*We're staying here What about you?* (not including the listener)

*We* is often used to mean 'anyone/everyone', e.g. in newspapers

*We should applaud the government's efforts to create more jobs*

*We* is used in the same way in general statements

*We all fear the unknown*

##### 4.5.7 The third person plural: 'they' (two or more people, things, etc.)

*They* can stand for persons, animals or things already mentioned

**John and Susan** phoned **They** re coming round this evening

Look at those **cows!** **They** never stop eating

**Our curtains** look dirty **They** need a good wash

*They* can be used in general statements to mean 'people'

**They** say (or **People** say) *oil prices will be going up soon*

*They* is also commonly used to refer to 'the authorities'

**They** *re putting up oil prices again soon*

*They* is also used to mean 'someone else, not me'

*If you ask at Reception they will tell you where it is*

For *they* in place of *anyone*, etc [> 4.40]

For the use of *we you* and *they* with *both* and *all* [> 5.19-20]

#### 4.5.8 Omission of subject in abbreviated statements

In everyday speech, we sometimes omit subject pronouns

*Found this in the garden Know who it belongs to?*

(= *I found this in the garden Do you know who it belongs to?*)

#### 4.6 Object pronouns

Object pronouns replace nouns in object positions They can be

- direct objects [> 1.9] *Have you met Marilyn? I've never met her*

- indirect objects [> 1.9] *If you see Jim give him my regards*

- objects of prepositions [> 8.1] *I really feel sorry for them*

In polite usage it is usual to avoid mentioning yourself first

*They were met by John and me* (in preference to *me and John*)

We often use *both* and *all* with *you* to avoid ambiguity (since *you* can refer to *both* or *all*) [> 5.19-20]

*Good luck to you both/all*

*Us* is often used very informally in place of *me*, particularly after the imperatives of verbs like *give* and *pass*

*Give us a hand with this trunk will you?*

In everyday speech, it is normal for unstressed *him her* and *them* to be pronounced *im er* and *em*

*Give 'im the money Give 'er a kiss Give 'em all you've got*

#### 4.7 Subject or object pronoun?

Here are a few exceptions to the rules for using subject and object pronouns outlined in 4.5 and 4.6

##### 4.7.1 Object pronouns after 'be'

Object pronouns are normally used in preference to subject pronouns after *be* in everyday speech

*Who is it? - It's me/him/her/us/them*

##### 4.7.2 Object pronouns (especially 'me') as subjects [> 13.29.3, 13.42n2]

Subject pronouns (*I she*, etc.) are not normally used by themselves or in short answers with *not* Object pronouns are used instead

*Who wants a ride on my bike? - Me/Not me!*

An object pronoun can also occur as the subject of a particular kind of exclamatory question for stress or emphasis

*You can tell him - Me tell him? Not likely!*

*Me* occurs very informally in 'cleft sentences' [> 4.14]

*Don't blame Harry It was me who opened the letter*

where careful usage would require

*It was I who* (Or *I was the one who* )

#### 4.7.3 Object or subject pronouns after comparatives with 'as' and 'than'

Object pronouns are commonly used in statements like the following when *as* and *than* function as prepositions:

*She's as old as me/as him You're taller than me/than her*

However, subject pronouns are used if *as* or *than* function as conjunctions, i.e. when they are followed by a clause [> 1.53, 6.27.1]:

*She's as old as I am/he is You're taller than I am/she is*

#### 4.7.4 Object pronouns in exclamations

Object pronouns often occur in exclamations like the following:

*He's got to repay the money - Poor him!* (= Isn't he unlucky!)

*She's been promoted - Lucky her!* (= Isn't she lucky!)

#### 4.8 Gender in relation to animals, things and countries

Animals are usually referred to with *it* as if they were things [> 4.5.5]. We only use *he*, *she*, *who*, etc. when there is a reason for doing so. For example, animals may be 'personalized' as pets, as farm animals, or in folk tales, and referred to as male or female:

*What kind of dog is Spot? He's a mongrel.*

Other 'lower animals' and insects are only referred to as *he*, *she*, etc. when we describe their biological roles:

*The cuckoo lays her eggs in other birds' nests*

or, sometimes, when we regard their activities with interest:

*Look at that frog! Look at the way he jumps!*

Ships, cars, motorbikes and other machines are sometimes referred to as if they were feminine when the reference is affectionate:

*My cars not fast, but she does 50 miles to the gallon*

Countries can also be 'personified' as feminine: e.g.

*In 1941 America assumed her role as a world power*

### 'One'

#### 4.9 General statements with 'one' and 'you'

*One*, used as an indefinite pronoun meaning 'everyone/anyone' [> 4.37], is sometimes used (formally) in general statements:

*World trade is improving, but one cannot expect miracles*

In everyday speech, the informal *you* is preferred:

*Can you buy refrigerators in Lapland? (= Can anyone ...?)*

*One* may be used to replace *I*, but this tends to sound pompous:

*One likes to have one's breakfast in bed now and again.*

*One* can be linked with *one's*, just as *you* can be linked with *your*-

However, constructions with *one*, *one's* and *oneself* are often awkward because of the repetition of *one*-

*One should do one's best at all times*

(For: *You should do your best at all times*)

*One shouldn't be too hard on oneself*

(For: *You shouldn't be too hard on yourself*)

In AmE *one's/oneself* can be replaced by *his/her, himself/herself*-

*One should give himself/herself a holiday from time to time*

For the use of the passive in place of *one* [> 12.4.3].

'One'

#### 4.10 'One' as a 'prop word' after a determiner [compare > 4.16, 5.30]

*One* and *ones* are frequently used as substitution words after a determiner (*that one*, etc). *One(s)* is sometimes called a **prop word** because it 'supports' the meaning of the noun it replaces. *One* is used to replace a countable noun in the singular and *ones* to replace a plural countable. *One* and *ones* can refer to people or things and we use them when we wish to avoid repeating a noun:

Things: *Have you seen this dictionary?* (singular countable)

- *Is that **the one** that was published recently?*

People: *Have you met **our German neighbours**?* (plural countable)

- *Are they **the ones** who moved here recently?*

We cannot use *one* when referring to an uncountable noun:

*Don't use powdered **milk** Use this fresh (**milk**)* (Not \**one*\*)

*One* and *ones* as prop words are most commonly used when we are identifying people and things, particularly after *Which?*, *this/that*, and adjectives [compare > 6.6]. *One* and *ones* are optional after *Which?*, after *this/that* and after superlatives. *Ones* can be used after *these/those*, though it is usually avoided:

**Which (one)** would you like? - **This (one) or that (one)?**

**Which (ones)** would you like? - **These (ones) or those (ones)?**

**Which (one/ones)** do you want? - **The cheapest (one/ones)**

We normally use *one/ones* after the positive form of adjectives:

**Which (one/ones)** do you want? - **The large one/ones**

After colour adjectives, *one* and *ones* may be omitted in answers:

**Which (one/ones)** do you want? - **I'll have the red (one/ones)**

In statements, requests, etc. *one* and *ones* must be used after *this/that/these/those* + adjective:

*I'll try on a few of these shirts Please pass me **that white one***

*One* and *ones* can be used in specific references after the definite article (*the one/the ones*), demonstratives (*this one*) or with defining phrases (*the one/ones with pink ribbons*) to identify or to indicate the location of people and things:

**Which woman** do you mean? - **The one in the green dress**

**Which boys** rang the doorbell? - **The ones in the street**

**Which shirt(s)** do you want? - **The one(s) in the window**

#### 4.11 Reference to two: 'the one...the other'

We can refer to two people or things (or to two groups) through the following combinations: (*the*) *one* *the other*, *the first* *the second*, or more formally, *the former* *the latter*

*You shouldn't get Botticelli and Bocchenni mixed up*

**(The) one** **the other**

**The first** is a painter and **the second** is a composer

**The former** **the latter**

*The former and the latter can have a plural verb:*

*Beans and peas are good value **The former/The latter** are cheap*



**'It'****4.12 'It' as an 'empty subject'**

We often use *it* in sentences referring to time, the weather, temperature or distance. When used in this way, *it* is sometimes called an **empty subject** because it carries no real information. It is present because every English sentence has to contain a subject and a verb [> 4.5]:

Time: *It's 8 o'clock* ***It's*** Tuesday ***It's*** May 25th.

*It's time...* [> 11.43]: ***It's*** time (for us) to leave

Weather: ***It's*** hot *It's* raining ***It*** rains a lot here

Temperature: *It's* 37° centigrade/Celsius

Distance: *It's* 20 miles to/from London

The tides: *It's* high tide at 11 44

Environment: *It's* noisy/smoky in here

Present situation: *Isn't it* awful<sup>1</sup> *Isn't it* a shame<sup>1</sup>

With *since*: *It's* three years ***since*** we last met

With *says*: ***It*** says here there was a big fire in Hove

With *take* [> 16.21]: ***It*** takes (us) half an hour to get to work

And note many expressions with *it*, e.g. *it* doesn't matter, *it's* no use,

(*it* as subject); *I've had it*; *That does it?* (*it* as object).

**4.13 'It' as a preparatory subject**

Sometimes sentences beginning with *it* continue with an infinitive, a gerund or a noun clause [> 1.23.1, 16.27.2, 16.47]. It is possible to begin such sentences with an infinitive or gerund, but we generally prefer *it*:

*It's* pleasant to lie in the sun (To lie in the sun is pleasant)

*It's* pleasant lying in the sun (Lying in the sun is pleasant)

*It's* a shame that Tom isn't here (That Tom isn't here is a shame)

*It* doesn't matter when we arrive (When we arrive doesn't matter)

The true subject in the above sentences with *it* is the infinitive, gerund or noun clause and *it* is preparatory to the subject.

*It* as a preparatory subject often combines with:

**adjectives:** e.g. *difficult, easy, important, vital* [> App 44]:

***It's*** easy (for me) to make mistakes.

**nouns:** e.g. *fun, a pity, a pleasure, a shame* [> 1.23.1, 16.34]:

***It's*** a pleasure (for us) to be here

**verbs:** e.g. *appear, happen, look, seem* [> 1.47.2, 10.25]:

***It*** appears that he forgot to sign the letter

***It*** now looks certain that the fire was caused by a cigarette end

**4.14 The use of 'it' in 'cleft sentences'**

We can begin sentences with *It is* or *It was* + subject + *that* or *who(m)*, if we wish to emphasize the word or phrase that follows. Sentences formed in this way are called **cleft sentences** because a simple sentence is split up (cleft) into two clauses using the *it*-construction:

'It'

*Freda phoned Jack last night* (simple sentence, no emphasis)  
*It was Freda who phoned Jack last night* (and not Rita)  
*It was Jack who(m) Freda phoned last night* (and not Richard)  
*It was last night that Freda phoned* (and not this morning)

#### 4.15 'It' as a 'preparatory object' [compare > 1.14]

*It* + adjective can be used after verbs like *find* [> 16.22] to prepare us for the infinitive or the that-clause that follows:

+ infinitive: *Tim finds it difficult to concentrate*

+ f/iaf-clause: *Jan thinks it funny that I've taken up yoga*

*It* can also be used after verbs like *enjoy*, *hate*, *like*, *love*  
*I don't like it when you shout at me.*

#### 4.16 Specific 'it/they', etc. and non-specific 'one/some', etc.

##### 4.16.1 Obligatory subjects: 'it', 'they', 'one', 'some' (for things)

*It* and *they* are used as subjects if the reference is specific:

specific: *Did the letter I've been expecting come?*

- Yes, *it* came this morning (*the* + singular noun = *it*)

*Did the letters I've been expecting come?*

- Yes, *they* came this morning, (*the* + plural noun = *they*)

*One* and *some*, functioning on their own as pronouns, can be used as subjects if the reference is non-specific:

non-specific: *Did a letter come for me?*

- Yes, *one* came/some came for you this morning  
(*a/an* + singular noun = *one*)

*Did any letters come for me?*<sup>9</sup>

- Yes, *some* came/one came for you this morning  
(*any/some* + plural noun = *some* in a positive answer or  
*none* in a negative answer)

##### 16.2 Obligatory objects: 'it', 'them', 'one', 'some', 'any' (for things)

An object is obligatory after transitive verbs, such as *enjoy* or *make*, and verbs which are being used transitively, such as *play* [> App 1].

*It*, *them* or a noun must be used as objects when the reference is specific [> 4.16.1]:

*What do you think of this cake?*

- *I like it/I don't like it* (Not *\*I like/don't like\**)

*What do you think of these cakes?*

- *I like them/I don't like them* (Not *\*I like/don't like\**)

*One* must be used as an object when it stands for *a/an* + countable noun (i.e. the reference is non-specific) [> 4.16.1]:

*Have a biscuit* - *I've had one/I don't want one* thank you

*Would you like a drink?* - *I'd love one* thank you

*Some* and *any* [> 5 10] must be used as objects when there is a non-specific reference to uncountable nouns and plural countables:

*Have you got any sugar? Can you lend me some please?*<sup>9</sup>

*Sorry, I haven't got any* (to spare).

*Have you got any drawing-pins? Can I borrow some please?*<sup>9</sup>

- *I'm afraid I haven't got any* (to spare)

#### 4.17 'So', not 'it' with certain verbs [compare > 1.23.5]

After verbs such as *believe, expect, fear, guess* (especially AmE- / *guess so*), *hope, imagine, presume, say, suppose, tell someone 'think* (also after *I'm afraid* and *It seems/appears*), it is usual to follow with *so* (never ,t) in affirmative responses, so that we do not repeat a whole clause:

*Is it true that Geoff has had a heart attack?*

- *I am afraid so/I believe so/ I think so It seems so*

In negative responses, *not* can be used directly after *be afraid believe, expect, fear guess* (especially AmE: *I guess not*) *hope imagine, presume, suppose, think* (and *It seems/appears*)-  
*Has Anne got into university?*

- *I am afraid not/I believe not/I think not It seems not*

Alternative responses using *not so* are possible with *believe expect imagine, say, suppose* and *think* :

*I don't believe so/ imagine so/ suppose so/ think so*

*So* can also precede the subject in short responses-

- with verbs like *believe, gather, hear, notice, see understand*  
*The stock market share-index has risen sharply*

- *So I believe/gather/hear/notice/see/understand*

- with verbs like *say, tell, seem, appear*

*So you said So he told me So it seems So it appears*

- before or after (I) *should/would* + verbs like *expect, hope say think* (implying 'this is what ought to happen')-

*So I should (or would) hope I Or: I should (or would)hope so'*

#### 4.18 'So' or 'it' after certain verbs

*So* and *it* are normally interchangeable after *do*, when *do* substitutes for another verb which has already been used and when it reflects an action that has been deliberately performed-

*Please lay the table - I've just done so / I've just done it*

After verbs like *guess, know, remember, it* can be used or omitted-

*Jack and Jill were secretly married - Yes, I know I had guessed*  
(= I know it. I had guessed it.)

### Possessive adjectives/possessive pronouns

#### 4.19 Form of possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns

adjectives *my your his her its one's our your their*  
pronouns *mine yours his hers - - ours yours theirs*

#### 4.20 Notes on form (possessive adjectives/pronouns)

1 With the exception of *one's*, the apostrophe s ('s) is unacceptable with possessive adjectives and pronouns. We should not confuse its (possessive) with *it's* = *it is* [> 10.6] or *it has* [> 10.29]

- 2 There are no familiar/non-familiar forms for the second person singular and plural [> 4.4n.2]: *your* and *yours* are used in all cases.
- 3 *One's* can be used as an impersonal possessive adjective, but not as a pronoun: ***One's first duty is to one's family*** [> 4.9]

## 1.21 Possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns compared

Possessive adjectives and pronouns show possession, i.e. that someone or something belongs to somebody. They answer the question *Whose?* The possessive adjectives *my*, *your*, etc. are determiners [> 3.1, 4.2.2] and must always be used in front of a noun. Their form is regulated by the possessor, not by the thing possessed. *His* refers to possession by a male: *John's daughter* (= *his daughter*). *Her* refers to possession by a female: *Jane's son* (= *her son*). *Its* refers to possession by an animal or thing: *the cat's milk* (= *its milky*) *the jacket of this book* (= *its jacket*).

*My*, *your* and *their* refer to possession by males or females:

***My*** house is there,' ***Sally*** said / ***John*** said

Here is ***your*** tea, ***Sally/John***, 'mother said

The ***boys'*** coats are here and ***their*** caps are there

The ***girls'*** coats are here and ***their*** berets are there

*Their* can also refer to possession by animals or things, as in:

***Dogs*** should have ***their*** own kennels outside the house

***Cars with their engines*** at the back are very noisy

The possessive pronouns *mine*, *yours*, etc. are never used in front of nouns and are stressed in speech. They refer equally to persons and things, singular or plural. *Its* is never used as a pronoun.

*These are my children* *These children are mine*

*These are my things* *These things are mine*

*I can't find my pen* *Can you lend me yours?*

Possessive pronouns can come at the beginning of a sentence:

*This is my cup* ***Yours*** is the one that's chipped

*My father/My mother is a lawyer* - ***Mine*** is a doctor

For 's/s' possession without a noun [> 2.44, 2.51].

Noun + *of it* can sometimes be used in place of *its* + noun [compare > 2.50]:

*How much is that book?* *I've forgotten the price of it/its price*

For the use of *of* + possessive pronoun [> 2.52].

## 4.22 The use of 'my own'

Extra emphasis can be given to the idea of possession by the addition of *own* to all possessive adjectives (not pronouns). The resulting combinations can function as possessive adjectives (*my own room*) or possessive pronouns (*it is my own*). Instead of (*my*) *own* + noun we often use *a/an* + noun *of (my) own*.

*I'd love to have my own room/a room of my own*

*Our cat has its own corner/a corner of its own in this room*

Further emphasis can be given with *very*-

*I'd love to have my very own room/a room of my very own*

We can say *one's own room* or *a room of one's own*, but we do not use *one* as a prop word [> 4.10] after *(my) own*:  
*Don't use my comb Use your own* (Not *\*your own one\**)

#### 4.23 The use of 'the' in place of possessive adjectives

*The* is never used with possessive adjectives and pronouns:

*This is my car This car is mine*, (no *the*) [> 3.4]

However, sometimes *the* is used where we might expect a possessive adjective, e.g. with parts of the body after prepositions:

*He punched me in the face A bee stung her on the nose*

This use can be extended to hair and clothes (i.e. things which are 'attached' to the body):

*Miss Pnngle pulled Clannda by the hair/by the sleeve*

Possessive adjectives (not *\*the\**) must be used in most other cases:

*She shook her head/cleaned her teeth I've hurt my finger*

In informal contexts, *the* can be used instead of (usually) *my/your/our* *children, family, kids*, as in:

*How's the family? Where are the children?*

But e.g. *Meet the wife* is familiar but not universally acceptable.

### Reflexive pronouns

#### 4.24 Form of reflexive pronouns

**singular:** *myself yourself himself, herself, itself, oneself*

**plural:** *ourselves yourselves themselves*

Reflexive pronouns are really compounds formed from possessive adjectives + *-self*; e.g. *myself yourse*"; or from object pronouns + *-self*: e.g. *himself*.

#### 4.25 Obligatory use of reflexive pronouns after certain verbs

There are only a very few verbs in English which must always be followed by a reflexive pronoun: e.g. *absent avail, pride-*

*The soldier absented himself without leave for three weeks*

Other verbs are very commonly followed by reflexives: e.g. *amuse blame, cut, dry, enjoy, hurt, introduce*

*I cut myself shaving this morning*

*We really enjoyed ourselves at the funfair*

Of course, these verbs can be followed by ordinary objects:

*I ve cut my lip We enjoyed the funfair*

The important thing to remember is that verbs of this kind are never followed by object pronouns (*me, him, her*, etc.) when the subject and object refer to the same person:

*I've cut myself* (Not *'me'*)

Note that these verbs are all transitive [> 1.9]. This means they must have an object and this is commonly a reflexive pronoun. The one exception is the intransitive verb *behave*, which can be followed (but need not be) by a reflexive pronoun:

*Please behave (yourself) The children behaved (themselves)*

#### 4.26 Optional use of reflexive pronouns after certain verbs

Other verbs which can point the action back to the subject (e.g. *dress, hide, shave, wash*) can be intransitive, so we don't need reflexive pronouns, though it would not be 'wrong' to use them. When these verbs are intransitive, it is assumed that the subject is doing the action to himself:

*I must **dress/wash*** (as opposed to *dress/wash myself*)

We often use (and stress) reflexive pronouns after such verbs when referring to children, the very old, invalids, etc. to indicate that an action is performed with conscious effort:

*Polly's nearly learnt how to **dress herself** now*

#### 4.27 Verbs which are not normally reflexive

Verbs such as *get up, sit down, stand up, wake up* and combinations with *gef* (*get cold/hot/tired, dressed, married*), often reflexive in other European languages, are not normally so in English:

*I **got up** with difficulty*

Reflexives would be used for special emphasis only:

*Will you **get yourself dressed**? We're late*

#### 4.28 Reflexive pronouns as objects of ordinary verbs

Reflexive pronouns can be used after many ordinary verbs if we wish to point back to the subject:

*I got such a shock when I **saw myself** in the mirror.*

Reflexives can be used as indirect objects:

*The boss **gave himself** a rise* (= gave a rise to himself)

Note there are a number of short conversational expressions with reflexive pronouns: e.g. *Help yourself, Make yourself at home<sup>1</sup>, Don't upset yourself!*; and also a few fixed expressions: e.g. *hear (yourself) speak, make (yourself) heard*

*I couldn't **make myself heard** above the noise*

There is a difference in meaning between *themselves* and *each other* after verbs such as *accuse, blame, help, look at* [compare > 5.28]:

*The two bank clerks **blamed themselves** for the mistake*

(= They both took the blame.)

*The two bank clerks **blamed each other** for the mistake*

(= The one blamed the other.)

#### 4.29 Reflexive pronouns as objects of prepositions

Reflexive pronouns can occur after prepositions which often follow verbs, nouns or adjectives [> Apps 27-29]:

***Look after yourself!***

*Lucy's looking very **pleased with herself***

or in combination with adverb particles: the reflexive comes between the verb and the particle [> 8.28]:

*We gave **ourselves** up*

*We pulled **ourselves** out (of the water)*

#### 4 Pronouns

*Myself* is sometimes used (unnecessarily) instead of *me* or *I*:  
*They sent invitations to Geoff and myself (me is preferable)*  
*Kate and myself think (Kate and I. is preferable)*

Reflexives also occur in a few idiomatic expressions, such as:  
***Strictly between ourselves, do you think she's sane?***  
***In itself his illness is nothing to worry about***

In all other cases we use object pronouns after prepositions when the reference is to place or after *with*-.  
*I haven't got any money on me (Not \*myself\*)*  
*There was a bus in front of us (Not "ourselves")*  
*Did you bring any money with you?*

*By* + reflexive means 'unaided' or 'alone':  
*Susie made this doll's dress all by herself (= unaided)*  
*He lives by himself (= alone)*

Reflexives can be used for emphasis after e.g. *but* and *than*-.  
*You can blame no one but yourself (= except yourself)*  
*Harry would like to marry a girl younger than himself*

After some prepositions we can use either form of pronoun:  
*I think this new magazine is aimed at people like us/ourselves*  
*Who's prepared to work overtime besides me/myself<sup>9</sup>*

#### 4.30 Reflexive pronouns used for emphasis

Reflexive pronouns can be used freely (but optionally) after nouns and pronouns for emphasis to mean 'that person/thing and only that person/thing' (*I myself, you yourself, Tom himself, etc.*):

***You yourself heard the explosion quite clearly***  
***The engine itself is all right, but the lights are badly damaged***

The reflexive can also come at the end of a sentence or clause:

***You heard the explosion yourself***

and particularly where there is a comparison or contrast:

***Tom's all right himself, but his wife is badly hurt***

When used for special emphasis, reflexives are stressed in speech, especially when there is a possibility of ambiguity:

*Mr Bates rang the boss him'self (and not the boss's secretary)*

Reflexive pronouns are used in (often rude) rejoinders, such as:

*Can you fetch my bags, please? - Fetch them yourself*

And note the special use of *Do it yourself* (often abbreviated to D.I.Y.) to refer to decorating, repairs, etc. we do ourselves (e.g. to save money) instead of employing others:

*I read about it in a Do It Yourself magazine*

#### 4.31 Reflexive pronouns after 'be' and verbs related to 'be'

After *be* and related verbs such as *feel*, *look*, *seem*, reflexives can be used to describe feelings, emotions and states:

*I don't know what's the matter with me I'm not myself today*

Occasionally, we use a possessive adjective + adjective + *self* (noun):

*Meg doesn't look her usual cheerful self today*  
*Frank didn't sound his happy self on the phone this morning*

## Demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

### 4.32 Form of demonstrative adjectives and pronouns

'Near' references matching *here*:

**singular**     *this*     *boy*     *girl*     *tree*     *book*     *money*

**plural:**     *these*     *boys*     *girls*     *trees*     *books*

'Distant' references matching *there*:

**singular:**     *that*     *boy*     *girl*     *tree*     *book*     *money*

**plural:**     *those*     *boys*     *girls*     *trees*     *books*

### 4.33 'This/that' and 'these/those': nearness and distance

'Nearness' may be physical. *This* and *these* may refer to something you are actually holding or that is close to you, or that you consider to be close to you, or to something that is present in a situation. We can associate *this* and *these* with *here*:

*The picture I am referring to is **this one here***

*The photographs I meant are **these here***

*This* and *these* can refer to nearness in time (*now*):

*Go and tell him now, **this instant***

'Distance' may be physical. *That* and *those* can refer to something that is not close to you, or that you do not consider to be close to you. We can associate *that* and *those* with *there*:

*The picture I am referring to is **that one there***

*The photographs I meant are **those there***

*That* and *those* can refer to distance in time (*then*):

*Operations were difficult in the 18th century In **those days there** were no anaesthetics*

### 4.34 Demonstrative adjectives/pronouns compared

Demonstratives can be adjectives: that is, they can be determiners [> 3.1] and go before a noun or *one/ones* [> 4.10]; or they can be pronouns used in place of a noun or noun phrase [> 4.2.1]:

**adjective + noun:** *I don't like **this coat***

**adjective + one**     *I don't like **this one***

**pronoun:**     *I don't like **this***

Demonstratives used as pronouns normally refer to things, not people:

*I found **this wallet** I found **this (pronoun)***

*I know **this girl** (*this* cannot stand on its own here)*

Demonstrative pronouns after *What?* refer to things:

*What's **this/that?** What are **these/those?***

*This* and *that* as pronouns after *Who?* refer to people:

*Who's **this**? Who's **that**?*

*These* and *those* referring to people are followed by a (plural) noun.

Compare *What are these/those?* (i.e. things) with:

*Who are **these/those people/men/women/children?***

But *those*, closely followed by *who*, can be used on its own:

***Those** (of you) **who** wish to go now may do so quietly*



#### 4.35 Common uses of 'this/that' and 'these/those'

*This/that/these/those* used as adjectives or as pronouns have many different uses. For examples [> App 7].

#### 4.36 Subject pronouns replacing demonstratives

Demonstratives are replaced by *it* or *they* in short responses when the thing or things referred to have been identified [compare > 13.19n7]:  
*Is this/that yours?* Yes, **it is** (Not \*Yes, *this/that is*\*)  
*Are these/those yours?* Yes, **they are**. (Not \*Yes, *these/those are*\*)  
*He/she* can replace *this/that* when the reference is to people:  
**This/That** is Mrs/Mr Jones **She's/He's** in charge here

### Indefinite pronouns

#### 4.37 Form of indefinite pronouns

Compounds of *some, any, no* and *every*

<i>some-</i>	<i>any-</i>	<i>no-</i>	<i>every-</i>
<i>someone</i>	<i>anyone</i>	<i>no one</i>	<i>everyone</i>
<i>somebody</i>	<i>anybody</i>	<i>nobody</i>	<i>everybody</i>
<i>something</i>	<i>anything</i>	<i>nothing</i>	<i>everything</i>

#### 4.38 Notes on the form of indefinite pronouns

- 1 There is no noticeable difference in meaning and use between *-one* forms and *-body* forms. They refer to male(s) and female(s).
- 2 These compounds (except *no one*) are normally written as one word.
- 3 These compounds (except those formed with *-thing*) have a genitive form [> 2.48]: *Grammar isn't **everyone's** idea of fun*
- 4 Compare compound adverbs which are formed with *-where*: *somewhere, anywhere, nowhere* and *everywhere* [> 7.18].

#### 4.39 Uses of 'some/any/no/every' compounds

*Some/any/no/every* compounds (except *-where* compounds) function as pronouns. They are called indefinite because we do not always know who or what we are referring to. These compounds follow the rules given for the use of *some, any* and *no* [> 5.10-11].

Briefly, *some* compounds are used in:

- the affirmative: *I **met someone** you know last night*
- questions expecting 'yes': ***Was there something** you wanted?*
- offers and requests: ***Would you like something** to drink?*

*Any* compounds are used:

- in negative statements: ***There isn't anyone** who can help you*
- in questions when we are doubtful about the answer:  
*te **there anyone** here who's a doctor?*
- with *hardly*, etc: *I've had **hardly anything** to eat today*

*No* compounds are used when the verb is affirmative [> 13.9]:

***There's no one** here at the moment*  
 (= There isn't anyone...)

#### 4.40 Personal pronoun reference with indefinite pronouns

The main problem (also for native speakers) is to know which personal pronouns to use to 'replace' the indefinite pronouns referring to people (*someone anyone no one everyone*). This is because English has no singular personal pronouns for both male and female. If we want to use personal pronouns (in place of the gaps) in a sentence like:

**Everyone** knows what *has to do* doesn't *?*

the traditional rule is to use masculine pronouns, unless the context is definitely female (e.g. a girls' school):

**Everyone** knows what **he** has to do doesn't **he**?

However, in practice, the plural pronouns, *they them*, etc. (which refer to both sexes) are used instead without a plural meaning:

**Everyone** knows what **they** have to do don't **they**?

This has the advantage of avoiding clumsy combinations like *he or she* and does not annoy mixed groups of people. However, it is not considered acceptable by some native speakers [compare > 2.41, 5.31].

#### 4.41 Indefinite pronouns + adjectives and/or the infinitive

Indefinite pronouns can combine with:

- positive adjectives: *This is **something special***  
*This isn't **anything important***
  - comparative adjectives: *I'd like **something cheaper***
  - the infinitive: *Haven't you got **anything to do**?*
  - for (me) + infinitive: *Is there **anything for me to sit on**?*
- (Note that adjectives come after indefinite pronouns.)

#### 4.42 Indefinite pronouns + 'else'

Like question-words (*What Who*, etc. [> 13.31n8]), indefinite pronouns readily combine with *else* (*everyone else someone else, anything else*, etc.); *else* can mean 'additional/more' or 'different':

- 'more': *We need one more helper Can you find **anyone else**?*
- 'different': *Take this back and exchange it for **something else***

*Anything (else)* and *nothing (else)* can be followed by *but*

**Nothing (else) but** a major disaster will get us to realize that we can't go on destroying the rain forests of the world

*Else than* is also heard, but this is usually replaced by *other than*, especially with reference to people:

**Someone other than** your brother should be appointed manager

Indefinite pronouns referring to people can combine with *else's*

*This isn't mine It's **someone else's** It's **someone else's** coat*

# 5 Quantity

## General introduction to quantity

### 5.1 Quantifiers: what they are and what they do

**Quantifiers** are words or phrases like *few little plenty (of)*, which often modify nouns and show how many things or how much of something we are talking about. Some quantifiers combine with countable nouns, some with uncountable and some with both kinds [ > 2.14 ]

1 Quantifiers combining with countable nouns answer *How many?*

*How many eggs are there in the fridge?* - *There are a few*

2 Quantifiers combining with uncountable nouns answer *How much?*

*How much milk is there in the fridge?* - *There is a little*

3 Quantifiers combining with uncountable or with countable answer

*How many?* or *How much?*

*How many eggs are there in the fridge?* - *There are plenty*

*How much milk is there in the fridge?* - *There is plenty*

Quantifiers can function as **determiners** [ > 3.1 ] or (with the exception of *every* and *no*) as **pronouns** [ > 4.2.2 ], some of them can function as **adverbs** / *don't like coffee very much* [ > 7.41 ]

### 5.2 Quantifier + noun combinations

Quantifiers combine with different types of nouns

1 **Quantifier + plural countable noun** *not many books*

any number more than one (2, 3, etc.), *both a couple of dozens hundreds of (a) few fewer the fewest a the majority of (not) many a minority of a number of several*

*We have fewer students specializing in maths than in English*

2 **Quantifier + uncountable noun** *not much sugar*

*a (small) amount of a bit of a drop of (liquid) a great good deal of (a) little less [but > 5.16], the least (not) much*

*I'd like a bit of bread with this cheese*

3 **Quantifier + plural countable noun** *a lot of books*

or + **(singular) uncountable noun** *a lot of sugar*

*some (of the) any (of the) all (the) hardly any enough half of the half the a lot of lots of more most most of the no none of the the other part of the plenty of the rest of the*

*There aren't any cars on the road at the moment*

*There isn't any traffic on the road at the moment*

4 **Quantifier + singular countable noun** *each book*

*all (of) the another any (of the) each either every half (of) the most of the neither no none of the one the only the other some (of the) the whole (of the)*

*It's each/every man for himself in this business*

### 5.3 Degrees of indefinite quantity

References to quantity can be **definite** that is, we can say exactly how many or how much

*We need **six eggs** and **half a kilo** of butter*

However, most quantifiers are **indefinite** that is, they do not tell us exactly how many or how much

*Some any* [> 5.10] and *zero* [> 3.24, 3.28.8] refer to indefinite number or amount

*Are there **(any)** **apples** in the bag?*

*There are **(some)** **apples** in the bag* (We are not told how many )

*Is there **(any)** **milk** in the fridge?*

*There is **(some)** **milk** in the fridge* (We are not told how much )

*No* + noun indicates a complete absence of the thing mentioned

*There are **no apples** There is **no milk***

Most quantity words give us more information than *some* and *any*, telling us the comparative degree of the number or amount e g

plural countable nouns	uncountable nouns
Approximately <b>how many</b>	Approximately <b>how much</b>
<i>There are <b>too many</b> eggs</i>	<i>There is <b>too much</b> milk</i>
<b>plenty of</b> eggs	<b>plenty of</b> milk
<b>a lot of/lots of</b> eggs	<b>a lot of/lots of</b> milk
<b>(not) enough</b> eggs	<b>(not) enough</b> milk
<b>a few</b> eggs	<b>a little</b> milk
<b>very few</b> eggs	<b>very little</b> milk
<b>not many</b> eggs	<b>not much</b> milk
<b>hardly any</b> eggs	<b>hardly any</b> milk
<b>no</b> eggs	<b>no</b> milk

### 5.4 Distributives: whole amounts and separate items

Words like *all both each every either* and *neither* are sometimes called **distributives** They refer to whole amounts (*all/both the children all both the books all the cheese*), or to separate items (*each child either of the books*) [> 5.18-31]

### 5.5 The use of 'of' after quantifiers

Some quantity phrases used as determiners always take *of*

*We ve had **a lot of answers*** (*a lot of answers* = determiner + noun)

But when they are used as pronouns, *of* is dropped

*We ve had **a lot*** (*a lot* as a pronoun)

#### 5.5.1 General references with quantifiers

Quantifiers which always take *of* before nouns/pronouns include

*a couple of*

*dozens of hundreds of* *people/books* (plural countable)

*the majority a minority of*

*a number of*

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*a large small amount of*                      *cheese* (uncountable)  
*a bit of*

*a lot of*  
*lots of*                      *books cheese* (plural countable or  
*plenty of*                      uncountable)

These references are general i.e. we are not saying which particular people, etc

Other quantifiers (*any (a) few more most some*, etc.) go directly before the noun (no *of*) in general references

*There are **hardly any eggs a few eggs** in the fridge*

*There is **some butter no butter** in the dish*

### 5.5.2 Specific references with quantifiers

If we need to be specific (i.e. point to particular items) we can follow a quantifier with *of* + a determiner (*the this my*) [> 3.1]

*Have **some of this/a little of my wine*** (e.g. the wine in this bottle)

*I // lend you **some of these/a few of my books*** (specified books)

In the same way we can make specific references with quantifiers which are always followed by *of* [> 5.5.1] by using determiners after them Compare

***A lot of students** missed my lecture yesterday* (general reference)

***A lot of the students** who missed my lecture yesterday want to borrow my notes* (specific reference)

Note the following quantifiers which are always specific and which must therefore be followed by *of* + determiner

***None of the/this milk** can be used*

***Part of/The rest of this food** will be for supper*

***Put the rest of those biscuits** in the tin*

Note the omission and use of *of* in

*How much is left? - **None** (of it) **Part of it The rest of it***

*How many are left? **None** (of them) **Part of/The rest of them***

## 5.6 The use of 'more' and 'less' after quantifiers

### 5.6.1 Quantifier + 'more'

*More* can be used after these quantifiers with plural countable nouns  
*some any a couple dozens hundreds a few hardly any a lot lots many no numbers, plenty several weights, measures*

*More* can be used after these quantifiers with uncountable nouns  
*some any a bit a good great deal hardly any a little a lot lots much no plenty weights*

Quantifier + *more* combinations can be used as follows

- directly in front of nouns    *I'd like **some more chips/milk***

- before *of* + determiner    *Do you want **some more of these chips?***

as pronouns    *I don't want **any more** thank you*

### 5.6.2 Quantifier + 'less' [see also > 5.16.1]

*Less* can be used after these quantifiers with uncountable nouns and  
*a bit a good great deal a little a lot lots much*, as follows

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- directly in front of nouns **Much less soup please**
- before *of* + determiner *I'd like **much less of that soup***
- as pronouns *I want **much less** please*

### 5.7 The use of '...left' and '...over' after quantifiers

left (= not consumed or remaining) and over (= more than is wanted) combine with many quantifiers whether they are used as determiners or pronouns

*Are there **any sweets left**? - I haven't got **any left** I'm afraid*  
*We prepared too much food for the party and we had **a lot over***  
*I thought we mightn't have enough pies but there's **one over***

### 5.8 The use of 'not' before quantifiers

Not (Not "no") can be used directly in front of e.g. *all another (one) enough every a few half the least a little many more much one the only one* as follows [compare > 5.13, 13.13]

- to begin statements

***Not much** is happening in our office at the moment*

- to emphasize the opposite in front of e.g. *a few* and *a little*

*She's had **not a few proposals** of marriage in her time (= a lot)*

- in short negative answers

*How much did they offer you? - **Not enough***

- (in a few cases) to express surprise

*I bought a new hat - **Not another one***

## Particular quantifiers and their uses

### 5.9 Numbers [> App 47]

Exact indications of quantity can be conveyed by means of numbers

#### 5.9.1 Cardinal numbers [compare > 2.37.1, 3.11]

Cardinal numbers can be used as quantifiers (*two apples*) or pronouns (*I bought two*). The number *one* will combine with any noun used as a singular countable noun

***We've got one micro and two electric typewriters in our office***

All other numbers combine with plural countable nouns

***Two cabbages three pounds of tomatoes and twelve oranges***

Note also ordinals followed by cardinals {*the first three the second two* etc } and *the next last two* etc

***The first three runners** won medals*

#### 5.9.2 Counting

A number of adverbial expressions can be used to describe quantities and groups e.g. *one at a time one by one two by two by the dozen by the hundred in tens in five hundreds*

*How would you like your money? - **In fives** please*

#### 5.9.3 Fractions [> App 47.3.2]

We can say e.g. (a *one half*) (a *one quarter* or *one fourth*

AmE) and (a *one third*) Otherwise we make use of cardinal and

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ordinal numbers when referring to a fraction on its own 9/16 (*nine sixteenths*) or to a whole number + fraction 2 2/3' (*two and two thirds*)  
2 1/4 (**Two and a quarter**) plus 3 1/2 (**three and a half**) equals 5 3/4 (**five and three quarters**)

We use a (Not \*one\*) with fractions for weights and measures [> 3.11]

I bought **half a pound of tea** and **a quarter of a pound of coffee**

This could also be expressed as a *half pound of tea* a *quarter pound of coffee*

### 5.9.4 Decimals [> App 47 3 3]

Fractions expressed as decimals are referred to as follows 0,5 (*nought point five* or *point five*), 2,05 (*two point nought five* or *two point oh five*), 2,5 (*two point five*)

The front tyre pressure should be 1,8 (**one point eight**) and the rear pressure 1,9 (**one point nine**)

### 5.9.5 Multiplying and dividing quantity

The following can be used to refer to quantity *double* (*the quantity* or *amount*), *twice as much* (or *twice the quantity* or *amount*), *half as much* (or *half the quantity* or *amount*), etc

We need **double/twice/three times** the quantity/amount

### 5.9.6 Approximate number and quantity

Numbers can be modified by e.g. *about* *almost* *exactly* *fewer than* *at least* *less than* *more than* *nearly* *over* *under*

There were **over seventy people** at the party (= more than)

You can't vote if you're **under eighteen** (= less than)

## 5.10 The use of 'some' and 'any'

*Some* and *any* are the most frequently used quantity words in the language. They never answer *How many?* and *How much?*

*How many do you want?* - e.g. **Just a few** (Not 'some')

*How much do you want?* - e.g. **Just a little** (Not 'some')

We generally use *some* and *any* when it is not important to state exactly how great or how small the quantity is. They often function as if they were the plural of *a/an* [> 3.6, 4.16]

There are **some letters** for you (unspecified number)

How many (letters are there)? **Seven** (number specified)

There's **some bread** in the bread-bin (unspecified amount)

How much (bread is there)? **Half a loaf** (amount specified)

It is sometimes possible to omit *some* or *any* [> 3.28.8, 5.3]

My wife bought me **medicine** and **pastilles** for my cough

*Some* (= indefinite quantity or amount) is normally used

- in the affirmative

There are **some eggs** in the fridge (i.e. an unstated number)

There is **some milk** in the fridge (i.e. an unstated quantity)

- in questions when we expect (or hope to get) the answer 'Yes'

Have you got **some paper-clips** in that box? (i.e. I know or I think you've got some and expect you to say 'Yes')

- in offers, requests, invitations and suggestions when we expect the answer 'Yes' or expect implied agreement

The following are in the form of questions though we are not seeking information [> 11.35-36]

*Would you like **some** (more) **coffee**?* (expecting 'Yes')

*May I have **some** (more) **coffee**?* (expecting 'Yes')

- to mean 'certain but not all'

***Some people** believe anything they read in the papers*

*Not **some** can be used in certain contexts to mean not all*

*I didn't understand **some** of the lectures **some** of the information*

**Some** + countable or uncountable noun is normally unstressed in fluent speech and is pronounced /səm/

*There are **some** /səm/ letters for you*

As a pronoun **some** is pronounced /səm/ but not usually stressed

*Would you like any sugar? – I've had **some** /səm/ thank you*

**Some**, meaning certain but not all (see note above) is usually stressed and is pronounced /səm/. It can be stressed at the beginning of a statement to emphasize a contrast

***Some** /səm/ people have no manners*

It can be stressed to refer to an unspecified person/thing

*'**Some** /səm/ boy left his shirt in the cloakroom* [> 5.12.1]

**Any** (= indefinite quantity or amount) is normally used

- in negative statements containing *not* or *n't*

*We haven't got **any** shirts in your size*

*There **isn't any** milk in the fridge*

- in questions when we are not sure about the answer or expect No

*Have you got **any** paper-clips in the box?* (i.e. I don't know if you've got any and wouldn't be surprised if you said 'No')

- in sentences containing a negative word other than *not* such as *hardly*, *never*, *seldom* or *without* or when there is any suggestion of doubt e.g. with *if* or *whether* [implied negatives > 13.8]

*There's **hardly any** petrol in the tank*

*We got to Paris **without any** problems*

*I don't know **if/whether there's any** news from Harry*

- with *at all* and (more formally) *whatever* for special emphasis

*I haven't got **any idea at all/whatever** about what happened*

## 5.11 The use of 'not...any', 'no' and 'none'

### 5.11.1 Not...any and no

An alternative way of forming a negative is with *no* [compare > 13.9]

*not any     There **aren't any** buses after midnight*

*no            There **are no** buses after midnight*

A clause can contain only *one* negative word so that *not* and e.g. *no* or *never* cannot be used together [> 7.39, 13.10]

*I could get **no** information* (Not \*I couldn't\*)

When used in preference to *not any*, *no* is slightly more formal and makes a negative idea more emphatic. Negatives with *not any* are used in normal conversation but we must always use *no* (Never 'not any') if we wish to begin a sentence with a negative

***No** department stores open on Sundays*



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*No* can combine with a singular noun:

*There's no letter for you* (= There isn't a letter for you.)

*I'm **no expert** but I think this painting is a fake*

*No* at the beginning of a statement strongly emphasizes a negative idea [compare > 13.9].

### 5.11.2 'No' and 'none' [compare 'none of', > 5.5.2]

No meaning *not any* is a determiner and can only be used before a noun; *none* stands on its own as a pronoun:

*There **isn't any bread** There's **no bread** There's **none***

*There **aren't any sweets** There are **no sweets** There are **none***

Like *no*, *none* is more emphatic than *not any*. When *no* or *none* are used, *not* cannot be used as well [> 7.39, 13.10]:

*I couldn't get **any information** about flights to the USA*

*I could get **no information** about flights to the USA*

*Do you have any new diaries? – We've got **none** at the moment*

## 5.12 Special uses of 'some', 'any' and 'no'

### 5.12.1 'Some'

Apart from its common use as a quantifier, *some* can be used to refer to an unspecified person or thing, etc. When used in this way it is generally stressed [> 5.10] and can mean:

- 'several': *I haven't seen Tom for **some years***
- 'approximately': *There were **some 400 demonstrators***
- 'extraordinary': *That's **some** radio you've bought* (informal)
- 'an unknown': *There must be **some book** which could help*
- 'no kind of': *That's **some consolation** I must say!* (ironic)

With abstract nouns *some* can be used to mean 'an amount of':

*We've given **some thought** to your idea and find it interesting*

### 5.12.2 'Any'

Apart from its common use as a quantifier, *any* can be used to refer to an unspecified person or thing and can occur in affirmative statements. When used in this way it is stressed and can mean:

- 'usual': *This **isn't just any** cake* (it's special)
- 'the minimum/maximum': *He'll need **any help** he can get*
- 'I don't care which': *Give me a plate **Any plate/one** will do*

### 5.12.3 'Any' and 'no' + adjective or adverb

*Any* and *no*, used as adverbs to mean 'at all', will combine with adjectives and adverbs in the comparative:

*Is he **any better** this morning? No he's **no better***

*Any* and *no*, used as adverbs, combine with a few positive adjectives, e.g. *good* (*any good*) and *different* (*any different*)

*Is that book **any good**? – It's **no good** at all*

## 5.13 Common uses of 'much' and 'many' [also > 6.24, 7.4]

We normally use *much* (+ uncountable) and *many* (+ plural countable):

- in negative statements:

*I **haven't much time** There **aren't many pandas** in China*

## Particular quantifiers and their uses

- in questions: (For questions with *How much many?* [> 13.40.1])

***Is there much milk in that carton? Have you had many inquiries?***

In everyday speech we usually avoid using *much* and *many* in affirmative statements. We use other quantifiers, especially *a lot of* [> 5.14]. *Much* and *many* occur in formal affirmative statements:

***Much*** has been done to improve conditions of work

***Many teachers*** dislike marking piles of exercise books

Combinations like *as much as* and *as many as* are used in the affirmative or negative:

*You can/can't have as much as (as many as) you like*

When *much* and *many* are modified by *much* and *far* (*much far too much far too many*) they tend to be used in the affirmative:

*Your son gets much/far too much pocket money*

*There are far too many accidents at this junction*

*Many* in time expressions occurs in the affirmative or negative:

*I have lived here/haven't lived here (for) many years*

*Not much* and *not many* commonly occur in short answers:

*Have you brought much luggage? No not much*

*Have you written many letters? No not many*

*Not much* and *not many* can be subjects or part of the subject:

***Not much*** is really known about dinosaurs

***Not many people*** know about Delia's past

*Much* occurs in a number of expressions (e.g. *there's not much point in it's a bit much, he's not much of a*):

***There's not much point in telling the same story again***

*Not so much* occurs in comparisons:

***It's not so much*** a bedroom, ***more*** a studio

***Dennis is not so much*** a nuisance ***as*** a menace

***It's not so much that*** he dislikes his parents, ***as that/but that*** he wants to set up on his own

*Many* (like *few* [> 5.15.1]) can be modified by *the my your*, etc.:

***One of the many*** people he knows can help him to get a job

### 5.14 'A lot of compared with similar quantifiers

*Much* and *many* do not normally occur in the affirmative in everyday speech [> 5.13]. Instead, we use *a lot of* and (informally) *lots of*:

***I've got a lot of/lots of time I've got a lot of/lots of books***

*A lot of* *lots of* and *plenty of* (+ plural countable or singular uncountable) are normally used in the affirmative. They also occur in questions, especially when we expect the answer 'Yes':

***I met a lot of/lots of interesting people on holiday***

***Don't worry We've got plenty of time before the tram leaves***

***Were there a lot of/lots of questions after the lecture?***

*A lot of* and *lots of* occur in the negative as well, especially when we are emphasizing a negative or denying, but the use of *plenty of* in negative statements is less common:

***haven't got a lot of patience with hypochondriacs!***

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A *lot of* (**not** *lots of* or *plenty of*) **can be** modified by *quite/rather*  
*Jimmy's caused **quite a lot of** trouble at his new school*  
*The new law has affected **rather a lot of** people*

*Plenty of a lot of* and *lots of* can be used with singular or plural verbs depending on the noun that follows them:

*There **has been a lot of/lots of/plenty of** gossip about her*  
(uncountable noun, so singular verb)  
*There **have been a lot of/lots of/plenty of** inquiries*  
(plural countable, so plural verb)

*Several* can only be used with plural countables in the affirmative:

*We've already had **several offers** for our flat*

It **can** also combine with *dozen*, *hundred*, *thousand*, *million* etc

***Several hundred people** took part in the demonstration*

*A lot of/lots of* are often considered unsuitable in formal style. Instead, we use *much/many* [> 5.13] or other quantifiers, such as:

- *a great deal of* or *a great amount of* + **uncountable noun**:  
***A great deal of/A great amount of** money is spent on research*
- *a large number of* or *a great number of* + **plural countable noun**:  
***A large number of/A great number of** our students are American*

Some native speakers use *amount of* with countable nouns as well:

***A large/great amount of** our investments are in property*

### 5.15 '(A) few' and '(a) little'

#### 5.15.1 'Few' and 'a few'

*Few* and *a few* are used with plural countables.

*Few* is negative, suggesting 'hardly any at all', and is often used after *very*.

*Mona has had **very few opportunities** to practise her English*

In everyday speech we prefer *not many* or *hardly any*-,

*Mona hasn't **had many opportunities** to practise her English*

*Mona has had **hardly any opportunities** to practise her English*

*Few* can also convey the idea of 'not as many as were expected':

*A lot of guests were expected but **few** came*

*A few* is positive, suggesting 'some, a (small) number':

*The police would like to ask him **a few questions***

*A few* can mean 'a very small number', or even 'quite a lot'. The size of the number depends on the speaker's viewpoint:

*I don't know how much he's got, but it must be **a few million***

*A few* can be used to mean 'more than none, more than expected':

*Have we run out of sardines'? - No there are **a few tins** left*

*A few* can also combine with other words: e.g.

*just*      *How many do you want? **Just a few** please*  
(i.e. a limited number, not many)

*only*      *There are **only a few** seats left*  
(i.e. very few, hardly any)

*quite*      *How many do you want? **Quite a few** please*  
(i.e. quite a lot)

*a good dozen 100 1000*      *We had a **good few** letters this morning (i.e. quite a lot)*  
*the, my etc:*      *The **few** people who saw the film enjoyed it*  
*Her few possessions were sold after her death (i.e. the small number of)*

### 5.15.2 'Little' and a little'

*Little* and *a little* are used with (singular) uncountables.  
*Little* (like *few*) is negative, suggesting 'hardly any at all' and is often used after *very*:

*He has **very little hope** of winning this race*  
 In everyday speech we prefer *not much* or *hardly any*:  
*He hasn't **much hope** of winning this race*  
*He has **hardly any hope** of winning this race*  
*Little* can also convey the idea of 'not as much as was expected':  
*We climbed all day but made **little progress***  
*Little* occurs in idiomatic 'negative' phrases such as *little point little sense, little use*, etc.:

*There's **little point** in trying to mend it*

*A little* and, in very informal contexts, *a bit (of)* are positive, suggesting 'some, a (small) quantity':

*I'd like **a little (or a bit of) time** to think about it please*  
 The size of the amount depends on the viewpoint of the speaker:  
*Mrs Lacey left **a little money** in her will - about \$1 000,000'*  
*A little* can also mean 'more than none, more than expected':  
*Have we got any flour? - Yes there's **a little** in the packet*

*A little* can combine with other words: e.g.

*just*      *How much do you want? - **Just a little** please*  
 (i.e. a limited quantity, not much)  
*only*      *There's **only a little** soup left (i.e. very little, hardly any)*

*Few and little can be modified by e.g. extremely relatively*

*There are **relatively few jobs** for astronauts*

*A few and a little* can modify other quantifiers, as in *a few more*, and *a little less* [compare > 6.27.5, 7.45-46],

### 5.16 'Fewer/the fewest' and 'less/the least'

These are the comparative and superlative forms of *few* and *little*. In theory, *fewer/the fewest* should be used only with plural countables (*fewer/the fewest videos*) and *less/the least* only with uncountables (*less/the least oil*):

***Fewer videos** were sold this year than last*  
***Less oil** was produced this year than last*

In practice, however, the informal use by native speakers of *less* and *the least* with plural countables or collective words like *people* is **commonly heard** (*less people, less newspapers, etc.*) but is not generally approved:

***Less and less people** can afford to go abroad for their holidays*  
*Political programmes on TV attract **the least viewers***

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Less (not *fewer*) is used before *than* for prices and periods of time:

*It costs **less than £5** I'll see you in **less than three weeks***

### 5.16.1 The modification of 'fewer' and 'less'

*Fewer* is modified by even *far many a good deal, many* and *a lot*:

*There are **far fewer/a lot fewer** accidents in modern factories*

*Less* is commonly modified by even *far a good deal a little a lot many (many less — see 5.16)* and *much*:

*I've got **much/a lot/far less** free time than I used to have*

### 5.17 'Enough'

*Enough*, meaning 'adequate in quantity or number', can be used in front of plural countable nouns and (singular) uncountable nouns in all kinds of utterances: statements, questions or negatives:

*Have we got **enough books** to read while we are on holiday?*

*Have we got **enough food** in the house to last the next few days?*

Compare the use of *enough*, meaning 'of an adequate degree', after adjectives and adverbs [> 7.47-48]:

*Is there **enough hot water** for me to take a bath? (quantity)*

*Is the **water hot enough** for me to take a bath? (degree)*

*Enough* of will combine with a singular countable:

*Your education is **enough of a problem** for me*

*Enough* can be modified by *about almost, hardly, less than more than nearly, not, not nearly quite not quite* and *scarcely*:

*There is **hardly enough cake** There are **hardly enough biscuits***

In special contexts, *little* and *few* can modify *enough*:

*I can't lend you any money I have **little enough** as it is*

*I can't give you any stamps I have **few enough** as it is*

(i.e. less than enough money/fewer than enough stamps)

*Enough* (= sufficient) is associated with *plenty* (= more than enough), especially in questions and answers:

*Have you got **enough cream** on your strawberries?*

- Yes I've got **plenty** thank you

## Distributives

### 5.18 'Both', 'all' and 'half + nouns [> 5.4]

#### 5.18.1 'Both', 'all' and 'half + plural countable nouns

##### - examples and notes

<i><b>Both</b> books are expensive</i>	<i><b>All</b> books are expensive</i>	
<i><b>Both</b> the my these books are expensive</i>	<i><b>All</b> the my these books are expensive</i>	<i><b>Half</b> the my, these eggs are bad</i>
<i><b>Both</b> of the/my these books are expensive</i>	<i><b>All</b> of the/my these books are expensive</i>	<i><b>Half</b> of the/my these eggs are bad</i>

1 *Both all* and *half* can be used equally with:

- people: *both (the) women all (the) women half the women*
- things: *both (the) forks all (the) forks half the forks*

- 2 *Both* refers to two people, things, etc. only:  
e.g. *both books/both the books/both of the books* (interchangeable).  
The reference is to specific items (e.g. *the books on this subject*).  
*Both* means 'not only one, but also the other' and refers to two things together. By comparison, *the two* (*the two things are different*) refers to the two considered separately.
- 3 *Half* + plural countable refers to 'more than two':  
e.g. *half the eggs/half of the eggs* (interchangeable).  
*Half* (*of*) cannot be used without a determiner (*the this my*, etc.) before plural countables [compare > 5.18.3n1].
- 4 *All* refers to 'the whole number of people, things, etc.:  
e.g. *all the books all of the books* (interchangeable).  
With *the*, the reference is to specific items: (e.g. *the books on this subject*). However, *all books* is general, referring to e.g. *all (the) books in the world*. It is not interchangeable with *all the books all of the books*.
- 5 *All* with or without *the*, however, refers to specific items when it is followed by a number before a plural countable:  
*All (the) thirty passengers on the boat were saved*

### 5.18.2 'All' and 'half + uncountable nouns

#### - examples and note

<i>All bread gets stale quickly</i>	-
<i>All the bread was stale</i>	<i>Half the bread was stale</i>
<i>All of the bread was stale</i>	<i>Half of the bread was stale</i>

The first statement with *all* is general; the second and third are interchangeable and refer to a specific amount of bread. The two statements with *half* are interchangeable and refer to a specific amount of bread. The word *both* cannot be used with uncountable nouns because it refers to two units.

### 5.18.3 'All' and 'half + singular countable nouns

#### - examples and notes

<i>All the country was against it</i>	<i>Half the country was against it</i>
<i>All of the country was against it</i>	<i>Half of the country was against it</i>

1When we are referring to a specific thing, we must use *the* or *of the* after *all* and *half* [compare *the whole*, > 5.22]. However, *all* and *half* can be used directly in front of many proper nouns:

*All London/Half New York was buzzing with gossip*

2*Half a* can be followed by singular countables as in *half a loaf half a minute half an orange*, etc. to refer to one thing divided into halves.

### 5.19 'Both' and 'all': word order with verbs

#### 5.19.1 'Both' and 'all' after auxiliary verbs

*Both* and *all* as pronouns are normally used after auxiliary verbs (be have [> 10.1] and modal auxiliaries like *can could* [> 11.1]):

*The girls are both ready*

(= Both girls/Both the girls/Both of the girls are ready.)

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*The girls **are both** waiting*

(= Both girls/Both the girls/Both of the girls are waiting.)

*The girls **have all** left*

(= All the girls/All of the girls have left.)

*The girls **can/must, etc. all** go home now*

(= All the girls/All of the girls can/must go home now.)

*Both/all* come *before* auxiliary and modal verbs in short answers:

*Are you ready?* - Yes we **both are**    Yes we **all are**

*Have you finished?* - Yes we **both have**    Yes, we **all have**

*Do you like it?* - Yes we **both do**    Yes we **all do**

*Can you see it?*    Yes we **both can**    Yes, we **all can**

### 5.19.2 'Both' and 'all' before full verbs

*Both* and *all* as pronouns must be used before full verbs:

*The girls **both** left early*

(= Both girls/Both the girls/Both of the girls left early.)

*The girls **all** left early*

(= All the girls/All of the girls left early.)

And *note both/all* before *have* as a full verb [> 10.27, 10.32]:

*We **all** have our books*    *We **both** had a haircut*

## 5.20 'Both', 'all' and 'half': word order with pronouns

### 5.20.1 'Both' and 'all': pronoun subject

*Both* and *all* must be followed by *of* before pronouns like *us*, *them*:

***Both of us/them** left early* (= We/They both left early.)

***All of us/them** left early* (= We/They all left early.)

***All of it** went bad* (= It all went bad.)

### 5.20.2 'Both' and 'all': pronoun object with verbs and prepositions

*I love **both/all of you*** or *I love **you both/all***

*He gave some to **both/all of us*** or *He gave some to **us both/all***

*You've eaten **all of it*** or *You've eaten **it all***

### 5.20.3 'Half as a distributive and as an adverb

***Half (of) the bottles** are empty*

(i.e. half of them are not empty)

However, there is a different meaning when *half* is an adverb:

*The bottles are **half empty***

(i.e. no bottle is completely empty)

## 5.21 The negative of 'all' and 'both'

We can use *not all* to mean 'some but not all':

***Not all** the girls left early* (= Only some of them left early.)

Compare the above with the following negative:

***All** the girls **didn't** leave early*

This negative statement is ambiguous because it can mean 'some of them left early' or 'none of them left early'.

To avoid ambiguity we should use *none of* to make the negative of *all* and *neither of* to make the negative of *both*

***All** the girls left early*

***None of** the girls left early*

***Both** the girls left early*

***Neither of** the girls left early*

## 5.22 'All (the)' compared with '(the) whole'

### 5.22.1 'All the' and 'the whole' with nouns

We usually prefer *the whole* to *all the* with singular concrete nouns  
*The whole* is not normally used with plurals and uncountables<sup>1</sup>

*He ate **the whole loaf** (= all the loaf) by himself*

*All and the whole* combine with a number of (often abstract) nouns

For example, we can use *all* or *the whole* in: *all my business my whole business all my life/my whole life all the time/the whole time* etc but normally only *all* in: e.g. *all my hair all the money*, and normally only *the whole* in: e.g. *the whole situation the whole story the whole truth*  
*Whole* can follow *a*, as in *a whole collection a whole loaf a whole week/hour*

### 5.22.2 Time references with 'all' and 'the whole'

*All* combines with words like *(the) day, (the) night, (the) week (the) year (the) summer* (but not with *hour or century*) in time references (*all of the* is possible, but less common):

*I waited **all (the) week** for him to answer*

*The whole* is stronger than *all* in time references and can also be used with *hour* and *century*:

*I waited **the whole week** for him to answer*

*Of the* is possible after *the whole*, but is usually absent. *The whole* followed by *of the* functions as a noun and is more common in references not concerned with time: e.g. *the whole (of the) book the whole (of the) building*

### 5.22.3 'All' and 'whole' + plural countable nouns

*All* and *whole* + plural countable have different meanings in' e g

***All forests** in North Africa were destroyed during Roman times*  
(= every single one of them)

***Whole forests** in North Africa were destroyed during Roman times*  
(= entire areas of forest)

## 5.23 'All' compared with 'every'

*All* refers to a collection of things seen as one, or to an amount-

*I've read **all these books**.* (= this whole collection)

*She's used **all the butter*** (= the whole amount)

*Every* emphasizes single units within a group and is used only with singular countables:

*I've read **every book** in the library* (= every single one)

*All* can be used before a noun or on its own [> 5.18, 5.24]; *every* can never stand on its own (*every day, every man*, etc.).

*Every* is often found in time references: *every day every week* etc and can be followed by ordinal and cardinal numbers and *other*:  
*every third day every six weeks every other day*, etc.:

*I work **every other day** Monday Wednesday and Friday*

*All* and *every* are not normally interchangeable in time references<sup>1</sup>

*Monica spent **all day** with us* (= one whole day)

*Monica spent **every day** with us while she was here on holiday*  
(all the days of her holiday, thought of separately)



### 5.24 'All' compared with 'everyone/everybody/anyone/anybody'

*All*, meaning 'everybody', is uncommon in modern English:

***Everyone/Everybody*** wanted Marilyn's autograph (Not "*All*")

In older English, *all* (= everybody) can occur:

***All but Emily*** had guessed the truth

*All* can occur in formal contexts to mean 'all the people', but it generally needs to be qualified by e.g. a relative clause [> 1.40]:

***All (those) who wish to apply*** must do so in writing

*All* could be replaced by *anyone/anybody*:

***Anyone/Anybody who wishes to apply*** must do so in writing

*Anyone/anybody* is the equivalent of *whoever* here and is preferable to *everyone/everybody*. *All*, used on its own to mean 'all the people', occurs in a few fixed expressions:

*A good time was had **by all*** *The law applies equally **to all***

### 5.25 'All' compared with 'everything'

*All* and *everything* + singular verb can be used interchangeably, though *all* is more formal and usually requires qualification:

***All/Everything I have*** belongs to you

*All*, used to mean 'everything', occurs in a few fixed phrases:

*Winner takes **all***

*All*, but not *everything*, can be used to mean 'the only thing':

***All*** he wants is more pay for less work

### 5.26 'Every' compared with 'each'

#### 5.26.1 'Every' and 'each' with reference to 'more than two'

*Every* and *each* refer to particular people or things. They can point to more than two. *Each* is more individual and suggests 'one by one' or 'separately'. We use it to refer to a definite and usually limited number:

***Each child in the school*** was questioned

*Every child* is less individual and is used in much the same way as *all children* [> 5.18.1] to refer to a large indefinite number:

***Every child*** enjoys Christmas (All children enjoy Christmas.)

This difference is not always important and the two words are often used interchangeably, as in:

***Every/Each time*** I wash the car it rains

*Each* cannot be modified; *every* can be modified by *almost*, *nearly*, and *practically* and can be followed by *single*:

***Almost every building*** was damaged in the earthquake

*I answer **every single** letter I receive*

We can use *not* in front of *every*, but not in front of *each*:

***Not every house on the island*** has electricity

*Every*, but not *each*, can be used in front of a few uncountables such as *assistance*, *encouragement*, etc. though this is unusual:

*My parents gave me **every encouragement** when I was a child*

#### 5.26.2 'Each' referring to both members of a pair

*Each*, but not *every*, can refer to both the members of a pair:

*As they had **both** worked so hard they **each** received a bonus*

*Both* usually means 'two items considered together'; *each* considers two things separately:

- I spoke to **both of the twins** this morning* (i.e. together)
- I spoke to **each of the twins** this morning* (i.e. separately)

### 6.26.3 'Each': word order

*Each*, but not *every*, has word order variations similar to *all both* [ > 5.19-20]. *Each*, combining with a plural subject, takes a plural verb:

- They **have each taken** their own share* (after an auxiliary)
- They **each have** their own share* (before a full verb)

*Each* takes a singular verb when it begins a subject-phrase:

***Each of us is** responsible for his or her actions* [ > 4.40]

*Each* can also occur at the end of a statement:

*Give the delivery-men \$5 **each***

## 5.27 'Another' compared with '(the) other(s)'

*Another* can have two meanings:

- 'additional'/'similar': *Do you need **another** cup? No I have enough*
  - 'different': *Give me **another** cup This one is cracked*
- Another* and *others* are indefinite; *the* (or *my* *your*, etc.) *other* and *the others* are definite. *Another*, as a determiner, always goes with a singular noun unless it is followed by a cardinal number or by *few*-

- I need **another three driving lessons** before my test*
- I need **another few days** before I can make up my mind*

*The other* can be followed by a singular or plural noun:

- This seat is free, **the other seat is** taken*
- These seats are free **the other seats are** taken*

*Another* is followed by a singular noun; *other* by a plural noun:

- There must be **another way** of solving the problem that can't be the only way*
- There must be **other ways** of solving the problem*

*The other* + *one* or a noun refers to a specific alternative:

- I don't like this shirt Can I try **the other one** please?*

Compare: *Can I try another (one)?* (= any other one, non-specific)

*The others the other* and *others* (like *another*) can stand on their own as pronouns to refer to specific alternatives:

- /// take these shirts but leave **the other(s)***

*The other(s)* is often used in contrast to *one*:

- One** has buttons and **the other** hasn't*

*Others* is often used in contrast to *some*:

- Some** people enjoy exercise **others don't***

*Other* can also mean 'additional' in: e.g.

- Jane and some **other girls** went shopping*

*The other (day)* can mean 'a few (days) ago' in time references:

- Karen phoned **the other day** to apologize for her behaviour*

This is not to be confused with the *next*, meaning 'the following':

- Karen phoned **the next day** to apologize for her behaviour*

or with *another* to mean 'a different':

- We aren't free tomorrow Can we arrange **another day**?*

**5.28 'Each other' and 'one another' [compare > 4.28]**

Sometimes a distinction is drawn between *each other* (used to refer to two people) and *one another* (used to refer to more than two). In everyday speech, both phrases are normally interchangeable.  
*Karen and Dave are deeply in love with **each other/one another***

Both phrases can be used with an 's

*Those two are always copying **each other's/one another's** homework*

**5.29 'Either' compared with 'neither'**

*Either* and *neither* refer to two people things, etc (singular nouns) only. *Either* means 'one or the other' and *neither* means 'not one and not the other'. Constructions with *neither* are generally more emphatic than those with *not either*.

*Do you want an appointment at 9 or at 10?*

*- **Either time** is difficult. **Neither time** is convenient.*

**5.29.1 'Either' and 'neither' + 'of'**

When followed by *of*, *either* and *neither* refer to each of two items.

*Which pot shall I use? - **Either (of them)** It doesn't matter which.*

*Which pot shall I use? - **Neither (of them)** Use this frying pan.*

**5.29.2 'Either + or'; 'neither + nor' [> 1.15, 5.31]**

*You can have **either** this one **or** that one.*

***Neither** this house **nor** the house next door has central heating.*

**5.29.3 'Either' and 'both' compared**

*Either* refers to two things considered separately. Compare

*You can't have **either of them** (= you can't have one or the other)*

*You can't have **both of them** (= you can have only one of them)*

**5.30 The use of 'one (of)' after distributives [compare > 4.10]**

We may use *one of* after *another*, *any*, *each*, *either*, *every* and *neither* before nouns or pronouns. *One* is optional except in the case of *every*.

***Each guidebook** in the series has been carefully written.*

***Every guidebook** in the series has been carefully written.*

***Each of these guidebooks** has been carefully written.*

***Each one of these guidebooks** has been carefully written.*

***Every one of these guidebooks** has been carefully written.*

We can use *single* after *every* for special emphasis.

***Every single apple** in the bag was bad.*

***Every single one of the apples** in the bag was bad.*

If we wish to use *another*, *each* and *either* as pronouns, we can use them with or without *one*.

*I didn't like the red skirt so I asked to see **another (one)**.*

*Look at these names. **Each (one)** should have a tick beside it.*

***Neither** is generally used without *one*.*

*I've tested both those TVs. **Neither** works very well.*

*Every* and *the only* cannot stand on their own as pronouns they must always be followed by a noun or *one* (also *ones* after *the only*)

*We need some more eggs You ate **every one** last night*

*You can't borrow my pen It's **the only one** I've got*

*These keys are **the only ones** I've got*

### 5.31 Singular and plural verbs with quantifiers [compare > 4.40]

Sometimes the reference is clearly singular or plural and a singular or plural verb is needed

***Most of us have*** experienced sorrow in our lives

***Most of our steel is*** imported

But after *neither* (= not either) and *none* (= not one) when the reference is plural we can use a plural verb in everyday speech or a singular verb when we wish to sound correct or formal

***Neither of us is/are*** happy about the situation

***None of my friends has/have*** been invited to the party

In the above examples *us* and *friends* attract plural verbs

*With either or and neither nor* the verb generally agrees with the nearest noun [> 1.15, 5.29.2]

*Neither my brother nor **my sister is*** red haired

*Neither my brother nor **my sisters are*** red haired

*Neither my brothers nor **my sister is/are*** red haired

*Neither James nor I am* interested

*Neither my brother nor **my sister is/are*** interested

# 6 Adjectives

## Formation of adjectives

### 6.1 What an adjective is and what it does

An adjective describes the person, thing, etc which a noun refers to  
We use adjectives to say what a person, etc is like or seems like For example, adjectives can give us information about

Quality	<i>a <b>beautiful</b> dress a <b>nice</b> day</i>
Size	<i>a <b>big</b> car a <b>small</b> coin a <b>tall</b> man</i>
Age	<i>a <b>new</b> handbag a <b>young</b> man</i>
Temperature	<i>a <b>cool</b> evening a <b>hot</b> day</i>
Shape	<i>a <b>round</b> table a <b>square</b> box</i>
Colour	<i><b>blue</b> eyes <b>grey</b> hair a <b>white</b> horse</i>
Origin	<i>a <b>Japanese</b> camera a <b>Swiss</b> watch</i>

An adjective can also describe the idea(s) contained in a whole group of words, as in

*Professor Roberts lecture on magnetism was **fascinating***  
*To maintain that we can survive a nuclear war is **absurd***

Many adjectives can answer the question *What like?* and, depending on context, can give general or precise information

*What's Tom like (to look at)? - He's **dark/short/tall***  
*What's Pam like (as a person)? - She's **clever/kind/witty***  
*What's the car like? - It's **new/old/red/rusty***  
*What's the car like to drive? - It's **difficult/fast/slow***

### 6.2 The suffixes and prefixes of one-word adjectives

Some words function only as adjectives (*tall*) Others function as adjectives or nouns (*cold*) Many adjectives which are related to verbs or nouns have a characteristic ending (or **suffix**) For example, *able* added to a verb like *enjoy* gives us the adjective *enjoyable*, *ful* added to a noun like *truth* gives us the adjective *truthful* For further examples [> App 8.1]

Present participle *ing* forms often function as adjectives (*running water* [> 2.7, 16.38, 16.39.3]) Many of these *ing* forms have *ed* adjectival past participle equivalents (*interesting interested*) [> 6.15] Some irregular past participles function as adjectives (*broken*) [> 6.14]

**Prefixes** added to adjectives generally have a negative effect For example, *dis-* added to *agreeable* gives us *disagreeable*, *un* added to *interesting* gives us *uninteresting* For further examples [> App 8.2] Not every 'positive' adjective can be turned into a negative one by the addition of a prefix Sometimes we have to use *not* (*not taxable*) Similarly, not every 'negative' adjective (especially those formed with past participles) has a positive equivalent (*discontinued mistaken*)

### 6.3 The formation of compound adjectives

Compound adjectives are often written with hyphens [> 2.11] Some of the commonest types are

#### 6.3.1 Compound adjectives formed with participles, etc.

- compounds formed with past participles e g a **candle-lit** table a **horse-drawn** cart a **self-employed** author a **tree-lined** avenue
- compounds formed with present participles e g a **long-playing** record a **long-suffering** parent a **time-consuming** job
- -ed words that look like participles although they are formed from nouns e g **cross eyed** **flat chested** **hard-hearted** **open-minded** **quick-witted** **slow footed**

#### 6.3.2 Compound adjectives of measurement, etc.

Cardinal numbers combine with nouns (usually singular) to form compound adjectives relating to time measurement etc e g

Age	a <b>three-year-old</b> building a <b>twenty-year-old</b> man
Area/volume,	a <b>three-acre</b> plot a <b>two-litre</b> car
Duration	a <b>four-hour</b> meeting a <b>two-day</b> conference
Length/depth	a <b>twelve-inch</b> ruler a <b>six-foot</b> hole
Price	a \$50 dress a <b>£90,000</b> house
Time/distance	a <b>ten-minute</b> walk a <b>three-hour</b> journey
Weight	a <b>ten-stone</b> man a <b>five-kilo</b> bag of flour

Ordinal numbers can be used in compounds e g a **first-rate** film a **second-hand** car a **third-floor** flat a **nineteenth-century** novel

#### 6.3.3 Compound adjectives formed with prefixes and suffixes

Compounds can be formed from a variety of prefixes and suffixes e g **class-conscious** **tax-free** **loose-fitting** **waterproof** **fire resistant** **car-sick** **tight lipped** **vacuum sealed** **airtight**

Many compounds can be formed with **well** and **badly** -**behaved** **built** -**done** -**paid** etc Similarly **///** and **poorly** combine with some past participles -**advised** -**educated** **informed** **paid** etc

## Types of adjectives and their uses

### 6.4 Form and use of adjectives

An adjective never varies in form no matter whether it refers to people or things etc in the singular or plural

#### singular:

a tall man	Bob is tall	He is tall	He is a tall man
a tall woman	Maggie is tall	She is tall	She is a tall woman
a tall horse	That horse is tall	It is tall	It is a tall horse
a tall tree	That tree is tall	It is tall	It is a tall tree

#### plural:

tall men	Bob and Jim are tall	They are tall	They are tall men
tall women	Mary and Ann are tall	They are tall	They are tall women
tall people	Bob and Ann are tall	They are tall	They are tall people
tall horses	Those horses are tall	They are tall	They are tall horses
tall trees	Those trees are tall	They are tall	They are tall trees

## 6.5 Gradable and non-gradable adjectives

Adjectives can be divided into two classes: a large class of words which can be graded (gradable adjectives) and a small class that cannot be graded (non-gradable adjectives).

An adjective is **gradable** when:

- we can imagine degrees in the quality referred to and so can use it with words like *very*, *too*, and *enough*-  
*very good too good, less good not good enough*, etc. [> 7.50]
- we can form a comparative and superlative from it [> 6.22, 6.24-25]  
*(big) bigger, biggest, (good) better, best*, etc.

An adjective is **non-gradable** when:

- we cannot modify it (i.e. we cannot use it with *very too*, etc.)
- we cannot make a comparative or superlative from it: e.g.  
*daily dead, medical, unique*, etc. [> 7.42].

## 6.6 Some problems for the learner in the use of adjectives

Learners may experience interference from their own language in relation to the following characteristics of adjectives in English:

- they do not vary in form to 'agree' with nouns [> 6.4]:  
*a tall man/woman'tree, tall men'women/trees*
- they generally precede nouns when used attributively [> 6.7]:  
*a cool drink, a long day a pretty dress*
- when used attributively, they nearly always combine with a noun or with *one/ones* [> 4.10]. So we must use a noun in expressions like *You poor thing' You lucky girl'* [compare > 4.7.4].  
*a young man a one-eyed man* [compare > 6.12.2].
- the verbs *be seem*, etc. combine with adjectives like *afraid, cold hot hungry lucky, right sleepy thirsty, unlucky, wrong*, where in some European languages such words are used as nouns after *have*, or an idea can be expressed by a verb. So, in English, depending on context, *she is cold* may relate to temperature (i.e. *not warm*) or attitude (i.e. *not friendly*)- Nor do adjectives like *cold hot*, etc. combine with *make* to refer to the weather:  
*It* (i.e. the weather) is *cold/hot/wmdy*
- for adjectives and adverbs often confused (*fast*, etc.) [> App 14].

## 6.7 Attributive and predicative adjectives

The terms **attributive** and **predicative** refer to the position of an adjective in a phrase or sentence. We say that an adjective is attributive or is used attributively when it comes before a noun (and is therefore part of the **noun phrase** [> 2.1]):

*an old ticket a young shop-assistant he is an old man*

We say that an adjective is predicative or that it is used predicatively when it comes directly after *be seem*, etc. It can be used on its own as the **complement** [> 1.9, 1.11.1, 6.17]:

*This ticket is old Your mother seems angry*

For predicative adjectives after verbs other than *be seem* etc: *turn yellow*> 10. 26.1]. Most adjectives can be used either attributively or predicatively. A few can be used in one way and not in the other.

## Types of adjectives and their uses

A few adjectives such as *old*, *late* and *heavy* can take on a different meaning when used attributively. Compare:

*Agatha Withers is very old now* (i.e. in years - predicative)

*He's an old friend* (i.e. I've known him a long time - attributive)

*Your suitcase is very heavy* (i.e. in weight - predicative)

*Paterson is a heavy smoker* (i.e. he smokes a lot - attributive)

*You're late again* (i.e. not on time - predicative)

*My late uncle was a miner* (i.e. he's dead now - attributive)

Adjectives used attributively in this way tend to combine with a limited selection of nouns: e.g. a *heavy drinker'sleeper*, but not e.g. *worker*.

There are other restrictions as well: e.g. *old* (*an old friend*), *heavy* (*a heavy smoker*) and *late* (*my late uncle*) cannot be used predicatively in these senses. However, *old* (in years) and *heavy* (weight) can be used attributively or predicatively. *Late* (not on time) is used attributively in limited contexts:

***Late arrivals will not be allowed to enter the auditorium***

For problems connected with adjectives which can be confused with adverbs, e.g. *fast*, *hard*/*hardly* *late*/*lately* [> Apps 14, 15].

## 6.8 Adjectives used predicatively

### 6.8.1 Predicative adjectives describing health

The following are used predicatively [> 6.7] in connexion with health: *faint*, *ill*, *poorly*, *unwell* and *well*:

*What's the matter with him? - He's ill/unwell He feels faint*

*How are you? - I'm very well thank you I'm fine thanks*

*Fine* relating to health is predicative; used attributively it means 'excellent' (e.g. *She's a fine woman*).

The adjectives *sick* and *healthy* can be used in the attributive position where *ill* and *well* normally cannot:

*What's the matter with Mr Court? - He's a sick man*

*Biggies was very ill but he's now a healthy man*

(But note that 'He's an ill man' is increasingly heard.)

*Well*, to mean 'in good health', is an adjective and should not be confused with *well*, the adverbial counterpart of *good* [> 6.17, 7.5n4].

*Faint* can be used attributively when not referring to health in e.g. *a faint chance*, *a faint hope* *a faint sound*, as can *ill* in fixed phrases such as: *an ill omen* *an ill wind*

### 8.2 Predicative adjectives beginning with 'a-'

Adjectives like the following are used only predicatively: *afloat* *afraid*. *alight* *alike*, *alive* *alone*, *ashamed* *asleep* *awake*

*The children were asleep at 7 but now they're awake*

We can express similar ideas with attributive adjectives:

*The vessel is afloat*                      *The floating vessel*

*The children are afraid*                *The frightened children*

*The buildings are alight*               *The burning buildings*

*Everything that is alive*                *All living things*

*That lobster is alive*                   *It's a live lobster*

*The children are asleep*                *The sleeping children*

*When I am awake*                        *In my waking hours*



## 6 Adjectives

Attributive adjectives can only replace predicative ones in suitable contexts. For example, *living* cannot replace *alive* in:

*All the hostages on the plane **are alive and well**.*

(Not '*all the living hostages*' in this context)

*Shameful* is not the attributive counterpart of *ashamed*;

*It was a shameful act* (describing the act)

*He ought to be ashamed* (describing the person)

Similarly, *lonely* is not the exact equivalent of *alone*.

*You can be **alone** without being **lonely***

*Alone* (predicative) means 'without others'; *lonely* (attributive: *a lonely woman*, or predicative: *she is lonely*) generally means 'feeling sad because you are on your own'.

Some of these adjectives are modified in special ways and not by *very*, *safely afloat*, *all alight*, *all alone fast/sound asleep*, *fully/wide awake* [compare > 6.9, 7.51]. However, the following can be modified by *very much*; *afraid*, *awake alive alone* and *ashamed*; *afraid* and *ashamed* can also be modified directly by *very* [compare > 7.51]:  
*Is that lobster alive?* - *Yes be careful!* *It's **very much alive***  
*I behaved badly yesterday and still feel **very ashamed** of myself*

### 6.8.3 Predicative adjectives describing feelings, reactions, etc.

Some adjectives describing feelings, etc., (*content*, *glad*, *pleased*, *sorry*, *upset*) and a few others, e.g. *far* and *near* (except in e.g. *the Far East/the Near East*) are normally used only predicatively:

*I **am** very **glad** to meet you* [> 16.26]

*Your hotel **is** quite **near** here. It **isn't** **far** from here*

We can express the same ideas with attributive adjectives:

*She **is** a **happy** (or **contented**) **woman*** (= She is glad/content.)

### 6.8.4 Predicative adjectives followed by prepositions [> App 27]

Many adjectives used predicatively may be followed by prepositions:

*A **capable** **person** **is** one who manages well* (attributive)

*He **is** **capable of** managing well* (adjective + preposition: predicative)

## 6.9 Adjectives used attributively to mean 'complete', etc.

A few adjectives can behave like adverbs of degree or intensifiers [> 7.41, 7.50], more or less in the sense of 'complete', and can be used only in the attributive position, e.g. *mere*, *out and out*, *sheer*, *utter*

*Ken can't be promoted. He's a **mere** boy/an **out and out** rogue*

*What you say is **sheer/utter nonsense***

(*Very* itself is used as an adjective in fixed expressions like *the very end*, *the very limit*, *the very thing I want/need*)

Other adjectives which can have the sense of *very* when used attributively are: *close* (*a close friend*); *complete*, *perfect*, *total* (*a complete perfect total fool*); *pure* (*pure nonsense*); and *strong* (*a strong supporter*). Most of these can be attributive or predicative in their normal meanings:

***Pure** drinking **water** is best. This **water** **is** **pure***

## Types of adjectives and their uses

Some *-ing* adjectives can qualify other adjectives. They have an intensifying effect equivalent to *very* in (often) fixed phrases like *boiling hot, freezing cold, hopping mad, soaking wet*

Adjectives which restrict the reference of the noun are always **attributive**: *certain* (a woman of a certain age); *chief* (my chief complaint); *main* (my main concern); *only* (the only explanation); *particular* (my particular aim); *principal* (the principal reason); *sole* (my sole interest) and *very itself* {the very man I wanted to see}. **These adjectives cannot be used predicatively, except for *certain* and *particular*, which then change in meaning:**

You should be **certain** of your facts before you rush into print  
Some people aren't very **particular** about the food they eat

### 6.10 Adjectives after nouns in official titles, etc.

The adjective follows the noun in a number of 'titles': e.g. *Attorney General, Governor General, Heir Apparent, Poet Laureate, Postmaster General, President Elect* (or *elect*), *Sergeant Major*. And note: *Asia Minor*, and a number of fixed phrases, such as *body politic, Goodness gracious*<sup>1</sup>, *hope eternal, penny dreadful, sum total, time immemorial*

### 6.11 Adjectives which can come before or after nouns

#### 6.11.1 Adjectives before or after nouns with no change in meaning

A limited number of adjectives, mostly ending in *-able* and *-ible*, can come before or after nouns, usually with no change of meaning. Some of these are: *available, eligible, imaginable, taxable*

*I doubt whether we can complete our contract in the **time available/in the available time***

#### 6.11.2 Adjectives before or after nouns with a change in meaning

A few adjectives change in meaning depending on whether they are used before or after a noun. Some of these are: *concerned, elect, involved, present, proper, responsible*

The **concerned** (= worried) **doctor** rang for an ambulance

The **doctor concerned** (= responsible) is on holiday

This **elect** (= specially chosen) **body** meets once a year

The **president elect** (= who has been elected) takes over in May

It was a very **involved** (= complicated) **explanation**

The **boy involved** (= connected with this) has left

**Present employees** (= those currently employed) number 3 000

**Employees present** (= those here **now**) should vote on the issue

It was a **proper** (= correct) **question**

The **question proper** (= itself) has not been answered

Janet is a **responsible girl** (= She has a sense of duty.)

The **girl responsible** (= who can be blamed) was expelled

### 6.12 Adjectives which can be used as if they were nouns

#### 6.12.1 Adjectives used as nouns

A few adjectives can be used as if they were nouns (e.g. after *a* or *an*)

## 6 Adjectives

and can sometimes have a plural The listener mentally supplies the missing noun

*I've got my **medical** on Thursday* (= medical examination)

*Don't be such a **silly**!* (= a silly fool)

*There's something the matter with **the electrics** in my car* (= the electrical system)

Other words which are both adjectives and nouns are e.g.  
*a black/blacks a red/reds a white/whites*

### 6.12.2 'The' + adjective: e.g. 'the young' [> App 9]

Adjectives like the following are used after *the* never after *a/an* to represent a group as a whole e.g. *the blind the deaf the living/the dead the rich/the poor the young/the old the unemployed*. So *the deaf* means a group of people who are all deaf.

*Andrew was sent to a special school for **the deaf***

These adjectives are followed by a plural verb

*You can always judge a society by the way **the old are** cared for.*

We can never use these adjectives on their own to refer to a single individual (Not \* *he is a young* \* \* *they are youngs* \*) If we wish to refer to single individuals, we must use an adjective + noun [> 6.6]

*He's a **young man** with a lot of ambition They are young men*

Some of these adjectives may be modified e.g. *the extremely poor the idle rich the super rich the young at heart*

Sometimes after e.g. *both the* can be dropped [> 3.28.6]

***Both young and old** enjoyed themselves at the party*

The reference can be general or abstract in e.g. *the supernatural to unexpected the unheard of the unknown* So *the unknown* means that thing or those things which are not known

*Scott's march to the South Pole was a journey into **the unknown***

These are followed by a singular verb

***The unknown is** always something to be feared*

For *the former the latter* [> 4.11]

For nationality adjectives used without nouns [> 3.19.2 App 49]

### 6.13 Nouns that behave like adjectives

Names of materials substances etc (*leather nylon plastic*) [> 2.10.5 6.20.1] resemble adjectives So do some nouns indicating use or purpose e.g. *kitchen chairs* Examples of such nouns are

*It's a **cotton** dress* (= it's cotton/made of cotton)

*It's a **summer** dress* (= a dress to be worn in summer)

Words like *cotton* or *summer* behave like adjectives in this one way they do not have comparative or superlative forms they cannot be modified by *very* etc They remain essentially nouns often modifying a second noun [> 2.10] Most of these noun modifiers can be used without change But note *wooden* and *woollen*

*It's a **wooden** spoon /It's made of **wood***

*It's a **woollen** dress /It's made of **wool***

Here *wooden* and *woollen* are adjectives not nouns Some other names for materials have adjectival forms *gold golden lead leaden silk silken silky stone stony* but the adjectival form generally has a

## Types of adjectives and their uses

metaphorical meaning ('like ') So, for example, a *gold watch* is a 'watch made of gold', but a *golden sunset* is a sunset which is 'like gold' Compare a *silvery voice* *leaden steps* *silky (or silken) hair* (a) *stony silence*

### 6.14 Present and past participles used as adjectives

Most present participles can be used as adjectives e.g. *breaking glass* *frightening stories* [> 2.7, 6.2, 6.3.1, 16.38 16.39.3]

Many past participles of verbs can be used as adjectives e.g. a *broken window* (= a window which has been broken), a *frozen lake* (= a lake which is frozen), a *locked door* (= a door which is locked), etc Regular past participles follow the normal pronunciation rules [> 9.14.1] However, note that some adjectives ending in *-ed* are not past participles, and here the ending is normally pronounced /id/, as in *an aged parent* *a crooked path* *a learned professor* *a naked man* *a ragged urchin* *a wicked witch*

### 6.15 Adjectival participles ending in '-ed' and '-ing' [> App 10]

Common pairs of *-ed/-ing* adjectives are *amazed/amazing* *annoyed/annoying* *bored/boring* *excited/exciting* *interested/interesting* *pleased/pleasing* *tired/tiring* Similar pairs *delighted/delightful* *impressed/impressive* *upset/upsetting*

Adjectives ending in *-ed* often combine with personal subjects and those ending in *-ing* often combine with impersonal ones [> 16.32.1]

*This story excites me -- I am excited by it -- It is exciting*

Most *-ing* adjectives can also be applied to people Compare

*Gloria was quite enchanting to be with*

(i.e. That was the effect she had on other people)

*Gloria was quite enchanted*

(i.e. That was the effect someone or something had on her)

A few *-ed* adjectives can be applied to things

*The old tin mine was quite exhausted (= used up)*

### 18.16 Adjectives used in measurements

Words such as *deep* *long* *wide*, etc. can function as adjectives or adverbs after the question word *How* [> 13.40.2]

*How deep is that pool? (adjective)*

*How deep did you dive? (adverb)*

In responses to such questions, the adjective (or adverb) follows the noun. It can sometimes be omitted.

*It's five metres (deep) / I went five metres deep*

And compare

*How old are you? - I'm five years old or I'm five*

*How old is your car? - It's five years old* (Not 'It's five')

Measurement nouns are plural when they are followed by adjectives or adverbs (*six metres high*), they are singular when they precede the noun (*a six metre wall*) [> 6.3.2] But note this exception

*Jim is six foot/feet tall (singular or plural)*

*He's a six-foot man (singular only)*

## 6 Adjectives

### 6.17 Adjectives as complements after e.g. verbs of perception

We use adjectives, not adverbs, after verbs of perception, particularly those relating to the senses, such as *look taste* [> 9.3, 10.23-25, App 38] e.g. *appear strange feel rough, look good, look well seem impossible, smell sweet sound nice, taste bad*

*That pie **looks good** but it **tastes awful***

*A day in the country **sounds nice** but think of the traffic!*

*Scratch my back there please Ah<sup>1</sup> That **feels better***

The words used after these verbs are adjectives because they are describing the subject of the verb, not modifying the verb itself. They function as adjectival complements [> 1.9, 1.11]. Compare:

*You **look well*** (*Well* = 'in good health' is an adjective.)

*You **play well*** (*Well* is an adverb modifying *play*.)

Adjectives can be used as complements of the subject after other verbs in expressions such as: *break loose die/marry young, keep>sit still live close to, remain open, ring true/false*

*Many famous poets **have died young***

*It's impossible for young children to **sit still**.*

*The murder was not solved and the case **remains open***

Adjectives are often used as complements after verbs such as *lie* or *stand*, particularly in descriptive writing [> 7.59.2]:

*The crowd **stood** (or **was**) **silent** at the end of the ceremony*

### 6.18 Adverbs that can function as adjectives

A few adverbs and adverb particles [> 7.3.4] can function as attributive adjectives, especially in fixed phrases: e.g. *the above statement an away match, the down train 'the up train, the downstairs lavatory/the upstairs bathroom a home win; the inside cover inside information an outside line, the then chairman*

### 6.19 Adjectives easily confused

Many common adjectives are easily confused. For details [> App 11].

### 6.20 Adjectives: word order

When we use more than one adjective to describe a noun, we have to take care with the word order. Hard-and-fast rules cannot be given, since much depends on the emphasis a speaker wishes to make. A general guide is as follows:

adjectives: usual order					noun
quality	size/age/shape	colour	origin	past participle	
<i>beautiful</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>brown</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>handmade</i>	<i>cupboard</i>
					<i>kitchen cupboard</i>
					<i>teak cupboard</i>

Note that general qualities go before particular qualities. The more particular the quality, the closer the adjective is to the noun. Let's begin with the noun and work backwards:

### 8.20.1 The noun

A noun may be [> 2.10, 6.13]:

- one-word: a *cupboard*
- two-word: a *kitchen cupboard* a *teak cupboard*
- three-word: a *teak kitchen cupboard*

Where there are three words, **material** (*teak*) precedes **purpose** or **use** (*kitchen*): a *cotton shirt* a *summer shirt*, a *cotton summer shirt*  
Compound nouns are never separated by adjectives.

### 8.20.2 Adjectival past participle

This is usually closest to the noun:

a **handmade** *teak cupboard*, a **handmade** *kitchen cupboard*,  
a **handmade** *teak kitchen cupboard*

### 8.20.3 Origin

A nationality word indicating **origin** [> App 49] or an adjective referring to a historical period (e.g. *Victorian*) usually precedes an adjectival past participle:

a **Chinese** *handmade shirt*, a **Chinese** *handmade cotton shirt*

This is not invariable: *handmade Chinese shirt* is also possible.

If a present participle adjective is used (i.e. the *-ing* form), then it precedes origin:

**quick-selling** *Chinese handmade shirts*

### 8.20.4 Size/age/shape/temperature/flavour, etc.

**Size** generally precedes **age** and **shape**, etc.:

a **large** *old table*, a **large** *round table*, a **large** *old round table*,  
a **huge** *ice-cold strawberry milkshake*

### 8.20.5 Quality (i.e. subjective assessment)

Adjectives expressing our general opinion of the **quality** of people or things come first: e.g. *beautiful*, *big*, *clean*, *dirty*, *nice*

a **beautiful** *tall building*, a **cheap** *Indian restaurant*

If there is more than one 'general quality' adjective, then the most general usually comes first:

a **beautiful spacious** *airy room*

### 8.20.6 Modification with (great) big' and 'little'

The adjectives *big* or *great big* generally precede **quality** adjectives, while *little* generally comes after:

**great big** *boots*, a (**great**) **big tall** *policeman*.

a **nice little** *restaurant* a **friendly little** *waiter*

## 6.21 The use of commas and 'and' to separate adjectives

### 21.1 Separating adjectives used attributively [> 6.7]

When we have two or more adjectives in front of a noun we only need commas to separate those which are equally important (i.e. where the order of the first two could easily be reversed):

a **beautiful, bright** *clean room*

That is, we put a comma after the **quality** adjective. We never use a comma after the adjective that comes immediately before the noun:

*The hotel porter led me to a **beautiful, bright** clean room*

*Joy is engaged to a **daring, very attractive** young Air Force pilot*

## 6 Adjectives

In journalism, writers frequently try to give condensed descriptions by stringing adjectives together, as in: e.g.

*Ageing recently-widowed popular dramatist Milton Fairbanks announced recently that 'Athletes was to be his last play*

Some fixed pairs of adjectives are often linked by *and*: *old and musty wine- a long and winding road, hard and fast rules*. **Pairs of colour** adjectives are often hyphenated: *a blue-and-white flag*.

### 6.21.2 Separating adjectives used predicatively [> 6.7]

If there are two adjectives, we separate them with *and*:

*My shoes are old and worn*

If there are more than two adjectives, we may separate them by commas, except for the last two which are separated by *and*:

*My shoes are dirty, wet old and worn*

We do not usually put a comma after the adjective in front of *and* [compare > 1.20].

## The comparison of adjectives

### 6.22 Shorter adjectives: form of regular comparison

Only **gradable** [> 6.5] adjectives compare. Most common adjectives are short words (usually of one syllable and not more than two syllables). They form their comparatives and superlatives as shown.

	adjective	comparative	superlative
1	<i>clean</i>	<i>cleaner</i>	<i>cleanest</i>
2	<i>big</i>	<i>bigger</i>	<i>biggest</i>
3	<i>nice</i>	<i>nicer</i>	<i>nicest</i>
4	<i>tidy</i>	<i>tidier</i>	<i>tidiest</i>
5	<i>narrow</i> [> 6.26n 1]	<i>narrower</i>	<i>narrowest</i>

### 6.23 Notes on the comparison of shorter adjectives

#### 6.23.1 Spelling of comparative and superlative forms

1 Most one-syllable adjectives form their comparatives and superlatives like *clean*: *-er* and *-est* are added to their basic forms.

**Other examples like *clean* are:** *cold cool great hard, high low neat new short small thick weak*.

2 Many one-syllable adjectives end with a single consonant after a single vowel-letter. This consonant doubles in the comparative and superlative, as in the case of *big*. Other examples like *big* are: *fa' fatter fattest sad sadder saddest thin thinner thinnest wet wetter wettest*. Compare adjectives like *full small tall*, etc. which end with a double consonant and form their comparatives and **superlatives like *clean*: *tall taller tallest***.

3 Many one-syllable adjectives end in *-e*, like *nice*. These add *-r* and *-st* to the basic form, pronounced e.g. /naɪsəst/. Other **examples like *nice* are:** *fine large late safe strange*. **And note** *free freer*.

4 Some adjectives, like *tidy*, end in *-y* with a consonant letter before it. These adjectives are usually two-syllable. In the comparative and

## The comparison of adjectives

superlative -y is replaced by/ (*tidy, tidier, tidiest*). Other examples like *tidy* are: *busy dirty, dry early easy empty, funny, heavy ready, sleepy*. (But note *shy shyer shyest*.) A few adjectives have a vowel before a -y ending, like *gay grey fey*, and these simply take the endings -er and -est.

5 Some other two-syllable adjectives can form their comparatives and superlatives regularly. Other examples like *narrow* are: *clever common gentle simple* [> 6.26n.1].

### 6.23.2 Pronunciation of comparative and superlative forms

In comparatives and superlatives containing the letters *ng*, /g/ is pronounced /ŋ/ after e.g. *younger longer strongest*. In other words containing *ng* /g/ is not pronounced: e.g. *singer* /sɪŋə/

### 6.24 Some irregular comparative and superlative forms

adjective	comparative	superlative
<i>good</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>best</i>
<i>bad</i>	<i>worse</i>	<i>worst</i>
<i>far</i>	<i>farther</i>	<i>farthest</i> [> 7.5n.4]
	<i>further</i>	<i>furthest</i>
<i>old</i>	<i>older</i>	<i>oldest</i> [> App 12.3-4]
	<i>elder</i>	<i>eldest</i>
quantifier [> 5.13]	comparative	superlative
<i>much</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>most</i>
<i>many</i>		
<i>little</i>	<i>less</i>	<i>least</i>

### 6.25 Longer adjectives: form of regular comparison

Most longer adjectives (i.e. of two or more syllables) combine with the quantifiers *more less* to form their comparatives and *most/least* to form their superlatives. *Less* can be used with one-syllable adjectives (less *big*) but *more*, *most* and *least* are not normally used in this way. *More* is occasionally used with one-syllable adjectives (e.g. *It's more true to say that British English is influenced by American, rather than the other way round*). *More/less* can never be used in front of a comparative (e.g. *happier*), nor can *most/least* be used in front of a superlative (e.g. *happiest*).

adjective	comparative	superlative
1 <i>pleasant</i>	<i>pleasanter</i> <i>more pleasant</i> <i>less pleasant</i>	<i>pleasantest</i> <i>most pleasant</i> <i>least pleasant</i>
2 <i>careful</i>	<i>more careful</i> <i>less careful</i>	<i>most careful</i> <i>least careful</i>
<i>expensive</i>	<i>more expensive</i> <i>less expensive</i>	<i>most expensive</i> <i>least expensive</i>
3 <i>bored/bonng</i>	<i>more bored/boring</i> <i>less bored/bonng</i>	<i>most bored/boring</i> <i>least bored, bonng</i>

### 6.26 Notes on the comparison of longer adjectives

1 Some two-syllable adjectives can form their comparatives and superlatives either with -er and -est or with *more less* and *most/least*



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**Other examples like pleasant are:** *clever common, gentle handsome happy, narrow quiet, shallow simple stupid tired* [ > 6.23 in.5]. The opposites of such words, when formed with the prefix *un-*, can also form their comparatives and superlatives in two ways- e.g. *uncommon unhappy unpleasant unhappier or more unhappy unhappiest or most unhappy*. Where there is uncertainty, it is safest to use *more* and *most* with two-syllable adjectives.

- 2 The comparatives and superlatives of other two-syllable adjectives must always be with *more/less* and *most/least*. These include all **adjectives ending in -ful or -less** (*careful careless useful, useless*).

Other examples of adjectives which form comparisons in this way **are:** *(un)certain (in)correct (in)famous foolish (in)frequent modern, (ab)normal*. Adjectives with more than two syllables **compare with more/most and less, least beautiful (un)comfortable dangerous expensive, (un)important (un)natural, (un)necessary**

This applies to most compound adjectives as well, such as: *quick-witted waterproof*. **But note compounds with good well and bad good-looking — better-looking, (or more good-looking) well-built — better-built (but more well-built is sometimes heard); bad-tempered — worse-tempered (or more bad-tempered).**

- 3 Adjectives ending in *-ed* and *-ing* such as *amused/amusing annoyed/annoying* [ > 6.15] **require more,less and most/least to form** their comparatives and superlatives.
- 4 Note the form *lesser* which, though formed from *less*, is not a true comparative because it cannot be followed by *than*. *Lesser* means *not so great in fixed phrases such as:* *to a lesser degree/extent lesser of two evils*

### 6.27 The use of the comparative form of adjectives

We use the comparative when we are comparing one person or thing, etc. with another. Comparison may be between:

- **single items:** *Jane is taller than Alice*
- **a single item and a group:** *Jane is taller than other girls*
- **two groups:** *The girls in class 3 are taller than the girls in class 1*

#### 6.27.1 The use of 'than' in the comparative

A comparative can stand on its own if the reference is clear:

*The grey coat is longer*

This implies that the hearer understands that the grey coat is being compared with another coat or something similar. If two things of exactly the same kind are being compared, we can use *the* before a comparative in formal style:

*Which is (the) longer? (of the two coats)*

*The grey coat is (the) longer (of the two coats)*

However, if we need to mention each item, then we must use *the* after the comparative. When *than* is followed by a noun or pronoun it functions as if it were a preposition [ > 4.7.3]; when it is followed by a

clause [> 1.53], it functions as if it were a conjunction, but note the ambiguity of:

*I know him better than **you*** This could mean:

*I **know him better than** you know him* (*than* is a conjunction)

*I know him better **than (I know)** you* (*than* could be a preposition)

We can avoid ambiguity by using e.g. *than you do*.

Examples with comparative + *than*.

*My room is **better/cleaner/worse than** the one next door*

*Driving is certainly **less tiring than** walking*

*A scheduled flight is **more expensive than** a charter flight*

*It's **pleasanter/more pleasant** today **than** it was yesterday*

*I feel **less tired** today **than** I felt yesterday*

Comparison with *than* + adjective also occurs in fixed phrases, such as (*taller*) *than average*, (*more/less expensive*) *than usual*

#### 6.27.2 Comparatives with '-er and -er'

Two comparatives (adjectives or adverbs), joined by *and*, can convey the idea of general increase or decrease:

*Debbie is growing fast' She's getting **taller and taller***

*Computers are becoming **more and more** complicated*

*Holiday flights are getting **less and less** expensive*

*More and more* and *less and less* do not normally combine with one-syllable adjectives.

#### 6.27.3 'the' + comparative + 'the'

This construction can be used with adjectives or adverbs to show cause and effect: when one change is made, another follows:

***The more** money you make, **the more** you spend*

***The more expensive** petrol becomes, **the less** people drive*

#### 6.27.4 'More' and 'most' in comparisons of relative quantity

*More* is used with countables and uncountables [> 5.2n.3]:

***More food** is wasted **than** is eaten in this canteen*

*More* also combines with numbers [> 5.6.1]:

***How many more stamps** do you want? - **Four more** please*

*Most* can mean 'the largest number of, 'the greatest amount of:

***Most doctors** don't smoke **Most wine** is imported (Not \**the most*\*)*

Compare *the most* in the superlative:

*Which country in the world produces **the most wine**?*

#### 6.27-5 Modification of comparatives [> 7.41-46]

We can use intensifiers and adverbs of degree like *very*, *too* and *quite* to modify adjectives: *very tall*, *too cold quite hot*, etc. However, we cannot use these intensifiers with the comparative. We must use *a bit* (informal), *(very) much*, *far*, *even*, *hardly any*, *a lot* lots, *a little* no. *rather*, *somewhat* (formal), etc.:

*It's **much/far/a lot/a little colder** today **than** it was yesterday*

*Houses are **much/far/a lot more expensive** these days*

*There have been **many more/many fewer** burglaries this year*

*Even* and *all the* can often be used interchangeably for emphasis in front of *more*, especially with *-ed/-ing* adjectival participles:

*This term his behaviour has become **even more annoying***

*When I told her the news, she became **all the more depressed***

## 6.28 The use of the superlative form of adjectives

We use the superlative when we are comparing one person or thing with more than one other in the same group. The definite article *the* is used before a superlative in a phrase or sentence:

*This is **the cleanest/tidiest** room in the house*

*This is **the best/worst** room in the hotel*

*Who is **the tallest** John, Mary or Sue? - Sue is **the tallest***

*First class is **the most expensive** way to travel*

Informally, we sometimes use the superlative instead of a comparative when we are comparing two people or things:

*Who's **the most reliable**, Frank or Alan?*

Similarly, *the* is sometimes dropped, especially after *Which?*:

*Which is **best**? The red one or the green one?*

and when the superlative is in front of a to-infinitive:

*I think it's **safest to overtake** now*

### 6.28.1 The use of a qualifying phrase or a relative

A qualifying phrase is not necessary after a superlative if the reference is clear:

*John is **the tallest***

This implies that the hearer understands that John is being compared with two or more people in the same group. If the comparison is not clear, then we must use a qualifying phrase after the superlative.

Phrases of this kind usually begin with *in* or (less frequently) *of*.

*John is easily the tallest boy **in our class***

*Yesterday was the hottest day **of the year***

Other fixed prepositional phrases are possible:

*It's the oldest trick **on earth/under the sun***

Alternatively, we can use a relative clause [> 1.40] after a superlative.

This is often accompanied by a present perfect with *ever heard*, *met*, *read*, *seen*, etc. [> 9.25.1]:

*'War and Peace' is the longest book (that) **I have ever read***

*Penfold is the most conceited man (that/whom) **I have ever met***

### 6.28.2 Modification of superlatives

Superlatives can be modified by adverbs of degree like *almost* *altogether*, *by far* *far much*, *nearly* *practically* *quite* *the very*

*This is **quite(far)** far the most expensive bicycle in the shop*

*This is **much** the worst stretch of motorway in the country*

Note the position of *very* after *the* [> 7.51.1]:

*I want to give my children **the very best** education I can afford*

## 6.29 Comparatives and superlatives confused and misused

Many common comparatives are easily confused [> App 12].

## 6.30 Comparison, similarity and contrast

### 6.30.1 'as...as' to indicate the same degree

*As* *as* can combine with one-syllable and longer adjectives to show that two people, things, etc. are similar:

*Jane is **as tall as/as intelligent as** Peter*

A number of everyday expressions with *as* + adjective + *as* are commonly in use [> App 13]: e.g. *as clear as crystal*, *as cold as ice* *as good as gold*, *as light as a feather*, *as old as the hills* *as white as snow* The first *as* is often dropped:

*How has Jimmy behaved himself?* - *He's been (as) good as gold*

Some of these expressions can occur as compound adjectives: e.g. *grass-green* (for 'as green as grass' = colour or 'inexperienced').

Like *than* [> 6.27.1], *as* can function as a preposition [> 4.7.3] or as a conjunction [> 1.53]. For differences between *like* and *as* [> App 25.25].

#### 6.30.2 'not as...as'; 'not so...as' to indicate lower degree

We can use either *as* or *so* after *not* to compare two people, things, etc.:

*Soames is not as/not so suitable for the job as me/as I am*

But note: *He's not so suitable in my view* This use of *so* is informal and can replace *very*. *Not such a/an* (+ adjective) + noun is also possible: *He's not such a hard worker as his brother*

#### 6.30.3 'More than', 'less than' and 'worse than' + adjective

*More than*, *less than* and *worse than* can be used in front of a number of adjectives in the following way:

*I was more than pleased with my pay rise I was over the moon'*

*This foot-pump is worse than useless*

(i.e. to a degree which *pleased* and *useless* cannot convey)

#### 6.30.4 'The same as'; 'different from'

Note that *as* follows *the same*:

*He's angry because my marks are the same as his*

(Not *\*the same like\** or *\*the same with\**)

Compare the use of *with* after *the same* in: e.g.

*Butterflies come from caterpillars It's the same with moths*

(i.e. moths do the same thing)

*The same* (with singular or plural) can also be used without *as*:

*This cup's cracked What's that one like? - It's the same*

*Those two dresses are the same* (plural)

*Different* is normally followed by *from*, especially in BrE:

*We have the same make of car, but yours is different from mine*

*I know we look alike, but we're quite different from each other*

*To* and *than* (especially in AmE) are also heard after *different*

However, *than* cannot replace *from* in uncomplicated comparisons:

*Roses are different from/different to violets*

*Than* is commonly used after *different* to introduce a clause:

*We're doing something quite different for our holiday this year than*

*(what) we did last year/from what we did last year*

#### 6.30.5 Degrees of similarity

Degrees of similarity can be expressed by means of *almost exactly* *just*, *nearly* + *as* + adjective [> 7.41]:

*Jeffrey is nearly as tall as his father now*

or + *like* + noun: *Sandra is just like her mother*

*Almost exactly just nearly* and *(not) quite* will combine with *the same*:

*Those two boys are exactly the same*

*Completely, entirely* and *quite* will combine with *different*:

*Those two boys are completely different*

# 7 Adverbs

## General information about adverbs

### 7.1 What an adverb is and what it does

The word **adverb** (ad-verb) suggests the idea of adding to the meaning of a verb. This is what many adverbs do. They can tell us something about the action in a sentence by **modifying** a verb, i.e. by telling us how, when, where, etc. something happens or is done:  
*Paganini played the violin **beautifully*** (How did he play?)

However, adverbs can also modify:

- adjectives: **very good, awfully hungry**
- other adverbs: **very soon awfully quickly**
- prepositional phrases: *You're **entirely** in the wrong*
- complete sentences: **Strangely enough** I won first prize
- nouns: *The man **over there** is a doctor*

Adverbs can be single words (*slowly*) or phrases (*in the garden*) and the term **adverbial** is often used to describe both types.

Adverbs are not always essential to the structure of a sentence, but they often affect the meaning. Compare:

*Dons has left                      Dons has **just** left*  
*I have finished work        I have **nearly** finished work*

Sometimes adverbs are essential to complete a sentence:

1 after some intransitive verbs such as *lie, live, sit*, etc.:

*Lie **down** [ > 8.29] Sit **over there** I live **in Rome***

2 after some transitive verbs (e.g. *lay place put*) + object:

*He put his car **in the garage***

For the general position of adverbs in a sentence [> 1.3].

### 7.2 Kinds of adverbs

Many adverbs can be thought of as answering questions, such as *How?* [**manner**, > 7.7]; *Where?* [**place**, > 7.17]; *When?* [**time**, > 7.20]; *How often?* [**frequency**, > 7.37]; *To what extent?* [**degree**, > 7.41]. Others 'strengthen' adjectives, other adverbs or verbs [**intensifiers**, > 7.50]; focus attention [**focus**, > 7.54]; reveal our attitudes, or help us to present information in a coherent fashion [**viewpoint adverbs and connectives**, > 7.57-58].

### 7.3 How to identify an adverb

#### 7.3.1 One-word adverbs ending in '-ly'

A great many adverbs, particularly those of manner, are formed from adjectives by the addition of -ly: e.g. *patient patiently*. Some adverbs of frequency are also formed in this way: e.g. *usual usually*, as are a

## The comparison of adverbs

few adverbs of degree: e.g. *near, nearly*. Many viewpoint adverbs end in *-ly*: e.g. *fortunately*.

### 7.3.2 One-word adverbs not ending in '-ly'

Many adverbs cannot be identified by their endings. These include adverbs of manner which have the same form as adjectives, e.g. *fast* [> App 14]; adverbs of place {*there*}; of time {*then*}; of frequency {*often*}; viewpoint adverbs {*perhaps*} and connectives (however).

### 7.3.3 Adverbial phrases

Adverbial phrases of manner, place and time are often formed with a preposition + noun: *in a hurry, in the garden, at the station*. Other examples of adverbial phrases: *again and again* (frequency); *hardly at all* (degree); *very much indeed* (intensifying); *as a matter of fact* (viewpoint); *in that case* (connective).

### 7.3.4 Adverb particles

Certain words, such as *in, off, up*, function either as prepositions or as adverb particles [> 8.4]. When such words are followed by an object, they function as prepositions; when there is no object, they are adverb particles:

**preposition:** *The children are in the house*

**adverb:** *The children have just gone in*

## The comparison of adverbs

### 7.4 Form of comparison of adverbs

Only **gradable** adverbs [compare > 6.5] can have comparative and superlative forms. Comparison is not possible with adverbs such as *daily, extremely, only, really, then, there, uniquely*, because they are not gradable. Gradable adverbs form comparatives and superlatives as follows:

	adverb	comparative	superlative
1 Same form as adjective:	<i>fast</i>	<i>faster</i>	<i>fastest</i>
2 -ly adverbs of manner:	<i>easily</i>	<i>more easily</i>	<i>most easily</i>
3 Some adverbs of frequency,	<i>rarely</i>	<i>more rarely</i>	<i>most rarely</i>
4 Exceptions:	<i>badly</i>	<i>worse</i>	<i>worst</i>
	<i>far</i>	<i>farther</i>	<i>farthest</i>
		<i>further</i>	<i>furthest</i>
	<i>late</i>	<i>later</i>	<i>last</i>
	<i>little</i>	<i>less</i>	<i>least</i>
	<i>much</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>most</i>
	<i>well</i>	<i>better</i>	<i>best</i>

### 7.5 Notes on the comparison of adverbs [compare 6.22-26]

- 1 Many adverbs like *early, fast*, etc. [> App 14] form their comparatives and superlatives in the same way as shorter adjectives (e.g. *earlier, earliest*).
- 2 As most adverbs of manner have two or more syllables, they form their comparatives and superlatives with *more/less* and *most/least*. Other examples: *more-'less/most'least briefly clearly quickly*.

## 7 Adverbs

**3 Some adverbs of frequency form their comparative and superlative with *more/less most/least* (e.g. *more seldom, most seldom*); *often* has two comparative forms: *more often* and (*less common*) *oftener*.**

**4 Compare *latest/last*: both words can be adjectives:**

*I bought the **latest** (i.e. most recent) edition of today's paper*

*I bought the **last** (i.e. final) edition of today's paper*

**But normally only *last* is used as an adverb:**

*That was a difficult question so I answered it **last***

**or before the main verb:**

***It last** rained eight months ago (= The last time it rained was...)*

**Both *farther* and *further* can be used to refer to distance:**

*I drove ten miles **farther/further** than necessary*

**Further, but not farther, can be used to mean 'in addition':**

*We learnt **further** that he wasn't a qualified doctor*

**Note the irregular adverb *well* (related to the adjective *good*) which means 'in a pleasing or satisfactory way':**

*Jane Somers writes **well** [compare *bad/badly* and > 6.8.1, 6.17]*

### 7.6 How we make comparisons using adverbs

Adverbial comparisons can be made with the following [compare > 6.27-30]:

*as...as: Sylvia sings **as sweetly as** her sister*

*not as/so...as: I can't swim **as well as** you (can)*

*She can't jump (quite) **so high as** Billy (can)*

*...than: The rain cleared **more quickly than** I expected*

*the...the: **The faster** I type **the more** mistakes I make*

*...and...: It rained **more and more heavily***

*comparative: Dave drives **faster than** anyone I know*

*superlative: I work **fastest** when I'm under pressure*

*Tim tries **the hardest of all** the boys in his class*

**We often use the comparative + *than ever than***

*anyone, than anything* in: e.g.

*Magnus concentrated **harder than ever/than anyone***

**This is preferable to the superlative in: e.g.**

*Magnus concentrated **the hardest***

## Adverbs of manner

### 7.7 Spelling and form of adverbs ending in '-ly'

	adjective	adverb
1 Add <i>-ly</i> to an adjective	<i>bad</i>	<i>badly</i>
	<i>careful</i>	<i>carefully</i>
2 <i>-y</i> becomes <i>-ily</i> : consonant + <i>y</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>happily</i>
Compare: vowel + <i>y</i> :	{ <i>day</i> - noun}	<i>daily</i>
3 Delete <i>-e</i> and add <i>-ly</i> for endings in <i>-le</i> :	<i>noble</i>	<i>nobly</i>
4 Adjectives ending in <i>-ic</i> take <i>-ally</i> .	<i>fantastic</i>	<i>fantastically</i>

## 7.8 Notes on the spelling and form of '-ly' adverbs

- 1 Most adverbs of manner are formed by adding *-ly* to adjectives, e.g. *mad/madly*, *plain/plainly*, *sudden/suddenly*. This applies to adjectives ending in *-l* so that the *l* is doubled: *beautiful/beautifully*, *musical/musically*. But note: *full/fully*
- 2 *-y* after a consonant becomes *-ily*. e.g. *busy/busily*, *funny/funnily*. Sometimes two formations are possible, e.g. *dry/drily/dryly*, but in e.g. *sly/slyly*, *-yly* is the acceptable form
- 3 Delete *-e* and add *-(l)y* if an adjective ends in *-te*: e.g. *able/ably*, *nimble/nimbly*, *possible/possibly*, *whole/wholly*. Other adjectives ending in *-e* retain the *-e* when adding *-ly*: *extreme/extremely*, *tame/tamely*. Exceptions: *due/duly* and *true/truly*.
- 4 Adjectives ending in *-ic* take *-ally*: e.g. *basic/basically*, *systematic/systematically*. Common exception: *public/publicly*

Some *-ly* adverbs (relating to manner/frequency) have the same form as adjectives: e.g. *daily*, *weekly*, *monthly*, *quarterly*, *yearly*

*I receive **quarterly** bills I pay my bills **quarterly***

*Early* can be used as an adjective or an adverb, but unlike e.g. *week/weekly* is not formed from another word

*I hope to catch an **early** train I want to arrive **early***

## 7.9 Suffixes other than '-ly' used to form adverbs of manner

A few other suffixes can be added to adjectives (and to some nouns and adverbs) to form adverbs of manner (or in some cases direction)<sup>1</sup> (*Indian*)-*fashion*; (*American*)-*style*, *backwards*, *forwards*, *northwards*, *upwards*; *crossways*, *lengthways*, *sideways*, *clockwise*, *lengthwise*. The suffix *-wise* is often used to make new adverbs meaning 'relating to (the noun)', *moneywise*, *taxwise* (*How do you manage **taxwise**?*)

## 7.10 Adverbs of manner with dynamic and stative verbs [> 9.3]

Most adverbs of manner naturally refer to action verbs (*laugh loudly*, *perform badly*, *drive carefully*, etc.) A smaller number of adverbs can also refer to stative verbs (e.g. *understand perfectly*, *know well*)  
*I hear very **badly***

## 7.11 Prepositional phrases used adverbially

When there is no *-ly* adverb for what we want to say, we have to use an adverbial phrase beginning with a preposition to refer to 'means' or 'method':

*I came here **by bus** She answered me **in a loud whisper***

Sometimes we can choose between a phrase and an *-ly* adverb

*He left **in a hurry/hurriedly*** [> App 26]

## , 7.12 '-ly' adjectives and equivalent adverbial forms

Here is a selection of adjectives which end in *-ly*:

*brotherly/sisterly*, *cowardly*, *elderly*, *friendly/unfriendly*, *heavenly*, *likely/unlikely*, *lively*, *lovely*, *manly/womanly*, *motherly/fatherly*, *sickly*,



## 7 Adverbs

*silly* and *ugly* We use most of these adjectives to describe people's qualities. We cannot use them as adverbs, so we form phrases with *way*, *manner* or *fashion*.

**adjective** Susan is a **friendly** girl

**adverb** She always greets me **in a friendly way/manner/fashion**

### 7.13 Adjectives/adverbs: same form, same meaning [> Apps14,15.1]

Some words can be used as adjectives or as adverbs of manner without adding *-ly* **fast** **hard**, etc

**A fast** (adjective) tram is one that goes **fast** (adverb)

I work **hard** (adverb) because I enjoy **hard** (adjective) work

### 7.14 Adverbs with two forms [> App 15]

Some adverbs have two forms which may have

- the same meaning e.g. *cheap* I bought this car **cheap/cheaply**
- different meanings e.g. *hard* I work **hard** and play **hard**  
I did **hardly** any work today

### 7.15 Adverbs differing in meaning from corresponding adjectives

Some adverbs differ in meaning from their corresponding adjectives

e.g. *express/expressly* ready *readily*

If it's *urgent* you should send it by **express** mail (fast)

You were told **expressly** to be here by 7 (clearly/deliberately)

Some adverbs, such as *coldly* *coolly* *hardly* and *warmly* can refer to feelings and behaviour and can be used with verbs such as *act* *behave* *react* *speak*. Compare adjective/adverb uses in e.g.

It's **cold** today The whole queue stared at me **coldly**

It's a **warm/cool** day Emily greeted me **warmly/coolly**

It's a **hot** day Edward **hotly** denied the accusation

### 7.16 Position of adverbs of manner

#### 7.16.1 Adverbs of manner: after the object or after the verb

The most usual position of adverbs of manner is after the object or after the verb [> 1.3] e.g.

- after the object Sue watched the monkeys **curiously**  
Look at this photo **carefully**
- after the verb It snowed **heavily** last January
- after an adverb particle He took the picture down **carefully**

The important thing is not to put the adverb between the verb and its object (Not *\*He speaks well English\**) But even this is possible if the object is very long

We could see **very clearly** a strange light ahead of us

#### 7.16.2 Adverbs of manner: between subject and verb

One-word adverbs of manner can sometimes go between the subject and the verb (This rarely applies to adverbial phrases) If we wish to emphasize the subject of the verb, we can say

Gillian **angrily** slammed the door behind her

(i.e. Gillian was angry when she slammed the door)

## Adverbs of place

However, *well* and *badly*, when used to evaluate an action, can only go at the end of a sentence or clause

*Mr Gradgnnd pays his staff **very well/badly*** [compare > 7.10]

With some adverbs of manner, such as *bravely cleverly cruelly foolishly generously kindly secretly simply*, a change of position results in a difference in emphasis Compare the following

***He foolishly** locked himself out*

(= It was foolish (of him) to ) [> 16.27.2]

*He behaved **foolishly** at the party* (= in a foolish manner)

With others, such as *badly naturally*, a change of position results in a change in meaning and function

*You **typed** this letter **very badly*** (adverb of manner)

*We **badly** need a new typewriter* (intensifier, > 7.53.1)

*You should always **speak naturally*** (adverb of manner)

***Naturally** I'll accept the invitation* (viewpoint adverb, > 7.57)

### 7.16.3 Adverbs of manner: beginning a sentence

In narrative writing (but not normally in speech) sentences can begin with adverbs of manner, such as *gently quietly slowly suddenly* We do this for dramatic effect, or to create suspense Such adverbs are followed by a comma

*O Connor held his breath and stood quite still **Quietly** he moved forwards to get a better view*

## Adverbs of place

### 7.17 The meaning of 'place'

The idea of **place** covers

- location *Larry **is in** Jamaica*
- direction (to away from) *Larry **flew to** Jamaica*

A distinction can be drawn between location and direction

1 **Location** adverbials answer the question *Where?* and go with 'position verbs' such as *be live stay work* They can begin a sentence ***In Jamaica** Larry stayed at the Grand Hotel*

2 **Direction** adverbials answer the questions *Where to?* and *Where from?* They often go with 'movement verbs' like *go* and cannot usually begin a sentence *Larry went by plane **to** Jamaica*

### 7.18 How to identify adverbs of place

Adverbs of place may be

- words like *abroad ahead anywhere everywhere nowhere somewhere ashore away back backwards/forwards here/there left right north south upstairs/downstairs*

- words like the following, which can also function as prepositions [>8.4.1] *above behind below beneath underneath*

- two words combining to emphasize place, such as *down below down up there far ahead far away over here over there*

Prepositional phrases often function as adverbials of place e.g. *at my mother's from New York in hospital on the left* [> 7.3.3, 7.30]

### 7.19 Position of adverbs of place

Adverbs of place never go between subject and verb

#### 7.19.1 Adverbs of place: after manner but before time

When there is more than one kind of adverb in a sentence, the usual position of adverbs of place is after manner, but before time (following a verb or verb + object [> 1.3])

---

	manner	place	time
<i>Barbara read</i>	<i>quietly</i>	<i>in the library</i>	<i>all afternoon</i>

---

However, adverbs of direction can often come after movement verbs {*come drive go*} and before other adverbials

*I went to London* (direction) *by train* (manner) *next day* (time)

If there is more than one adverb of place then 'smaller places' are mentioned before 'bigger places' in ascending order

She lives | in a small house | in a village | outside Reading | in Berkshire | England

#### 7.19.2 Adverbs of place: beginning a sentence

If we wish to emphasize location (e.g. for contrast), we may begin with an adverb of location especially in descriptive writing

**Indoors** *it was nice and warm* **Outside** *it was snowing heavily*

To avoid ambiguity, the initial position is usual when there is more than one adverbial of place

*On many large farms* *farm workers live in tied cottages*

For inversion after initial place adverbials [> 7.59.1-2]

## Adverbs of time

### 7.20 How to identify adverbs of time

Adverbs and adverbial phrases of time can refer to **definite time** [> 7.21], answering questions like *When (exactly)?*

*I'll see you tomorrow/on Monday*

They refer to **duration** [> 7.30], answering *Since when? For how long?*

*I haven't seen her since Monday/for a year*

Other adverbials refer to **indefinite time** [> 7.23], i.e. they do not answer time questions precisely

*He doesn't live here now/any more*

Some time adverbs can also act as nouns

*Tomorrow is Tuesday isn't it?*

### 7.21 Adverbs of definite time

Adverbs of definite time answer the question *When?* and are generally used with past tenses, or refer to the future

*I started my job last Monday I'll ring tomorrow*

Two main categories can be defined

1 'Points of time' such as *today tomorrow yesterday* [> App 48]

These can be modified by the words *early earlier late and later*  
e.g. *earlier today late later this year*

2 Prepositional phrases which function as adverbials of time [> 8.11-14] They often begin with *at in* or *on* e.g. *at five o'clock* [> App 47.5] *at Christmas in July on November 20th*  
Some of these can be modified *early in July punctually at 5*

## 7.22 Position of adverbs of definite time

The most usual position is at the very end of a sentence [> 1.3]  
*We checked in at the hotel **on Monday/yesterday** etc*  
Definite time references can also be made at the beginning [> App 48]  
***This morning** I had a telephone call from Sheila*  
If there is more than one time reference we usually progress from the particular to the general i.e. time + day + date + year  
*Gilbert was born **at 11.58 on Monday November 18th 1986***

## 7.23 Adverbs of indefinite time

Some common adverbs of indefinite time are *afterwards already* [> 7.26, 7.28] *another day another time at last at once early eventually formerly immediately just* [> 7.29] *late lately* (= recently) *now nowadays once one day presently recently some day soon still* [> 7.25] *subsequently suddenly then these days ultimately and yet* [> 7.27-28]

## 7.24 Position of adverbs of indefinite time

The following usually come at the end of a sentence although they can also come before the verb and (usually to focus interest or for contrast) at the beginning of a sentence *afterwards eventually formerly immediately lately once presently recently soon subsequently suddenly then ultimately*  
*I went to Berlin **recently** I **recently** went to Berlin*  
***Recently** I went to Berlin It was very interesting*  
When the verb is *be* these adverbs usually come after it  
*I was **recently** in Berlin*  
*Early* and *late* come at the end of a sentence or clause  
*We arrived at the airport too **early/late** for our flight*  
*Another day/time one day* (referring to past or future) *some day* (referring to future) can come at the beginning or the end  
***Some day** I'll tell you I'll tell you **some day***  
Some adverbs of indefinite time can be modified with *only* (*only just only recently*) or with *very* (*very early very recently*)

## 7.25 Position and use of 'still'

*Still* referring to time emphasizes continuity It is mainly used in questions and affirmatives often with progressive tenses [> 9.20.1] Its position is the same as for adverbs of indefinite frequency [> 7.40]  
*Mrs Mason is **still** in hospital*  
*I'm **still** waiting for my new passport*  
*Tom **still** works for the British Council*

## 7 Adverbs

For special emphasis, it can come before an auxiliary [> 7.40.6]:

*Martha **still 'is** in hospital, you know*

Used after the subject in negative sentences, *still* can express dissatisfaction or surprise:

*I **still** haven't heard from her*

(Compare *I haven't heard from her **yet***, which is neutral.)

### 7.26 Position and use of 'already'

*Already* is not normally used in negative sentences. Its position is the same as for adverbs of indefinite frequency [> 7.40], though it can also come at the end:

*This machine is **already** out of date It is out of date **already***

*I've **already** seen the report I've seen it **already***

*Tom **already** knows the truth He knows it **already***

For special emphasis it can come before an auxiliary [> 7.40.6]:

*You'd better lock up - I **already 'have** (locked up)*

In the end position, *already* can emphasize 'sooner than expected':

*Don't tell me you 've eaten it **already!***

### 7.27 Position and use of 'yet'

*Yet* generally comes at the end in questions and negatives:

*Have the new petrol prices come into force **yet?***

*Haven't the new petrol prices come into force **yet?***

*The new petrol prices haven't come into force **yet***

In negatives, *yet* can come before the main verb:

*The new petrol prices haven't **yet** come into force*

*Yet* is often used after *not* in short negative answers:

*Has the concert finished? - No **not yet***

Before an infinitive, *yet* has almost the same meaning as *still*:

*Who'll be appointed? - It's **yet/still** to be decided*

### 7.28 'Yet' and 'already' compared

Both these adverbs are commonly used with perfect tenses [> 9.26.2], though in AmE they commonly occur with the past:

*Have you seen 'Tosca' **yet?** - I've **already** seen it (BrE)*

*Did you see Tosca **yet?** - I **already** saw it (AmE)*

We use *yet* in questions when we want information:

*Have you received your invitation **yet?** (i.e. I don't know.)*

We sometimes use *already* when we want confirmation:

*Have you **already** received your invitation? (i.e. Please confirm.)*

### 7.29 Position and use of 'just'

*Just* (referring to time) has the same position as for adverbs of indefinite frequency [> 7.40] and is used:

- with perfect tenses to mean 'during a very short period before now or before then' [> 9.26.2, 9.29.1]:

*I've **just** finished reading the paper Would you like it?*

*I saw Mrs Mason yesterday She had **just** come out of hospital*

## Adverbs of time

- with the past, especially in AmE, to mean 'a very short time ago':  
*I **just** saw Selina She was going to the theatre*
  - to refer to the immediate future, with progressive tenses or *will*:  
*Wait I'm **just** coming I'll **just** put my coat on*
- Just* has other meanings, e.g. 'that and nothing else':  
*How do I work this<sup>9</sup> - You **just** turn on that switch*

### 7.30 Adverbials of duration

Duration (periods of time) can be expressed by adverbs (e.g. *ago all (day) long, (not) any more (not) any longer, no longer no more*), and by prepositional phrases functioning as adverbials (beginning with e.g. *by, during, for from to/till, since throughout*).

### 7.31 'Since' and 'ago' [> 9.25.2, 9.29.1, 9.33.1, 10.13.5, 9.18]

*Since* combines with points of time to answer the question *Since when<sup>9</sup>* it is often associated with the present perfect to mark the beginning of a period lasting till *now*, or with the past perfect to mark the beginning of a period lasting till *then*:

*I haven't seen Tim **since January/since last holidays***

*I met John last week I hadn't seen him **since 1984***

*Since* can be used as an adverb on its own:

*I saw your mother last January, but I haven't seen her **since***

Period of time + *ago* (answering *How long ago?* or *When?*) marks the start of a period going back from now:

*I started working at Lawson's **seven months ago***

Note that *since* is placed before the point in time it refers to; *ago* is placed after the period it refers to.

### 7.32 'For' [> App 25.20]

*For* (+ period of time, answering *How long?*) marks the duration of a period of time in the past or in the future, or up to the present:

*The Kenways lived here **for five years** (They no longer live here.)*

*The Kenways have lived here **for five years** (They are still here.)*

*For* combines with e.g. *ages, hours, days, weeks, months, years*, etc. to emphasize or exaggerate duration:

*I haven't seen Patricia **for months** How is she?*

In affirmative sentences with a 'continuity verb' like *be live, work*

[> 9.33.1] *for* is often omitted when the verb is present perfect or past:

*Patricia has been (or has lived, has worked) here (**for**) a year*

Sometimes *for* can be omitted in future reference:

*I'll be (or stay, work) in New York (**for**) six months*

*For* cannot be omitted in negative sentences or when it comes at the beginning of a sentence or clause:

*I haven't seen him **for six years**. **For six years**, he lived abroad*

### 7.33 'From...to/till/until'

*From to/till/until* refer to a defined period:

*The tourist season runs **from** June **to/till** October*

## 7 Adverbs

*From* can be omitted informally with *till* but not usually with *to*  
*I'm at my office (from) nine till five ( from nine to five)*  
*We worked on the project (from) March till June*

### 7.34 By, 'till/until' and not...till/until

*Till* (or *until*) and *by* mean any time before and not later than When we use continuity verbs [> 9.33.1] which indicate a *period of time* (e.g. *stay wait*) we can only use *till/until* (Not *\*by*)

*I'll stay here till/until Monday*  
*I won't stay here till/until Monday*  
*Will you stay here till/until Monday?*

When we use verbs which indicate a *point of time* (e.g. *finish leave*) we can only use *till/until* in the negative

*I won't leave till/until Monday* (= on Monday not before)

We can only use *by* with point of time verbs so we can say

*I'll have left by Monday* (= any time before and not later than)  
*I won't have left by Monday* (= I'll still be here on Monday)

### 7.35 'During', 'in' and 'throughout'

*During* always followed by a noun can refer to a whole period

*It was very hot during the summer*  
or to points during the course of a period

*He's phoned four times during the last half hour*  
*In* (= within a period) can replace *during* in the above examples  
Vagueness can be emphasized by the use of *some time + during*  
*I posted it some time during (Not \*in\*) the week*

*During* cannot be replaced by *in* when we refer to an event or activity rather than to a period of time

*I didn't learn much during my teacher-training*

*Throughout* can replace *in* or *during* if we wish to emphasize 'from the beginning to the end of a whole period

*There were thunderstorms throughout July*  
*During or throughout* (Not *\*in\**) can combine with e.g. *the whole the entire* to emphasize that something happened over a period  
*During the whole/the entire winter she never saw a soul*

### 7.36 All (day) long, '(not) any more'

*All long* emphasizes duration and is commonly used with words like *day* and *night* *Long* gives extra emphasis and is optional  
*It rained all night (long)*

*Not any more not any longer* and *no longer* are used to show that an action with duration has stopped or must stop They come at the end of a sentence or clause

*Hurry up I can't wait any longer/any more*  
*No longer* can come before a full verb or at the end of a sentence though the end position is sometimes slightly more formal  
*I'm sorry Professor Carrington no longer lives here*

## Adverbs of frequency

### 7.37 How to identify adverbs of frequency

These adverbs fall into two categories **definite frequency** and **indefinite frequency** Both kinds of adverbs answer *How often?*

### 7.38 Adverbs of definite frequency and their position

These include words and phrases like the following

- *once twice three/several times (a day week month year, etc )*
- *hourly/daily weekly/fortnightly/monthly/yearly annually*
- *every + e.g. day/week/month/year + morning afternoon evening night and in combinations like every other day every 3 years every few days every third (etc ) day*
- *on + Mondays Fridays weekdays, etc*

These adverbials usually come at the end of a sentence

*There s a collection from this letter box **twice daily***

Some of them can also begin a sentence, just like adverbs of time

This may be necessary to avoid ambiguity

**Once a month** *we visit our daughter who s at Leeds University*  
avoids the ambiguity of

*We visit our daughter who s at Leeds University **once a month***

The -ly adverbs (*hourly daily etc* ) are not normally used to begin sentences

### 7.39 Adverbs of indefinite frequency

These adverbs give general answers to *How often?* Here are some of the most common, arranged on a 'scale of frequency'

- *always* (i.e. 'all of the time')
- *almost always nearly always*
- *generally normally regularly usually*
- *frequently often*
- *sometimes occasionally*
- *almost never hardly ever rarely scarcely ever seldom*
- *not ever never* (i.e. 'none of the time')

Negative frequency adverbs (*almost never, etc* above) cannot be used with *not* [ > 13.10]

*I **hardly ever** see Brian these days (Not \*I **don't hardly ever**)*

The following can be intensified with *very frequently occasionally often rarely regularly and seldom* **But note that** *very occasionally* means 'not very often'

*We only have dinner parties **very occasionally** these days*

The following can be modified by *fairly* and *quite frequently often and regularly*

Other adverbials that suggest indefinite frequency are *again and again at times every so often (every) now and again from time to time (every) now and then, and ordinary -ly adverbs such as constantly continually continuously repeatedly*



## 7 Adverbs

*Not*, *any more*, *not any longer*, etc. refer both to duration and frequency, indicating activities that used to occur frequently, but have now stopped [ > 7.36].

### 7.40 Position of adverbs of indefinite frequency

#### 7.40.1 Adverbs of frequency: affirmatives/questions: mid-position

The normal position of most adverbs of indefinite frequency is 'after an auxiliary or before a full verb'. This means:

- after *be* when it is the only verb in a sentence [but > 7.40.6]:  
*I **was never** very good at maths*
- after the first auxiliary verb when there is more than one verb:  
*You **can always** contact me on 032 5642.*
- before the main verb when there is only one verb:  
*Gerald **often made** unwise decisions*

These adverbs usually come before *used to*, *have to* and *ought to*:  
*We **never used to** import so many goods.*

They can also come before a to-infinitive, though this is formal:

*You **ought always to** check your facts when you write essays*

In questions, these adverbs usually come after the subject:

***Do you usually** have cream in your coffee?*

#### 7.40.2 Adverbs of frequency: negative sentences: mid-position

*Not* must come before *always* and it commonly comes before *generally*, *normally*, *often*, *regularly* and *usually*:

*Public transport isn't **always** very reliable*

*We don't **usually** get up before nine on Sundays*

The following is also possible with slightly different emphasis:

***We usually** don't get up before 9 on Sundays.*

*Not* must come after *sometimes* and *frequently*:

*Debbie is **sometimes not** responsible for what she does*

Some frequency adverbials such as *almost always*, *nearly always* and *occasionally* are not used in the negative.

#### 7.40.3 Adverbs of frequency: end position

'Affirmative adverbs' can be used at the end of a sentence:

*I get paid on Fridays **usually***

We can use *often* at the end in questions and negatives:

*Do you come here **often**? I don't come here **often***

*Always* may occur at the end, but in the sense of 'for ever':

*I'll love you **always**.*

The 'negative adverbs' *rarely* and *seldom* can sometimes occur at the end, especially when modified by *only* or *very*:

*Nowadays, we drive down to the coast **only rarely***

#### 7.40.4 Adverbs of frequency: beginning a sentence

Where special emphasis or contrast is required, the following can begin a sentence: *frequently*, *generally*, *normally*, *occasionally*, *ordinarily*, *sometimes* and *usually*:

***Sometimes** we get a lot of rain in August*

*Often* is generally preceded by *quite* or *very* when it is used for emphasis at the beginning of a sentence:

***Quite/Very often** the phone rings when I'm in the bath*

## Adverbs of degree

*Always* and *never* can be used at the beginning in imperatives:

**Always** pay your debts **Never** borrow money [> 9.52n.6]

When negative adverbs (*never*, *seldom*, etc.) are used to begin sentences, they affect the word order that follows [> 7.59.3].

### 7.40.5 Adverbs of frequency: 'ever' and 'never'

*Ever*, meaning 'at any time', is used in questions:

*Have you **ever** thought of applying for a job abroad?*

We can use *ever* after *any-* and *no-* indefinite pronouns [> 4.37]:

*Does **anyone ever** visit them? **Nothing ever** bothers Howard*

*Ever* can occur in affirmative *If*-sentences:

*If you **ever** need any help, you know where to find me*

and **after** *hardly* *scarcely* and *barely* [> 7.39].

*Never* is used in negative sentences and frequently replaces *not* when we wish to strengthen a negative [> 13.8]. Compare:

*I **don't smoke** I **never smoke***

The negative *not* *ever* may be used in preference to *never* for extra emphasis in e.g. promises, warnings, etc.:

*I promise you, he **won't ever** trouble you again'*

### 7.40.6 Adverbs of frequency before auxiliaries

Adverbs of indefinite frequency can be used before auxiliaries (*be*, *have*, *do*, *can*, *must*, etc.) when we want to place special emphasis on the verb, which is usually heavily stressed in speech:

*It's just like Philip He **always 'is** late when we have an important meeting You **never can** rely on him*

We often use this word order in short responses, especially to agree with or contradict something that has just been said:

*Philip is late again - Yes, he **always 'is***

Note this use when *do*, *does* and *did* replace a full verb:

*Your son never helps you - No, he **never 'does***

*or: But he **always 'does***

A response of this kind can be part of a single statement:

*Joan promised to keep her room tidy but she **never did***

The same kind of emphasis can be made with more than one verb:

*George **never should have joined** the army*

## Adverbs of degree

### 7.41 How to identify adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree broadly answer the question '*To what extent?*'

Some of **the** most common **are**: *almost altogether*, *barely*, *a bit*, *enough* *fairly* *hardly* *nearly* *quite*, *rather* *somewhat*, *too* Most of these go before the words they modify: e.g.

- adjectives: *quite good*

- adverbs: *quite quickly*

- verbs: *I quite like it*

- nouns (in a few instances): *quite an experience*

However, not all adverbs of degree can form all these combinations.

Adverbs of degree change the meaning of a sentence, often by

## 7 Adverbs

weakening the effect of the word they modify. In speech, the information they provide can vary according to stress:  
*The film was quite good* (rising tone: = I enjoyed it on the whole)  
*The film was quite good* (falling tone: = I didn't particularly enjoy it)  
For adverbs of degree which will combine with the comparative and superlative of adjectives and adverbs [> 6.27.5, 6.28.2].

Some quantifiers, such as *a little*, *a lot*, *much*, etc. can be used as adverbs of degree [> 7.45-46]. Compare:

*I don't like coffee **very much** (degree)*  
*I don't drink **much** coffee (quantity)*

Fractions and percentages also function as adverbs to show degree:

*Business is so bad that the department stores are **half** empty*  
*We have a 60% chance of winning the next election*

Some adverbs of degree (*almost*, *nearly*, etc.) do not pose problems in usage; others (*fairly*, *rather*, etc.) are more complicated. Details follow.

### 7.42 'Quite'

The meaning of *quite* depends on the kind of word it modifies. With adjectives and adverbs which are gradable [> 6.5] *quite* means 'less than the highest degree', or it can mean 'better than expected'. This use of *quite* (- less than, etc.) is not very common in AmE.

*The lecture was **quite good** He lectured **quite well** (= less than)*  
However, with ungradable words (*dead*, *perfect(ly)* *unique(ly)*) and '**strong**' gradable words (*amazing(ly)*, *astounding(ly)*), *quite* means 'absolutely' or 'completely':

*The news is **quite amazing**. She plays **quite amazingly***

*Not quite*, roughly meaning 'not completely', is normally used with **ungradable words only** (*not quite dead*, *not quite perfect*, etc.):

*Your answer is **not quite right**.*

*Quite* is not used with the comparative but can modify a few verbs:

*I **quite enjoy** mountain holidays (i.e. to a certain extent)*

*I **quite forgot** to post your letter (i.e. completely)*

And note: *He's quite better* (= He has completely recovered.)

*Quite* is often used in BrE in understatement. Thus, if a speaker says, *He's quite clever*, he might mean, 'He's very intelligent'. Where a slightly different emphasis is required, *quite* can be replaced by *no! all* + a negative word: *He's not at all stupid* [compare > 5.8]

#### 7.42.1 'Quite a/an', 'quite some' and 'quite the'

*Quite a/an* + countable noun suggests 'noteworthy':

*Madeleine is **quite an expert** on Roman coins*

*Quite some* + uncountable noun suggests 'considerable':

*It's **quite some time** since we wrote to each other*

*Quite a an* (or *a quite*) + adjective + noun is positive in its effect:

*It is **quite an interesting** film/a **quite interesting** film*

*Quite the* (= e.g. 'certainly') can combine with:

- **superlatives**: *It's **quite the worst** play I have ever seen*

- **nouns**: *Wide lapels are **quite the fashion** this spring*

### 7.43 'Fairly'

*Fairly* suggests 'less than the highest degree' and often combines with adjectives/adverbs that suggest a good state of affairs (e.g. *good nice well*). It is less 'complimentary' than *quite*:

*The lecture was **fairly good** He lectured **fairly well***

*Fairly* does not combine with comparatives. Compared with *quite* and *rather*, it combines with verbs in restricted contexts:

*You **fairly drive me mad** with your nagging* (= very nearly)

A *fairly* combines with adjective + noun:

He's *a **fairly good speaker*** (less complimentary than *quite a/an*)

### 7.44 'Rather'

*Rather* can be stronger than *quite* and *fairly* and suggests 'inclined to be'. It can combine with adjectives which suggest a good state of affairs or a bad one:

- inclined to be **good**: *good, nice clever, well*

- inclined to be **bad**: *bad, nasty, stupid, ill*

*Rather* combines with:

- adjectives: *This jacket's getting **rather old***

- adverbs: *I did **rather badly** in the competition*

- some verbs: *I **rather like** raw fish*

- comparatives: *Clive earns **rather more** than his father*

*Rather* tends to combine with 'negative' adjectives:

*Frank is clever but **rather lazy***

With 'positive' adjectives, *rather* often suggests 'surprisingly':

*Your results are **rather good** - better than I expected*

In BrE *rather*, like *quite* [> 7.42], is used in understatements:

*Professor Boffin was **rather pleased** when he won the Nobel Prize*

#### 7.44.1 'Rather a/an' and 'a rather'

*Rather a/an* combines with a noun:

*Old Fortescue's **rather a bore*** (= he's inclined to be a bore)

*Rather a/an* or *a rather* can precede adjective + noun:

*It's **rather a sad story** = It's **a rather sad story***

### 7.45 'Much', 'far' and 'a lot'

Normally, *much* and *far* combine with comparative/superlative forms [> 6.27.5, 6.28.2]: *much bigger far better, far the best*; and *a lot*

combines with comparatives: *a lot more expensive*

*Much* can be used like *very* [> 7.51] and *any* [> 5.12.3] with a few positive (i.e. not comparative or superlative) forms such as *good* and *different*. It is normally used with a negative:

*I don't think this battery is **much good/much different***

*A lot* and *far* combine with *different*, but not with *good*:

*This edition is **a lot/far different** from the earlier one*

*Not much* and *a lot* combine with verbs like *like* and *enjoy*:-

*I don't **much like** fish I don't like fish (**very**) **much/a lot***

*Far* combines with verbs like *prefer* and *would rather* [> 11.44]:

*I **far prefer** swimming to cycling*

#### 7.46 'A (little) bit', 'a little', 'somewhat'

*A bit (or a little bit), a little and somewhat combine with*

- **adjectives**     *It's a bit/a little/somewhat expensive*
- **adverbs**       *He arrived a bit/a little/somewhat late*
- **comparatives**   *You're a bit/a little/somewhat taller than Alice*
- **verbs**           *I've turned up the oven a bit/a little/somewhat*

*Not a bit (like not in the least not in the slightest) is often used for extra emphasis as a negative intensifier [compare > 5.8]*  
*She **wasn't** even a bit upset when she heard the news*

#### 7.47 'Enough' and 'fairly' [compare > 5.17]

*Enough and fairly should not be confused Enough, as an adverb, follows an adjective or adverb and suggests 'for some purpose'*

*The water in the pool **is fairly warm***

*The water in the pool **is warm enough** (to swim in) [ > 16.32.2]*

#### 7.48 'Too', 'very' and 'enough'

*Too goes before adjectives and adverbs It conveys the idea of 'excess', 'more than is necessary', and should not be confused with the intensifier very, which does not suggest excess [ > 7.51] Too and enough point to a result*

*I arrived at the station **too late** (I missed the train )*

*I didn't arrive at the station **early enough** (I missed the train )*

*I didn't arrive at the station **too late** (I caught the train )*

*I arrived at the station **early enough** (I caught the train )*

*Too can be modified by a bit far a little a lot much and rather (far too much work a bit too difficult, etc )*

*For too and enough with adjective + infinitive [ > 16.32]*

#### 7.49 'Hardly', 'barely' and 'scarcely'

*These adverbs are similar in meaning They can be used in front of*

- **adjectives**     *This soup is **hardly/barely/scarcely warm** (enough)*
- **adverbs**       *She plays **hardly/barely/scarcely well** enough*

*Hardly and scarcely can be used with verbs*

*It might stop raining but I **hardly/scarcely think** it likely*

*Barely combines with a smaller range of verbs*

*Jimmy **barely knows** his multiplication tables yet*

*Hardly barely and scarcely are negative words and do not combine with not or never They combine with ever [ > 7.39] and any [ > 5.10]*

*I've got so little time I **hardly ever read** newspapers*

*There's **hardly any** cheerful news in the papers*

*Hardly barely scarcely ever can be replaced by almost never*

*I **almost never** visit London these days (= I **hardly ever** )*

*Nearly will not combine with never, we must use almost never*

*We can say not nearly, but we cannot say \*not almost\**

*There are **not nearly enough** members present to hold a meet 11*

## Intensifiers

### 7.50 How to identify intensifiers

Intensifiers are adverbs which are used with gradable [ $> 6.5$ ] adjectives and adverbs (very slow *slowly*) and in some cases verbs (I entirely agree) While an adverb of degree normally weakens or limits the meaning of the word it modifies an intensifier normally strengthens (or 'intensifies') the meaning

Your work is **good**

Your work is **very good** (intensifier meaning strengthened)

your work is **quite good** (adverb of degree meaning weakened)

### 7.51 'Very', etc. [compare $> 6.9$ ]

Very is the most common intensifier We use it before adjectives

*Martha has been **very ill***

adjective + noun *Boris is not **a very nice person***

adverbs *The wheels of **bureaucracy** turn **very slowly***

very on its own cannot go before comparatives but very + much

can very much better/faster. Nor can it go before many predicative

adjectives like *alone* [ $> 6.8.2$ ] except with *much*

*Since her husband's death Mrs Kay has been **very much alone***

Combinations with *not* (*not very good not very well*) are often used in

preference to positive forms because they are sometimes more polite

Your work is **not very good**)

Very can be used before gradable adjectival present participles (*very interesting*) and adjectival past participles (mostly ending in *-ed* e.g. *very interested* [ $> \text{App } 10$ ] and a few others e.g. *very mistaken*)

When past participles are used to form verb tenses they can

sometimes be preceded by *much* or *very much*

*These developments **have very much interested** us* (Not 'very')

7.51.1 Very, very much, so, such a/an

*Much*, with or without *very* or *so* can be used in mid-position

*Byron is **very much/so much/much** admired in Greece*

*very much* and *so much* (but never *much* on its own) can also go in the end position

*I **enjoyed** your party **very much so much***

*best) but we must use very much and so much before a superlative (the very*

BEST) we must use *very much* or *so much* before a comparative

(*so much better*) [ $> 6.27.5$ ] *The very* can also combine with a few

nouns (*the very beginning*) [ $> 6.9$ ] *Very* can be replaced by *most*

before some adjectives describing personal feelings attitudes (*most obliged most concerned*, etc.)

Such a/an + adjective + noun can be used in place of *so* + adjective

*It was **such a nice party**/The party was **so nice***

Compare *so* a/an in

*It was **so important an occasion** we couldn't miss it*

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So + adjective can replace *very* informally, e.g. in exclamations:

*This new cheese is **so good*** [> App 7.18]

For extra emphasis, *very* may be repeated:

*This new cheese is **very very good*** (also: *so very very good*)

### 7.51.2 'Jolly', 'pretty' and 'dead' in place of 'very'

*Jolly* and the weaker *pretty* can be used in (informal) BrE in place of *very* before adjectives or adverbs:

*She's a **jolly good** player. The traffic is moving **pretty slowly***

*Pretty* can also combine with *well* to mean 'nearly':

*The film was **pretty well** over by the time we got to the cinema*

*Dead* is used, usually informally, with a limited selection of adjectives (**not adverbs**): *dead certain dead drunk dead level dead quiet dead right, dead straight, dead tired, dead wrong*

*You're **dead right**! The war in Europe did end on May 7 1945*

### 7.51.3 'Indeed' and 'not (...) at all'

*Very* (but not *so*) can be intensified by *indeed* in affirmative sentences:

*That's **very good indeed**! I enjoyed it **very much indeed***

*At all* (with or without *very much*) can be used in negatives:

*Mike doesn't enjoy classical music (**very much**) **at all***

## 7.52 -ly intensifiers used in place of 'very'

A few *-ly* adverbs such as *extremely particularly, really* and (informally) *awfully frightfully*, and *terribly* are commonly used for extra emphasis in place of *very* with:

- **adjectives:** *Miss Hargreaves is **extremely helpful***
- **adverbs:** *Dawson works **really slowly***
- **past participles:** *I'm **terribly confused** by all this information*
- **-ing-form adjectives:** *The information is **terribly confusing***
- **adjective + noun:** *Dawson is a **particularly good worker***

Some *-ly* adverbs will combine with verbs:

*I **really appreciate** all you've done for me*

## 7.53 -ly intensifiers that retain their basic meaning

Many *-ly* adverbs which can act as intensifiers retain their basic meaning: e.g. *absolutely completely definitely entirely, greatly perfectly seriously* [> App 16]. Each of these will combine with some words and not with others. For example, *greatly* will combine with verbs, but not with adjectives (except a few ending in *-ed*) or adverbs: *Many people **greatly admire** English gardens*

Many *-ly* adverbs commonly combine with past participles (*completed mistaken horribly injured perfectly planned*, etc.).

In the passive *-ly* adverbs can come before or after past participles:

*He was **unexpectedly delayed/delayed unexpectedly***

### 7.53.1 Limited combinations with -ly adverbs

Some *-ly* adverbs, such as *badly deeply, lightly sharply strikingly utterly*, combine with relatively small sets of words: e.g. *badly needed deeply suspicious highly respected*. **More combinations are possible** with adverbs like *deeply* and *utterly* than with e.g. *sharply*.

## Focus adverbs

### 7.54 The use of adverbs when 'focusing'

**Adverbs such as *even just merely only, really and simply can*** precede the word they qualify to focus attention on it. Others, like *too* and *as well*, focus our attention by adding information.

### 7.55 The position of 'even' and 'only'

The position of some adverbs such as *even* and *only* is particularly flexible, conveying slightly different meanings according to where they are placed. A few examples are:

***Even* Tom knows that 2 and 2 make 4 (i.e. although he's stupid)**

***Tom even* knows that 2 and 2 make 4 (i.e. of the many things he knows)**

***Only* Tom knows the answer (i.e. nobody else does)**

***Tom knows only* half of it (i.e. nothing else)**

***Tom only* met Helen (i.e. no one else)**

The pre-verb position of *even* and *only* often leads to ambiguity. In the written language we can avoid ambiguity by putting these words before the words they qualify. In the spoken language, this is not necessary (and rarely happens). We rely on stress and intonation:

*I **only** asked Jim to lend me his **ladder** (i.e. not anything else)*

#### 7.55.1 Other uses of 'only' [compare > 16.12.2]

*Only + too*, in the sense of 'extremely':

***I'm only too* glad to be of help**

*Only* before a verb in explanations and excuses:

***I don't know why you're so angry I only* left the door open**

### 7.56 'Too', as well', 'not...either' and 'also'

*Too* and *as well* usually go in the end position in the affirmative:

***I like John and I like his wife, too/as well***

In negative sentences these words are replaced by *either*.

***I don't like John and I don't like his wife either***

*Also*, used as a replacement for *too* and *as well*, is more common in writing than in speech. It comes:

- after auxiliaries:

***Sue is an engineer She is also* a mother**

- after the first verb when there is more than one:

***I've written the letters I should also have posted them***

- before the main verb:

***I play squash and I also play* tennis**

Note in the above example that *also* generally refers to the verb that follows it (i.e. tennis is not the only game I play). Compare *I too play tennis* which refers to the subject (= My friend plays tennis and I play tennis, *too/as well*). The use of *too*, directly after the subject, is formal and the end position is generally preferred, especially in informal speech. Like *too* and *as well*, *also* is not used in negative sentences and must be replaced by *not either* [compare > 13.28-29].



## Viewpoint adverbs and connectives

### 7.57 Expressing a viewpoint [> App 17]

Many adverbs and adverbial phrases tell us something about a speaker's (or writer's) attitude to what he is saying or to the person he is talking to (or writing to or for). We call these 'viewpoint' or 'sentence' adverbs because they qualify what is being said (or written), but do not affect its grammatical structure. For example, a speaker or writer may use adverbs such as *clearly* or *evidently* to tell us he is drawing conclusions; *frankly* or *honestly* to impress us with his sincerity; *generally* or *normally* to make generalizations; *briefly* or *in short* to suggest he will not be tedious or go into details. Viewpoint adverbs may come at the very beginning of a sentence, and are followed by a brief pause in speech or a comma in writing. They then modify the sentence or sentences that follow:

**Frankly** *I am not satisfied with your work*

Some viewpoint adverbs may also come in mid-position:

*He smiled nastily* **He evidently** *knew something I didn't*

*Hopefully* is an adverb of manner in:

*To travel* **hopefully** *is better than to arrive*

Nowadays, *hopefully* is often used as a viewpoint adverb, though not all native speakers approve of this use:

**Hopefully** (= I hope) *I'll see you sometime tomorrow*

**Hopefully**, (= it is hoped) *they'll arrive at an agreement*

### 7.58 Connecting words and phrases [> App 18]

Numerous adverbs introduce additions to, modifications or summaries of what has already been said. They are essential when we wish to present information in a coherent fashion in speech or writing. For example, a speaker or writer may use adverbs such as *however* or *on the contrary* **to draw a contrast**; *at the same time* or *meanwhile* **to tell** us about something else that was happening at the same time; as a *result* or *consequently* to draw our attention to results; *furthermore* or *moreover* to add information.

Connectives may come at the beginning, followed by a pause in speech or a comma in writing:

*The police were sure Griffiths was lying* *They had found his fingerprints everywhere* **Furthermore** *they knew for a fact that he hadn't been at his mother's at the time of the crime*

Some connectives may also come in mid-position and are then separated from the rest of the sentence by commas:

*Penrose gambled heavily and* **as a result** *lost a lot of money*

## Inversion after adverbs

### 7.59 Inversion after adverbs

Sometimes the normal subject-verb order in a sentence is reversed if a sentence begins with an adverb. This can happen as follows:

**7.59.1 Inversion after adverbs of place like 'here', 'there'**

After *here* and *there* and after adverb particles such as *back*, *down*, *off*, *up*, etc. the noun subject comes *after* the verb. This is common with verbs of motion, such as *come* and *go*:

*Here comes a taxi!* *There goes the last train!* (Note the progressive is not used here.)

*Down came the rain and up went the umbrellas*

This kind of inversion is common after *be* when we are offering things or identifying location (often with a plural subject) [> 10.18]:

*Here's a cup of tea for you (offer)*

*Here's your letters* (offering or indicating)

*'There's (stressed) Johnny Smith* (identifying location)

Inversion does not occur if the subject is a pronoun:

*Here it comes* *There she goes* *Up it went*

*Here you are* (offer) *There she is* (identifying location)

**7.59.2 Inversion after adverbials of place [compare > 6.17]**

After adverbials of place with verbs of position (e.g. *lie*, *live*, *sit* *stand*) or motion (e.g. *come*, *go* *rise*), the noun subject can follow the verb. This happens mainly in descriptive writing:

*At the top of the hill stood the tiny chapel*

*In the fields of poppies lay the dying soldiers*

This inversion also occurs in the passive with other verbs:

*In the distance could be seen the purple mountains*

Inversion does not occur if the subject is a pronoun:

*At the top of the hill it stood out against the sky*

**7.59.3 Inversion after negative adverbs, etc.**

Certain adverbs, when used at the beginning of a sentence, must be followed by auxiliary verbs (*be*, *do*, *have*, *can* *must*, etc.) + subject + the rest of the sentence. This kind of inversion, which may be used for particular emphasis, is typical of formal rhetoric and formal writing. It occurs after the following:

- negative or near-negative adverbs (often of time or frequency, such as *never*, *rarely*, *seldom*); or adverbs having a negative effect, e.g. *little*, *on no account* [> App 19]:

*Never/Seldom has there been so much protest against the Bomb*

*Little does he realize how important this meeting is*

*On no account must you accept any money if he offers it*

The word order is, of course, normal when these adverbs do not begin a sentence:

*There has never seldom been so much protest against the Bomb*

*He little realizes how important this meeting is*

- combinations with *only* (e.g. *only after*, *only then*):

*The pilot reassured the passengers* *Only then did I realize how dangerous the situation had been*

- *so* + adjective (+ *that*) and *such* (+ *that*):

*So sudden was the attack (that) we had no time to escape*

*Such was his strength that he could bend iron bars*

For normal word order with *so* and *such* [> 1.52.1].

# 8 Prepositions, adverb particles and phrasal verbs

## General information about prepositions and adverb particles

### 8.1 What a preposition is and what it does

We normally use prepositions in front of nouns or noun phrases, pronouns or gerunds to express a relationship between one person, thing, event, etc. and another:

**preposition + noun:**     *I gave the book to Charlie*

**preposition + pronoun:**   *I gave it to him*

**preposition + gerund:**   *Charlie devotes his time to reading*

Some relationships expressed by prepositions are:

Space: *We ran across the field*

Time: *The plane landed at 4.25 precisely*

Cause: *Travel is cheap for us because of the strength of the dollar*

Means: *You unlock the door by turning the key to the right*

Prepositions always have an object. Even when a preposition is separated from its object, for example in questions [ > 8.22, 13.31n4, 13.33] or relatives [ > 1.35-38], the relationship is always there:

*Who(m) were you talking to just now on the phone?* (= To whom )

*The chair I was sitting on was very shaky* (= The chair on which...)

### 8.2 Form and stress of prepositions

Prepositions may take the form of:

- single words:         *at from in to into*, etc.

- two or more words:   *according to apart from because of*, etc.

One-syllable prepositions are normally unstressed in speech:

*There's someone at the 'door* (No stress on *at*.)

Prepositions of two or more syllables are normally stressed on one of the syllables: *'opposite the 'bank be'hind the 'wall*, etc.

For examples of common prepositions [ > App 20].

### 8.3 Pronouns after prepositions

English nouns do not have 'case' [ > 1.1], so they do not change in form when they are e.g. the object of a verb or a preposition:

*There's a chair behind/by/in front of/near the door*

But the object form of pronouns must be used after prepositions:

*The car stopped behind/in front of/near me/him/her/us/them*

*Between you and me, there's no truth in the report*

Some native speakers mistakenly use *I* instead of *me* after prepositions, especially when there are two pronouns separated by *and* (Not *'between you and I*\*).

#### 8.4 When is a word a preposition, adverb or conjunction?

A preposition 'governs' an object, so it is always related to a noun, a noun phrase, pronoun or gerund; an adverb particle does not 'govern' an object, so it is more closely related to a verb [> 7.3.4 ]

##### 8.4.1 Words that can be used as prepositions or adverb particles

Some words function both as prepositions and as adverb particles. When they are followed by an object, they function as **prepositions**:

*We drove **round the city** (round + object = preposition)*

When no object is stated, these words function as **adverb particles** (even if an object is implied):

*We drove **round** (no object = adverb particle)*

Unlike prepositions, adverb particles are stressed in speech.

The most common of the words that can be used as prepositions or **as adverb particles are**: *about, above, across, after along around before, behind below beneath beyond by down in inside near off on opposite, outside, over past round through under underneath up without*

##### 8.4.2 Words that are used as prepositions, but not as particles

The following words are used only as prepositions (that is, they take **an object**): *against at beside despite during except for from into of onto per since till/until to toward(s) upon via with and* prepositions ending in *-ing* such as *excepting regarding* [> App 20.2]. A few phrasal verbs [> 8.23] are formed with verb + *to* as an adverb particle: e.g. *come to pull to*.

##### 8.4.3 Words that are used as adverb particles, but not as prepositions

The following words are used only as particles (that is, they do not **take an object**): *away back backward(s) downward(s) forward(s) out* [except informally > App 25.31] and *upward(s)*.  
*The children rang the bell and ran **away***

##### BAA Words that can be used as prepositions or conjunctions

Some words can be used as prepositions (when followed by an object) or as conjunctions (when followed by a clause): e.g. *after as before since, till until* [> 1.44-53]:

*I haven't seen him **since this morning** (preposition)*

*I haven't seen him **since he left this morning** (conjunction)*

When used as conjunctions, *as well as but, except* and *than* can be followed by a bare infinitive [> 16.1 ]:

*I've done everything you wanted **except (or but) make the beds***

#### 8.5 Some problems for the learner in the use of prepositions

English uses more prepositions than most other European languages, partly because 'case' [> 1.1] is no longer expressed by noun endings.

This may cause problems of choice because:

- many English prepositions have nearly the same meaning:  
**e.g.** *beside by near next to*, **or**: *above on top of over*
- a single preposition in the student's mother tongue may do the work of several English prepositions. So, for example, there may be one

- preposition to cover the meanings of *by*, *from*, and of, or *at*, *in*, *on* and *to*, particularly after 'movement verbs' [> 8.7].
- some prepositions (e.g. *at*) perform different functions. For example, they express relationships in time (*at six o'clock*), space (*at the bank*) and other relationships as well.

## Movement and position

### 8.6 Position in space seen from different viewpoints

When referring to space (i.e. a very wide area), we have a choice of preposition, depending on the meaning we wish to express. For example, we can say:

*in/at/to/from/under/over/across London*

A speaker's personal viewpoint of a place may affect his choice of preposition. If a speaker says:

*I live **in** London*

he feels 'enclosed' by London.

But if a speaker says:

*We stopped **at** London on the way to New York*

he sees London as a point on a route.

We use *at* to imply that the location has a special purpose: it may be a stopping place, a meeting place, an eating place, a work place, etc seen externally.

We can consider position in space in relation to:

- a **point** (i.e. a place or e.g. event):  
*at the cinema, at a party, to/from London*  
*We stood **at the door** and waited* (i.e. **at that point**)
  - a **line** (i.e. a place we think of in terms of length):  
*across/along/on a border/over/road*  
*There is a letter box **across the road*** (i.e. **across that line**)
  - a **surface** (i.e. a place we think of as a flat area):  
*across/off/on a table/floor/wall/ceiling*  
*I stared at a fly **on the wall*** (i.e. **on that surface**)
  - **area or volume**: (i.e. a place which can 'enclose'):  
*in/into/out of outside/within a room/ship/car/factory forest*  
*We all sat **in the car*** (i.e. **in that area**)
- A single place (e.g. *river*) can be viewed from different angles:
- We went **to the river*** (a point)
  - Greenwich is **down the river*** (a line)
  - The paper boat floated **on the river*** (a surface)
  - We swam **in the river*** (an area or volume)

### 8.7 Prepositions reflecting movement or lack of movement

A preposition takes on the idea of movement (*fly under*) or lack of movement (*stop under*) from the verb in the sentence. Some prepositions combine either with 'movement verbs' (e.g. *bring drive fly get go move pull run take walk*) or with 'position verbs' (e.g. *be live keep meet stay stop work*).

## Movement and position

movement			position (lack of movement)		
		<i>above</i>			<i>above</i>
		<i>across</i>			<i>across</i>
	<b>drove</b>	<i>along</i>			<i>along</i>
We	<b>flew</b>	<i>behind</i>	+ object.	We	<b>were</b>
	<b>ran</b>	<i>beside</i>			<b>live</b>
		<i>between</i>			<b>work</b>
		<i>near, etc.</i>			<i>beside</i>
					<i>between</i>
					<i>near, etc</i>

Some prepositions, such as *into onto out of to*, etc., normally combine only with 'movement verbs':

*A bird **flew into** my bedroom this morning*

*I **drove out of** the car park*

Other prepositions, such as *at, in, on*, etc. normally combine only with 'position verbs':

*The bird **perched on** the curtain rail*

*I **waited in** the hotel lobby*

Verbs which describe 'movement with an end': e.g. *lay place sit stand* do not combine with prepositions like *into onto* or *to*:

*She **laid** the letter **on** the table*

*She **sat** the baby **on** the table*

We can often use the verb *be* with prepositions that normally combine with 'movement verbs' to convey the idea of 'having reached a destination' (real or metaphorical):

*At last we **were into/out of** the forest/over the river*

*At last we **were out of/over** our difficulties*

### 8.8 Adverb particles reflecting movement or lack of movement

The same contrast between movement and lack of movement can also be expressed by verb + adverb particle:

**movement:** *We went away/back/inside-outside/up down*

**position:** *We stayed away/back/inside/outside/up down*

Compare:

*Where's Jim? I don't know He **went out** (movement)*

*Where's Jim? - I don't know He's **out** (position)*

### 8.9 Prepositions reflecting direction and destination

The difference between direction and destination can often be expressed by contrasting prepositions. The choice depends on whether we are referring to a point, a surface or an area [> 8.6].

#### 8-9.1 'To/from a point' compared with 'at a point' [> 8.6]

*To* and *from* a point (indicating direction) may contrast with *at* a point (indicating destination or position after movement):

direction to or from		destination after movement	
	<i>The Grand Hotel</i>		<i>The Grand Hole'</i>
<i>Jim has gone to</i>	<i>school</i>	<i>and now he's at</i>	<i>school</i>
<i>(has come <b>from</b>)</i>	<i>London Airport</i>		<i>London Airport</i>
	<i>my brother's</i>		<i>my brother's</i>

*To* and *at* combine with a variety of nouns [> App 21].

## 8 Prepositions, adverb particles and phrasal verbs

### 8.9.2 'To/from a point' compared with 'in an area' [> 8.6]

*To* and *from* a point (indicating direction) may contrast with *in* an area (indicating destination or position after movement):

direction to or from		destination after movement	
	<i>the country</i>		<i>the country</i>
<i>Jim has gone to</i>	<i>Paris</i>	<i>and now he's in</i>	<i>Paris</i>
	<i>bed</i>		<i>bed</i>

*To* and *in* combine with a variety of nouns [> App 22].

### 8.9.3 'To/from a point' compared with 'at a point/in an area' [> App 23]

With certain nouns, the destination after movement may be *at* or *in* depending on whether the location is seen as a point or an area.

direction to or from		destination after movement	
	<i>the restaurant</i>		<i>in the restaurant</i>
<i>Jim has gone to</i>	<i>the hotel</i>	<i>and now he's at</i>	<i>the hotel</i>
	<i>the bank</i>		<i>the bank</i>

*At* cannot replace *in* for words that represent very wide areas: e.g. *in the sky*, *in the universe*, *in the world*. Note that the use of *at* or *in* after the verb *arrive* depends on which preposition the noun is normally used with (*arrive at a party*, *arrive in the country*). Sometimes either preposition is possible depending on whether we regard the location as a point or an area [> 8.6]: *arrive at Brighton* or *arrive in Brighton*.

### 8.9.4 'On(to) a line or surface', 'off a line or surface'

*On(to)* (direction) and *on* (destination or location) can be used to indicate 'being supported by' a line or surface:

direction on(to)	destination after movement
<i>I put the pen on(to) the table</i>	<i>and now it is on the table</i>

*Onto* is spelt as one word or two: *on to*. *On* (without *to*) can sometimes indicate direction, often with a change of level:

*I put the pen on the table*

However, *onto* is sometimes preferable to *on* with movement verbs like *climb* *lift* *jump* [> 8.7] to avoid ambiguity:

*Mr Temple jumped onto the stage* (i.e. from somewhere else)

*Mr Temple jumped on the stage* (which could mean 'jumped up and down on it', or 'jumped once to test its strength')

*On* (indicating destination or location) can also contrast with *to* (indicating direction) with reference to levels:

*He's gone to the fourth floor and now he's on the fourth floor*

*Off* (= 'not on', indicating separation from a line or surface) combines with movement verbs or position verbs:

*I took the plate off the table and now it is off the table*

### 8.9.5 'In(to) and in an area or volume'

*Into* always reflects movement and is never used for destination or position. *In* usually reflects position, but with some movement verbs like *drop* *fall* and *put* it can also reflect movement:

direction in(to)	destination after movement
<i>I have put the coin in(to) my pocket</i>	<i>and now it is in my pocket</i>

## Time

However, with other movement verbs, such as *run* and *walk*, *in* does not reflect movement from one place to another:

*We walked **into** the park* (= we were outside it and entered it)

*We walked **in** the park* (= we were already inside it and walked within the area)

*Inside* can replace *in* when we refer to e.g. rooms, buildings:

*I // meet you **inside/in** the restaurant.*

### 8.9.6 'Out of an area or volume'

*Out of* can reflect direction and destination:

**direction out of**

**destination after movement**

*We ran out of the building*

*and then we were out of the building*

*Outside* can replace *out of* when we refer to e.g. rooms, buildings-

*We were **outside** the building*

But *outside* and *out of* are not always interchangeable [> App 25.31]

*Within*, to mean 'inside', can occur in a few limited and formal contexts:

*Everyone **within** the London area was affected by the bus strike*

*Without*, to mean 'outside', is now archaic.

### 8.9.7 'Get' + preposition/particle reflecting movement

*Get*, followed by a preposition or particle, often suggests 'movement with difficulty' [compare > 12.13.1]:

*We **got into** the house through the window (i.e. with difficulty)*

*How did the cat **get out (of the box)**? (i.e. it must have been difficult)*

## Time

### 8.10 General remarks about prepositions of time

The prepositions *at*, *on* and *in* refer not only to place, but also to time

We can refer to approximate time with *approximately*, *about* *around*, *round* or *round about*:

*The accident happened **at approximately** 5 30*

*The accident happened **(at) about/around** 5 30*

For other prepositions of time such as *during*, *for*, *from* *since* *till* functioning in adverbial phrases [> 7.30-35], and also [> App 25].

### 8.11 Time phrases with 'at'

**Exact time:** *at 10 o'clock; at 14 hundred hours* [> App 47.5]

**Meal times:** *at lunch time, at tea time, at dinner time*

**Other points of time:** *at dawn; at noon, at midnight, at night*

**Festivals:** *at Christmas; at Easter, at Christmas-time*

**Age:** *at the age of 27, at 14*

**+ time:** *at this time, at that time*

*At* is often omitted in questions with *What time?* and in short answers to such questions:

***What time** do you arrive'? - **Nine o'clock** in the morning*

The full question and answer is formal:

***At what time** do you arrive? - **At nine o'clock** in the morning*



### 8.12 Time phrases with 'on'

Days of the week: *on Monday on Fridays* [> App 24.1]  
Parts of the day: *on Monday morning, on Friday evening*  
Dates: *on June 1st on 21st March* [> App 47.4.2]  
Day + date: *on Monday June 1st*  
Particular occasions: *on that day on that evening*  
Anniversaries, etc.: *on your birthday on your wedding day*  
Festivals: *on Christmas Day, on New Year's Day*

In everyday speech *on* is often omitted:

*I // see you **Friday** See you **June 21st***

Prepositions (and the definite article) must be omitted when we use *last*, *next* and *this that* [compare > App 48]:

*I saw him **last/this April** I'll see you **next/this Friday***

### 8.13 Time phrases with 'in' (= some time during [compare > 7.35])

Parts of the day: *in the evening in the morning*  
Months: *in March, in September* [> App 24.2]  
Years: *in 1900 in 1984 in 1998* [> App 47.4.1]  
Seasons: *in (the) spring, in (the) winter* [> App 24.2]  
Centuries: *in the 19th century, in the 20th century*  
Festivals- *in Ramadan, in Easter week*  
Periods of time: *in that time, in that age in the holidays*

### 8.14 'In' and 'within' to refer to stated periods of time

*In* and, more formally, *within*, sometimes mean 'before the end of a stated period of time, which may be present, past or future':

*I always eat my breakfast **in ten minutes***

*I finished the examination **in (within) an hour and a half***

When we refer to the future in phrases like *in ten days* (or *in ten days time*), we mean 'at the end of a period starting from now'; -s apostrophe or apostrophe -s + *time* is optional [compare > 2.49]:

*The material will be ready **in ten days/in ten days' time***

However, when we mean 'within a period of time, not starting from now', we cannot use -s apostrophe + *time*. Compare:

*Sanderson will run a mile **in four minutes***

(That's how long it will take him to do it.)

*Sanderson will run a mile **in four minutes' time***

(That's when he'll start running.)

## Particular uses of prepositions and particles

### 8.15 Particular prepositions, particles and contrasts

Many prepositions/particles have special uses. For details [> App 25].

### 8.16 Pairs of prepositions and particles

Prepositions and particles can be repeated for extra emphasis:

*We went round and round (the town) looking for the hotel*

Some prepositions function as contrasting pairs:

*Please don't keep running **up and down** (the stairs)*

Or the second word adds something to the meaning of the first:

*Martha was ill for a long time, but she's **up and about** now*

### 8.17 Prepositional phrases

A large number of fixed prepositional phrases are in common use:

e.g. *by right in debt, on time, out of breath*, etc. Some of these phrases have metaphorical or idiomatic uses which extend their time/place associations: e.g. *above average beneath contempt beyond belief*. Many phrases follow the pattern preposition + noun + preposition: e.g. *in danger of, on account of* [ > Apps 20.3, 26].

### 8.18 Combinations of particles and prepositions

Prepositions often follow particles, e.g. *across/along/back/down/off 'on + to for*, etc. [also > 8.30.2]:

*I'm just **off for** a swim I'm going **down to** the beach*

Prepositions sometimes combine directly with each other, as in:

*That's the boy **from over** the road*

*Come out **from under** there will you?*

### 8.19 Adjectives + prepositions

Many adjectives used predicatively [ > 6.7, 6.8.4] are followed by particular prepositions: *absent from, certain of*, etc.

*Simon is often **absent from** school because of illness*

Sometimes a single adjective can be followed by different prepositions: e.g. *embarrassed about embarrassed at, embarrassed by* [ > App 27].

### 8.20 Nouns + prepositions

Nouns usually take the same prepositions as the adjectives or verbs they relate to [ > Apps 27-29].

---

<b>adjective</b>	<b>noun</b>
<i>embarrassed about/at/by</i>	<i>embarrassment about/at</i>
<i>keen on</i>	<i>keenness on</i>
<i>successful in</i>	<i>success in</i>
<b>verb</b>	<b>noun</b>
<i>emerge from</i>	<i>emergence from</i>
<i>object to</i>	<i>objection to</i>

---

This correlation does not always apply: e.g. *be proud of/take pride in*

Or a noun takes a preposition and the verb does not:

*I fear something*

*My fear **of** something*

*I influence somebody*

*My influence **on** somebody*

### 8.21 Modification of prepositions and adverb particles

Prepositions and adverb particles can be modified by adverbs:

*directly above our heads, quite out of his mind right off the main*

*road, well over \$200, in particular, all, to mean 'entirely', can combine*

with numerous prepositions and particles, such as *about along down during round through*

*Our baby went on crying **all through** the night*

*Straight* (= immediately) is frequently used with movement and *right* (= in the exact location) is commonly associated with destination

*He went **straight** to bed/into my office/up to his room*

*He lives **right** at the end of the street/across the square*

## 8.22 Word order in relation to prepositions

Single-word prepositions except e.g. *but during except* and *since* [ > App 20] can be separated from the words they refer to in

Wh-questions ***Where** did you buy that jacket **from**?* [ > 13.31n 4]

Relative clauses ***The painting** you're looking **at** has been sold* [ > 1.35-38]

Wh-clauses ***What** he asked me **about** is something I can't discuss* (Separation is obligatory here)

Indirect speech *Tell me **where** you bought that (**from**)* (optional)

Exclamations ***What a lot of trouble** he put me **to***

Passives *Our house **was broken into** last night*  
(The end-position is obligatory in the passive)

Infinitives *I need someone to talk to* [ > 16.36]

Nowadays not many native speakers believe that it is 'bad style' to end a sentence with a preposition, though the choice of position does depend to some extent on style and balance

## Verb + preposition/particle: non-phrasal and phrasal

### 8.23 General information about phrasal verbs

One of the most common characteristics of the English verb is that it can combine with prepositions and adverb particles [ > 7.3.4] Broadly speaking, we call these combinations **phrasal verbs** Though grammarians differ about the exact definition of a phrasal verb, we may use the term to describe any commonly-used combination of verb + preposition or verb + adverb particle

#### Essential combinations

Sometimes this combination is essential to the use of the verb So, for example, the verb *listen* (which can occur on its own in e.g. *Listen*) must be followed by *to* when it has an object

*We spent the afternoon **listening to** records*

#### Non-essential combinations

Sometimes the combination is not essential but reinforces the meaning of a verb So, for example, the verb *drink*, in *Drink your milk* can be reinforced by *up* to suggest 'finish drinking it' or 'drink it all'

***Drink up** your milk' Or **Drink** your milk **up*** [ > 8.28]

#### Idiomatic combinations

Sometimes the primary meaning of a verb is completely changed

## Verb + preposition/particle

when it combines with a preposition or particle a new verb is formed, which may have a totally different idiomatic meaning, or even several meanings For example, there are numerous combinations with *make* *make for* (a place) (= go towards), *make off* (= run away), *make up* (= invent), etc See examples in 8.23.2

### 8.23.1 The use of phrasal verbs in English

There is a strong tendency (especially in informal, idiomatic English) to use phrasal verbs instead of their one-word equivalents It would be very unusual, for instance, to say *Enter* instead of *Come in* in response to a knock at the door Similarly, *blow up* might be preferred to *explode*, *give in* to *surrender*, etc Moreover, new combinations (or new meanings for existing ones) are constantly evolving  
*Share prices bottomed out* (= reached their lowest level) *in 1974*  
*The book took off* (= became successful) *as soon as it appeared*

### 8.23.2 How common phrasal verbs are formed

The most common phrasal verbs are formed from the shortest and simplest verbs in the language e.g. *be break bring come do fall find get give go help let make put send stand take tear throw turn*, which combine with words that often indicate position or direction, such as *along down in off on out over under up* Not only can a single verb like *put* combine with a large number of prepositions or particles to form new verbs (*put off put out put up with*, etc) but even a single combination can have different meanings  
*Put out your cigarettes* (= extinguish)  
*I felt quite put out* (= annoyed)  
*We put out a request for volunteers* (= issued)  
*They're putting the programme out tomorrow* (= broadcasting)  
*This stuff will put you out in no time* (= make you unconscious)  
*Martha's put out her hip again* (= dislocated)

## 8.24 Some problems in the use of verb + preposition/particle

Apart from the obvious problem that the use of phrasal verbs is extremely common and a standard feature of good idiomatic English, interference with the learner's own language may arise from

- 1 Verbs which may be followed by an infinitive in the learner's language, but which in English can be followed by a preposition or particle + object, but never by an infinitive e.g. *dream of insist on succeed in think of* [> 8.27]  
*Your father insists on coming with us* [> 16.51, 16.54]
- 2 Verbs which are followed by *to* as a preposition, not as an infinitive  
There are relatively few of these [> 16.56]  
*I look forward to seeing you soon*
- 3 Verbs which are followed by different prepositions from the ones used in the learner's language e.g. *believe in consist of depend on laugh at live on rely on smell of taste of*  
*Everybody laughed at my proposal to ban smoking on trains*
- 4 Verbs which take a preposition in English, but may not need one in the learner's language e.g. *ask for listen to look at look for wait for*  
*You should ask for the bill*

- 5 Verbs which may be followed by a preposition in the learner's language, but not normally in English e.g. *approach discuss enter lack marry obey remember resemble*  
*We all turned and looked at Mildred when she entered the room*

### 8.25 Non-phrasal verbs compared with phrasal verbs

What is a phrasal verb Very often a verb is followed by a prepositional or adverbial phrase [> 7.3.3, 7.18, 7.30]

*Let's eat in the garden/on the terrace/under that tree*

In the above examples, *in* and *on* do not have a 'special relationship' with *eat* they are in 'free association' so that *eat in* and *eat on* are not phrasal verbs here Most verbs (especially verbs of movement) can occur in free association with prepositions and particles, but these combinations are not always phrasal verbs For example *climb come go walk*, etc will combine freely with *down from in up*, etc  
*I go to the bank on Fridays* (verb + preposition, non-phrasal)

*You can come out now* (verb + particle, non-phrasal)

In examples of this kind, the verbs before the prepositions or particles are replaceable

*He hurried/ran/walked/went up (the hill)*

Furthermore, in such examples, a verb + preposition or particle is used in its literal sense The meaning of the verb is a combination of the two words used e.g. *come + out* (i.e. it is the same as the meaning of its separate parts) However, a verb may have an obvious literal meaning in one context and a highly idiomatic one in another

*We'd better not step on that carpet* (literal)

*We'd better step on it* (i.e. hurry up idiomatic phrasal verb)

The combination of verb + preposition or particle can be described as **phrasal** when the two (or three) parts are in common association (not 'free association') and yield a particular meaning which may either be obvious (e.g. *I took off my jacket*) or idiomatic (*the plane took off* = rose into the air) However, the dividing-line between non-phrasal and phrasal verbs is not always easy to draw

### 8.26 Four types of verb + preposition/particle

We can distinguish four types of combinations with different characteristics

Type 1 verb + preposition (transitive) e.g. *get over (an illness)*

Type 2 verb + particle (transitive) e.g. *bring up (the children)*

Type 3 verb + particle (intransitive) e.g. *come about* (= happen)

Type 4 verb + particle + preposition (transitive) e.g. *run out of (matches)*

### 8.27 Type 1: Verb + preposition (transitive)

#### 8.27.1 General characteristics of Type 1 verbs [compare > 12.3n7]

a Verbs of this type are followed by a preposition [> 8.4] which takes an object (they are transitive [> 1.9])

*I'm looking for my glasses* (noun object)

*I'm looking for them* (pronoun object)

Verb + preposition/particle

- b We cannot put the preposition after the object  
**Look at this picture** (Never \**Look this picture at*)  
However, separation of the preposition from the verb is sometimes possible in relative clauses and questions (and see note e below)  
*The picture **at which you are looking** was bought at an auction*  
*At which picture are you **looking**?*
- c Verb + preposition can come at the end of a sentence or clause  
*She's got more work than she can **cope with***  
*There's so much to **look at** when you visit the National Gallery*
- d Some combinations can go into the passive [> Apps 28-30]  
*Every problem that came up **was dealt with** efficiently*
- e An adverb may come after the object  
*Look at **this drawing** carefully*  
or, for emphasis, immediately before or after the verb [> 7.16]  
*Look **carefully** at this drawing*
- f Monosyllabic prepositions are not usually stressed  
*This cake **consists of** a few common ingredients*

Three sub-groups can be identified

#### 8.27.2 Verb + preposition: non-idiomatic meanings

e.g. *approve of associate with believe in emerge from fight against hope for listen to*, etc [> App 28]

The verbs are used in their normal sense. The problem is to remember which preposition(s) are associated with them. Sometimes different prepositions are possible e.g. *consist of consist in* where the meaning of the verb remains broadly unchanged.

*Cement **consists of** sand and lime* (ie what the subject (cement) is made of)

*Happiness **consists in** having a cheerful outlook* (ie consists defines the subject, happiness)

#### 8.27.3 Verb + object + preposition: non-idiomatic meanings

e.g. *remind someone of tell someone about thank someone for*  
***Tell us about** your travels in China grandpa*

Most of these verbs can be used in the passive [> App 29]

#### 8.27.4 Verb + preposition: idiomatic meanings

The parts of such verbs cannot be so easily related to their literal meanings. Relatively few of these verbs can go into the passive, and the preposition can hardly ever be separated from the verb (See 8.27.1 note b above.)

e.g. *come over* (= affect), *get over* (= recover), *go for* (= attack), *run into* (= meet by accident) [> App 30]

*I can't explain why I did it I don't know what **came over** me*

*Has Martha **got over** her illness yet?*

*Our dog **went for** the postman this morning*

#### 8.28 Type 2: Verb + particle (transitive)

##### 8.28.1 General characteristics of Type 2 verbs [compare > 12.3n7]

- a These verbs are followed by particles or words that can be used as prepositions or particles [> 8.4]. A word following a verb may in

## 8 Prepositions adverb particles and phrasal verbs

some cases function as a preposition in one context and as a particle in another

*Come **up** the stairs* (preposition)

*Come up* (particle)

b These verbs are transitive *Drink up **your** milk*<sup>1</sup>

though some of them can be used intransitively *Drink up*'

c The particle can be separated from its verb and can go immediately after the noun or noun-phrase object [> 8.28.2]

*Please **turn** every light in the house **off***

With long objects, we avoid separating the particle from the verb

*She **turned off** all the lights which had been left on*

d All transitive verbs can be used in the passive

*All the lights in the house **have been turned off***

e When the particle comes at the end of the sentence, it is stressed

*He **took off** his 'coat He **took** his coat **off***

f Often a verb + particle can be transitive with one meaning

*We have to **turn our essays in**/turn in our essays by Friday*

and intransitive, therefore Type 3 [> 8.29] with another meaning

*I feel sleepy so I think I'll **turn in** (= go to bed)*

g Nouns can be formed from many verbs of this type e.g.

*a breakdown a knockout a follow up a setback* [> App 31 ]

### 8.28.2 Type 2 verbs: word order

When there is a noun object, the particle can go

- **before the object** *she gave **away** all her possessions*

- **or after the object** *She gave **all her possessions** **away***

Even though we may put an object after e.g. away as in the first example above, away is a particle, not a preposition. A particle is more closely related to the verb and does not 'govern' the object as a preposition does [> 8.4]. It is mobile to the extent that it can be used before or after the object.

If the object is a pronoun, it always comes before the particle.

*She gave **them** **away**. She let **me/him/her/it/us/them** **out***

In some cases, the particle comes only after the object [> App 32]

***We can allow the children** **out** till 9*

Three sub-groups can be identified

### 8.28.3 Non-phrasal verbs with obvious meanings ('free association')

Verbs in this group can be used with their literal meanings [> 8.25]

*You'd better **pull in** that fishing line*

*You'd better **pull** that fishing line **in***

### 8.28.4 Particles that strengthen or extend the effect of the verb

e.g. *call out eat up stick on write down*. The verbs in this group retain their literal meanings [> App 32]. In some cases, the particle can be omitted altogether.

***Write** their names*

or it can have a strengthening effect on the verb

***Write down** their names /**Write** their names **down***

In other cases, the particle can extend the meaning of a verb

***Give out** these leaflets (i.e. distribute)*

Verb + preposition/particle

The difference between 'literal (non-idiomatic) meanings' and 'extended meanings' is often hard to draw

#### 8.28.5 Type 2 verbs with idiomatic meanings

This is a very large category [> App 33] in which the verb + particle have little or no relation to their literal meanings for example, *make up* can mean 'invent', as in *make up a story*, *take off* can mean 'imitate', as in *take off the Prime Minister* Verb combinations, therefore, can have many different meanings, depending on the particles used Here are just a few examples of the combinations possible with *bring*

*bring up the children* (= train/educate)  
*bring off a deal* (= complete successfully)  
*bring on an attack of asthma* (= cause)  
*bring somebody round to our point of view* (= persuade)  
*bring someone round* (= revive)  
*bring down the house* (= receive enthusiastic applause)

There is also a large category of fixed expressions with nouns These remain invariable at all times e g *make up your mind* (where *mind* cannot be replaced by another word), *push the boat out* (= take risks), etc Such expressions are too numerous to list and can only be found in good dictionaries [but > App 34]

#### 8.29 Type 3: Verb + particle (intransitive)

##### 8.29.1 General characteristics of Type 3 verbs

a The verbs in this category are intransitive, that is they cannot be followed by an object

*Hazel is out We set off early* etc

b Passive constructions are not possible

c The same combination of verb + particle can sometimes belong to Type 2 (with an object *We broke down the fence*) and Type 3 (without an object *The car broke down*) [compare > 8.28.1f]

d Nouns can be formed from verbs of this type eg *a climb down a dropout an outbreak an onlooker* [> App 35]

Two sub-groups can be identified

##### 8.29.2 Non-phrasal verbs with obvious meanings ('free association')

Verbs in this group can be used with their literal meanings [> 8.25] Combinations with *be* are common, but occur with many other verbs, often in the imperative e g *hurry along go away sit down keep on drive over* ([> App 32] for particle meanings) The 'strengthening effect' noted in 8.28.4 can apply to some of these verbs too, as in *hurry up move out*, etc

##### 8.29.3 Type 3 verbs with idiomatic meanings

The verbs in this category [> App 36] often have little or no relation to their literal meanings e g *break down* (collapse), *die away* (become quiet), *pull up* (stop when driving a car), *turn up* (appear unexpectedly)

*Mrs Sims broke down completely when she heard the news*

*The echoes died away in the distance*

*The bus pulled up sharply at the traffic lights*

*Harry turned up after the party when everyone had left*



**8.30 Type 4: Verb + particle + preposition (transitive)**

**8.30.1 General characteristics of Type 4 verbs** [compare > 12.3n7]

a These are three-part verbs (e.g. *put up with*)- They are transitive because they end with prepositions and must therefore be followed by an object:

*I don't know how you **put up with these conditions***

Some of these verbs take a personal object: *take someone up on something* (pursue a suggestion someone has made):

*May I **take you up on** your offer to put me up for the night?*

b Some verbs can go into the passive and others cannot:

*All the old regulations **were done away with*** (passive)

*I find it difficult to **keep up with** you* (no passive)

c Two-part nouns can be formed from some three-part verbs: e.g. someone who *stands in* for someone is a *stand-in*-

Two sub-groups can be identified:

**8.30.2 Non-phrasal verbs with obvious meanings ('free association')**

Three-part combinations, which can be used with their literal meanings, are common [> 8.18]: e.g. *come down from, drive on to, hurry over to, run along to, stay away from, walk up to, etc.*:  
*After stopping briefly in Reading we **drove on to** Oxford*

**8.30.3 Type 4 verbs with idiomatic meanings**

The verbs in this category [> App 37] often have little or no relation to their literal meanings: e.g. *put up with* (tolerate), *run out of* (use up). Unlike the 'free association verbs' noted above, there is no choice in the preposition that can be used after the particle: each verb conveys a single, indivisible meaning:

*I'm not prepared to **put up with** these conditions any longer*

*We're always **running out of** matches in our house*

# 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

## General information about verbs and tenses

### 9.1 What a verb is and what it does

A verb is a word (*run*) or a phrase (*run out of*) which expresses the existence of a state (*love, seem*) or the doing of an action (*take, play*). Two facts are basic:

- 1 Verbs are used to express distinctions in time (past, present, future) through **tense** (often with adverbials of time or frequency).
- 2 Auxiliary verbs [> 10.1] are used with full verbs to give other information about actions and states. For example *be* may be used with the present participle of a full verb to say that an action was going on ('in progress') at a particular time (*I was swimming*); *have* may be used with the past participle of a full verb to say that an action is completed (*I have finished*).

### 9.2 Verb tenses: simple and progressive

Some grammarians believe that tense must always be shown by the actual form of the verb, and in many languages present, past and future are indicated by changes in the verb forms. On this reckoning, English really has just two tenses, the present and the past, since these are the only two cases where the form of the basic verb varies: *love, write* (present); *loved, wrote* (past).

However, it is usual (and convenient) to refer to all combinations of *be* + present participle and *have* + past participle as tenses. The same goes for *will* + bare infinitive [> 16.3] to refer to the future (*It will be fine tomorrow*). But we must remember that tense in English is often only loosely related to time.

Tenses have two forms, **simple** and **progressive** (sometimes called 'continuous'). The progressive contains *be* + present participle:

	<b>simple</b>	<b>progressive</b>
<b>present:</b>	<i>' work</i>	<i>I am working</i>
<b>past:</b>	<i>' worked</i>	<i>I was working</i>
<b>present perfect:</b>	<i>I have worked</i>	<i>I have been working</i>
<b>past perfect:</b>	<i>I had worked</i>	<i>I had been working</i>
<b>future:</b>	<i>I will work</i>	<i>I will be working</i>
<b>future perfect:</b>	<i>I will have worked</i>	<i>I will have been working</i>

Simple forms and progressive combinations can also occur with:

<b>conditionals</b> [> Chapter 14]:	<i>I would work</i>	<i>I would be working</i>
<b>modals</b> [> Chapter 11]:	<i>I may work</i>	<i>I may be working</i>

Both simple and progressive forms usually give a general idea of when an action takes place. But the progressive forms also tell us that

an activity is (or was, or will be, etc.) in progress, or thought of as being in progress.

This activity may be in progress at the moment of speaking:

*What **are** you **doing**? I'm **making** a cake*

or not in progress at the moment of speaking:

*I'm **learning** to type* (i.e. but not at the moment of speaking)

Or the activity may be temporary or changeable:

*Fred **was wearing** a blue shirt yesterday*

Or the activity may be uncompleted:

*Vera **has been trying** to learn Chinese for years*

Our decision about which tense to use depends on the context and the impression we wish to convey.

### 9.3 Stative and dynamic verbs

Some verbs are not generally used in progressive forms. They are called **stative** because they refer to **states** (e.g. experiences, conditions) rather than to actions. In a sentence like:

*She **loves/loved** her baby more than anything in the world*  
loves (or loved) describes a state over which the mother has no control: it is an involuntary feeling. We could not use the progressive forms (*is/was loving*) here.

**Dynamic verbs**, on the other hand, usually refer to **actions** which are deliberate or voluntary (*I'm making a cake*) or they refer to changing situations (*He's growing old*), that is, to activities, etc., which have a beginning and an end. Dynamic verbs can be used in progressive as well as simple forms. Compare the following:

- |  | <b>progressive forms</b>        | <b>simple forms</b>            |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Dynamic verbs with progressive and simple forms:           | <i>I'm looking at you</i>       | <i>I often look at you</i>     |
|  | <i>I'm listening to music</i>   | <i>I often listen to music</i> |
| 2 Verbs which are nearly always stative (simple forms only): |                                 | <i>I see you</i>               |
|  |                                 | <i>I hear music</i> [> 11.13]  |
| 3 Verbs that have dynamic or stative uses:                   |                                 |                                |
|  | <b>deliberate actions</b>       | <b>states</b>                  |
|  | <i>I'm weighing myself</i>      | <i>I weigh 65 kilos</i>        |
|  | <i>I'm tasting the soup</i>     | <i>It tastes salty</i>         |
|  | <i>I'm feeling the radiator</i> | <i>It feels hot</i>            |

**Stative verbs** usually occur in the simple form in all tenses. We can think of 'states' in categories like [> App 38]:

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Feelings:                    | <i>like love, etc.</i>               |
| 2 Thinking/believing:          | <i>think, understand, etc.</i>       |
| 3 Wants and preferences:       | <i>prefer, want, etc.</i>            |
| 4 Perception and the senses:   | <i>hear, see, etc.</i>               |
| 5 Being/seeming/having/owning: | <i>appear seem belong, own, etc.</i> |

Sometimes verbs describing physical sensations can be used in simple or progressive forms with hardly any change of meaning:

*Ooh! It **hurts!** = Ooh! It's **hurting***

## The sequence of tenses

*Can/can't* and *could/couldn't* often combine with verbs of perception to refer to a particular moment in the present or the past where a progressive form would be impossible [> 11.13]:

*I **can smell** gas = I **smell** gas*

### 9.4 Time references with adverbs [> App 48]

Some adverbs like *yesterday* and *tomorrow* refer to past or future:

*I **saw Jim yesterday** I'll **be seeing Isabel tomorrow***

Other adverbs, such as *already*, *always*, *ever*, *often*, *never*, *now*, *still*, can be used with a variety of tenses, though they may often be associated with particular ones. For example, *always* is often associated with the simple present or past for habits:

*We **always have** breakfast at 7.30*

*Roland **always took** me out to dinner on my birthday*

But it can be used with other tenses as well:

*I **shall always remember** this holiday (future)*

*Natasha **has always been** generous, (present perfect)*

*Mr Biggs said he **had always travelled** first class (past perfect)*

## The sequence of tenses

### 9.5 The sequence of tenses

In extended speech or writing we usually select a governing tense which affects all other tense forms. The problem of the 'sequence of tenses' is not confined to indirect speech [> 15.5]. Our choice of tense may be influenced by the following factors:

#### 9.5.1 Consistency in the use of tenses

If we start a narrative or description from the point of view of **now**, we usually maintain 'now' as our viewpoint. This results in the following combinations:

- present (simple/progressive) accords with present perfect/future:  
*Our postman usually **delivers** our mail at 7 every morning*  
*It's nearly lunch-time and the mail still **hasn't arrived** I suppose the mail **will come** soon. Perhaps our postman **is** ill*

If we start a narrative or description from the point of view of **then**, we usually maintain 'then' as our viewpoint. This results in the following combinations:

- past (simple/progressive) accords with past perfect:  
*When I **lived** in London the postman usually **delivered** our mail at 7 every morning*  
*Usually no one in our household **had got up** when the mail **arrived***

#### 9.5.2 The proximity rule

A present tense in the main clause (for example, in a reporting verb) normally attracts a present tense in the subordinate clause:

*He **tells me** he's a good tennis-player*

A past tense normally attracts another past:

*He **told me** he **was** a good tennis-player*

In the second example only a more complete context would tell us whether *he was a good tennis player* refers to the past (i.e. when he was a young man) or to present time. A speaker or writer can ignore the proximity rule and use a present tense after a past or a past after a present in order to be more precise.

*He told me he is a good tennis-player* (i.e. he still is)

*He tells me he used to be a good tennis player*

However combinations such as *you say you are* or *you told me you were* tend to form themselves automatically. That is why we can refer to the idea of sequence of tenses in which present usually combines with present and past usually combines with past.

### 9.5.3 Particular tense sequences

Refer to the following for particular tense sequences

Indirect speech [> Chapter 15]

Conditional sentences [> Chapter 14]

Temporal clauses [> 1.45.2]

After *wish* etc [> 11.41-43] *I'd rather* [> 11.45]

Clauses of purpose [> 1.51]

## The simple present tense

### 9.6 Form of the simple present tense

We add *s* or *es* to the base form of the verb in the third person singular

<i>I</i>	<i>work</i>	
<i>You</i>	<i>work</i>	
<i>He</i>	<i>works</i>	
<i>She</i>	<i>works</i>	<i>in an office</i>
<i>It</i>	<i>works</i>	
<i>We</i>	<i>work</i>	
<i>You</i>	<i>work</i>	
<i>They</i>	<i>work</i>	

### 9.7 The third person singular: pronunciation and spelling

#### 9.7.1 Pronunciation of the 3rd person singular [compare > 2.21]

*/s/* after */f/, /p/, /k/, /t/* - *laughs puffs drops kicks lets*

Verbs ending in */z/, /dʒ/, /s/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/* and */ks/* take an extra syllable in the third person which is pronounced */ɪz/* - *loses manages passes pushes stitches mixes*

Other verbs are pronounced with a */z/* in the third person after */b/* - *robs* after */d/* - *adds* after */g/* - *digs* after */l/* - *fills* after */m/* - *dreams* after */n/* - *runs* after */r/* - *rings* after vowel + *w* or *r* - *draws* after */v/* - *loves* after vowels - *sees pays* *Says* is normally pronounced */seɪz/* and *does* is pronounced */dəʒ/*

#### 9.7.2 Spelling of the 3rd person singular [compare > 2.20]

Most verbs add *s* - *work/works drive/drives play/plays run/runs*

Verbs normally add *es* when they end in *o* - *do/does* *s miss/misses* *x mix/mixes* *-ch catch/catches* *-sh push/pushes*

## The simple present tense

When there is a consonant before -y, change to *ies* *cry/cries* but compare *buy/buys say/says obey/obeys*

### 9.8 Uses of the simple present tense

#### 9.8.1 Permanent truths

We use the simple present for statements that are always true  
*Summer **follows** spring Gases **expand** when heated*

#### 9.8.2 'The present period'

We use the simple present to refer to events actions or situations which are true in the present period of time and which for all we know may continue indefinitely What we are saying in effect, is 'this is the situation as it stands at present'  
*My father **works** in a bank My sister **wears** glasses*

#### 9.8.3 Habitual actions

The simple present can be used with or without an adverb of time to describe habitual actions, things that happen repeatedly  
*I **get up** at 7 John **smokes** a lot*

We can be more precise about habitual actions by using the simple present with adverbs of indefinite frequency (*always never*, etc [> 7.39]) or with adverbial phrases such as *every day* [> 7.38]

*I **sometimes stay up** till midnight  
She **visits** her parents **every day***

We commonly use the simple present to ask and answer questions which begin with *How often*<sup>7</sup>

***How often do you go to the dentist? - I go every six months***

Questions relating to habit can be asked with *ever* and answered with e.g. *never* and sometimes *not ever* [> 7.40.5]

***Do you ever eat meat? - No I never eat meat***

#### 9.8.4 Future reference

This use is often related to timetables and programmes or to events in the calendar

***The exhibition opens on January 1st and closes on January 31st  
The concert begins at 7.30 and ends at 9.30  
We leave tomorrow at 11.15 and arrive at 17.50  
Wednesday, May 24th marks our 25th wedding anniversary***

For the use of the simple present after *when* etc [> 1.45.2]

#### 9.8.5 Observations and declarations

We commonly use the simple present with stative and other verbs to make observations and declarations in the course of conversation e.g.  
*I **hope/assume/suppose/promise** everything will be all right*

*I **bet** you were nervous /ust before your driving test  
It **says** here that the police expect more trouble in the city  
I **declare** this exhibition open  
I **see/hear** there are roadworks in the street again  
I **love** you I **hate** him  
We **live** in difficult times - I **agree***

## The present progressive tense

### 9.9 Form of the present progressive tense

The progressive is formed with the present of be + the *-ing* form See under *be* for details about form [[> 10.6](#)]

I am		I'm	
You are	waiting	You're	waiting
He is	writing	He's	writing
She is	running	She's	running
It is	beginning	It's	beginning
We are	lying	We're	lying
You are		You're	
They are		They're	

### 9.10 Spelling: how to add '-ing' to a verb

#### ***wait/waiting***

We can add *-ing* to most verbs without changing the spelling of their **base forms**. Other examples: *beat/beating, carry/carrying, catch/catching, drink/drinking, enjoy/enjoying, hurry/hurrying*

#### ***write/writing***

If a verb ends in *-e*, omit the *-e* and add *-ing*. Other examples: *come/coming, have/having, make/making, ride/riding, use/using* This rule does not apply to verbs ending in double *e*: *agree/agreeing, see/seeing*; or to *age/ageing* and *singe/singeing*

#### ***run/running***

A verb that is spelt with a single vowel followed by a single consonant doubles its final consonant. Other examples: *hit/hitting, let/letting, put/putting, run/running, sit/sitting*

Compare: e.g. *beat/beating* which is not spelt with a single vowel and which therefore does not double its final consonant.

#### ***begin/beginning***

With two-syllable verbs, the final consonant is normally doubled when the last syllable is stressed. Other examples: *for'get/forgetting, pre'fer/prefer'ring, up'set/upsetting* **Compare:** *'benefit/benefiting, 'differ/differing and 'profit/profitting which are stressed on their first syllables and do not double their final consonants. Note 'label/labelling 'quarrel/quarrelling, 'signal/signalling and 'travel/travelling (BrE) which are exceptions to this rule. Compare: labeling, quarreling, signaling, traveling (AmE) [[compare > 9.14.2](#)]. *-ic* at the end of a verb changes to *-ick* when we add *-ing*: *panic/panicking picnic/picnicking traffic/trafficking**

#### ***lie/lying***

Other examples: *die/dying, tie/tying*

### 9.11 Uses of the present progressive tense

#### 9.11.1 Actions in progress at the moment of speaking

We use the present progressive to describe actions or events which

## The present progressive tense

are in progress at the moment of speaking. To emphasize this, we often use adverbials like *now*, *at the moment*, *just*, etc.:  
*Someone's **knocking** at the door Can you answer it?*  
*What **are you doing**? - I'm **just tying up** my shoe-laces*  
*He's **working at the moment**, so he can't come to the telephone*

Actions in progress are seen as uncompleted'

He's **talking** to his girlfriend on the phone

We can emphasize the idea of duration with *still* [> 7.25]:

He's **still talking** to his girlfriend on the phone

### 9.11.2 Temporary situations

The present progressive can be used to describe actions and situations which may not have been happening long, or which are thought of as being in progress for a limited period:

*What's your daughter **doing** these days?*

- *She's **studying** English at Durham University*

Such situations may not be happening at the moment of speaking:

*Don't take that ladder away Your father's **using** it* (i.e. but perhaps not at the moment)

*She's at her best when she's **making** big decisions*

Temporary events may be in progress at the moment of speaking:

*The river **is flowing** very fast after last night's rain*

We also use the present progressive to describe current trends:

*People **are becoming** less tolerant of smoking these days*

### 9.11.3 Planned actions: future reference

We use the present progressive [and *be going to* > 9.46.3] to refer to activities and events planned for the future. We generally need an adverbial unless the meaning is clear from the context:

***We're spending next winter** in Australia*

This use of the present progressive is also commonly associated with future arrival and departure and occurs with verbs like *arrive*, *come*, *go*, *leave*, etc. to describe travel arrangements:

He's **arriving tomorrow morning** on the 13 27 train

The adverbial and the context prevent confusion with the present progressive to describe an action which is in progress at the time of speaking:

*Look! The train's **leaving*** (i.e. it's actually moving)

### 9.11.4 Repeated actions

The adverbs *always* (in the sense of 'frequently'), *constantly*, *continually*, *forever*, *perpetually* and *repeatedly* can be used with progressive forms to describe continually-repeated actions:

*She's **always helping** people*

Some stative verbs can have progressive forms with *always*, etc.:

*I'm **always hearing** strange stories about him* [> 9.3]

Sometimes there can be implied complaint in this use of the progressive when it refers to something that happens too often:

*Our burglar alarm **is forever going off** for no reason*



## 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

### 9.12 The present tenses in typical contexts

#### 9.12.1 The simple present and present progressive in commentary

The simple present and the present progressive are often used in commentaries on events taking place at the moment, particularly on radio and television. In such cases, the simple present is used to describe rapid actions completed at the moment of speaking and the progressive is used to describe longer-lasting actions:

*MacFee passes to Franklyn Franklyn makes a quick pass to Booth Booth is away with the ball, but he's losing his advantage*

#### 9.12.2 The simple present and present progressive in narration

When we are telling a story or describing things that have happened to us, we often use present tenses (even though the events are in the past) in order to sound more interesting and dramatic. The progressive is used for 'background' and the simple tense for the main events:

*I'm driving along this country road and I'm completely lost Then I see this old fellow He's leaning against a gate I stop the car and ask him the way He thinks a bit then says, 'Well, if I were you, I wouldn't start from here'*

#### 9.12.3 The simple present in demonstrations and instructions

This use of the simple present is an alternative to the imperative [> 9.51]. It illustrates step-by-step instructions:

*First (you) boil some water Then (you) warm the teapot Then (you) add three teaspoons of tea Next, (you) pour on boiling water*

#### 9.12.4 The simple present in synopses (e.g. reviews of books, films, etc.)

*Kate Fox's novel is an historical romance set in London in the 1880's The action takes place over a period of 30 years*

#### 9.12.5 The simple present and present progressive in newspaper headlines and e.g. photographic captions

The simple present is generally used to refer to past events:

*FREAK SNOW STOPS TRAFFIC*

*DISARMAMENT TALKS BEGIN IN VIENNA*

The abbreviated progressive refers to the future. The infinitive can also be used for this purpose [> 9.48.1]:

*CABINET MINISTER RESIGNING SOON (or: TO RESIGN SOON)*

## The simple past tense

### 9.13 Form of the simple past tense with regular verbs

The form is the same for all persons [> App 39].

	pronunciation		spelling
I			
He	<i>played</i>	<i>/d l/</i>	<i>arrive/arrived</i>
She	<i>arrived</i>	<i>/d l/</i>	<i>wait/waited</i>
	<i>worked</i>	<i>/t l/</i>	<i>stop/stopped</i>
	<i>dreamed/dreamt</i>	<i>/dri:md/or/dremt/</i>	<i>occur/occurred</i>
	<i>posted</i>	<i>/id/</i>	<i>cry/cried</i>
You			
They			

## 9.14 The regular past: pronunciation and spelling [> App 39]

### 9.14.1 Pronunciation of the regular past

Verbs in the regular past always end with a *-d* in their spelling, but the pronunciation of the past ending is not always the same:

#### **play/played** / d /

The most common spelling characteristic of the regular past is that *-ed* is added to the base form of the verb: *opened, knocked, stayed*, etc. Except in the cases noted below, this *-ed* is not pronounced as if it were an extra syllable, so *opened* is pronounced: / əʊpənd /, *knocked*: / nokt /, *stayed*: / steid /, etc.

#### **arrive/arrived** / d /

Verbs which end in the following sounds have their past endings pronounced / d /: / b / *rubbed*; / g / *tugged*; / dʒ / *managed*; / l / *filled*; / m / *dimmed*; / n / *listened*; vowel + / r / *stirred*; / v / *loved*; / z / *seized*. The *-ed* ending is not pronounced as an extra syllable.

#### **work/worked** / t /

Verbs which end in the following sounds have their past endings pronounced / t /: / k / *packed*; / s / *passed*; / tʃ / *watched*; / ʃ / *washed*; / f / *laughed*; / p / *tipped*. The *-ed* ending is not pronounced as an extra syllable.

#### **dream/dreamed** / d / or **dreamt** / t /

A few verbs function as both regular and irregular and may have their past forms spelt *-ed* or *-t* pronounced / d / or / t /: e.g. *burn, dream, lean, learn, smell, spell, spill, spoil* [> App 40].

#### **post/posted** / d /

Verbs which end in the sounds / t / or / d / have their past endings pronounced / d /: *posted, added*. The *-ed* ending is pronounced as an extra syllable added to the base form of the verb.

### 9.14.2 Spelling of the regular past

The regular past always ends in *-d*:

#### **arrive/arrived**

Verbs ending in *-e* add *-d*: e.g. *phone/phoned, smile/smiled*- This rule applies equally to *agree, die, lie*, etc.

#### **wait/waited**

Verbs not ending in *-e* add *-ed*: e.g. *ask/asked, clean/cleaned, follow/followed, video/videoed*

#### **stop/stopped**

Verbs spelt with a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter double the consonant: *beg/begged, rub/rubbed*

#### **occur/occurred**

In two-syllable verbs the final consonant is doubled when the last syllable contains a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant letter and is stressed: *pre'fer/preferred, re'fer/referred*- Compare: *'benefit/benefited, 'differ/differed* and *'profit/profited* which are stressed on their first syllables and which therefore do not double their

## 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

final consonants In AmE *labeled, quarreled signaled and traveled* follow the rule In BrE *labelled quarrelled, signalled and travelled* are exceptions to the rule [compare > 9.10]

**cry/cried** [compare > 2.20]

When there is a consonant before -y, the y changes to i before we add -ed eg *carry earned deny denied fry fried try tried* Compare *delay delayed obey obeyed play played*, etc which have a vowel before -y and therefore simply add -ed in the past

### 9.15 Form of the simple past tense with irregular verbs

---

The form is the same for all persons [> App 40]

I  
You  
He  
She            *shut*            *the suitcase*  
It              *sat on*  
We  
You  
They

---

### 9.16 Notes on the past form of irregular verbs

Unlike regular verbs, irregular verbs (about 150 in all) do not have past forms which can be predicted

**shut/shut**

A small number of verbs have the same form in the present as in the past e g *cut/cut hit hit put put* It is important to remember, particularly with such verbs, that the third person singular does not change in the past eg *he shut* (past), *he shuts* (present)

**sit/sat**

The past form of most irregular verbs is different from the present *bring brought catch caught keep/kept leave/left lose/lost*

### 9.17 Uses of the simple past tense

#### 9.17.1 Completed actions

We normally use the simple past tense to talk about events, actions or situations which occurred in the past and are now finished They may have happened recently

*Sam **phoned** a moment ago*

or in the distant past

*The Goths **invaded Rome in A.D. 410***

A time reference must be given

*I **had** a word with Julian **this morning***

or must be understood from the context

*I **saw** Fred in town (i e when I was there this morning)*

*I **never met** my grandfather (i e he is dead)*

When we use the simple past, we are usually concerned with *when* an action occurred, not with its duration (*how long* it lasted)

The simple past tense

### 9.17.2 Past habit

Like used to [> 11.60], the simple past can be used to describe past habits [compare present habit > 9.8.3]:

*I **smoked forty cigarettes a day** till I gave up*

### 9.17.3 The immediate past

We can sometimes use the simple past without a time reference to describe something that happened a very short time ago-

*Jimmy punched me in the stomach*

*Did the telephone ring?*

*Who left the door open? (Who's left the door open? [> 9.26.1])*

### 9.17.4 Polite inquiries, etc.

The simple past does not always refer to past time. It can also be used for polite inquiries (particularly asking for favours), often with verbs like *hope think* or *wonder*. Compare:

*I **wonder** if you could give me a lift*

*I **wondered** if you could give me a lift (more tentative/polite)*

For the use of 'the unreal past' in conditional sentences [> 14.12]

## 9.18 Adverbials with the simple past tense

The association of the past tense with adverbials that tell us *when* something happened is very important. Adverbials used with the past tense must refer to past (not present) time. This means that adverbials which link with the present (*before now, so far till now yet*) are not used with past tenses.

Some adverbials like *yesterday, last summer* [> App 48] and combinations with *ago* are used only with past tenses

*I **saw Jane yesterday/last summer***

*Ago* [> 7.31], meaning 'back from now', can combine with a variety of expressions to refer to the past: e.g. *two years ago, six months ago, ten minutes ago, a long time ago*

*I **met Robert Parr many years ago** in Czechoslovakia*

The past is often used with *when* to ask and answer questions:

***When did you learn about it?** - **When I saw it** in the papers*

*When* often points to a definite contrast with the present:

*I **played** football every day **when I was a boy***

Other adverbials can be used with past tenses when they refer to past time, but can be used with other tenses as well [> 9.4]:

**adverbs:**

*I **always** liked Gloria*

*I **often** saw her in Rome*

*Did you **ever** meet Sonia?*

*I **never** met Sonia*

**adverbial/prepositional phrases.** *We left **at 4 o'clock/on Tuesday***

*We had our holiday **in July***

*I waited **till he arrived***

**adverbial clauses:**

*I met him **when I was at college***

**as + adverb + as:**

*I saw him **as recently as last week***

## The past progressive tense

### 9.19 Form of the past progressive tense

The past progressive is formed with the past of *be* + the *-ing* form. See under *be* [> 10.8] for details about form.

I	was	
You	were	
He	was	
She	was	waiting [For spelling, > 9.10]
It	was	
We	were	
You	were	
They	were	

### 9.20 Uses of the past progressive tense

#### 9.20.1 Actions in progress in the past

We use the past progressive to describe past situations or actions that were in progress at some time in the past:

*I **was living abroad in 1987**, so I missed the general election.*

Often we don't know whether the action was completed or not:

*Philippa **was working** on her essay last night*

Adverbials beginning with *all* [> 5.22.2, 7.36] emphasize continuity:

*It **was raining all night/all yesterday/all the afternoon***

In the same way, *still* can emphasize duration [> 7.25]:

***Jim was talking to his girlfriend** on the phone when I came in **and was still talking** to her when I went out an hour later*

#### 9.20.2 Actions which began before something else happened

The past progressive and the simple past are often used together in a sentence. The past progressive describes a situation or action in progress in the past, and the simple past describes a shorter action or event. The action or situation in progress is often introduced by conjunctions like *when* and *as just as, while*:

***Just as I was leaving** the house the phone rang*

*Jane met Frank Sinatra **when she was living** in Hollywood*

Or the shorter action can be introduced by *when*:

*We **were having supper** **when the phone rang***

We can often use the simple past to describe the action in progress, but the progressive puts more emphasis on the duration of the action, as in the second of these two examples:

***While I fumbled** for some money, my friend paid the fares*

***While I was fumbling** for some money, my friend paid the fares.*

#### 9.20.3 Parallel actions

We can emphasize the fact that two or more actions were in progress at the same time by using e.g. *while* or *at the time (that)*:

***While I was working** in the garden, **my wife was cooking dinner***

#### 9.20.4 Repeated actions [compare > 9.11.4]

This use is similar to that of the present progressive:

*When he worked here, Roger **was always making** mistakes*

## The simple present perfect tense

### 9.20.5 Polite inquiries [compare > 9.17.4]

This use is even more polite and tentative than the simple past:

*I **was wondering** if you could give me a lift.*

### 9.21 Past tenses in typical contexts

The simple past combines with other past tenses, such as the past progressive and the past perfect, when we are talking or writing about the past. Note that the past progressive is used for scene-setting.

Past tenses of various kinds are common in story-telling, biography, autobiography, reports, eye-witness accounts, etc.:

*On March 14th at 10 15 a.m. I was waiting for a bus at the bus stop on the corner of Dover Road and West Street when a black Mercedes parked at the stop. Before the driver (had) managed to get out of his car, a number 14 bus appeared.*

*It was evening. The sun was setting. A gentle wind was blowing through the trees. In the distance I noticed a Land Rover moving across the dusty plain. It stopped and two men jumped out of it.*

*It was just before the Second World War. Tom was only 20 at the time and was living with his mother. He was working in a bank and travelling to London every day. One morning, he received a mysterious letter. It was addressed to 'Mr Thomas Parker'.*

## The simple present perfect tense

### 9.22 Form of the simple present perfect tense

The present perfect is formed with the present of have [> 10.27] + the past participle (the third part of a verb). For regular verbs [> App 39] the past participle has the same form as the simple past tense: e.g. *arrive, arrived, have arrived*. For irregular verbs [> App 40] the simple past and the past participle can be formed in a variety of ways: e.g. *drink, drank, have drunk*.

I	have	(I've)			
You	have	(You've)	arrived	/d/	(regular)
He	has	(He's)	finished	/t/	(regular)
She	has	(She's)	started	/ɪd/	(regular)
It	has	(It's)	shut		(irregular)
We	have	(We've)	lost		(irregular)
You	have	(You've)	drunk		(irregular)
They	have	(They've)			

### 9.23 Present time and past time

Students speaking other European languages sometimes misuse the present perfect tense in English because of interference from their mother tongue. The present perfect is often wrongly seen as an alternative to the past, so that a student might think that *I've had lunch* and *I had lunch* are interchangeable. It is also confused with the present, so that an idea like *I've been here since February* is wrongly expressed in the present with *I am*.

The present perfect always suggests a relationship between present time and past time. So *I've had lunch* (probably) implies that I did so very recently. However, if I say *I had lunch*, I also have to say or imply *when*: e.g. *I had lunch an hour ago*. Similarly, *I've been here since February* shows a connexion between past and present, whereas *I am here* can only relate to the present and cannot be followed by a phrase like *since February*.

In the present perfect tense, the time reference is sometimes **undefined**; often we are interested in **present results**, or in the way something that happened in the past affects the present situation. The present perfect can therefore be seen as a present tense which looks backwards into the past (just as the past perfect [> 9.29] is a past tense which looks backwards into an earlier past). Compare the simple past tense, where the time reference is **defined** because we are interested in past time or **past results**. The following pairs of sentences illustrate this difference between present time and past time:

*I **haven't seen him** this morning* (i.e. up to the present time: it is still morning)

*I **didn't see him** this morning* (i.e. the morning has now passed)

***Have you ever flown** in Concorde?* (i.e. up to the present time)

***When did you fly** in Concorde?* (i.e. when, precisely, in the past)

## 9.24 Uses of the simple present perfect tense [compare > 10.13]

The present perfect is used in two ways in English:

- 1 To describe actions beginning in the past and **continuing up to the present moment** (and possibly into the future).
- 2 To refer to actions occurring or not occurring **at an unspecified time in the past** with some kind of connexion to the present.

These two uses are discussed in detail in the sections below.

## 9.25 Actions, etc. continuing into the present

### 9.25.1 The present perfect + adverbials that suggest 'up to the present'

We do not use the present perfect with adverbs relating to past time (*ago*, *yesterday*, etc.) [> 9.18, App 48]. Adverbial phrases like the following are used with the present perfect because they clearly connect the past with the present moment: *before (now)*, *It's the first time*, *so far*, *so far this morning*, *up till now*, *up to the present*. Adverbs like *ever* (in questions), and *not ever* or *never* (in statements) are commonly (but not exclusively) used with the present perfect:

***I've planted** fourteen rose-bushes **so far this morning***

*She's **never eaten** a mango **before** **Have you ever eaten** a mango?*

*It's the most interesting book **I've ever read*** [compare > 6.28.1]

*Olga **hasn't appeared** on TV **before now***

### 9.25.2 The present perfect with 'since' and 'for' [> 7.31-32, 10.13.5]

We often use *since* and *for* with the present perfect to refer to periods of time up to the present. *Since* (+ point of time) can be:

- a conjunction: *Tom **hasn't been home since he was a boy***

## The simple present perfect tense

- an adverb: *I saw Fiona in May and I **haven't seen her since***
- a preposition: *I've **lived here since 1980***

*Since*, as a conjunction, can be followed by the simple past or present perfect:

*I retired in 1980 and came to live here I've lived here **since I retired*** (i.e. the point when I retired: 1980)

*I have lived here for several years now and I've made many new friends **since I have lived here*** (i.e. up to now)

*For* + period of time often occurs with the present perfect but can be used with any tense. Compare:

***I've lived here for five years*** (and I still live here)

***I lived here for five years*** (I don't live here now)

***I am here for six weeks*** (that's how long I'm going to stay)

## 9.26 Actions, etc. occurring at an unspecified time

### 9.26.1 The present perfect without a time adverbial

We often use the present perfect without a time adverbial, especially in conversation. We do not always need one, for often we are concerned with the consequences *now* of something which took place *then*, whether 'then' was very recently or a long time ago. If further details are required (e.g. precise answers to questions like *When?*, *Where?*) we must generally use the simple past:

***Have you passed your driving test?*** (Depending on context, this can mean 'at any time up to now' or 'after the test you've just taken'.)

- yes, ***I passed when I was 17*** (simple past: exact time reference)

*Jason Vilhers **has been arrested*** (Depending on context, this can imply 'today' or 'recently' or 'at last'.) *He **was seen** by a Customs Officer who **alerted** the police* (simple past with details)

However, adverbs like *just*, used with the present perfect, can provide more information about actions in 'unspecified time'. Details follow.

### 9.26.2 The present perfect for recent actions

The following adverbs can refer to actions, etc. in recent time:

- *just* [> 7.29]: ***I've just tidied up the kitchen***

- *recently*, etc: ***He's recently arrived from New York***

- *already* in questions and affirmative statements [> 7.26, 7.28]:

***Have you typed my letter already?*** - Yes, ***I've already typed it***

- *yet*, in questions, for events we are expecting to hear about:

***Have you passed your driving test yet?*** [> 7.27-28]

or in negatives, for things we haven't done, but expect to do:

***I haven't passed my driving test yet***

- *still* [> 7.25], *at last*, *finally*

***I still haven't passed my driving test*** (despite my efforts)

***I have passed my driving test at last*** (after all my efforts)

### 9.26.3 The present perfect for repeated and habitual actions

This use is associated with frequency adverbs (*often*, *frequently*) and expressions like *three/four/several times* [> 7.38-39]:

***I've watched him on TV several times*** (i.e. and I expect to again)

***I've often wondered why I get such a poor reception on my radio***

***She's attended classes regularly She's always worked hard***



## 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

### 9.27 The simple present perfect tense in typical contexts

The present perfect is never used in past narrative (e.g. stories told in the past, history books). Apart from its common use in conversation, it is most often used in broadcast news, newspapers, letters and any kind of language-use which has connexion with the present.

Examples:

#### 9.27.1 Broadcast reports, newspaper reports

*Interest rates rose again today and the price of gold has fallen by \$10 an ounce. Industrial leaders have complained that high interest rates will make borrowing expensive for industry.*

#### 9.27.2 Implied in newspaper headlines

**VILLAGES DESTROYED IN EARTHQUAKE** (= have been destroyed)

#### 9.27.3 Letters, postcards, etc.

*We've just arrived in Hong Kong, and though we haven't had time to see much yet, we're sure we're going to enjoy ourselves.*

## The simple past perfect tense

### 9.28 Form of the simple past perfect tense

The past perfect is formed with **had** + the past participle. See under **have** [**> 10.28**] for details about form.

I	had	(I'd)	
You	had	(You'd)	arrived
He	had	(He'd)	finished
She	had	(She'd)	started [ <b>&gt; 9.22</b> ]
It	had	(It'd)	shut
We	had	(We'd)	lost
You	had	(You'd)	drunk
They	had	(They'd)	

### 9.29 Uses of the past perfect tense

It is sometimes supposed that we use the past perfect simply to describe 'events that happened a long time ago'. This is not the case. We use the simple past for this purpose [**> 9.17.1**]:

*Anthony and Cleopatra **died in 30 B.C.***

#### 9.29.1 The past perfect referring to an earlier past

The main use of the past perfect is to show which of two events happened first. Here are two past events:

*The patient **died**. The doctor **arrived**.*

We can combine these two sentences in different ways to show their relationship in the past:

*The patient **died when the doctor arrived** (i.e. the patient died at the time or just after the doctor arrived)*

*The patient **had died when the doctor arrived** (i.e. the patient was already dead when the doctor arrived)*

The event that happened first need not be mentioned first:

*The doctor **arrived** quickly, but the patient **had already died**.*

## The simple past perfect tense

Some typical conjunctions used before a past perfect to refer to 'an earlier past' are: *when* and *after*, *as soon as*, *by the time that*. They often imply a cause-and-effect relationship:

***We cleared up as soon as our guests had left***

Adverbs often associated with the present perfect [> 9.25-26]: *already ever for* (+ period of time), just, *never never before since* (+ point of time) are often used with the past perfect to emphasize the sequence of events:

***When I rang, Jim had already left***

***The boys loved the zoo. They had never seen wild animals before***

### 9.29.2 The past perfect as the past equivalent of the present perfect

The past perfect sometimes functions simply as the past form of the present perfect:

***Juliet is excited because she has never been to a dance before***

***Juliet was excited because she had never been to a dance before***

This is particularly the case in indirect speech [> 15.13n.3]

Used in this way, the past perfect can emphasize completion:

***I began collecting stamps in February and by November I had collected more than 2000***

*Yet* can be used with the past perfect, but we often prefer expressions like *until then* or *by that time*. Compare:

***He hasn't finished yet***

***He hadn't finished by yesterday evening***

### 9.29.3 The past perfect for unfulfilled hopes and wishes

We can use the past perfect (or the past simple or progressive) with verbs like *expect hope, mean, suppose, think want*, to describe things we hoped or wished to do but didn't [> 11.42.3]:

***I had hoped to send him a telegram to congratulate him on his marriage, but I didn't manage it***

## 9.30 Obligatory and non-obligatory uses of the past perfect

We do not always need to use the past perfect to describe which event came first. Sometimes this is perfectly clear, as in:

***After I finished, I went home***

The sequence is often clear in relative clauses [> 1.27] as well:

***I wore the necklace (which) my grandmother (had) left me***

We normally use the simple past for events that occur in sequence:

***I got out of the taxi, paid the fare, tipped the driver and dashed into the station***

***7 came, I saw, I conquered,' Julius Caesar declared***

But there are instances when we need to be very precise in our use of past or past perfect, particularly with *when*:

***When I arrived, Anne left*** (i.e. at that moment)

***When I arrived, Anne had left*** (i.e. before I got there)

In the first sentence, I saw Anne, however briefly. In the second, I didn't see her at all. See also indirect speech [> 15.12].

We normally use the past perfect with conjunctions like *no sooner than* or *hardly/scarcely/barely when*

*Mrs Winthrop had no sooner left the room than they began to gossip about her*

*Mr Jenkins had hardly/scarcely/barely begun his speech when he was interrupted*

### 9.31 Simple past and simple past perfect in typical contexts

The past perfect combines with other past tenses (simple past, past progressive, past perfect progressive) when we are talking or writing about the past. It is used in story-telling, biography, autobiography, reports, eye-witness accounts, etc and is especially useful for establishing the sequence of events:

*When we returned from our holidays, we found our house in a mess. What had happened while we had been away? A burglar had broken into the house and had stolen a lot of our things* (Now that the time of the burglary has been established relative to our return, the story can continue in the simple past). *The burglar got in through the kitchen window. He had no difficulty in forcing it open. Then he went into the living-room.*

Note the reference to an earlier past in the following narrative:

*Silas Badley inherited several old cottages in our village. He wanted to pull them down and build new houses which he could sell for high prices. He wrote to Mr Harrison, now blind and nearly eighty, asking him to leave his cottage within a month. Old Mr Harrison was very distressed* (The situation has been established through the use of the simple past. What follows now is a reference to an earlier past through the use of the simple past perfect.) *He had been born in the cottage and stayed there all his life. His children had grown up there, his wife had died there and now he lived there all alone.*

## The present perfect progressive and past perfect progressive tenses

### 9.32 Form of the present/past perfect progressive tenses

The present perfect progressive is formed with *have been* + the *-ing* form. The past perfect progressive is formed with *had been* + the *-ing* form. See under *be* [p. 10.12] for details about form.

#### present perfect progressive past perfect progressive

I	have	(I've)	I	had	(I'd)	
You	have	(You've)	You	had	(You'd)	
He	has	(He's)	He	had	(He'd)	
She	has	(She's)	been waiting	She had	(She'd)	been waiting
It	has	(It's)	It	had	(It'd)	[For spelling
We	have	(We've)	We	had	(We'd)	> 9.10
You	have	(You've)	You	had	(You'd)	
They	have	(They've)	They	had	(They'd)	i

### 9.33 Uses of the present/past perfect progressive tenses

#### 9.33.1 Actions in progress throughout a period

We use the present perfect progressive when we wish to emphasize that an activity has been in progress throughout a period, often with consequences *now*. Depending on context, this activity may or may not still be in progress at the present time. This use often occurs with *all* + time references: e.g. *all day* [compare > 9.20.1]:

*She is very tired She's **been typing** letters **all day*** (Depending on context, she is still typing or has recently stopped.)

The past perfect progressive, in the same way, is used for activities in progress during an earlier past, often with consequences *then*:

*She was very tired She **had been typing** letters **all day*** (Depending on context, she was still typing or had recently stopped.)

Some verbs like *learn, lie, live, rain, sit, sleep stand, study wait, work* naturally suggest *continuity* and often occur with perfect progressives with *since* or *for* [> 7.31-32, 9.25.2] and also in questions beginning with *How long* ? [> 10.13.5]:

*I've **been working** for Exxon **for 15 years*** (Depending on context, I am still *now*, or I may have recently changed jobs or retired.)

*When I first met Ann, she **had been working** for Exxon **for 15 years*** (Depending on context, Ann was still working for Exxon *then* or she had recently changed jobs or retired.)

With 'continuity verbs', simple and progressive forms are often interchangeable, so in the above examples 'I've worked' and 'she had worked' could be used. The only difference is that the progressive puts more emphasis on continuity.

#### 9.33.2 The present/past perfect progressive for repeated actions

The perfect progressive forms are often used to show that an action is (or was) frequently repeated:

*Jim **has been phoning** Jenny every night for the past week*

*Jenny was annoyed Jim **had been phoning** her every night for a whole week*

#### 9.33.3 The present/past perfect progressive for drawing conclusions

We use the progressive (seldom the simple) forms to show that we have come to a conclusion based on direct or indirect evidence:

*Your eyes are red You've **been crying***

*Her eyes were red It was obvious she **had been crying***

The present perfect progressive often occurs in complaints:

*This room stinks Someone's **been smoking** in here*

### 9.34 The present/past perfect simple and progressive compared

The difference between an activity still in progress and one that has definitely been completed is marked by context and by the verbs we use. The simple and progressive forms are *not* interchangeable here:

*a I've **been painting** this room*

*I've **painted** this room*

In the first example, the activity is uncompleted. In the second example, the job is definitely finished.

## 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

b *When I got home, I found that Jill had been painting her room*

*When I got home, I found that Jill had painted her room*

In the first example, the activity was uncompleted *then*. In the second example, the job was definitely finished *then*.

## The simple future tense

### 9.35 Form of the simple future tense

The simple future is formed with *will* [but > 9.36] and the base form of the verb

affirmative	short form	negative	short forms
I will	I'll	I will not	I'll not I won't
You will	You'll	You will not	You'll not You won't
He will	He'll	He will not	He'll not He won't
She will	She'll	She will not	She'll not She won't stay
It will	It'll	It will not	It'll not It won't
We will	We'll	We will not	We'll not We won't
You will	You'll	You will not	You'll not You won't
They will	They'll	They will not	They'll not They won't

### 9.36 Notes on the form of the simple future tense

#### 1 *Shall* and *will*

*Will* is used with all persons, but *shall* can be used as an alternative with *I* and *we* in pure future reference [> 9.37.1]

*Shall* is usually avoided with *you* and *I*:

*You and I will work in the same office*

#### 2 Contractions

*Shall* weakens to / *Ja*/ in speech, but does not contract to /*ll*/ in writing. *Will* contracts to /*ll*/ in writing and in fluent, rapid speech after vowels (/I/, *we'll*, *you'll*, etc.) but /*ʔ*/ can also occur after consonants. So we might find /*ll*/ used: e.g.

- after names: *Tom'll be here soon*
- after common nouns: *The concert'll start in a minute*
- after question-words: *When'll they arrive?*

#### 3 Negatives

*Will not* contracts to /*ll not* or *won t*, *shall not* contracts to *shan t*:  
/I/ *We won't* or *shan't go* (/I/ *We will not* or *shall not go*)

In AmE *shan't* is rare and *shall* with a future reference is unusual.

#### 4 Future tense

When we use *will/shall* for simple prediction, they combine with verbs to form tenses in the ordinary way [> 9.2, 11.7]:

- simple future:** *I will see*
- future progressive:** *I will be seeing*
- future perfect:** *I will have seen*
- future perfect progressive:** *I will have been seeing*

### 9.37 Uses of the 'will/shall' future

#### 9.37.1 'Will/shall' for prediction briefly compared with other uses

*Will* and *shall* can be used to predict events, for example, to say what

## The simple future tense

we think will happen, or to invite prediction:

*Tottenham **will win** on Saturday*

*It **will rain** tomorrow **Will** house prices **rise** again next year<sup>7</sup>*

*I don't know if I **shall see** you next week*

This is sometimes called 'the pure future', and it should be distinguished from many other uses of *will* and *shall*: e.g.

*I'll **buy you** a bicycle for your birthday* [promise, > 11.73]

(Note that *will* is not used to mean 'want to')

***Will you hold** the door open for me please?* [request, > 11.38]

***Shall I get** your coat for you?* [offer, > 11.39]

***Shall we go** for a swim tomorrow?* [suggestion, > 11.40]

*Just wait - **you'll regret this*** [threat, > 11.23, 11.73]

Though all the above examples point to future time, they are not 'predicting'; they are 'coloured' by notions of willingness, etc. *Will/shall* have so many uses as modal verbs [> Chapter 11] that some grammarians insist that English does not have a pure future tense [also > 9.2].

### 9.37.2 'Will' in formal style for scheduled events

*Will* is used in preference to *be going to* [> 9.44] when a formal style is required, particularly in the written language:

*The wedding **will take place** at St Andrew's on June 27th The reception **will be** at the Anchor Hotel*

### 9.37.3 'Will/shall' to express hopes, expectations, etc.

The future is often used after verbs and verb phrases like *assume*, *be afraid*, *be sure*, *believe*, *doubt*, *expect*, *hope*, *suppose*, *think*

*I **hope she'll get** the job she's applied for*

The present with a future reference is possible after *hope*:

*I **hope she gets** the job she's applied for* [compare > 11.42.1]

Lack of certainty, etc. can be conveyed by using *will* with adverbs like *perhaps*, *possibly*, *probably*, *surely*

*Ask him again **Perhaps he'll change** his mind*

### 9.38 Time adverbials with the 'will/shall' future tense

Some adverbials like *tomorrow* [> App 48] are used exclusively with future reference; others like *at 4 o'clock*, *before Friday*, etc. are used with other tenses as well as the future:

*I'll **meet you at 4 o'clock***

*Now* and *just* can also have a future reference [> 7.29]:

*This shop **will now be open** on June 23rd* (a change of date)

*I'm nearly ready I'll **just put** my coat on*

For *in* + period of time [> 8.14] and *by*, *not until* [> 7.34],

### 9.39 Other ways of expressing the future

We can express the future in other ways, apart from *will/shall*:

**be going to:** *I'm **going to see** him tomorrow* [> 9.44]

**be to:** *I'm **to see** him tomorrow* [> 9.47]

**present progressive:** *I'm **seeing** him tomorrow* [> 9.11.3]

**simple present:** *I **see** him tomorrow* [> 9.8.4]

These ways of expressing the future are concerned less with simple prediction and more with intentions, plans, arrangements, etc.

## The future progressive tense

### 9.40 Form of the future progressive tense

The future progressive is formed with *will/shall* + *be* + the *-ing* form:

I	will/shall	(I'll)	be	
You	will	(You'll)	be	
He	will	(He'll)	be	
She	will	(She'll)	be	expecting you/me
It	will	(It'll)	be	
We	will/shall	(We'll)	be	[For spelling, > 9.10]
You	will	(You'll)	be	
They	will	(They'll)	be	

### 9.41 Uses of the future progressive tense

#### 9.41.1 Actions in progress in the future

The most common use of the progressive form is to describe actions which will be in progress in the immediate or distant future:

*Hurry up! The guests **will be arriving** at any minute!*

*A space vehicle **will be circling** Jupiter in five years' time*

It is often used for visualizing a future activity already planned:

*By this time tomorrow, **I'll be lying** on the beach.*

#### 9.41.2 The 'softening effect' of the future progressive

Sometimes the future progressive is used to describe simple futurity, but with a 'softening effect' that takes away the element of deliberate intention often implied by *will*:

***I'll work** on this tomorrow, (intention, possibly a promise)*

***I'll be working** on this tomorrow, (futurity)*

In some contexts, the future progressive sounds more polite than *will*, especially in questions when we do not wish to appear to be pressing for a definite answer:

*When **will you finish** these letters? (e.g. boss to assistant)*

*When **will you be seeing** Mr White? (e.g. assistant to boss)*

Sometimes there really is a difference in meaning:

*Mary **won't pay** this bill (she refuses to)*

*Mary **won't be paying** this bill (futurity)*

***Will you join** us for dinner? (invitation)*

***Will you be joining** us for dinner? (futurity)*

***Won't you come** with us? (invitation)*

***Won't you be coming** with us? (futurity)*

#### 9.41.3 Arrangements and plans [compare > 9.11.3]

The future progressive can be used like the present progressive to refer to planned events, particularly in connexion with travel:

***We'll be spending** the winter in Australia (= we are spending)*

*Professor Craig **will be giving** a lecture on Etruscan pottery tomorrow evening (= is giving)*

The future perfect simple/progressive

## The future perfect simple and future perfect progressive tenses

### 9.42 Form of the future perfect simple and progressive tenses

The future perfect simple is formed with *will have* + the past participle. The future perfect progressive is formed with *will have been* + the -ing form.

future perfect simple		future perfect progressive	
I	will/shall have	will/shall	have been
You	will have	will	have been
He	will have	will	have been
She	will have received it	will	have been living here for 20 years
It	will have by then	will	have been by the end of the year
We	will/shall have	will/shall	have been
You	will have	will	have been
They	will have	will	have been

### 9.43 Uses of the future perfect simple and progressive tenses

#### 9.43.1 'The past as seen from the future'

We often use the future perfect to show that an action will already be completed by a certain time in the future:

*I will have retired by the year 2020*

(That is before or in the year 2020, my retirement will already be in progress.)

This tense is often used with *by* and *not till/until* + time [ > 7.34] and with verbs which point to completion: *build, complete, finish* etc. We also often use the future perfect after verbs like *believe, expect, hope, suppose*.

*I expect you will have changed your mind by tomorrow.*

#### 9.43.2 The continuation of a state up to the time mentioned

What is in progress now can be considered from a point in the future:

*By this time next week I will have been working for this company for 24 years.*

*We will have been married a year on June 25th.*

## The 'going to'-future

### 9.44 Form of the 'going to'-future

The *going to*-future is formed with *am/is/are going to* + the base form of the verb.

I	am	
You	are	
He	is	
She	is	going to arrive tomorrow
It	is	
We	are	
You	are	
They	are	



### 9.45 The pronunciation of 'going to'

There can be a difference in pronunciation between *be going to* (which has no connexion with the ordinary verb *go*) and the progressive form of the verb *go*.

In: *I'm going to have a wonderful time* 'going to' is often pronounced in everyday speech. [gənə]

In: *I'm going to Chicago* 'going to' can only be pronounced or [gəvɪntə]

### 9.46 Uses of the 'going to'-future

#### 9.46.1 The 'going to'-future for prediction

The *going to*-future is often used, like *will*, to predict the future. It is common in speech, especially when we are referring to the immediate future. The speaker sees signs of something that is about to happen:

*Oh, look! It's going to rain! Look out! She's going to faint!*

This use *ongoing to* includes the present, whereas *It will rain* is purely about the future. Alternatively, the speaker may have prior knowledge of something which will happen in the near future:

*They're going to be married soon* (Her brother told me.)

A future time reference may be added with such predictions:

*It's going to rain tonight They're going to be married next May*

We usually prefer *will* to the *going to*-future in formal writing and when there is a need for constant reference to the future as in, for example, weather forecasts.

#### 9.46.2 The 'going to'-future for intentions, plans, etc.

When there is any suggestion of intentions and plans, we tend to use the *going to*-future rather than *will* in informal style:

*I'm going to practise the piano for two hours this evening* (i.e.

That's my intention: what I have planned/arranged to do.)

However, we generally prefer *will* to *going to* when we decide to do something at the moment of speaking:

*We're really lost I'll stop and ask someone the way*

Intention can be emphasized with adverbs like *now* and *just* which are generally associated with present time [compare > 7.29]:

*I'm now going to show you how to make spaghetti sauce*

*I'm just going to change I'll be back in five minutes*

The use of *be going to* to refer to the remote future is less common and generally requires a time reference:

*She says she's going to be a jockey when she grows up*

If we want to be precise about intentions and plans, we use verbs like *intend to plan to propose to*, rather than *going to*-

*They're going to build a new motorway to the west* (vague)

*They propose to build a new motorway to the west* (more precise)

#### 9.46.3 The 'going to'-future in place of the present progressive

The *going to*-future may be used where we would equally expect to have the present progressive [> 9.11.3] with a future reference:

*I'm having dinner with Janet tomorrow evening*

*I'm going to have dinner with Janet tomorrow evening*

## Other ways of expressing the future

However, we cannot use the present progressive to make predictions, so it would not be possible in a sentence like this:

***It's going to snow tonight***

Though *be going to* can combine with *go* and *come*, the present progressive is preferred with these verbs for reasons of style. We tend to avoid *going next to go* or *come* (e.g. ***going to go/going to come***).

***I'm going/coming home early this evening***

### 9.46.4 The 'going to'-future after 'if'

We do not normally use *will* after *if* to make predictions [> 14.24.2], but we can use *be going to* to express an intention:

***If you're going to join us, we'll wait for you***

*Be going to* can often be used in the main clause as well:

***If you invite Jack, there's going to be trouble***

## Other ways of expressing the future

### 9.47 Forms of future substitutes

<i>I am/You are, etc.</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>see Mr Jones tomorrow</i>
<i>I am/You are, etc</i>	<i>due to</i>	<i>leave at 7 30</i>
<i>I am/You are, etc</i>	<i>about to</i>	<i>get a big surprise</i>
<i>I am/You are, etc</i>	<i>on the point of</i>	<i>leaving</i>
<i>I am/You are, etc</i>	-	<i>leaving immediately</i> [> 9.11.3]
<i>I/You, etc</i>	-	<i>leave at 7 tomorrow</i> [> 9.8.4]

### 9.48 Uses of future substitutes

#### 9.48.1 The use of 'am/is/are to'

*Be to* is used to refer to the future when the actions are subject to human control. Thus statements such as *I'm going to faint* or *It's going to rain* cannot be expressed with *be to*, which has restricted uses: e.g.

Formal arrangements/public duties:

*OPEC representatives are to meet in Geneva next Tuesday* **Compare:**

***OPEC REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET IN GENEVA*** [> 9.12.5]

Formal appointments/instructions:

**active:** *You're to deliver these flowers before 10*

**passive:** *Three tablets to be taken twice a day*

Prohibitions/public notices:

***You're not to tell him anything about our plans*** (= **you mustn't**)

***POISON NOT TO BE TAKEN***

#### 9.48.2 The use of 'be about to', 'be on the point of'

These constructions are used to refer to the immediate future:

*Look! The race is about to start*

*On the point of* conveys even greater immediacy:

*Look! They're on the point of starting'*

## 9 Verbs, verb tenses, imperatives

The use of *just* with *about to* and *be on the point of* increases the sense of immediacy, as it does with the present progressive:  
*They're **just starting***

### 9.48.3 The use of 'be due to'

This is often used in connexion with timetables and itineraries:

*The **BA 561 is due to arrive** from Athens at 13 15*

*The BA 561 **is not due** till 13 15*

## The future-in-the past

### 9.49 The future-in-the-past [compare *be supposed to* > 12.8n3]

The future-in-the-past can be expressed by *was going to*, *was about to*, *was to*, *was to have* + **past** participle, *was on the point of*, *was due to* and (in more limited contexts) *would*. These forms can refer to events which were planned to take place and which did take place:  
*I couldn't go to Tom's party as I **was about to go** into hospital*  
or refer to an outcome that could not be foreseen:

*Little did they know they **were to be reunited ten years later***

However, the future-in-the-past can also be used to describe events which were interrupted (*just when*) [compare > 9.20.2]:

*We **were just going to leave** when Jean fell and hurt her ankle*

or to describe events which were hindered or prevented ( *but*):

*I **was to see/was going to see/was to have seen** Mr Kay tomorrow, **but** the appointment has been cancelled*

Note the possible ambiguity of:

*I **was going to see** Mr Kay* (the meeting did or did not take place)

compared with:

*I **was to have seen** Mr Kay (I **did not see** him)*

### 9.50 Future-in-the-past: typical contexts

The future-in-the-past is often used in narrative to describe 'events that were destined to happen':

*Einstein was still a young man His discoveries had not yet been published but they **were to change** our whole view of the universe*

*Would* can also express future-in-the-past in such contexts:

*We had already reached 9 000 feet Soon we **would reach** the top*

## The imperative

### 9.51 Form of the imperative

The imperative form is the same as the bare infinitive [> 16.1]:

Affirmative form (base form of the verb):	<i>Wait!</i>
Negative short form ( <i>Don't</i> + base form):	<i>Don't wait!</i>
Emphatic form ( <i>Do</i> + base form):	<i>Do wait a moment!</i>
Addressing someone (e.g. pronoun + base form):	<i>You wait here!</i>
Imperative + question tag:	<i>Wait here will you?</i>
Imperatives joined by <i>and</i> :	<i>Go and play outside</i>

### 9.52 Some common uses of the imperative [compare > 10.5]

We use the imperative for direct orders and suggestions and also for a variety of other purposes. Stress and intonation, gesture, facial expression, and, above all, situation and context, indicate whether the use of this form is friendly, abrupt, angry, impatient, persuasive, etc. The negative form is usually expressed by *Don't*. The full form (*Do not*) is used mainly in public notices. Here are some common uses:

1 Direct commands, requests, suggestions:

***Follow me. Shut the door (please) Don't worry!***

2 Warnings:

***Look out! There's a bus! Don't panic!***

3 Directions:

***Take the 2nd turning on the left and then turn right***

4 Instructions:

***Use a moderate oven and bake for 20 minutes***

5 Prohibitions (in e.g. public notices):

***Keep off the grass! Do not feed the animals!***

6 Advice (especially after *always* and *never* [> 7.40.4]):

***Always answer when you're spoken to! Never speak to strangers!***

7 Invitations:

***Come and have dinner with us soon***

8 Offers:

***Help yourself. Have a biscuit.***

9 Expressing rudeness:

***Shut up! Push off!***

For uses of *let* as an imperative [> 16.4.1].

### 9.53 Uses of the imperative with 'do'

We use *do* (always stressed) before the imperative when we particularly wish to emphasize what we are saying: e.g.

- when we wish to be polite:

***Do have another cup of coffee***

- or when we wish to express impatience:

***Do stop talking!***

- or when we wish to persuade:

***Do help me with this maths problem***

In response to requests for permission, offers, etc. *do* and *don't* can be used in place of a full imperative:

***May/Shall I switch the light off? - Yes, do. No, don't.***

### 9.54 The use of the imperative to address particular people

The imperative, e.g. *Wait here!*, might be addressed to one person or several people: *you* is implied. However, we can get the attention of the person or people spoken to in the following ways. (For 1st person plural imperative with *let's* [> 16.4.1]):

1 *You* + imperative:

***You wait here for a moment.***

Intonation and stress are important. If, in the above example, *you* is unstressed, the sentence means 'this is where you wait'. If it is

stressed, it means 'this is what I want you to do'. When *you* is stressed, it might also convey anger, hostility or rudeness:

**'You mind your own business'**<sup>1</sup>

**You try teaching 40 noisy children five days a week'**

*Don't* (not *you*) is stressed in the negative:

**'Don't you speak to me like that!'**

2 You + name(s) or name(s) + you:

**You wait here, Jim, and Mary, you wait there**

3 Imperative + name or name + imperative:

**Drink up your milk, Sally! Sally, drink up your milk!**

4 Imperative + reflexive [> 4.25]:

**Enjoy yourself. Behave yourself.**

5 We can use words like *everybody* *someone* with the imperative when we are talking to groups of people [> 4.37]:

**Everyone keep quiet! Keep still everybody'**

**Nobody say a word! Somebody answer the phone please**

Any compounds are used after negative commands:

**Don't say a word anybody! Don't anybody say a word!**

### 9.55 The imperative with question tags [> 13.17-22]

Tags like *will you?*, *won't you?*, *can you?*, *can't you?*, *could you?* and *would you?* can often be used after an imperative for a variety of purposes: e.g.

- to express annoyance/impatience with *will/won't/can't you?* (rising tone):

**Stop fiddling with that TV, will you/won't you/can't you?**

- to make a request (*can you?* for neutral requests; *could/would you?* for more polite ones); or to sound less abrupt:

**Post this letter for me can you?/could you?/would you?**

- to offer polite encouragement or to make friendly offers and suggestions (*will you?* and *won't you?*):

**Come in, will you/won't you? Take a seat, will you/won't you?**

- to obtain the co-operation of others with *Don't will you?*:

**Don't tell anyone I told you, will you?**

And note *why don't you?* as a tag in: e.g.

**Go off for the weekend, why don't you?**

### 9.56 Double imperatives joined by 'and' [compare > 16.12.2]

Some imperatives can be followed by *and* and another imperative where we might expect a to-infinitive:

**Go and buy yourself a new pair of shoes (Not \*Go to buy\*)**

**Come and see this goldfish (Not \*Come to see\*)**

**Come and play a game of bridge with us (Not \*Come to play\*)**

**Wait and see. (Not \*Wait to see\*)**

**Try and see my point of view (Note Try to is also possible.)**

In AmE *go* is sometimes followed directly by a bare infinitive:

**Go fetch some water (= Go and fetch)**

A to-infinitive can follow an imperative to express purpose:

**Eat to live, do not live to eat [> 16.12.1]**

# 10 Be, Have, Do

## 'Be', 'have' and 'do' as auxiliary verbs

### 10.1 'Be', 'have', 'do': full verbs and auxiliary verbs

*Be* is a full verb when it combines with adjectives and nouns [> 10.9]; *have* is a full verb when it is used to mean 'possess', etc. [> 10.27, 10.32]; *do* is a full verb when it is used to mean 'perform an activity', etc. [> 10.40]. The three verbs are auxiliary (or 'helping') verbs when they combine with other verbs to 'help' them complete their grammatical functions (see below).

### 10.2 Uses of 'be' as an auxiliary verb

1 *Be*, on its own or in combination with *have*, is used for progressive tense forms [> 9.1-2]: e.g.

*I am/He is/We are working* (present progressive)  
*I have been working* (present perfect progressive)

2 *Be* combines with the past participle to form passives: e.g.

*It was taken* [> 12.2ns.1-2]; *It can't be done* [> 12.2n.2]

### 10.3 Uses of 'have' as an auxiliary verb

1 *Have* + past participle forms simple perfect tenses: e.g.

*I have He has eaten I had eaten* [> 9.1-2]

2 *Have* + *been* + present participle forms perfect progressive: e.g.

*I have/I had been eating* [> 9.2]

3 *Have* + *been* + past participle forms passives: e.g.

*It has been eaten* [> 12.2n1]  
*She must have been delayed* [> 12.2n.2]

Questions/negatives with *be* and *have* as auxiliary verbs follow the same pattern as those for *be* as a full verb [> Chapter 13]. *Have* can function as an auxiliary and full verb in the same sentence [> 10.34-36],

### 10.4 Uses of 'do' as an auxiliary verb

1 The most important use of *do* as an auxiliary verb is that it combines with the base form of verbs to make questions and negatives in the simple present and simple past tenses, and is used in place of a verb in short answers and question tags [> Chapter 13]. Note that *do* can function both as a auxiliary verb and as a full verb in the same sentence [> 10.41-42].

*Do* (auxiliary verb) *you do* (full verb) *your shopping once a week?*

2 *Do* is also used for emphasis [compare > 9.53]:

*Do sit down I did turn the gas off*  
*Drive carefully<sup>1</sup> - I do drive carefully*

3 *Do* is used in place of a verb in: e.g.

*I like ice-cream and Ann does too* [> 4.18, 10.44.2, 11.31, 13.28]

## 'Be' as a full verb

### 10.5 Uses of 'be' in the imperative [compare > 9.51]

The imperative of *be* is restricted to the following combinations:

#### 10.5.1 'Be' + noun

Many combinations of *be* (affirmative) + noun are idiomatic:

***Be a man!***

***Be an angel*** and fetch me my slippers please

Go on! Have another slice! ***Be a devil!***

*Don't be* + noun is much more common and very often refers to (foolish) behaviour. The negative response is *I'm not!*:

***Don't be an ass/a clown/a fool/an idiot/an Imbecile!*** etc

And note combinations of *be* + adjective + noun:

***Be a good girl at school. Don't be a silly idiot!***

*Be* can have the sense of 'become' especially in advertisements:

***Be a better cook! Be the envy of your friends!***

The negative *don't be* (= don't become) is often used for advice. Agreement is expressed with *I won't (be)*:

***Don't be a racing driver! It's so dangerous.***

*Be* is also used to mean 'pretend to be', especially after *you*:

***(You) be the fairy godmother and I'll be Cinderella***

***Be a monster, granddad!***

And note:

***Now be yourself again!***

#### 10.5.2 'Be' + adjective

Only adjectives referring to passing behaviour can be used after *be/don't be*. e.g. *careful/careless, patient/impatient, quiet, silly* [> App 41]  
(*Be/Don't be* will not usually combine with adjectives describing states, e.g. *hungry/thirsty, pretty*):

***Be quiet!*** (negative response: *I won't!*)

***Don't be so impatient!*** (negative response: *I'm not!*)

#### 10.5.3 'Be' + past participle

*Be* combines with a few past participles: e.g. *Be prepared!, (Please) be seated!, Be warned!* Compare: *Get washed!* [> 12.6].

#### 10.5.4 'Do' + 'be' in place of the imperative and the present tense

The imperative:

***Be careful, or you'll break that vase!***

can be re-phrased with *if* in the following way:

***If you don't be careful, you'll break that vase.***

This is less common than [> 14.4]:

***If you're not careful, you'll break that vase***

We can use *be* like any other imperative where the sense allows:

- after *do* [> 9.53]: ***Do be careful with that vase!***

- after *you* [> 9.54]: ***You be quiet!***

- with tags [> 9.55]: ***Be quiet for a moment, will you?***

'Be' as a full verb

## 10.6 The simple present form of 'be'

affirmative		short form		negative short forms
	<i>I am</i>		<i>I'm</i>	<i>I'm not</i>
	<i>You are</i>		<i>You're</i>	<i>You're not = You aren't</i>
<i>Tom</i>	<i>is = He is</i>	<i>Tom's = He's</i>	<i>He's</i>	<i>He's not = He isn't</i>
<i>Ann</i>	<i>is = She is</i>	<i>Ann's = She's</i>	<i>She's</i>	<i>She's not = She isn't</i>
<i>My ticket</i>	<i>is = It is</i>	<i>My ticket's = It's</i>	<i>It's</i>	<i>It's not = It isn't</i> old
<i>Tom and I</i>	<i>are = We are</i>		<i>We're</i>	<i>We're not = We aren't</i>
<i>Ann and you</i>	<i>are = You are</i>		<i>You're</i>	<i>You're not = You aren't</i>
<i>Tom and Ann</i>	<i>are = They are</i>		<i>They're</i>	<i>They're not = They aren't</i>

## 10.7 Notes on the present form of 'be'

- Short forms never occur at the end of a sentence:  
*I don't know where **they are***
- There are two negative short forms (e.g. *You aren't* and *You're not*) and there is no difference in their use. The short negative forms can stand on their own (*I'm not/They aren't*). The affirmative short forms (*I'm*, etc.) cannot stand on their own. Only the full affirmative forms can do this:  
*Are you ready? - Yes, I am No, I'm not*
- Note the formation of negative questions and negative question tags  
[> 13.14, 13.18] with *I*. The (rare) full form is *Am I not* ?, but this contracts to *Aren't I* . ? (Not *\*Amn't I...?\**):  
 - negative question: *Am I not late?* ***Aren't I late?***  
 - negative Wh?-question: ***Why am I not invited?*** ***Why aren't I invited?***  
 - negative question tag: *I'm late, am I not?* ***I'm late, aren't I?***  
*Aren't I* is only possible in negative questions/negative question tags and is never used in negative statements in standard English:  
*I am not late I'm not late*, (the only possible contraction)  
 There are no variations with other persons: e.g.  
***He isn't late. Isn't he late? He's late, isn't he?***
- The non-standard form *ain't*, in place of *am not*, *is not* and *are not* [also > 10.30n8], is frequently heard in all persons and is avoided by educated speakers (except perhaps in joking):  
*Ain't you late? He ain't late.*  
*I ain't late. They ain't late.*

## 10.8 The simple past form of 'be'

affirmative		negative		negative short form
<i>I was</i>		<i>I was not</i>		<i>I wasn't ~</i>
<i>You were</i>		<i>You were not</i>		<i>You weren't</i>
<i>He was</i>		<i>He was not</i>		<i>He wasn't</i>
<i>She was</i>		<i>She was not</i>		<i>She wasn't</i>
<i>It was</i>	<i>late</i>	<i>It was not</i>	<i>late</i>	<i>It wasn't late</i>
<i>We were</i>		<i>We were not</i>		<i>We weren't</i>
<i>You were</i>		<i>You were not</i>		<i>You weren't</i>
<i>They were</i>		<i>They were not</i>		<i>They weren't</i>



## 10.9 Uses of 'be' in the simple present and simple past

We use the present and past of *be* when we are identifying people and things or giving information about them, and when we are talking about existence with *There* . [> 10.17]. For verbs related in meaning to be, such as *seem*, *look*, *appear* [> 10.23].

### 10.9.1 'Be' + names/nouns/pronouns: identification/information

*Her name is/was Helen This is Tom That was Harry*  
*Who's that? - It's me Who was that? It was Jane*  
*Which one is Mary? ~ That's her on the left*  
*The capital of England is London In the past it was Winchester*  
*She is/was a doctor They are/were doctors*  
*He is/was an American They are/were Americans*

### 10.9.2 'Be' + adjective

<i>He is hungry They are hungry</i>	(state)
<i>He was angry They were naughty</i>	(mood, behaviour)
<i>She was tall Her eyes are green</i>	(description, colour)
<i>She is French They are French</i>	(nationality)
<i>It was fine/wet/cold/windy</i>	(weather)

### 10.9.3 'Be' + adjective(s) + noun

*He is an interesting man They are interesting men*  
*It is a blue jacket They are blue jackets*

### 10.9.4 'Be': time references, price, age, etc.

*It is Monday/July 23/1992 It is £5.50 Tom is 14*

### 10.9.5 'Be' + possessives

*It's mine/Tom's. They are mine/Tom's*

### 10.9.6 'Be' + adverbs and prepositional phrases [> 7.3.3]

*She is here/there They are upstairs*  
*The play is next Wednesday (future reference)*  
*He is in the kitchen They are at the door*

### 10.9.7 'Be' + adverb particle and 'home' [compare > 8.29.2, 10.13.4]

*Be* combines with adverb particles (*away in out*, etc. [> 8.4]);

*Is Tim in? No, he's out He's back in an hour*

*Be* combines with *home* [*at* is optional]:

*Where was Tim? Was he home?/Was he at home?*

Compare: *Tim's home now* (= he has arrived at his home)

*Tim's at home now* (= he may not have left home at all)

### 10.9.8 'Be' in the present and past replacing 'have/had'

In informal English, the present and past of *be* can replace *have/had* [present and past perfect, > 9.22, 9.28] with verbs like *do*, *finish*, *go*.

*I'm done with all that nonsense (= I have done, i.e. finished)*

*I left my keys just there and next moment they were (had) gone*

*Have you finished with the paper? - I'm (have) nearly finished*

### 10.9.9 'Empty subject' + 'be' [> 4.12]

*It's foggy It's 20 miles to London*

### 10.9.10 'Be' + infinitive [> 9.47-48, 16.16]

*My aim is to start up my own company*

'Be' as a full verb

## 10.10 Form of the present and past progressive of 'be'

present progressive				past progressive			
I	am	(I'm)	being	I	was	being	
You	are	(You're)	being	You	were	being	
He	is	(He's)	being	He	was	being	
She	is	(She's)	being silly	She	was	being	silly
(It	is	(It's)	being)	(It	was	being)	
We	are	(We're)	being	We	were	being	
You	are	(You're)	being	You	were	being	
They	are	(They're)	being	They	were	being	

The forms *He's being silly* and *He's been silly* [> 10.12] should not be confused

## 10.11 The use of 'be' + 'being' to describe temporary behaviour

The progressive forms normally occur only with the present and the past forms of *be*. They are used with a few adjectives and nouns [> App 41] (or adjective and noun combinations). The progressive is possible with adjectives such as *naughty silly*, referring to passing behaviour, but is not possible with adjectives describing states (*hungry, thirsty*, etc.) With some combinations there is a strong implication that the behaviour is deliberate. Compare temporary and usual behaviour in the following:

*Your brother is being very annoying this evening*

*He isn't usually so annoying*

*Your brother was being a (silly) fool yesterday*

*He isn't usually such a (silly) fool*

## 10.12 Form of the present perfect and past perfect of 'be'

present perfect		past perfect	
full form	short form	full form	short form
I have been	I've been	I had been	I'd been
You have been	You've been	You had been	You'd been
He has been	He's been	He had been	He'd been
She has been	She's been ill	She had been	She'd been ill
(It has been)	(It's been)	(It had been)	
We have been	We've been	We had been	We'd been
You have been	You've been	You had been	You'd been
They have been	They've been	They had been	They'd been

The forms *He's been silly* and *He's being silly* [> 10.10] should not be confused.

## 10.13 Uses of 'have been' and 'had been' [compare > 9.24]

In many of the uses described below, other languages require the present or past of *be* where English requires *has been* or *had been*.

### 10.13.1 'Have been/had been' + adjective: behaviour and states

*Have been* and *had been* will combine not only with adjectives describing temporary behaviour (*annoying*, etc., [> 10.11]), but also with those describing states and moods continuing up till now or till

then. *Have been* is common in conversation and *had been* in reported speech and written narrative:

**Behaviour:** *She's been very quiet I said she had been very quiet*

**States:** *I've never been so tired I said I'd never been so tired*

**Moods:** *He's been very gloomy I said he'd been very gloomy*

Some participles used as adjectives combine with *have/had been*:

*My uncle **has been retired** for more than two years*

*Their dog **has been missing** for three days*

And notice especially:

*She's **been gone** (= away) for half an hour*

**10.13.2 'Have been/had been' + adjective: weather, etc.**

*Have been* and *had been* will also combine with adjectives describing the weather (i.e. states):

*It's **been** very cold lately I said it **had been** very cold*

In certain contexts other adjectives (e.g. numbers) are possible:

*You're speaking as if **you'd never been 15 years old** in your life*

**10.13.3 'Have been/had been' + noun: professions, behaviour**

*Have been* and *had been* will combine with noun (or with adjective + noun) to ask about or describe professions:

***Have you ever been a teacher?***

***I've been a teacher**, but now I'm a computer salesman*

*How long **have you been a computer salesman?***

Nouns referring to behaviour will also combine with *have been*:

*What a good girl you are! **You've been an angel!***

All the above examples can be transferred to the past perfect:

*He told me **he had been a waiter** before he became a taxi-driver*

**10.13.4 'Have been/had been' and 'have gone/had gone'**

*Have been* (generally + *to* or *in* [> Apps 21-23]) has the sense of 'visit a place and come back'. *Have gone* (followed by *to* and never by *in*) has the sense of 'be at a place or on the way to a place':

*So there you are! Where **have you been?***

***I've been to** a party/in the canteen (= and come back)*

*Where's Pam? - **She's gone to** a party/to Paris/to the canteen*

(= She's on her way there, or she's there now.)

*Have been* and *have gone* will combine with adverb particles like *out*, *away*, and with *home* (not preceded by *to* [> 10.9.7]):

*Where **have you been?** - **I've been out/away/home.***

(i.e. I'm here now)

*Where **has Tim gone?** - **He's gone out/away/home.***

(i.e. he's not here now)

We can use *from* before *home* in: e.g.

*He's come from home (i.e. 'home' is where he started out from.)*

Compare: *He's come home* (= He has arrived at his home.)

*Have been/had been* combine with other adverbials as well:

*He's been a long time (i.e. He hasn't come back yet.)*

## 'Be' as a full verb

*Have been* and *have gone* are interchangeable only when they have the sense of 'experience'. This can occur when they are used with *ever* or *never* and followed by:

- a gerund: ***Have you ever been/gone skiing in the Alps?***
- for + noun: ***I've never been/gone for a swim at night***
- on + noun: ***Have you ever been/gone on holiday in winter?***

### 10.13.5 'Have been/had been' with 'since' and 'for' [compare > 9.25.2]

With *How long* . ?, *since* for , *have been* can be used in the sense *have lived/worked/waited* or *have been living/working>waiting*

***How long have you been in London?*** (i.e. lived/been living)

- ***I've been here since January/for six months***

***How long have you been with IBM?*** (i.e. worked/been working)

- ***I've been with them since November/for three months***

***How long have you been in this waiting-room? (waited/been waiting)***

- ***I've been here since 3 o'clock/for half an hour***

The past perfect replaces the present perfect in reported speech:

***She told me she had been with IBM for three months***

### 10.14 Form of the future and future perfect of 'be'

future [compare > 9.35]			future perfect [compare > 9.42]		
full form		short form	full form		short form
I	will/shall be	I'll be	I	will/shall	I'll have been
You	will be	You'll be	You	will	You'll have been
He	will be	He'll be	He	will	He'll have been
She	will be	She'll be	She	will	She'll have been
late					
It	will be	It'll be	It	will	It'll have been
We	will/shall be	We'll be	We	will/shall	We'll have been
You	will be	You'll be	You	will	You'll have been
They	will be	They'll be	They	will	They'll have been

### 10.15 The future of 'be' as a full verb

*Will be* combines with many of the nouns and adjectives possible after the simple present/past of *be* for normal will-future uses:

***It will be sunny tomorrow I'll be here by 7*** [> 9.35-37]

*Will be* can be used for deduction: ***That will be Helen*** [> 11.33]

### 10.16 The future perfect of 'be' as a full verb

*Will have been* combines with the same nouns and adjectives possible after *have been* for normal uses in the future perfect [> 9.43]:

***How long will you have been a teacher?***

***By the end of next week, I will have been a teacher for 25 years***

*Will have been* can be used to mean 'lived, worked, waited':

***How long will you have been with IBM?***

***By the end of January I will have been with IBM for six months***

*Will have been* can also be used for deduction [> 11.33]:

***That will have been Roland He said he'd be back at 7***

## 'There' + 'be'

### 10.17 Some forms of 'there' + 'be' [For there + modals > 11.76]

#### the simple present

*There is a man at the door*  
*There are two men at the door*

#### the present perfect

*There has been an accident*  
*There have been a lot of enquiries*

#### the simple future

*There will be a letter for you tomorrow*

#### the simple past

*There was someone to see you*  
*There were some people to see you*

#### the past perfect

*He said there had been an accident a lot of enquiries*

#### the future perfect

*There will have been a definite result before Friday*

#### tag questions [> 13.17-22]

*There is a big match on TV tonight isn't there?*  
*There has been some awful weather lately hasn't there?*

#### common contractions

<i>There is</i>	= <i>There's</i>	<i>There's a man at the door</i>
<i>There has</i>	= <i>There's</i>	<i>There's been an accident</i>
<i>There have</i>	= <i>There've</i>	<i>There've been a lot of accidents round here</i>
<i>There had</i>	= <i>There'd</i>	<i>He told me there'd been an accident near here</i>
<i>There would</i>	= <i>There'd</i>	<i>There'd be fewer accidents if drivers took care</i>
<i>There will</i>	= <i>There'll</i>	<i>There'll be a good harvest this year</i>

### 10.18 Notes on the form and pronunciation of 'there' + 'be'

1 The singular form *There's* is often used informally in place of *There are* to refer to the plural:

*There's lots of cars on the roads these days*

*There's a man and a dog in our garden*

2 When we are talking about existence, *There is/There's* and *There are* are unstressed and pronounced [ðeəriz] [ðez] and [ðeərə:]

Compare the stressed form to show we have just seen something:

Look! *'There's* [ðeəz] *the new Fiat* [also > 7.59.1]

### 10.19 When we use 'there' + 'be' combinations

We use *there + be* combinations when we are talking or asking about the existence of people, things, etc. It is more idiomatic and 'natural' to say *There's a man at the door* than to say *A man is at the door*.

The construction with *there* allows important new information to come at the end of the sentence for emphasis. We use *there*:

- when it is a 'natural choice':

*There's been an accident* (= An accident has occurred.)

*Is there a hotel near here?* - *There's one on the corner*

- to announce or report events, arrangements, facts, etc.:

*There'll be a reception for the President at the Grand Hotel*

*There's been a wedding at the local church*

- for scene-setting in story-telling:

*There hadn't been any rain for months* *The earth was bare and dry* *There wasn't a blade of grass growing anywhere*

'There' + 'be'

#### 10.20 'There is', etc. compared with e.g. 'it is'

Once existence has been established with *there*, we must use personal pronouns + *be* (or other verbs) to give more details:

***There's* a bus coming, but *it's* full**

***There's* a man at the door *It's* the postman** [> 3.20.4]

***There's* a man at the door *He wants* to speak to you** [> 4.5.5]

***There are* some children at the door *They want* to see Jimmy**

***There's* a van stopping outside *It's* someone delivering something**

[compare > 1.60, 11.76.3-4, 16.52]

***There's to be* a concert at the Albert Hall tonight *It's to be* broadcast live** (*There/It is to be* = *There/It is going to be*)

#### 10.21 'There is', etc. + determiner

*There is*, etc. can combine with: e.g.

- a and an [> 3.10]:

***There's a letter* for you from Gerald** (Not *"It has"*)

***There'll be an exhibition* of Hockney paintings in December**

- the zero article [> 3.28.8]:

***There are wasps* in the jam**

- some, any and no [> 5.10-11]:

***There are some changes* in the printed programme**

***Are there any lemons* in the fridge?** (Not *"It has"*)

***There are no volunteers* for a job like this!**

- some, any and no compounds [> 4.37]:

***Is there anyone* here who can read Arabic?**

***I'm starving and there's nothing* in the fridge**

- numbers and quantity words [> 5.3]:

***There are seventeen people* coming to dinner!**

***There aren't many Sanskrit scholars* in the world**

***There'll be thousands of football fans* in London this weekend**

- definite determiners (*the, this that my*, etc. [>3.1]).

The use of *the*, etc. after *there is* is relatively rare:

***What can we carry this shopping in?* - *There's the/this/my* briefcase. *Will that be all right?***

#### 10.22 'There' + verbs other than 'be'

*There* can be used with a few verbs besides *be* (usually in the affirmative and in formal style). These verbs must be regarded as variations of *be* in that they describe a state: e.g. *exist, live* (*there lived* is common in fairy stories) *lie remain*:

***There remains one matter still to be* discussed**

***It is highly probable that there exist any number of systems* resembling our own solar system**

*There* combines with verbs related to *be*, such as *appear* [> 10.25]:

***There appears/seems to be little enthusiasm* for your idea**

*There* combines with a few other verbs, such as *arrive, come enter, follow, rise*- Such combinations have restricted uses:

***There will follow an interval of five minutes***

## Verbs related in meaning to 'be'

### 10.23 Verbs related in meaning to 'be': selected forms

		verbs related to 'be'
present of 'be':	<i>He is quite rich</i> <i>It is quite dark</i>	<i>He appears/seems (to be) quite rich</i> <i>It appears/seems (to be) quite dark</i>
past of 'be':	<i>He was quite rich</i> <i>It was quite dark</i>	<i>He appeared/seemed (to be) quite rich</i> <i>It appeared/seemed (to be) quite dark</i>
present progressive:	<i>He is working hard</i> <i>It's working</i>	<i>He appears/seems to be working hard</i> <i>It appears/seems to be working</i>
past progressive:	<i>He was working hard</i> <i>It was working</i>	<i>He appeared/seemed to be working hard</i> <i>It appeared/seemed to be working</i>
present perfect:	<i>He has been hurt</i> <i>It has been broken</i>	<i>He appears/seems to have been hurt</i> <i>It appears/seems to have been broken</i>

### 10.24 Expressing uncertainty with verbs related to 'be'

We can express certainty about states with *be*:

***He is ill***

We can express less certainty about states with modals [> 11.27-28]:

***He may/might/could be ill***

or through the use of verbs related to *be*:

***He seems (to be) ill***

Some common verbs related in meaning and function to *be* are:  
*appear feel look seem smell sound and taste* [> 9.3, App 38.5];  
*chance happen* and *prove* can also be used in certain patterns.

### 10.25 Some possible constructions with verbs related to 'be'

We cannot normally omit *to be* after *appear* and *seem* except in the simple present and simple past:

***He appears/seems (to be) ill*** ***He seems (to be) a fool***

***It seems/seemed (to be) a real bargain***

*To be* is usually included before predicative adjectives beginning with a [->6.8.2]:

***The children appear/seem to be asleep***

***The children seemed to be awake when I went into their room***

We can use other infinitives after *appear happen prove* and *seem*:

***You seem to know a lot about steam engines***

***Juan happens to own a castle in Toledo***

We cannot use *to be* after *feel look smell sound or taste*:

***He feels/looks hot*** ***You smell nice***

***Gillian sounded very confident when she spoke to me***

***I like your new jacket*** ***It looks comfortable***

***It feels cold in here*** ***It smells funny in here***

*Feel look seem smell sound and taste* can be followed by *like* + noun or adjective + noun:

***This looks/tastes/smells/feels like an orange (obligatory like)***

***Jennifer seems/sounds/looks (like) the right person for the job***

Verbs related in meaning to 'be'

To + object pronoun is commonly used after an adjective:

*He seems/appears/looks tired **to me** (Not 'seems to me')*

*This material feels quite rough **to me** (Not 'feels to me')*

Or to + object pronoun can come immediately before an infinitive:

*He seems **to me** to be rather impatient*

**We can use that after it + appear, chance happen and seem;**

***It seemed (that)** no one knew where the village was*

For the use of as if after verbs [> 1.47.2],

*There **will combine with** appear, chance happen prove and seem + to be and to have been;*

***There seems to be** a mistake in these figures*

***There appears to have been** an accident*

## 10.26 Process verbs related to 'be' and 'become'

### 10.26-1 Process verb + adjective complement [> 1.9, 1.11]

**Process verbs** (e.g. *become, come, fall, go, get grow, run, turn, wear*)

+ adjective complement describe a change of state. Unlike *appear, seem*, etc. they can be used in the progressive to emphasize the idea that change is actively in progress:

*It **was** gradually **growing dark***

*As she waited to be served, she **became very impatient***

*Old Mr Parsons **gets tired** very easily since his operation*

*The milk in this jug **has gone bad***

*The leaves **are turning yellow** early this year*

*My shoelaces **have come undone***

*The River Wey **ran dry** during the recent drought*

*My pyjamas **are wearing** rather **thin***

The most common process verbs are *get, become* and *grow*.

*Get* is used informally with a variety of adjectives: *get annoyed get bored, get depressed, get ill, get tired, get wet* [**compare > 12.6**]

*Used to* is common after *get* (and to a lesser extent after *become*) to describe the acquisition of a habit. In such cases, *used to* functions as an adjective and can be replaced by *accustomed to* [> 16.56]:

*I **hated** jogging at first, but I eventually **got used to** it*

Process verbs are often used in fixed phrases: e.g. *come right come true, fall ill go mad, run wild, turn nasty, wear thin*

### 10.26.2 Process verb + noun complement

Nouns are not so common after process verbs, but note that:

- *become* + noun can describe a change of state or occupation:

*The ugly frog **became a handsome prince***

*Jim **became a pilot/a Buddhist/a CND supporter***

- *make* + noun can be used to suggest a change of state:

*I'm sure Cynthia **will make a good nurse** one day*

*This piece of wood **will make a very good shelf***

### 10.26.3 Process verb + infinitive

*Come get* and *grow* can be followed directly by a to-infinitive:

*We didn't trust Max at first but we soon **grew to like** him*



## 'Have' as a full verb = 'possess'; 'have got' = 'possess'

### 10.27 The present form of 'have' as a full verb

affirmative full form		short form	negative short form [> 10.30n2]
	I have	I've	I haven't
	You have	You've	You haven't
Tom	has = He has	-	He hasn't
Mary	has = She has	-	She hasn't a chance
My car	has = It has	-	It hasn't
Tom and I	have = We have	We've	We haven't
Tom and you	have = You have	You've	You haven't
Tom and Mary	have = They have	They've	They haven't

### 10.28 The past form of 'have' as a full verb

affirmative full form		short form	negative short form [> 10.30n 5]
	I had "	I'd	I hadn't
	You had	You'd	You hadn't
Tom	had = He had	He'd	He hadn't
Mary	had = She had	She'd	She hadn't a chance
My car	had = It had	-	It hadn't
Tom and I	had = We had	We'd	We hadn't
Tom and you	had = You had	You'd	You hadn't
Tom and Mary	had = They had	They'd	They hadn't

### 10.29 The present form of 'have got'

affirmative full form	short form	negative short forms
I have got	I've got	I haven't (I've not) got
You have got	You've got	You haven't (You've not) got
Tom = He has got	Tom's = He's got	He hasn't (He's not) got
Mary = She has got	Mary's = She's got	She hasn't (She's not) got
My car = It has got	My car's = It's got	It hasn't (It's not) got
Tom and I = We have got	We've got	We haven't (We've not) got
Mary and you = You have got	You've got	You haven't (You've not) got
Tom and Mary = They have got	They've got	They haven't (They've not) got

### 10.30 Notes on the forms of 'have' and 'have got' = 'possess'

*Have* and *have got* (= possess) are often interchangeable, but there are differences between British and American usage.

1 *Have got* is basically a perfect form. Compare the following:

a) *get* (= obtain)

b) *have got* (= possess)

A Go and **get** the tickets

What **have you got**?

B **I've got** the tickets

(= I have obtained them.)

A **Have you got** the tickets?

B Yes, **I've got** the tickets

(= I possess them.)

In BrE, *have got* can be used as the perfect form of *get* to mean 'have obtained', as in a) above. This meaning is emphasized in the

'Have'/'have got' = 'possess'

AmE form *have gotten*, which always means 'have obtained'.  
However, in BrE (more rarely in AmE) *have got* can also mean 'possess' - as in b) above, so that e.g. *I have the tickets* and *I've got the tickets* are equivalents. Indeed, in spoken, idiomatic BrE, *I've got*, etc. is more common than *I have*, etc.

- 2 In BrE, questions and negatives with *have* = 'possess' can be formed in the same way as for *be*:

**Are you ready?** **Have you a pen?** (= Have you got...?)  
**Aren't you ready?** **Haven't you a pen?** (= Haven't you got...?)  
**You aren't ready** **You haven't a pen** (= You haven't got...)

There is an alternative negative form for *have got* - *I've not got*, etc., but this is less common than *I haven't got*. *Have* on its own (without *got*) can also form questions and negatives with *do does* and *did*. This is usual in AmE and is becoming more common in BrE to the extent that *You hadn't a/an* and *Had/Hadn't you a/an* ? are becoming rare:

**You don't have a pen** **You didn't have a pen**  
**Do you have a pen?** **Did you have a pen?**

- 3 *Have* (= possess) is a stative verb [> 9.3]. It cannot be used in the progressive, though it can be used in all simple tenses:

**present:** *I have a Ford*  
**past:** *He had a Ford last year*  
**present perfect:** *I have had this car for three years*  
**past perfect:** *He told me he had had a Ford for several years*  
**future:** *I will have a new car soon*  
**future perfect:** *By May I will have had (= possessed) this car five years*

**with modals:** e.g. *I can have a Ford as a company car*  
*Have* (= possess) is not normally used in the passive. The imperative (never with *got*) is rare: *Have patience!*

- 4 *Have got* (= possess) is normally used only for present reference:

**I've got a Ford**

The affirmative *had got* is sometimes possible in the past, but *had* on its own is generally preferred:

*The bride looked lovely Her dress had (got) a fine lace train*

We can never use *had got* for certain states:

*He had* (Not 'had got') **long hair** when he was a teenager

*Had got* is generally used in its original sense of 'had obtained':

*When I saw him he had just got a new car*

*Will have got* is only used in the sense of 'will have obtained':

*By May I will have got (= will have obtained) a new car*

*Have got* in the passive is impossible.

- 5 *Hadn't got* is usually possible as an alternative to *didn't have*:

**I didn't have (hadn't got) an appointment, so I made one for 4 p.m.**

**I felt cold I didn't have (hadn't got) a coat**

*Hadn't* on its own (always contracted) is possible (*I hadn't an appointment, I hadn't a coat*) but not very usual.

In past questions, the usual form is *Did you have?* :

**Did you have an appointment? When did you have one?**

## 10 Be, Have, Do

*Had you ?* sounds old-fashioned and formal. *Had you got ?* can be used in Yes/No questions, but sounds awkward in Wh-questions, so is usually avoided:

***Had you got an appointment? (but not usually When had you got?)***

*Have got* is preferable to *have* in *Which* subject-questions:

***Which (pen) have you got? (or do you have?), but not usually***

***Which (pen) have you?***

6 Some forms of *have* (= possess) are rare or not encountered at all:

- the short form of the affirmative, especially in the third person (***he's/she's***). **The full form is used: *He/She has a pen***
- the uncontracted negative. The contracted form is normal: *I haven't (or hadn't) a pen*
- some question-forms, except when formed with *do*, etc. (note 5).

7 Compare:

***My bag's old It's old (= My bag is old/It is old)***

*My bag's got a hole in it It's got a hole in it*

(= *My bag has got a hole in it/It has got a hole in it*)

8 The non-standard form *ain't got* is commonly heard in place of *haven't got* and *hasn't got* [compare > 10.7n.4]:

***I ain't got my bag. She ain't got her bag.***

Similarly, *have* and *has* are often omitted before *got*:

***I got my car outside, (for I have got)***

### 10.31 When we use 'have' and 'have got' = 'possess'

In all the examples below, *have* can be replaced by *have got* in the present and sometimes in the past. Short forms with *got* (*I've got*) are much more common than full forms (*I have got*), especially in speech.

1 In the sense of 'own' or 'possess' [> App 38.5]:

***I have (got) a new briefcase***

2 In the sense of 'be able to provide':

***Do you have/Have you (got) any ink? (= Can you let me have some?)***

***Do you have/Have you (got) any fresh eggs? (= Can you let me have some?)***

3 *Have (got)* + number (of things)/quantity of a substance:

***I have (got) fourteen pencils I have (got) a lot of milk***

4 Possession of physical characteristics [> App 25.37]:

*Have* and *have got* combine with nouns like: *a beard blue eyes long hair a scar a slim figure*, **to describe appearance:**

*You should see our baby He has (got) big brown eyes*

*Our dog has (got) long ears*

*This plant has (got) lovely russet leaves*

*Our house has (got) five rooms*

5 Possession of mental and emotional qualities [> App 42.1.10]:

*Have* and *have got* combine with nouns like: *faith a good mind*

*patience a quick temper*, **to describe character:**

***She has (got) nice manners but she has (got) a quick temper***

'Have' (= something other than 'possess')

- 6 Family relationships:  
*I **have (got)** two sisters*
- 7 Contacts with other people:  
*I **have (got)** a good dentist* (i.e. whom I can recommend to you)
- 8 In the sense of 'wear' [> App 25.37]:  
*That's a nice dress you **have/you've got***  
In this sense, *have* often combines with *on*: *have something on*  
*have got something on*  
*That's a nice dress you **have on/you've got on***  
*I can't answer the door I **have (got)** nothing on*
- 9 Illnesses [> App 42.1.7]:  
*Have and have got combine with nouns describing pains and illnesses. For the use of a/an with such nouns [> 3.15]:*  
*I **have (got)** a cold/a bad headache*  
*The baby **has (got)** measles*
- 10 Arrangements [> App 42.1.4]:  
*Have and have got combine with nouns like: an appointment a conference, a date, an interview a meeting, time, etc.:*  
*I **have (got)** an appointment with my dentist tomorrow morning*  
*Sally **has (got)** an interview for a job today*
- 11 Opinions [> App 42.1.10]:  
*Have and have got combine with nouns like: an idea, influence, an objection, an opinion a point of view, a proposal, a suggestion*  
*I **have (got)** an idea<sup>1</sup>*  
*Have you (got) any objection to this proposal?*
- 12 In the sense of 'there is':  
*You **have (got)** a stain on your tie* (= There is a stain on your tie.)  
*You **have (got)** sand in your hair* (= There is sand in your hair.)

## 'Have' as a full verb meaning something other than 'possess'

### 32 Forms of 'have' meaning something other than 'possess'

imperative:	<i>Have a cup of coffee<sup>1</sup></i>
simple present.	<i>I always have milk in my tea</i>
present progressive:	<i>We're having a nice time</i>
simple past	<i>We had a lovely holiday last summer</i>
past progressive:	<i>I was having a bath when the phone rang</i>
present perfect	<i>Poor Jim has just had an accident</i>
present perfect progressive:	<i>The children have been having a lot of fun</i>
past perfect:	<i>I woke up because I had had a bad dream</i>
past perfect progressive.	<i>I woke up I had been having a bad dream</i>
simple future.	<i>I'll have a haircut tomorrow</i>
future progressive:	<i>If anyone phones, I'll be having a bath</i>
future perfect:	<i>You'll have had an answer by tomorrow</i>
future perfect progressive:	<i>She will have been having treatment all her life</i>
with modal verbs:	<i>e.g. You could have a cup of tea if you like</i>

**10.33 The forms 'have' (= possess) and 'have' (other meanings)**

1 *Have*, in the sense of 'eat, enjoy, experience, drink, take', etc., is a dynamic verb [> 9.3] so it is concerned with actions (e.g. *have a walk*), not states like *have* in the sense of 'possess' (e.g. *I have (got) a car*) Because of this, it can be used in the progressive form of all the tenses. Compare:

*I have (= I've got) a drink, thanks*

(i.e. it's in my hand: stative)

*I'm having a drink*

(= I'm drinking: dynamic)

*I have a drink every evening before dinner.*

(= I drink: dynamic)

*Have got* can never replace *have* used as a dynamic verb.

2 *Have* in the sense of 'take', etc. is used like any other English verb.

This means that:

- questions and negatives in the simple present and simple past must be formed with *do*, *does* and *did*:

*Do you have milk in your tea? I don't have milk in my tea*

*Did you have a nice holiday? I didn't have a nice holiday*

Compare *have* meaning 'possess':

*Have you (got) any milk in your tea?* (= Is there any?)

*I haven't (got) any milk in my tea* (= There isn't any.)

- it occurs freely in all active tenses as the context permits, but passive forms are rare: e.g. *a good time was had by all*
- the passive infinitive sometimes occurs in: e.g. *I tried to buy some extra copies of this morning's newspaper, but there were none to be had* (i.e. they were not available)

3 There are no contracted forms of *have* (= 'take', etc.) as a full verb in the simple present and simple past:

*I have a cold shower every morning* (Not *I've...*)

Compare *have*, meaning 'possess':

*I have/I've/I've got a new shower in my bathroom*

4 The present and past perfect tenses of *have* involve the use of *have* as both auxiliary verb and main verb. For this reason, the present perfect and past perfect forms are given in full below.

**10.34 Form of the simple present perfect of 'have' = 'take'**

affirmative	short form	negative short forms			
<i>I have had</i>	<i>I've had</i>	<i>I've not had</i>	= <i>I</i>	<i>haven't had</i>	
<i>You have had</i>	<i>You've had</i>	<i>You've not had</i>	= <i>You</i>	<i>haven't had</i>	
<i>He has had</i>	<i>He's had</i>	<i>He's not had</i>	= <i>He</i>	<i>hasn't had</i>	
<i>She has had</i>	<i>She's had</i>	<i>She's not had</i>	= <i>She</i>	<i>hasn't had</i>	<i>lunch</i>
<i>It has had</i>	<i>It's had</i>	<i>It's not had</i>	= <i>It</i>	<i>hasn't had</i>	
<i>We have had</i>	<i>We've had</i>	<i>We've not had</i>	= <i>We</i>	<i>haven't had</i>	
<i>You have had</i>	<i>You've had</i>	<i>You've not had</i>	= <i>You</i>	<i>haven't had</i>	
<i>They have had</i>	<i>They've had</i>	<i>They've not had</i>	= <i>They</i>	<i>haven't had</i>	

'Have' (= something other than 'possess')

### 10.35 Form of the simple past perfect of 'have' = 'take'

affirmative	short form	negative	short forms
I had had	I'd had	I'd not had	= I hadn't had
You had had	You'd had	You'd not had	= You hadn't had
He had had	He'd had	He'd not had	= He hadn't had
She had had	She'd had	She'd not had	= She hadn't had lunch
It had had	It'd had	It'd not had	= It hadn't had
We had had	We'd had	We'd not had	= We hadn't had
You had had	You'd had	You'd not had	= You hadn't had
They had had	They'd had	They'd not had	= They hadn't had

### 10.36 Notes on the forms 'have had' and 'had had'

1 These forms are, of course, quite regular: *I have had my lunch and I had had my lunch work in the same way as I have eaten my lunch and I had eaten my lunch.*

Here are a few more examples of *have* as a full verb in the present perfect and past perfect:

*Have you ever had lunch at Maxim's?*

*That boy looks as if he's never had a haircut*

*I had never had a ride on an elephant before I went to India.*

2 In general, the negative forms *I haven't had*, *I hadn't had*, etc. are more common than *I've not had* and *I'd not had*.

3 The following forms should not be confused:

*He's ill* (= *He is ill.*) and *He's had lunch* (= *He has had lunch.*)

*He'd had lunch* (= *He had had lunch.*) and

;  
*He said he'd have lunch now* (= *he would have lunch now*)

### 10.37 Common 'have' + noun combinations

*Have* combines with a great many nouns. In this respect, it is similar to other phrases with such verbs as *give* (e.g. *in give a thought*) and *take* (in e.g. *take an exam*). For verb phrases of this kind and for examples with *have* [> App 42]:

*Let's have lunch I'd like to have a sandwich please*

### 10.38 'Have' + noun in place of other verbs

The verbs *to sleep*, *to swim*, etc. can be expressed with *have* + noun in the sense of 'perform that activity': e.g.

*to dance* - *to have a dance* *I had two dances with Molly*  
*to fight* - *to have a fight* *Those twins are always having fights*  
*to look* - *to have a look* *Just have a look at this*  
*to rest* - *to have a rest.* *I want to have a rest this afternoon*  
*to ride* - *to have a ride* *Can I have a ride in your car?*  
*to talk* - *to have a talk* *Jim and I have just had a long talk*  
*to swim* - *to have a swim* *Come and have a swim with us*  
*to wash* - *to have a wash* *I must have a wash before lunch*

*Have* commonly replaces verbs like the following:

*receive* *I had a letter from Jim this morning*

*permit* *I won't have that kind of behaviour in my house*

### 10.39 The use of 'have' in the imperative

One of the most common uses of *have* (= 'take', etc.) is in the imperative. It is often used after *do* [ > 9.53] for emphasis and/or encouragement (*Do have* ). Common instances are:

Offers: ***Do have some oysters! Don't have tomato soup***  
 Suggestions: ***Have a bath and a rest and you'll feel better***  
 Encouragement: ***Have a go! Have a try! Have a shot at it***  
 Good wishes: ***Have fun! Have a good time! Have a good day!***  
 (fixed expressions)

There are no direct references to appetite, digestion, etc. (like *Bon appetit!* in French or *Guten Appetit!* in German), but expressions with *have* can be coined to suit particular occasions:

***Have a really good meal! Have a lovely party!***  
***Have a really restful holiday!***  
***Have a really interesting debate!*** etc.

## 'Do' as a full verb

### 10.40 Forms of 'do' as a full verb

imperative	<i>Do your homework!</i>
simple present	<i>I do the shopping every morning</i>
present progressive:	<i>I'm doing this crossword puzzle</i>
simple past:	<i>He did a lot of work this morning</i>
past progressive:	<i>We were doing sums all yesterday evening</i>
present perfect:	<i>We've just done the washing-up</i>
present perfect progressive:	<i>I've been doing this exercise all day</i>
past perfect	<i>We went home after we had done our work</i>
past perfect progressive:	<i>We had been doing business with each other for years before we quarrelled</i>
simple future:	<i>I'll do the housework tomorrow morning</i>
future progressive:	<i>I'll be doing jobs about the house tomorrow</i>
future perfect:	<i>If you finish this job as well, you will have done far more than I expected</i>
future perfect progressive	<i>By this time next year, we will have been doing business with each other for 20 years</i>
with modal verbs.	e.g. <i>Would you do me a favour please?</i>

### 10.41 The present form of 'do' as a full verb

affirmative	negative full form	negative short form
<i>I do</i>	<i>I do not</i>	<i>I don't</i>
<i>You do</i>	<i>You do not</i>	<i>You don't</i>
<i>He does</i>	<i>He does not</i>	<i>He doesn't</i>
<i>She does the work</i>	<i>she does not</i>	<i>She doesn't do the work</i>
<i>It does</i>	<i>It does not</i>	<i>It doesn't</i>
<i>We do</i>	<i>We do not</i>	<i>We don't</i>
<i>You do</i>	<i>You do not</i>	<i>You don't</i>
<i>They do</i>	<i>They do not</i>	<i>They don't</i>

'Do' as a full verb

#### 10.42 The past form of 'do' as a full verb

affirmative	negative full form	negative short form
I <i>did</i>	I <i>did not</i>	I <i>didn't</i>
You <i>did</i>	You <i>did not</i>	You <i>didn't</i>
He <i>did</i>	He <i>did not</i>	He <i>didn't</i>
She <i>did</i> the work	she <i>did not</i>	She <i>didn't</i> do the work
It <i>did</i>	It <i>did not</i>	It <i>didn't</i>
We <i>did</i>	We <i>did not</i>	We <i>didn't</i>
You <i>did</i>	You <i>did not</i>	You <i>didn't</i>
They <i>did</i>	They <i>did not</i>	They <i>didn't</i>

#### 10.43 The present perfect form of 'do' as a full verb

affirmative	negative full form	negative short form
I <i>have done</i>	I <i>have not done</i>	I <i>haven't</i> (I've not) <i>done</i>
You <i>have done</i>	You <i>have not done</i>	You <i>haven't</i> (You've not) <i>done</i>
He <i>has done</i>	He <i>has not done</i>	He <i>hasn't</i> (He's not) <i>done</i>
She <i>has done</i>	She <i>has not done</i>	She <i>hasn't</i> (She's not) <i>done</i> it
It <i>has done</i>	It <i>has not done</i>	It <i>hasn't</i> (It's not) <i>done</i>
We <i>have done</i>	We <i>have not done</i>	We <i>haven't</i> (We've not) <i>done</i>
You <i>have done</i>	You <i>have not done</i>	You <i>haven't</i> (You've not) <i>done</i>
They <i>have done</i>	They <i>have not done</i>	They <i>haven't</i> (They've not) <i>done</i>

#### 10.44 Uses of 'do' as a full verb

##### 10.44.1 'Do' = 'perform an activity or task'

*Do* often has the sense of 'work at' or 'be engaged in something'.  
'Doing something' can be deliberate or accidental. We can use verbs  
other than *do* to answer questions like *What are you doing?*:

*What are you doing?*

- *I'm reading* (i.e. that's what I'm doing)

*What did you do this morning?*

- *I wrote some letters* (i.e. that's what I did)

*What have you done?*

- *I've broken this vase* (i.e. that's what I've done)

We often use *do* in this sense with *some/any/no* compounds:

*Haven't you got anything to do? I've got nothing to do*

We can use *do* to refer to an unnamed task and then we can refer to  
named tasks by means of other verbs:

*I did a lot of work around the house today I took down the  
curtains and washed them and I cleaned the windows*

##### 10.44.2 The use of 'do' to avoid repeating a previous verb

We can use *do* to avoid repeating a previous verb [> 4.18]:

*Antonia works 16 hours a day I don't know how she does it*

*Take the dog for a walk - I've already done it/done so*

We can avoid repeating the verb in short answers, such as:

*Shall I take the dog for a walk? - Yes, do./No, don't.* [> 9.53]  
(i.e. take/don't take the dog for a walk)



**10.44.3 'Do' = 'be in the wrong place'**

Used in this sense, *do* often conveys disapproval, e.g.

- of present results of past actions:  
*What are those clothes **doing** on the floor?*  
(i.e. they shouldn't be there)
- of people:  
*What are those boys **doing** in our garden?*  
(i.e. we disapprove of their presence, not their actions)

**10.44.4 'Do' before gerunds**

We can use *do* + gerund to refer to named tasks:

*I've **done the shopping/the ironing/the washing up***  
***We did all our shopping** yesterday*  
***I do a lot of swimming** (in preference to 'I swim a lot.')*  
***I stayed at home last night and did some reading***

**10.45 'Do' and 'make' compared**

*Make* conveys the sense of 'create'; *do* (often suggesting 'be engaged in an activity') is a more general term:

*What **are you doing**? - I'm **making** a cake*  
*What **are you making**? - A cake*

Both *do* and *make* can be used in a variety of fixed combinations [ > App 43]. Here is a brief selection:

*do* + *one's best business with someone, damage to something*  
*one's duty, an experiment; someone a favour, good, etc.*  
*make* + *an accusation against (someone), an agreement with*  
*(someone), an appointment: an arrangement; a bed, etc.*

Sometimes both *make* and *do* are possible:

*I'll **make/I'll do the beds** this morning, if you like*

**10.46 'Do' in fixed expressions**

*Do* occurs in numerous fixed expressions, such as:

*What **does he do**?(i.e. What work does he do for a living?)*  
*How **do you do**?[> 13.40.6]*  
*That'll **do**! (e.g. That will be enough.)*  
*How many miles **does it do to the gallon**?(do in the sense of 'go')*  
*This simply **won't do** (i.e. It's unacceptable.)*  
*How **did you do**?(i.e. How did you manage?)*  
*I **could do with** a drink (i.e. I would like a drink.)*  
*It's got **nothing to do with me** (i.e. It doesn't concern me.)*  
*I **can do without** a car (i.e. manage without a car)*  
*I **was done**! (i.e. I was cheated.)*  
*Shall I **do your room out**?(i.e. clean it)*  
*You **did me out of my share** (i.e. cheated me)*

# 11 Modal auxiliaries and related verbs

## General characteristics of modal verbs

### 11.1 Which verbs are modal auxiliaries and what do they do?

Verbs like *can* and *may* are called **modal auxiliaries**, though we often refer to them simply as **modal verbs** or **modals**. We frequently use modals when we are concerned with our relationship with someone else. We may, for example, ask for permission to do something; grant permission to someone; give or receive advice; make or respond to requests and offers, etc. We can express different levels of politeness both by the forms we choose and the way we say things. The bluntest command (*You must see a doctor*), with a certain kind of stress, might be more kindly and persuasive than the most complicated utterance (*I think it might possibly be advisable for you to see a doctor*).

Modals sharing the same grammatical characteristics [> 11.5-6] are:

<i>can</i>	-	<i>could</i>
<i>may</i>	-	<i>might</i>
<i>will</i>	-	<i>would</i>
<i>shall</i>	-	<i>should</i>
<i>must</i>	-	
<i>ought to</i>	-	

Verbs which share *some* of the grammatical characteristics of modals are: *need* [> 11.49], *dare* [> 11.65], *used to* [> 11.58],  
By comparison, *need to* and *dare to* are full verbs.

Modals have two major functions which can be defined as **primary** and **secondary**.

### 11.2 Primary function of modal verbs

In their primary function, modal verbs closely reflect the meanings often given first in most dictionaries, so that:

- *can/could* relate mainly to **ability**: *I can lift 25 kg/I can type*
- *may/might* relate mainly to **permission**: *You may leave early*
- *will/would* relate mainly to **prediction** [> 9.35]: *it will rain soon*
- *shall* after *I/We* [> 9.36n1] relates mainly to **prediction**:  
*Can we find our way home? - I'm sure we shall*
- *should/ought to* relate mainly to **escapable obligation** or **duty**:  
*You should do (or ought to do) as you're told*
- *must* relates mainly to **inescapable obligation**: *You must be quiet*
- *needn't* relates to **absence of obligation**: *You needn't wait*

### 11.3 Secondary function of modal verbs

In their secondary function, nine of the modal auxiliaries (not *shall*) can be used to express the degree of certainty/uncertainty a speaker feels about a possibility. They can be arranged on a scale from the greatest uncertainty (*might*) to the greatest certainty (*must*). The order of modals between *might* and *must* is not fixed absolutely. It varies according to situation. For example, one arrangement might be:

		<i>might</i>		<b>very uncertain</b>
		<i>may</i>		
		<i>could</i>		
		<i>can'</i>		
You		<i>should</i>	<i>be right</i>	
		<i>ought to</i>	<i>have been right</i>	
		<i>would</i>		
		<i>will</i>		
		<i>must</i>		<b>almost certain</b>
<hr/>				
You	<i>are</i>	<i>right</i>	<b>certain</b>	

*Can* requires qualification to be used in this way [> 11.29ns2.4]:

***He can hardly be right***

***Do you think he can be right?***<sup>7</sup>

***I don't think he can be right***

### 11.4 Primary and secondary functions of 'must' compared

This example of *must* shows that it is 'defective' [> 11.6.1]:

1 In its primary function it requires another full verb (*have to*) to make up its 'missing parts'. (In the same way *can*, for example, in its primary function requires the full verb *be able to* to make up its missing parts.)

2 In its secondary function *must* (like the other modals listed in 11.1) has only two basic forms: a form which relates to the present and a form which relates to the perfect or past [> 11.8.4],

	<b>primary (inescapable obligation)</b>	<b>secondary (certainty)</b>
<b>infinitive:</b>	<i>to have to leave</i>	-
<b>-ing form:</b>	<i>having to leave</i>	
<b>present:</b>	<i>They must leave</i>	<i>They must be right</i>
<b>future:</b>	<i>They must leave tomorrow</i>	
<b>perfect:</b>	<i>They have had to leave</i>	
<b>past:</b>	<i>They had to leave</i>	<i>They must have been right</i>
<b>past perfect:</b>	<i>They had had to leave</i>	
<b>future perfect:</b>	<i>They will have had to leave</i>	
<b>'conditional':</b>	<i>They would have had to leave</i>	

### 11.5 Some ways in which modals resemble 'be', 'have', 'do'

Structurally, modal auxiliaries resemble the auxiliaries *be*, *have* and *do* in some ways and differ completely from them in others. Some of the most important similarities are noted in this section and some differences are explained in 11.6.

### 11.5.1 The negative [> 13.1-2]

The negative is formed (as it is for *be*, *have* and *do*) by the addition of *not* after the modal. In informal spoken English *not* is often reduced to the unemphatic *n't*:

<i>be</i>	<i>(is) not</i>	<i>(is)n't</i>	[> 10.6, 10.8]
<i>have</i>	<i>(have) not</i>	<i>(have)nt</i>	[> 10.27-28]
<i>do</i>	<i>(do) not</i>	<i>(do)n't</i>	[> 10.41-42]
<i>can</i>	<i>cannot</i>	<i>can't</i>	
<i>could</i>	<i>could not</i>	<i>couldn't</i>	
<i>may</i>	<i>may not</i>	<i>mayn't</i>	
<i>might</i>	<i>might not</i>	<i>mightn't</i>	
<i>will</i>	<i>will not</i>	<i>won't</i>	[> 9.35]
<i>would</i>	<i>would not</i>	<i>wouldn't</i>	
<i>shall</i>	<i>shall not</i>	<i>shan't</i>	[> 9.36n.3]
<i>should</i>	<i>should not</i>	<i>shouldn't</i>	
<i>must</i>	<i>must not</i>	<i>mustn't</i>	
<i>ought to</i>	<i>ought not to</i>	<i>oughtn't to</i>	
<i>need</i>	<i>need not</i>	<i>needn't</i>	
<i>dare</i>	<i>dare not</i>	<i>daren't</i>	

The full form *cannot* is written as one word.

*Mayn't* is rare, but does occur. For *used not* and *usedn't* [> 11.59n2],

### 11.5.2 Questions [> 13.1-3, 13.30, 13.41]

**Yes/No questions** are formed as for *be*, *have* and *do*. We begin with the modal, followed by the subject and then the predicate.

*May we leave early?*

In **question-word questions**, the question-word precedes the modal:

*When may we leave?*

With Yes/No questions, the modal used in the answer is normally the same as the one used in the question [> 11.31, 13.6n.1]:

*Can you come and see me tomorrow? - Yes I can 'No, I can't*

Modals also behave like *be*, *have* and *do* in **tag questions** [> 13.17]:

*You can do it, can't you?*

### 11.5.3 Negative questions [> 13.14]

As with *be*, *have* and *do*, the full form of negative questions with modals requires *not* after the subject (*Can you not help me?*). This is formal and rare. Contracted forms are normally used:

*Can't you help me?* [compare > 13.16]

*Shouldn't (you) ?* is usually preferred to *Oughtn't (you) to?* perhaps because the latter is more difficult to pronounce.

Negative questions with *Used?* on the above patterns are rare [> 11.59].

## 11.6 Some ways in which modals differ from 'be', 'have', 'do'

### 11.6.1 'Defective verbs'

Modals are sometimes called **defective verbs** because they lack forms ordinary full verbs have [> 11.4]. For example:

1 Modals cannot be used as infinitives (compare to *be*, *to have to do*). If ever we need an infinitive, we have to use another verb:

*If you want to apply for this job, you have to be able to type at least 60 words a minute* (Not *\*to* before *can* or *can* alone)

## 11 Modal auxiliaries and related verbs

- 2 We do not use a to-infinitive after modals (compare *be to*, *have to*). Only the bare infinitive [> 16.3] can be used after modals (except *ought*, which is always followed by *to*):  
*You **must/mustn't** phone him this evening* (Not *"to phone"*)
- 3 Modals have no *-ing* form (compare *being*, *having*, *doing*). Instead of *-ing*, we have to use another verb or verb-phrase:  
*I **couldn't go**/I **wasn't able to go** home by bus, so I took a taxi*  
(= Not being able to go...)
- 4 Modals have no *-(e)s* in the 3rd person singular (compare *is* *has does*):  
*The boss **can see** you now* (No *-s* on the end of *can*)
- 5 Each modal has a basic meaning of its own. By comparison, as auxiliaries, *be/have/do* have only a grammatical function [> 10.1].

### 11.6.2 Contracted forms

Unlike *be* and *have* (but not *do*), modals in the affirmative do not have contracted forms, except for *will* and *would* [*I'll*, *I'd* > 9.35, 14.17n3]. In speech, *can*, *could* and *shall* are 'contracted' by means of unemphatic pronunciation:

*I, (etc.) can /kən/, I, (etc.) could /kəd/, I/We shall /ʃəl/*

### 11.6.3 One modal at a time

Only *one* modal can be used in a single verb phrase:

*We **may call** the doctor* but not *may and must* together.

*We **must call** the doctor*

If we wish to combine the two ideas in the above sentences, we have to find a suitable paraphrase:

*It **may be necessary** (for us) **to call** a doctor*

By comparison, we can use e.g. *be* and *have* together:

*It **has been necessary** to call a doctor*

## 11.7 Form of modal auxiliaries compared with future tenses

Each of the modals fits into the four patterns for future tense forms:

<i>I will see</i>	simple future [> 9.35]
<i>I will be seeing</i>	future progressive [> 9.40]
<i>I will have seen</i>	future perfect simple [> 9.42]
<i>I will have been seeing</i>	future perfect progressive [> 9.42]

	active	passive
modal + (bare infinitive):	<i>I may see</i>	<i>I may be seen</i>
modal + <i>be</i> + present participle:	<i>I may be seeing</i>	- [but > 12.3n.6]
modal + <i>have</i> + past participle:	<i>I may have seen</i>	<i>I may have been seen</i>
modal + <i>have been</i> + present participle:	<i>I may have been seeing</i>	-

## 11.8 Forms and uses of modals compared with verb tenses

The labels we use to describe the verb tenses (e.g. **present**, **progressive**, **past**, **perfect**) cannot easily be applied to modals.

### 11.8.1 'Present'

All modals can refer to the immediate present or the future, therefore 'present' is not always a reliable label:

*I **can/may** (etc.) phone **now** I **can/may** (etc.) phone **tomorrow***

## General characteristics of modal verbs

### 11.8.2 'Progressive'

There is no progressive form for modals. But we can put the verb that follows a modal into the progressive form:

*Meg is phoning her fiancé* (present progressive)  
*Meg may be phoning her fiancé* (modal + be + verb-ing)  
*Meg may have been phoning her fiancé* (modal + have been+ing)

It is the *phoning* that is or was in progress, not 'may'.

### 11.8.3 'Past'

*Would*, *could*, *might* and *should* can be said to be past in **form** but this usually has little to do with their **use** and **meaning**. They can be called 'past' when used in indirect speech [> 15.13n6]:

*He says you can/will/may leave early* (present)  
*He said you could/would/might leave early* (past)

*Might* can have a past reference in historical narrative:

*In the 14th century a peasant might have the right to graze pigs on common land*

However, *might* usually expresses more uncertainty than *may*.

*I might see you tomorrow*

is less certain than:

*I may see you tomorrow*

*Could* sometimes expresses ability in the past [> 11.2.1]:

*He could (or was able to) swim five miles when he was a boy*  
but *could* is not possible in:

*I managed to/was able to finish the job yesterday.* [> 11.12.3]

However, *couldn't* and *wasn't able to* are usually interchangeable

*I couldn't/wasn't able to finish the job yesterday*

The other main use of *could*, as a more polite alternative to *can* in requests, has nothing to do with time:

*Could you help me please?*

*Would* expresses the past in [> 11.61]:

*When we were young we would spend our holidays in Brighton*

Otherwise, *would* and *should* have special uses [e.g. > 11.74-75]

*Must* can express past time only in indirect speech [> 15.13n6].

otherwise it has to be replaced by *have to*, etc. [> 11.4]:

*He told us we must wait (or we had to wait) until we were called*

*She asked her boss if she must work (or had to work) overtime*

### 11.8.4 'Perfect' and 'past'

Forms with modal + *have* + past participle or with modal + *have been* + progressive are not necessarily the equivalent of the Present perfect. The modal refers to the present, while *have* + past participle refers to the past. So, depending on context,

*You must have seen him* can mean:

*I assume (now) you have seen him* (i.e. before now; equivalent to the present perfect)

*I assume (now) you saw him* (i.e. then; equivalent to the past)

*I assume (now) you had seen him* (i.e. before then; equivalent to the past perfect)

### 11.9 Modal + verb and modal + 'be/have been' + progressive

Two observations need to be made here:

1 Modal + *be/have been* + progressive is not always possible in the primary function. For example:

*He can't leave yet* (= it's not possible for him to leave yet)

is quite different from the secondary function:

*He can't be leaving yet* (= I don't think he is)

But compare the primary and secondary functions of *must* in:

**primary:** *You must be working when the inspector comes in*  
(i.e. it is necessary (for you) to be working.)

**secondary:** *You must be joking'*  
(i.e. I'm almost certain you are joking.)

2 Occasionally, in the primary function, a modal + *be* + progressive has a 'softening effect' similar to the use of the future progressive [ > 9.41.2]. So:

*We must/may/should (etc.) be leaving soon*

is more polite and tentative than:

*We must/may/should (etc.) leave soon*

## Uses of modals, etc. to express ability

### 11.10 Form of modals and related verbs expressing ability

#### *can/could*

*Can/could* express ability, which may be natural or learned:

**present reference:** *I/You/He (etc.) can/can't hear music*

**past or perfect reference** *I/You/He (etc.) could/couldn't play chess*  
*I/You/He (etc.) could have/couldn't have danced all night*

**future reference:** None. We use *will be able to* [but compare > 11.19, 11.26]

Verbs and verb phrases related in meaning to *can* (ability):

**be (un)able to** *I am (not) able/I am unable to attend the meeting*

**be (in)capable of** *He is (not) capable/He is incapable of doing the pb*

**manage to:** *We managed/didn't manage to persuade him to accept*

**succeed in** *They'll succeed/won't succeed in getting what they want*

### 11.11 'Can' = ability: the present

#### 11.11.1 'Can' + verb (natural ability)

Natural ability can be expressed as follows:

*Can you run 1500 metres in 5 minutes?*

(= Are you able to run? Are you capable of running?)

*I can/cannot/can't run 1500 metres in 5 minutes*

*Can* and *am/is/are able to* are generally interchangeable to describe natural ability, though *able* is less common:

*Billy is only 9 months old and he can already stand up*

*Billy is only 9 months old and he is already able to stand up*

However, *am/is/are able to* would be unusual when we are commenting on something that is happening at the time of speaking:

*Look' I can stand on my hands'*

Modals etc to express ability

### 11.11.2 'Can' + verb (learned ability or 'know-how')

Learned ability can be expressed as follows:

**Can you drive a car?**

(= Do you know how to? Have you learnt how to?)

**I can/cannot/can't drive a car**

Verbs such as *drive, play, speak, understand* indicate skills or learned

abilities. *Can*, and to a lesser extent, *am/is/are able* often combine with such verbs and may generally be used in the same way as the simple present tense:

**I can/can't play chess** (= I play/don't play chess)

### 11.12 'Could/couldn't' = ability: the past

#### 11.12.1 Past ability (natural and learned) expressed with 'could'

*Could, couldn't* or *was/were (not) able to* can describe natural and learned ability in the past, not related to any specific event:

**Jim could/couldn't run very fast when he was a boy**

**Barbara could/couldn't sing very well when she was younger**

**Jim was able to/was unable to run fast when he was a boy,**

We also often use *used to be able to* to describe past abilities

**I used to be able to hold my breath for one minute under water**

*Could* and *was (or would be) able to* occur after reporting verbs

**He said he could see me next week.**

For 'unreal past'<sup>1</sup> *could* (= was/were able to) after *if* [ > 14.10-12, 14.14

#### 11.12.2 The past: 'could' + verb: achievement after effort

*Could* and *was/were able to* can be interchangeable when we refer to the acquisition of a skill after effort:

**I tried again and found I could swim/was able to swim**

#### 11.12.3 Specific achievement in the past

*Could* cannot normally be used when we are describing the successful completion of a specific action; *was/were able to* *managed to* or *succeeded in + ing* must be used instead

**were able to rescue**

**In the end they managed to rescue the cat on the roof**

**succeeded in rescuing**

If an action was not successfully completed, we may use *couldn't*.

**They tried for hours but they couldn't rescue the cat**

(or weren't able to, didn't manage to etc)

*Could* can be used when we are asking about a specific action (as opposed to describing it):

**Could they rescue the cat on the roof?** (= did they manage to?)

- No, they **couldn't**. It was too difficult

However, an affirmative response requires an alternative to *could*

- Yes, they **managed to** (Not 'could')

### 11.13 Can/could' + verbs of perception [ > APP 38.4]

Verbs of perception [ > 9.3], like *see, hear, smell* rarely occur progressive *Can*, and to a lesser extent, *am/is/are able to* combine



with such verbs to indicate that we can see, hear, etc. something happening at the moment of speaking. In such cases *can* has a grammatical function equivalent to the simple present in statements and to *do/does* in questions and negatives:

*I can smell something burning* (= I smell something burning.)  
*I can't see anyone* (= I don't see anyone.)

*Could* can be used in place of the simple past in the same way:

*I listened carefully, but couldn't hear anything*  
 (= I listened carefully, but didn't hear anything.)

*Can/could* can be used with verbs suggesting 'understanding':

*I can/can't understand why he decided to retire at 50*  
*I could/couldn't understand why he had decided to retire at 50.*

*Can't/couldn't* cannot be replaced by the simple present or simple past when conveying the idea 'beyond (my) control' (impossible):

*I can't (couldn't) imagine what it would be like to live in a hot climate.* (Not *\*I don't/I didn't imagine\**)

#### 11.14 'Could' and 'would be able to'

We can use *could* as an 'unreal past' [> 14.10, 14.14] in the sense of 'would be able to'. When we do this, an *if*-clause is sometimes implied:

*I'm sure you could get into university (if you applied)*

*Could* + *never* has the sense of 'would never be able to':

*I could never put up with such inefficiency if I were running an office* (i.e. I would never be able to)

*Could* is often used to express surprise, anger, etc. in the present:

*I could eat my hat I could slap your face!*

#### 11.15 'Could have' and 'would have been able to'

We do not use *can/can't have* + past participle to express ability or capacity. We use them for possibility or conjecture (He *can't have told you anything I don't already know*) [> 11.32].

However, in conditional sentences and implied conditionals we may use *could have* + past participle (in place of *would have been able to*) to refer to ability or capacity that was not used owing to personal failure or lack of opportunity [> 14.19]:

*If it hadn't been for the freezing wind and blinding snow, the rescue party could have reached the injured man before nightfall*

For *could have* (= had been able to) in conditions [> 14.16-17].

#### 11.16 Ability in tenses other than present and past

If we need to express ability in other tense combinations (e.g. the future or the present perfect), then the appropriate forms of *be able to*, *manage to* or *succeed in* must be used:

*I'll be able to pass my driving test after I've had a few lessons*  
*I've been trying to contact him, but I haven't managed to*

*Can*, referring to ability, skill, or perception, is usable in clauses after *and when* [> 14.4] to refer to the future:

*If you can pass (or are able to pass) your driving test at the first attempt, I'll be very surprised*

Modals, etc. to express permission/prohibition

### 11.17 Expressing ability with 'can' and 'could' in the passive

Passive constructions with *can* and *could*, indicating ability, are possible where the sense allows:

*This car **can only be driven** by a midget*

*The lecture **couldn't be understood** by anyone present*

*The injured men **could have been reached** if heavy equipment had been available during the rescue operation*

### 11.18 'Can/could' = capability/possibility

*Can* + *be* + adjective or noun has the effect of 'is sometimes' or 'is often' and refers to capability or possibility. It can be replaced by *be capable of* + *-ing*, but not by *am/is/are able to*:

*It **can be quite cold** in Cairo in January*

(= It is sometimes - or often - quite cold.)

*He **can be very naughty**, (or 'a very naughty boy') [ $> 10.11$ ]*

(When used for people, the effect is generally negative, even when the adjective is favourable: *She **can look quite attractive** when she wants to* — which implies she doesn't usually look attractive.)

*Could* has the same effect in the past:

*It **could be quite cold** in Cairo in January when I lived there*

(= It was sometimes - or often - quite cold.)

*He **could be very naughty** when he was a little boy*

*Could* can also have a future reference in this kind of context:

*It **could be quite cold** when you get to Cairo*

## Uses of modals, etc. to express permission and prohibition

### 11.19 Form of modals and related verbs: permission/prohibition

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**can/could/may/might** [compare  $> 11.34, 11.36-38$ ]:

*Can I stay out late?*      you (etc.) *can/can't/mustn't stay out late*

*Could I stay out late?*

---

*May I stay out late?*      you (etc.) *may/may not/mayn't/mustn't stay out late*

*Might I stay out late?*

**can/could** (= be free to)

**present or future reference:**

*I can see him now/tomorrow*

*I could see him now/tomorrow*

Verbs and verb phrases related in meaning to *can/could/may/might/mustn't*

**(not) be allowed to.**      *You're (not) allowed to stay out late*

**(not) be permitted to.**      *You're (not) permitted to stay out late*

**be forbidden to:**      *You're forbidden to stay out late*

**be prohibited.**      *Smoking is (strictly) prohibited*

**be not to:**      *You're not to smoke*

**negative imperative:**      *Don't smoke!*

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### 11.20 Asking for permission/responding: 'can/could/may/might'

Requests for permission can be graded on a 'hesitancy scale', ranging from a blunt request to an extremely hesitant one. Requests for permission can refer to the present or future. The basic forms are:

**Can**

**Could**      *I borrow your umbrella (please)?*

**May**

**Might**

1 *Can* is the commonest and most informal:

**Can I borrow your umbrella (please)?**

A few (old-fashioned) native speakers still hold that *can* is the equivalent of *am/is/are able to* and therefore *may* must be used instead. The idea of e.g. asking for a favour is less strong in *can* than in *could/may/might*.

2 *Could* is more 'hesitant' and polite than *can*. We often use it when we are not sure permission will be granted:

**Could I borrow your umbrella (please)?**

3 *May* is more formal, polite and 'respectful' than *can* and *could*:

**May I borrow your umbrella (please)?**

4 *Might* is the most hesitant, polite and 'respectful' and is rather less common than the other three:

**Might I borrow your umbrella (please)?**

In practice, *can*, *could* and *may* are often interchangeable in 'neutral' requests.

Common responses with modals are: e.g.

- affirmative: *Of course you can/may.* (Not "*could\*/might*")

- negative: No, *you can't/may not.* (Not "*could not\*/might not*")

Numerous non-modal responses are possible ranging from the polite *Of course* (affirmative), *I'm afraid not*, *I'd rather you didn't* (negative), to blunt refusal like *Certainly not*. A polite refusal is usually accompanied by some kind of explanation (*I'm afraid you can't because...*).

Permission to ask an indiscreet question may be requested with the formulas *if I may ask* and (more tentative) *if I might ask*:

*How much did you pay for this house if I may/might ask?*

### 11.21 Asking for permission with 'can't' and 'couldn't'

*Can't* and *couldn't* are often used in place of *can* and *could* when we are pressing for an affirmative answer [> 13.6]:

**can't**      *I stay out till midnight (please)?*

**Couldn't**

*May I not ?*      is old-fashioned.

*Mayn't I ?*      is unlikely.

*Might I not. ?*      is rare, but all these forms occur in formal style.

### 11.22 Very polite requests: 'can/could/may/might'

There are numerous variations on straightforward request forms to express degrees of politeness. *Possibly* is commonly added to make requests more polite. Requests may be hesitant:

*Can/Could I (possibly)  
Do you think I could/might use your phone?  
I wonder if I could/might*

Or they may be over-cautious or obsequious:

*Might I (possibly) be allowed to...?*

### 11.23 Granting and refusing permission

Permission can be granted or refused as follows:

*You can(not) watch TV for as long as you like (Not \*could\*)*

*may (not) (Not might\*)*

*You may/may not* carries the authority of the speaker and is the equivalent of 'I (personally) give you permission'. *You can/cannot* is more general and does not necessarily imply personal permission. Permission issuing from some other authority can be granted or withheld more emphatically with *be allowed to, be permitted to and be forbidden to*, as follows:

*You can/cannot or You're allowed to/not allowed to  
You can/cannot or You're permitted to/not permitted  
You mustn't or You're forbidden to smoke here.*

Granting/refusing permission is not confined to 1st and 2nd persons

*Johnny/Frankie can/can't may/may not/mustn't stay up late.*

This can be extended to:

- rule-making e.g. for games: *Each player may choose* five cards
- other contexts: *Candidates may not attempt more than three questions.*

Permission may also be given by a speaker with *shall* in the 2nd and 3rd persons (formal and literary):

*You shall do as you please*, (i.e. You have my permission to)

*He shall do as he pleases*, (i.e. He has my permission to )

Permission may also be denied with *shan't* in BrE only [>9.36n3]

*If you don't behave yourself, you shan't go out/be allowed out.*

*If he doesn't behave himself, he shan't go out/be allowed out.*

Numerous alternative forms are available to express anyth

mild refusal {*I'd rather you didn't if you don't mind*) to strong.

prohibition (*I forbid you to .*) Formal and strong statements with

non-modal forms are often found in public notices [compare > 12.9.1

*Thank you for not smoking* (i.e. please don't)

*Passengers are requested to remain seated till the aircraft stops*

*Trespassing is strictly forbidden*

### 11.24 Permission/prohibition in other tenses

The gaps in the 'defective' verbs *may* and *must* [> 11.4, 11.6.1] can be filled with the verb phrases *be allowed to* and the more formal *be permitted to*. Examples of other tenses:

**present perfect:** *Mrs James is in hospital and **hasn't been allowed** to have any visitors*

**past:** *We **were allowed to** stay up till 11 last night*

*Could* can only express past 'permission in general'[compare > 11.12.1]:

*When we were children we **could watch** (or **were allowed to watch**) TV whenever we wanted to*

### 11.25 Conditional sentences with 'could' and 'could have'

*Could* may imply 'would be allowed to':

*I **could have** an extra week's holiday if I asked for it*

*Could have* + past participle can be used in place of *would have been allowed to* to show that permission was given but not used:

*You **could have had** an extra week's holiday You asked for it I said you **could have** it, but you didn't take it [compare > 11.15]*

### 11.26 'Can/could' = 'am/is/are free to': present or future

'Being free to' is often linked to the idea of 'having permission'. *Can*, in the sense of 'am/is/are free to', can be used to refer to the present or the future:

*I can see him now* (= I am free to)

*I **can see** him tomorrow* (= I am/will be free to)

*Could* expresses exactly the same idea, but is less definite:

*I **could see** him now* (= I am free to)

*I **could see** him tomorrow* (= I am/will be free to)

Compare *can/could* (= ability) which cannot be used to refer to the future [> 11.10, 11.16].

## Uses of modals, etc. to express certainty and possibility

### 11.27 Certainty, possibility and deduction

If we are certain of our facts, we can make statements with *be* or any full verb [compare > 10.24]:

*Jane **is (or works)** at home* (a certain fact)

If we are referring to possibility, we can use combinations of *may* *might* or *could* + verb:

*Jane **may/might/could be** (or **work**) at home* (a possibility)

We may draw a distinction between the expression of possibility in this way (which allows for speculation and guessing) and deduction based on evidence. Deduction [> 11.32], often expressed with *must be* and *can't be*, suggests near-certainty:

*Jane's light is on She **must be** at home She **can't be** out*

Modals, etc to express certainty/possibility

## 11.28 Forms of tenses (certainty) versus modals (possibility)

certain (expressed by verb tenses)	possible/less than certain (expressed by <i>may</i> , <i>might</i> and <i>could</i> )
<i>He is at home</i>	<i>He may/might/could be at home (now)</i>
<i>He will be at home tomorrow</i>	<i>He may/might/could be at home tomorrow</i>
<i>He was at home yesterday</i>	<i>He may/might/could have been at home yesterday</i>
<i>He leaves at 9</i>	<i>He may/might/could leave at 9</i>
<i>He will leave tomorrow</i>	<i>He may/might/could leave tomorrow</i>
<i>He has left</i>	<i>He may/might/could have left</i>
<i>He left last night</i>	<i>He may/might/could have left last night</i>
<i>He will have left by 9</i>	<i>He may/might/could have left by 9</i>
<i>He is working today</i>	<i>He may/might/could be working today</i>
<i>He will be working today</i>	<i>He may/might/could be working today</i>
<i>He was working today</i>	<i>He may/might/could have been working today</i>
<i>He has been working all day</i>	<i>He may/might/could have been working all day</i>
<i>He will have been working all day</i>	<i>He may/might/could have been working all day</i>

## 11.29 Notes on modal forms expressing possibility

- 1 *Should be* and *ought to be* to express possibility  
In addition to the above examples, we can also express possibility with *should be* and *ought to be*:  
*John should be/ought to be at home.*  
*John should be working/ought to be working*  
*John should have left/ought to have left by tomorrow etc.*  
However, because *should* and *ought to* also express obligation [> 11.46] they can be ambiguous, so are not used as much as *may/might/could* to express possibility. For example, *He should have arrived (ought to have arrived) yesterday* could mean 'I think he probably has arrived' or 'He failed in his duty to arrive yesterday'.
- 2 Questions about possibility  
When we are asking about possibility, we may use *Might* ?, *Could* ? and sometimes *Can* ? and (rarely) *May* ?. (We do not normally use *should* and *ought to* in affirmative questions about possibility because of the risk of confusion with obligation):  
*Might/Could/Can this be true?*  
*Might/Could he know the answer?*  
*Might/Could/Can he still be working? (or be still working)*  
*Might/Could he be leaving soon?*  
*Might/Could/Can he have been waiting long?*  
*Might/Could he have left by tomorrow?*  
  
Can is not always possible in questions like these, probably because of the risk of confusion with *can* = ability [> 11.10]. However, in questions like *Can this be true?*, *can* often indicates disbelief. *Can* is possible in some indirect questions:  
*I wonder where he can have left the key?*

## 11 Modal auxiliaries and related verbs

### 3 Negative questions about possibility

Negative questions about possibility can be asked with *Mightn't* and *Couldn't*. *May not* (Not 'Mayn't') can sometimes be used, as can *Shouldn't* and *Oughtn't* to:

***Mightn't*** *he be at home now?* etc

***Couldn't*** *he know the answer?* etc

### 4 Negative possibility

Negative possibility is expressed with *may not mightn't*, *can't* and *couldn't*, but not usually with *shouldn't* and *oughtn't* to:

*He may not be* (or ***have been***) *here* etc.

*He may not be* (or ***have been***) *working late* etc.

*Can't* + *be* often suggests disbelief:

*What you're saying can't be true!* *I can hardly believe it*

*Can* may be used in negative indirect questions:

*I don't think he can have left home yet*

or in semi-negatives' *He can hardly be at home yet It's only 6*

## 11.30 Modals on a scale of certainty

Degrees of certainty can be expressed on a scale:

*He is at home* (= it's a certain fact, non-modal *be*)

*He could be at home* (= doubtful possibility)

*He should be at home* (= doubtful possibility)

*He ought to be at home* (= doubtful possibility)

*He may be at home* (= it's possible, but uncertain)

*He might be at home* (= less certain than *may*)

*He isn't at home* (= it's a certain fact)

*He can't be at home* (= it's nearly certain)

*He couldn't be at home* (= more 'tentative' than *can't*)

*He may not be at home* (= possible, but uncertain)

*He mightn't be at home* (= less certain than *may not*)

(See 11.29ns1,3 for *shouldn't* and *oughtn't* to)

(See under deduction [> 11.32], for *must be*, *can't be*, etc.)

In speech, the element of doubt is increased with heavy stress:

*He could be at home* (i.e. but I very much doubt it).

Particular stress is also used in exclamations:

***It 'can't be true!*** ***You 'can't 'mean it!*** ***You 'must be mistaken!***

## 11.31 Certain and uncertain responses to questions

Yes/No answers to questions can reflect varying degrees of certainty felt by the speaker. For example, a 'certain' question may elicit an 'uncertain' answer:

*Does he like ice-cream?*

(direct question)

- *Yes he does No, he doesn't*

('certain' response)

- *He might (do) He may (do) He could (do)*

(possibility)

- *He mightn't He may not*

(uncertainty)

Similarly, an 'uncertain' question may elicit a 'certain' answer:

*Can he still be working?*

(disbelief)

*Mightn't he be working?*

(possibility)

- *Yes, he is No, he isn't*

('certain' response)

Modals to express deduction

- *He might (be) He may (be)* (possibility)
- *He may not be I don't think he can be* (possibility)
- *He can't be He couldn't be* (disbelief)

Of course, any other answer, not necessarily involving the use of a modal verb, may be available, depending on circumstances.

- *I don't know I'm not sure I don't think so etc.*

*Be* and *have been* are normally used in answers to questions with *be*

*Is he ill? - He may be*

*Was he ill? - He may have been*

*Do* often replaces other verbs:

*Will you catch an early train? - I may do*

*Has he received my message? ~ He could have/could have done*

## Uses of modals to express deduction

### 11.32 Examples of modal forms for deduction

***must* and *can't***

**present reference**

Certainty expressed by verb tenses:

<i>He is here</i>	<i>He lives here</i>	<i>He is leaving</i>
<i>He isn't here</i>	<i>He doesn't live here</i>	<i>He isn't leaving</i>

Deduction expressed by *must be* and *can't be*.

<i>He must be here</i>	<i>He must live here</i>	<i>He must be leaving</i>
<i>He can't be here</i>	<i>He can't live here</i>	<i>He can't be leaving</i>

**perfect and past reference.**

Certainty expressed by verb tenses

<i>He was here</i>	<i>He has left/He left early</i>	<i>He has been/was working late</i>
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Deduction expressed by *must have been* and *can't/couldn't have been*

<i>He must have been here</i>	<i>He must have left early</i>	<i>He must have been working late</i>
<i>He can't have been here</i>	<i>He can't have left early</i>	<i>He can't have been working late</i>
<i>He couldn't have been here</i>	<i>He couldn't have left early</i>	<i>He couldn't have been working late</i>

### 11.33 Expressing deduction with 'must be' and 'can't be', etc.

The distinction between possibility (often based on speculation) and deduction (based on evidence) has already been drawn [> 11.27]. The strongest and commonest forms to express deduction are *must* and *can't*. For teaching and learning purposes, it is necessary to establish the following clearly:

- 1 *can't be* (Not "*mustn't be*") is the negative of *must be*.
- 2 *can't have been* (Not "*mustn't have been*") is the negative of *must have been*.

*Have to/have got to be* (affirmative) can express, deduction in AmE:

*This has to be/has got to be the most stupid film I have ever seen*



Compare deduction [secondary use of modals > 11.3-4, 11.9] in:

**He must be hungry**

*He must have been hungry*

He ***mustn't*** be careless

*He must be careful*

*He **didn't have to be** at the dentist's.      He **had to be** at the doctor's.*

That **will be** Roland I can hear him at the door

*That will have been Roland* He said hed be back at 7

*That won't be Roland. I'm not expecting him yet*

*That won't have been Roland I'm not expecting him till 7*

Is Roland in his room?

- Yes. **he is** No. **he isn't** (certainty)

- Yes **he must be**. I heard him come in (deduction)

- No, he **won't be** He had to go out. (near-certainty)

- No, **he can't be** There's no light in his room (deduction)

### 11.34 General information about offers, requests and suggestions

### 11.34.1 Things and substances

1 Offering things and substances + appropriate responses.

2 Requests for things and substances + appropriate responses.

### 11.34.2 Actions

3 Making suggestions, inviting actions + appropriate responses.

4 Requesting others to do things for you + appropriate responses.

5 Offering to do things for others + appropriate responses.

6 Suggestions that include the speaker.

### 11.35 Things and substances: offers with modals

### 11.35.1 Typical offers inviting Yes/No responses

*Can/Could I offer you*

Will/Won't you have a sandwich/some coffee?

*Wouldn't you like*

Modals for offers, requests, suggestions

### 11.35.2 Typical responses

There are many non-modal forms (*Yes please No thank you* etc) and a few modal ones:

*Yes, I'd like one/some please Yes, I'd love one/some please*

However, we don't usually repeat the modal when we refuse an offer

A reply like *Wo. I won't* in answer to *Will you have ...?* could sound rude [ > 11.74.1].

### 11.35.3 Typical offers with 'What'

*What will you have?*<sup>9</sup> *What would you like to have?*

*What would you prefer? What would you rather have?*

### 11.36 Things and substances: requests with modals

#### 11.36.1 Typical requests inviting Yes/No responses [ > 11.19-20 13.6]

*Can/Could/May/Might I have a sandwich/some coffee (please)-?*

#### 11.36.2 Typical responses

*Of course you can/may (Not \*could/might\* [compare > 11.23])*

*No, you can't/may not (I'm afraid)*

(These answers with modals would be likely where e.g. a parent is addressing a child. Adult responses would be e.g. *Certainly* or *I'm afraid there isn't any, etc.*)

### 11.37 Actions: suggestions/invitations with modals

#### 11.37.1 Typical suggestions inviting Yes/No responses

*Will you/Won't you /Would you/Wouldn't you like to come for a walk (with me)?*

#### 11.37.2 Typical responses

*(Yes.) I'd like to I'd love to*

*(No.) I'd prefer not to, thank you*

Note that to must follow *like, love, etc.* [ > 16.17]. Negative responses like *No, I won't* are not appropriate [ > 11.74.1].

#### 11.37.3 Typical inquiry with 'What' to invite suggestions

*What would you like to do?*

### 11.38 Actions: using modals to ask someone to do something

#### 11.38.1 Typical requests inviting Yes/No responses [ > 11.19-20]

*Will you ...? Would you ...?* in these requests refer to willingness *Can you ...? Could you ...?* refer to ability.

*Will you (please)*

*Can/Could you (please) open the window for me)?*

*Would you (please)*

*Would you like to*

*Would you mind opening the window (for me)?*

*Will/Would you* sounds even more polite with the addition of *kindly* and *can/could* with the addition of *possibly* [compare > 11.22]

*Will/Would you kindly ...? Can/Could you possibly ...?*

We cannot use *May you...?* in requests for help.

**11.38.2 Typical responses**

*Yes of course (I will) No I'm afraid I can't (at the moment)*

**11.39 Actions: using modals to offer to do things for others**

**11.39.1 Typical offers to do things [ > 11 19-20]**

Offers beginning *Shall I ? Shall we ?* are very common

*Can I/ Could I/ Shall I open the window (for you)?*

*Would you like me to open the window (for you)?*

*That's the phone I'll get it for you (shall I)?*

*What shall/ can I do for you?*

And note very polite offers with *may* in e.g.

*May I take your coat?*

**11.39.2 Typical responses**

The usual responses are *Yes please No thank you*, or tag responses like *Can/ Could/ Would you?*<sup>9</sup> - *that's very kind*, but not *Yes, you can/ No, you can't*, which could sound rude

**11.40 Actions: suggestions that include the speaker**

**11.40.1 Typical suggestions inviting Yes/No responses**

*Shall we go for a swim? We can/ could/ might go for a swim*

**11.40.2 Typical responses**

*Yes lets (shall we)?* [compare > 16.4.1]

*No I'd rather we didn't/ No I'd rather not*

**11.40.3 Typical inquiries with 'What'**

*What shall/ can/ could we do this afternoon?*

## Expressing wishes with 'wish', 'if only', etc.

**11.41 The expression of wishes**

The verb *wish* can be followed by *to* and can be used like *want to* in formal style to express an immediate desire

*I wish to (or want to) apply for a visa*

In addition, we can express hypothetical wishes and desires with

- the verb *wish* often for something that might happen
- the phrase *if only* often to express longing or regret
- the phrases *it's (high) time* and *it's about time* to express future wishes and impatience that a course of action is overdue

After *wish if only it's (high) time it's about time*, we use

- the **past** tense to refer to **present** time
- the **past perfect** tense to refer to **past** time
- *would* and *could* to make general wishes or refer to the future

In other words, we 'go one tense back' [compare > 15.13n3]

Though *wish* and *if only* are often used interchangeably, *if only* expresses more strongly the idea that the situation wished for does not exist, whereas *wish* is used for something that might happen  
Details follow

## 11.42 The verb 'wish' and the phrase 'if only'

### 11.42.1 Present reference: 'wish/if only' with 'be' + complement

After *wish* and *if only* we may use

- the simple past of *be*

*I wish/If only Tessa was here now*

- the subjunctive [> 11.75.1] of *be*, i.e. *were* after all persons

This is formal and has the effect of making a wish more doubtful

*I wish/If only Tessa were here now*

*Wish* and *if only* can also be followed by the past progressive

*I wish/If only the sun was (or were) shining at this moment*

Compare *hope* + simple present or future for an immediate 'wish'

*I hope he is on time I hope he won't be late (Not \*I wish\*)* [> 9.37.3]

### 11.42.2 Present reference: 'wish/if only' + verbs other than 'be'

*I wish/If only I knew the answer to your question*

*I wish/If only I didn't have to work for a living*

*If only* (but not *wish*) will also combine with the simple present

*If only he gets this job it will make a great deal of difference*

Here, *if only* functions like *if* in Type 1 conditionals [> 14.4] and that is why the present (which has a future reference) can be used

### 11.42.3 Past reference with 'wish' and 'if only'

- *be* + complement *I wish/If only I had been here yesterday*

- verbs other than *be* *I wish/If only you had let me know earlier*

*I wish/If only we had been travelling*

*yesterday when the weather was fine*

In sentences like the above *if only* particularly expresses regret

*If only I had been here yesterday The accident would never have happened*

Compare

*I wish I had been here yesterday You all seem to have had such a good time (a simple wish, not the expression of regret)*

### 11.42.4 'Would' and 'could' after 'wish' and 'if only'

*I wish you would/wouldn't* often functions like a polite imperative

Because the wish can easily be fulfilled, *if only* is less likely

*I wish you would be quiet*

*I wish you wouldn't make so much noise*

We must use *could* and not *would* after *I* and *We*

*I wish I could be you*

*If only we could be together*

*I wish I could swim I wish I could have been with you*

*Would* expresses willingness, *could* expresses ability

*I wish he would come tomorrow (i.e. I don't know if he wants to)*

*I wish he could come tomorrow (i.e. I'm sure he can't)*

*I wish Tessa could have come to my party (i.e. she wasn't able to)*

Wishes expressed with *would* at the beginning of a sentence have either become obsolete (*Would that it were true*) or have become fossilized idioms (*Would to God ! knew<sup>1</sup> Would to God I had known<sup>1</sup>*)

#### 11.42.5 The position of 'only' after 'if'

*Only* can be separated from *if* and can be placed

- after *be* *If he **was/were only** here now!*
- before the past participle *If I **had only known**!*
- after the modal *If you **would only** try harder!*

Though the separation of *only* from *if* is common in exclamations (as above), it is also possible in longer sentences

*If more people were **only** prepared to be as generous as you are many children's lives would be saved (If **only** more people )*

#### 11.42.6 The use of 'wish' and 'if only' in short responses

Short responses can be made with *wish* and *if only*

*It would be nice if Tessa was/were/could be here now!*

*- I wish/If **only she was**! **She were!** **she could be!***

*You should have come with us - I **wish/If only I had!***

*I can help you with that box - I **wish/If only you would!***

#### 11.43 'It's (high) time' and 'It's about time'

These expressions are used with the past tense or the subjunctive [> 11.42.1, 11.75.1] to refer to the present and future

***It's (high) time he was (or were) taught a lesson***

***It's about time he learnt to look after himself***

(= the time has come)

*Could* (but not *would*) is sometimes possible

***Isn't it about time our baby **could** walk?***

Negatives are not used after *it's (high) time* and *it's about time*

Short responses are possible with these expressions

*I still haven't thanked Aunt Lucy for her present*

***It's time you did.*** (you're taking too long over it)

Compare the use of *it's time* in

*We've enjoyed the evening but **it's time (for us) to go***

(i.e. the time has now arrived for us to go)

*We've enjoyed the evening but **it's time we went***

(i.e. we should probably have left before this)

## Expressing preferences with 'would rather' and 'would sooner'

#### 11.44 'Would rather/sooner' to express preference

*Would + rather/sooner + bare infinitive* [> 16.5] expresses our personal preference, or enables us to talk about someone else's. This can refer to present time

***I'd rather/sooner be a miner than a bank clerk***

***He'd rather (not) go by car***

or to past time

***If I'd lived in 1400 I'd rather have been a knight than a monk***

***If she'd had the chance she'd rather have lived 100 years ago***

## Advisability duty/obligation and necessity

In negative responses, we can omit the infinitive

*Are you coming with us?* - *I'd rather not*

*Would you rather have been a knight?* - *I'd rather not (have been)*

*Would rather/sooner* can be modified by *far* and (very) *much*

*I'd far (or much) rather be happy than rich*

*I'd far (or much) sooner be young than old*

### 11.45 'Would rather/sooner' + clause

*Would rather* and *would sooner* can introduce a clause with its own subject (different from the subject of *would rather/sooner*) We use this construction when we want to say what we would prefer someone or something else to do or to be

*I'd rather/sooner he/Jack (etc) left on an earlier train*

Note the use of past tenses after *I'd rather* + clause

- the past with present or future reference

*I'd rather you were happy (or weren't unhappy)*

*I'd rather she sat (or didn't sit) next to me*

- the past perfect with past reference

*I'd rather you had been/hadn't been present*

*I'd rather he had told/hadn't told me about it*

When expressing negative preferences (to refer to the present or future), we can use *didn't* to avoid repeating the main verb

*You always go without me and I'd rather you didn't*

We can use *hadn't* in the same way to refer to the past

*Katie went by car and I'd rather she hadn't*

Short responses to express preferences are possible as follows

**present and future** *Frank wants to buy a motorbike - I'd rather he didn't*

**past** *I've told everyone about it - I'd rather you hadn't*

## Advisability, duty/obligation and necessity

### 11.46 Examples of forms expressing advisability, etc.

#### present advisability

*I should stop smoking*

*I ought to stop smoking*

*I'd better stop smoking*

(I still smoke)

#### present inescapable obligation

*I must stop smoking*

(I am obliged to stop smoking

and I shall it is my duty)

#### past advisability not acted upon

*I should have stopped smoking*

*I ought to have stopped smoking*

(I was advised to stop but

ignored the advice)

#### past inescapable obligation

*I had to stop smoking*

(I was obliged to stop smoking

and I did it was my duty)

For *should* and *ought to* in indirect speech [> 15.13n 6]

For the ambiguity of *should have* and *ought to have* [> 11.29n1]

For the uses of *must* and *had to* in indirect speech [15.13n6]

### 11.47 Advisability —> necessity: 'a scale of choice'

We can use modals and other verbs to express advisability on a scale which reflects a degree of choice. This scale may vary according to the subjective point of view of the speaker.

**advisability** *should*: generally means 'in my opinion, it is advisable to<sup>1</sup> or 'it is (your) duty'.  
*ought to*: can be slightly stronger than *should* in that it is sometimes used to refer to regulations or duties imposed from the outside: *You ought to vote* (= it is your public duty). *Should* is more likely than *ought to* in questions and negatives.  
*had better*: is stronger than *should* and *ought to*. It is used to recommend future action on a particular occasion, not in general. It carries a hint of threat, warning or urgency: *You'd better see a doctor*,  
*am/is/are to*: can be used for instructions [compare > 9.48.1]: *You're to report for duty at 7*  
*need (to)*: (= it is necessary to).  
*have to*: is an alternative to *must* and fills the gaps in that defective verb [> 11.4],  
*have got to*: like *have to*, but more informal.  
**necessity** *must*: like *have to* and *have got to*, suggests inescapable obligation. In the speaker's opinion there is no choice at all.

### 11.48 'Must', 'have to' and 'have got to'

As far as meaning is concerned, these three forms are largely interchangeable. However, there are differences between them. When used in the first person, *have to* and *have got to* (often pronounced /haevta/ and /hav'gDta/ in everyday speech) can refer to an external authority and might be preferable to *must* in: e.g.

***We have to/We've got to send these VAT forms back before the end of the month*** (i.e. we are required to do so by law)

On the other hand, *must* can express a speaker's authority over himself and might be preferable to *have to/have got to* in:

***I/We really must do something about the weeds in this garden*** (i.e. but I don't have to account to anybody if I don't)

In other persons {*you*, etc.) *must* conveys more strongly than *have to* the idea of inescapable obligation or urgency in: e.g.

***You must phone home at once It's urgent***

*Have to* and *have got to* are interchangeable for single actions:

***I have to/have got to check the oil level in the car.***

However they are not always interchangeable when we refer to habitual actions. The following are possible:

***I have to/I have got to leave home every morning at 7 30***

But when one-word adverbs of frequency (*always, sometimes, etc.*) are used *have to* is always preferable to *have got to*:

***I often have to get up at 5 Do you ever have to get up at 5?***

*Must* (not *have to* or *have got to*) is used in public notices or documents expressing commands:

*Cyclists **must** dismount Candidates **must** choose five questions*

We generally prefer *Must you. ?* to *Do you have to ?/Have you got to ?* to mean 'Can't you stop yourself...?'

***Must you always interrupt me when I'm speaking?***

*Must* is also used in pressing invitations, such as:

***You really must come and see us some time***

and in emphatic advice, such as:

***You really must take a holiday this year***

Even when heavily stressed, these uses of *must* do not mean or imply 'inescapable obligation'.

#### 11.49 Need' as a modal

*Need* has only some of the characteristics of modal verbs [> 11.1] in that it occurs in questions, *Need you go?*, and negatives, *You needn't go* [> 11.52-53]. In Yes/No questions, a negative answer is often expected:

***Need you leave so soon?*** (= surely not/I hope not)

Yes/No questions with *Need?* can be answered with *must* or *needn't*

***Need I type this letter again?*** ~ Yes, ***you must***/No, ***you needn't***

*Need* + *have* + past participle behaves in the same way:

***Need you have told him about my plans?***

***You needn't have told him about my plans***

Yes/No questions with *Need.*, *have .?* can be answered:

Yes, ***I had to*** (no choice) No, ***I needn't have*** (I had a choice)

*Need* as a modal verb also occurs in combination with negative-type adverbs like *hardly, never, seldom, rarely* and *scarcely* to make what are effectively negative statements:

***She need never know what you have just told me***

***I need hardly tell you how badly I feel about her departure***

***All you need do is to take a taxi from the airport*** (i.e. you need to do nothing except take a taxi)

*Need* can also occur in clauses with a negative main clause:

***I don't think you need leave yet.***

*Need* as a modal is mostly used in the negative (*I needn't go* [> 11.53]) to express lack of necessity. Otherwise we generally use the full verb *need to* (used like any regular verb):

***I need to/I needed to go to the dentist this morning.***

***I don't need to/I didn't need to go to the dentist***

***When will you next need to go to the dentist?***

***Why did you need to go to the dentist?***'etc.



**11.50 Advisability/necessity: the present and future**

*Should* *ought to*, etc refer to present time (except in indirect speech [> 15.13n6]) With the addition of adverbials such as *this afternoon* *tomorrow*, etc, they refer to future time

---

	<b><i>should</i></b>		
	<b><i>ought to</i></b>	<b><i>be</i></b>	<i>at the office (before 9 tomorrow)</i>
<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>had better</i></b>	<b><i>leave</i></b>	<i>(before 9 tomorrow)</i>
	<b><i>have to</i></b>	<b><i>be leaving</i></b>	<i>(before 9 tomorrow)</i>
	<b><i>have got to</i></b>		
	<b><i>must</i></b>		

---

*Will* *shall* will combine with *have to* and *need to* (full verb) for explicit future reference

---

	<b><i>need to</i></b>	<b><i>be</i></b>	<i>at the office before 9 (tomorrow)</i>
<b><i>I'll</i></b>	<b><i>have to</i></b>	<b><i>leave</i></b>	<i>London before 9 (tomorrow)</i>
		<b><i>be leaving</i></b>	<i>London before 9 (tomorrow)</i>

---

**11.51 Advisability/necessity: the perfect and past**

Reference to the past can be made in the following ways

---

	<b><i>should have</i></b>	<b><i>been</i></b>	<i>at the office before 9</i>
<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>ought to have</i></b>	<b><i>left</i></b>	<i>London before 9</i>
		<b><i>been leaving</i></b>	<i>London before 9</i>

---

		<b><i>be</i></b>	<i>at the office before 9</i>
<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>had to</i></b>	<b><i>leave</i></b>	<i>London before 9</i>
		<b><i>be leaving</i></b>	<i>London before 9</i>

---

*Should have* and *ought to have* could be followed (here) by *but I wasn't* / *didn't* to suggest that whatever was advisable or necessary did not happen

***I should have left London before 9 but I didn't***

*Had to* suggests that the action was performed in the past because this was necessary It could be followed by *and I was* *did*

***I had to leave London before 9 and I did***

The form *had got to* also exists, but it is not always suitable, *had to* is generally preferred

When other tenses are required, appropriate forms of *have to* must be used to fill the gaps of the defective modal *must* [> 11.4]

***I have had to remind him several times to return my book***

***Because of the bus strike I've been having to walk to work every day***

***The reason for our late arrival was that we had had to wait for***

***hours while they checked the plane before take off***

***If he had asked me I would have had to tell him the truth***

## Lack of necessity, inadvisability, prohibition

### 1.52 Examples of modal forms to express inadvisability, etc.

<b>present lack of necessity</b> <i>You needn't go there</i> Or <i>You don't need to go there</i> <i>You don't have to go there</i> <i>You haven't got to go there</i>	<b>past lack of necessity</b> <i>You needn't have gone there</i> (= you went there unnecessarily) <i>You didn't have to go there</i> Or <i>You didn't need to go there</i> (= there was no necessity to go there, whether you did go or not)
<b>present inadvisability</b> <i>You shouldn't start smoking</i> <i>You ought not to start smoking</i>	<b>past inadvisability, not acted upon</b> <i>You shouldn't have started smoking</i> <i>You oughtn't to have started smoking</i> (but e.g. you ignored this advice)
<b>present prohibition</b> <i>You can't park here</i> <i>You mustn't park here</i>	<b>failure to observe a prohibition</b> <i>You shouldn't have parked there</i> <i>You ought not to have parked there</i>

For *shouldn't* and *oughtn't* to in indirect speech [> 15.13n6]  
*Shouldn't have* and *oughtn't to have* are not ambiguous in the way that *should have* and *ought to have* can sometimes be ambiguous [compare > 11.29n1 ]  
For the use of *must(n't)* in indirect speech [> 15.13n6]  
*Have to* can replace *must* in the present [> 11.48, 11.50] but *don't/didn't have to* cannot replace *mustn't* in the present and past [> 11.55, 11.57.1 ]

### 1.53 Lack of necessity: 'needn't/don't have to/haven't got to'

Lack of necessity can be expressed by *needn't don't have to* and the more informal *haven't got to* (where *got* is often stressed)

*You needn't*  
*You don't have to*      *work such long hours*  
*You haven't got to*  
(i.e. you can work fewer hours, if you choose to)

The above forms can be used to express the subjective point of view of the speaker that the listener has a choice or has permission not to do something. Note that *(You) haven't to* is a regional BrE variation of *(You) don't have to*.

### 11.54 Inadvisability —> prohibition: 'a scale of choice'

We can use modals and other verbs to express inadvisability —> prohibition on a scale which reflects a degree of choice. This scale may vary according to the subjective view of the speaker. This is particularly the case when we are addressing others directly with *you*, or when we are referring to others with *he/she*, and *they*. At one end of the scale (see next page) the advice (however strong) can be ignored. At the other end of the scale, the prohibition is total and, in the speaker's opinion, there is no choice at all.

<b>inadvisability</b>	<i>shouldn't</i>	generally means 'in my opinion, it is inadvisable to/it is (your) duty not to'
	<i>oughtn't to</i>	can be slightly stronger than <i>shouldn't</i> It is sometimes used to refer to regulations and duties imposed from the outside <i>You oughtn't to park so near the crossing</i> suggests 'it's your public duty not to do this'
	<i>had better not</i>	is stronger than <i>shouldn't</i> and <i>oughtn't to</i> It is used to recommend future action on a particular occasion not in general It carries a hint of threat, warning, or urgency <i>You'd better not overtake here</i>
<i>am/is/are not to</i> can be used for instructions [> 9.48.1]		
	<i>can't</i>	is nearly as strong as <i>mustn't</i> to suggest something is prohibited
	<i>You can't park here</i>	
<b>prohibition</b>	<i>mustn't</i>	conveys absolute prohibition In the opinion of the speaker, there is no choice at all This opinion may be subjective or may be supported by some outside authority as in <i>You mustn't turn left</i> (e.g. there's a road sign forbidding it)

#### 11.55 'Mustn't', 'needn't', 'don't have to', 'haven't got to'

Though *must have to* and *have got to* are generally interchangeable in the affirmative [> 11.48], *don't have to* and *haven't got to* can never replace *mustn't* to convey prohibition Like *needn't* they convey lack of necessity [> 11.56.1]

*Mustn't* conveys the strongest possible opinion of the speaker

*You really mustn't say things like that in front of your mother*

*Julian mustn't hitchhike to Turkey on his own*

Prohibition reflecting external authority (in e.g. public notices, documents) is often expressed as *must not* (in full)

*Life belts must not be removed*

*Candidates must not attempt more than four questions*

*Haven't got to* should be avoided with adverbs of frequency (*always*, *sometimes*, etc.) for reasons of style So

I **needn't always** be at the office by 9

**don't always have to**

is usually preferred to *I haven't always got to be*

#### 11.56 Lack of necessity, etc.: present/future

##### 11.56.1 Lack of necessity: 'needn't', 'don't have to', 'haven't got to'

Reference to present or future time can be made as follows These forms are normally interchangeable [compare > 11.57.1]

Lack of necessity madvisability prohibition

I	<b>needn't</b>	<b>be</b>	at the office (until 9 tomorrow)
	<b>don't have to</b>	<b>leave</b>	until 9 (tomorrow)
		<b>be leaving</b>	untill 9 (tomorrow)

(Haven't got to is not generally used with progressive forms )

Won't (and shan't in BrE [> 9.36n3]) will combine with *have to* and *need to* (full verb) for explicit reference to the future

I **won't need to/have to be** at the office before 9 tomorrow

#### 11.56.2 Inadvisability/prohibition: 'shouldn't/oughtn't to/mustn't', etc.

You **shouldn't/oughtn't to/can't/mustn't be** late for meetings  
(present/habitual')

You **shouldn't/oughtn't to/had better not/can't/mustn't be** late tomorrow (future)

*Shouldn't* *oughtn't* *to* *had better not* *can't* and *mustn't* are used to refer to the future, although they do not have future forms Possible alternatives are

*Shouldn't/oughtn't to/had better not* can be replaced by

**It won't be advisable** (for her) to play games for the next month

*Can't* and *mustn't* can be replaced by

We **won't be allowed** to park here for long

You **will be forbidden** to enter the courtroom before 9 30

Traffic in this street **will be prohibited by law**

#### 11.57 Lack of necessity/inadvisability/prohibition: perfect/past

##### 11.57.1 Lack of necessity: 'needn't have', 'didn't have to', 'didn't need to'

These forms mean roughly the same thing in English

I **needn't have gone** to the office yesterday

I **didn't have to (or/ didn't need to)go** to the office yesterday  
(have and need are stressed)

(= I went there, but it was unnecessary)

When *have* and *need* are unstressed, they mean something different from *needn't have*

I **didn't have to/ didn't need to go** to the office yesterday  
(= I knew it was unnecessary and I didn't go)

Because modals are defective [> 11.4 11.6.1] appropriate alternatives must be used in some tenses

**It wouldn't have been necessary** to change at Leeds if we had caught the earlier train

**I haven't had to cancel** my appointment after all

If he had asked me **I would have had to tell** him the truth

##### 11.57.2 Inadvisability: 'shouldn't have' and 'oughtn't to have'

Both these forms suggest criticism of an action

You **shouldn't have** paid the plumber in advance  
**oughtn't to have**

or failure to observe a prohibition

You **shouldn't have** stopped on the motorway  
**oughtn't to have**

## Uses of modals to express habit

### 11.58 Modal forms expressing habit

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**will:** *He will always complain if he gets the opportunity*  
**would:** *When we were students we would often stay up all night*  
**used to** *Jackie used to make all her own dresses*  
*Fred never used to be so bad-tempered*

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### 11.59 Notes on the form of 'used to'

- 1 *Used to* occurs only in the simple past form.
- 2 Questions and negatives with *used to* may be formed without the auxiliary *do*:  
***Used he to live in Manchester? You usedn't (used not) to smoke***  
 These forms are relatively rare. *Usedn't* is probably avoided because it is difficult to say and spell. *Did* and *didn't* are more commonly used to form questions and negatives. In such instances, use is often treated as an infinitive in writing:  
***Did he use to live in Manchester? You didn't use to smoke***  
 In spoken English, we cannot tell whether a speaker is saying *Did he use to* or *Did he used to*, since what we hear is /ju:st/ not /ju:zd/ as in *used* (= made use of). The forms *did (he) use to* and *(he) didn't use to* are logical on grounds of grammatical form (compare *didn't do*, Not *'didn't did/\*didn't done\**). We can avoid the problem of the negative by using *never* [compare > 7.40.1]:  
***Fred never used to be so difficult.***
- 3 Question tags [> 13.17-18] and short responses are formed with *didn't*, rather than *usedn't*:  
***He used to live in Manchester, didn't he?***  
 Note these short answers, etc. [compare > 13.5]:  
***Did you use to smoke? - Yes, I did or Yes, I used to***  
***- No, I didn't or No, I didn't use to***  
 (No, I used not to is rare.)  
***He used to live in Manchester and so did I (Not \*used\*)***

### 11.60 Past habit: 'used to' and the simple past

*Used to* refers only to the past. If we wish to refer to *present* habit, we must use the simple present tense (Not *\*I use to\**) [> 9.6-8]. We rely on *used to* to refer to habits that we no longer have, so there is a contrast between past and present. This contrast is often emphasized with expressions like *but now*, *but not any more/any longer* which combine with the simple present:

***I used to smoke, but I don't any more/any longer***  
***I never used to eat a large breakfast, but I do now***

However, *used to* can refer simply to discontinued habit without implying a contrast with the present. For be *used to* [> 10.26.1, 16.56]. If we wish to use the simple past to refer to past habit, we always need a time reference. Compare:

*I **collected** stamps **when I was a child*** (simple past + time reference)

*I **used to collect** stamps (when I was a child)* (time reference not necessary with *used to*, but may be included)

*Used to* is not possible with *since* [> 7.31] and for [> 7.32]:

*I **lived** in the country **for three years*** (Not '*used to live*')

For the past progressive referring to repeated actions [> 9.20.4],

#### 11.61 Past habit: 'used to', 'would' and the simple past

We can refer to past habit in the following ways:

*When I worked on a farm I **always used to get up** at 5 a m*

*When I worked on a farm, I **would always get up** at 5 a m*

*When I worked on a farm, I **always got up** at 5 a m*

*Would* can be used in place of *used to*, but, like the simple past, it always requires a time reference. We often use it to talk about regular activities, particularly in narrative, or when we are reminiscing. *Would* is never used at the beginning of a story: the scene must first be set with the simple past or *used to* - In familiar narrative, *would* can be reduced to *y*:

*When I was a boy we always spent (or used to spend) our holidays on a farm We'd get up at 5 and we'd help milk the cows Then we'd return to the farm kitchen, where we would eat a huge breakfast*

#### 11.62 'Used to' to describe past states, etc.

*Used to* (not *would*) combines with *be*, *have* (possession) and other stative verbs [> 9.3] to describe past states:

*I **used to be** a waiter, but now I'm a taxi-driver* (past state)

*I **used to have** a beard, but I've shaved it off* (past possession)

If we use past tenses instead of *used to*, we need a time reference:

*I **was** a waiter **years ago**, but now I'm a taxi-driver*

#### 11.63 'Will/would' to describe characteristic habit/behaviour

*Will* can sometimes be used in place of the simple present and *would* in place of the simple past to refer to a person's characteristic habits or behaviour. *Will* and *would* are unstressed when used in this way:

*In fine weather, he **will often sit** in the sun for hours*

*As he grew older, he **would often talk** about his war experiences*

And note common fixed phrases with *will* -

**Boys will be boys Accidents will happen**

*Will* and *would* (usually with heavy stress) are often used accusingly to criticize a person's characteristic behaviour:

*Harriet **will keep leaving** her things all over the floor*

*That's just typical of Harry He **would say** a thing like that<sup>1</sup>*

Sometimes *will* used in this way implies insistence, or wilful refusal to follow advice. Note that although *will* is not normally used after *if* [> 14.4-6, 14.24.2], it can be in this sense:

*If you **'will** (stressed) go to bed so late no wonder you're tired*

**11.64 'Will' and 'would' to describe natural tendency**

Like the simple present tense [> 9.6-8] *will* (with a 3rd person subject) can refer to general truths or to the qualities of things; *would* can sometimes refer to the past.

*Water will boil at 100°C It won't boil at under 100°C*

*I planted a vine last year but it wouldn't grow because it didn't get enough sun*

In the same way *will* and *would* can suggest 'has the capacity to'.

*Would* is more tentative than *will*:-

*That container will/won't hold a gallon (definite statement)*

*That container would/wouldn't hold a gallon ('tentative')*

**'Dare' as a modal verb and as a full verb****11.65 Forms of 'dare' as a modal verb and as a full verb**

Like *need* *dare* can work as a modal verb or as a full verb with little or no difference in meaning

**present reference**

**modal verb**

*dare daren't/don't dare + go*

**full regular verb**

*dare don't dare + to go*

**past reference**

**modal verb.**

*dared/dared not/didn't dare + go*

**full regular verb:**

*dared/didn't dare + to go*

**11.66 Notes on the forms of 'dare'**

*Dare* as a modal is not nearly as common as *need* and *used to* as modals. Its function is generally filled by verb phrases like *(not) be afraid to* or *(not) have the courage to* [> 11.67],

Like modal *need* [> 11.49], modal *dare* occurs in questions and negatives and is rare in the affirmative, unless a negative is expressed or implied:

*Dare you do it? - I daren't do it*

*I hardly dare tell him what happened (implied negative)*

Questions/negatives are more commonly formed with *do/does did*

*Do you dare tell him? I don't dare tell him*

*Did you dare tell him I didn't dare tell him*

Such forms are anomalous because *dare* is like a full verb in taking *do*, but like an auxiliary in taking a bare infinitive.

*To* can be used after *dare* in the examples with *do don't* and *d'd d'dn't*, making it a full verb, but not changing its meaning:

*Do you dare to tell him? I don't dare to tell him etc.*

Both *dare not* and *dared not* can be used to refer to the past, though this is more formal:

*Mother dare(d) not tell father she'd given away his old jacket*

*Dare* cannot combine with *be* + progressive, but it can combine with

*Have* + past participle, though this is not very common:

*I didn't like their new house though I daren't have said so*

### 11.67 The use of 'dare' to express courage or lack of courage

*Daren't* is used in the present (to refer to present or future time) and can be replaced by *am/is/are afraid to*:

*I'd like to ask for the day off, but I **daren't*** (= I'm afraid to)

*Don't dare to* (regular verb) is acceptable in the present:

*I'd like to ask for the day off, but I **don't dare (to)***

*Didn't dare to* is used in the past:

*I wanted to ask for the day off, but I **didn't dare (to)***

*Dare* can also be used in the affirmative, but this is less common:

*Sally is the only person in our class who **dares (to)** answer Miss Thompson back*

### 11.68 'Dare' for 'challenging'

*Dare* as a full transitive verb is used especially by children when challenging each other to do something dangerous:

*I **dare you to** jump off that wall*

*I didn't want to do it, but **he dared me (to)***

### 11.69 'Dare' for expressing outrage

*Dare*, as a modal, is often used to reprimand and express outrage or strong disapproval. It is especially common after *How*:

***How dare you! How dare she** suggest such a thing'*

***Don't you dare speak** to me like that again'*

***You dare raise** your voice! [imperative, > 9.54]*

*<sup>^</sup> I'm going to smash this vase! - **Just you dare!***

*Dared* can be used after *How* in: e.g.

***How dared he** tell everybody I was looking for a new job ?*

### 11.70 The use of 'daresay'

The verbs *dare* and *say* can combine into a single verb, *daresay*, (sometimes spelt as two separate words, *dare say*) which can be used in the first person singular and plural (present tense only) to mean *I suppose* or *it's possible*:

***I daresay** you'll phone me if you're going to be late tonight*

Or in the sense of 'accept what you say':

*This is supposed to be a cheap restaurant It says so in this guidebook - **I daresay** it does, but look at these prices<sup>1</sup>*

## Other uses of modal auxiliaries

### 11.71 'May' in formulas for expressing wishes

*May* occurs in fixed phrases like:

***May God** be with you! **May you live** to be a hundred!*

*May* can also be used in the sense of 'We hope very much that...':

***May there never be** a nuclear war'*



**11.72 'May/might'**

**11.72.1 'May/might (just) as well'**

*May as well* and *might as well* can be used interchangeably to express the idea 'it makes no difference':

*It's not very far, so **we may/might as well go on foot***

*May as well* and *might as well* can differ as follows:

*Shall we walk or take a bus?*

- **We may/might as well walk** (i.e. it makes no difference)

*What a slow bus this is!*

- Yes, we **might (Not \*may\*) just as well walk** (i.e. we'd get there more quickly)

**11.72.2 'May/might/could well' = 'it is extremely likely'**

*May well*, *might well* and *could well* can be used interchangeably:

***He may/might/could well find that the course is too difficult***

**11.72.3 'May/might' in the sense of I grant you...'**

This construction is often used in discussion and argument.

*Your typewriter **may/might be** a wonderful machine, but it's still old-fashioned compared with a word-processor*

**11.72.4 'Might/could (at least)' in nagging complaints/reproach**

***You might (at least) clean the bathtub after you've used it***

(*I*) *might have* + past participle of verbs like *guess*, *know* and *suspect* can reinforce complaint:

***I might have guessed he'd fail to read the instructions***

**11.72.5 'Might' in requests**

*Might* can replace the imperative [> 9.52] in:

*While you're out **you might** (no stress) **post** this letter for me*

**11.73 'Shall'**

Apart from its main uses with *I/we* to refer to the future [> 9.36], and to make offers/suggestions [> 11.39-40], *shall* can be used with other persons (*you*, *he*, *they*, etc.) in e.g. the following ways [compare > 11.23]:

***You shall pay for this*** (threat)

***You shall* (stressed) **have a car** for your birthday** (promise)

***They shall not pass!*** (determination)

***When he comes in nobody shall say a word*** [> 9.54n5] (order)

**11.74 'Won't/wouldn't' and 'would/wouldn't'**

**11.74.1 'Won't' and 'wouldn't' for 'refusal'**

*Won't* and *wouldn't* are commonly used to express refusal in the present and the past:

*Drink your milk, Jimmy!* - ***I won't*** (Also, BrE: ***I shan't!***)

*I offered Jimmy some milk, but **he wouldn't drink it***

'Refusal' (or resistance to effort) can be extended to things:

***The car won't start*** ***The car wouldn't start this morning***

**11.74.2 'Would' and 'wouldn't' in place of the simple present tense**

We often use *would* and *wouldn't* in place of the simple present tense

and sometimes in place of *will/won't*, when we want to sound less definite (*I would think that* , etc):

<i>That <b>seems</b> the best solution to me</i>	(definite)
<i>That <b>would seem</b> the best solution to me</i>	(less definite)
<i>Friday evening <b>is not</b> (or <b>won't be</b>) very convenient</i>	(definite)
<i>Friday evening <b>wouldn't be</b> very convenient</i>	(less definite)

## 11.75 'Should'

### 11.75.1 Noun clauses with 'should'

There are two classes here:

1 Many verbs, particularly reporting verbs: *say*, etc. [> App 45] can be followed by (*that*) *should* or (*that*) *ought to* referring to obligation, advice, etc.:

*He said (**that**) I **should** (or **ought to**) see a doctor*

2 After verbs referring to proposals, suggestions, requests and orders (e.g. *propose*, *suggest*), we may follow with (*that*) *should* (not *ought to*), the simple present, or the subjunctive [> App 45.3]. The subjunctive (rare in English) refers to what could or should happen in hypothetical situations.

In the present, the base form of the verb remains the same in all persons: *If I/you/he* (etc.) *be*; *It is important that you/he* (etc.) *go*

The past subjunctive of *be* is *were*: *If I/you/he* (etc.) *were*; *I wish I/he* (etc.) *were*.

### 11.75.2 That... should' after 'suggest', etc.

- **future reference**: affirmative/negative after (*that*):

*That should* can be used after such verbs as *ask*, *propose*, *recommend* and *suggest*; alternatively, the present or subjunctive can be used in BrE or the subjunctive in AmE. *That* is generally dropped in informal style:

<i>I suggest (that) he <b>should/shouldn't</b> apply for the job</i>	(should)
<i>I suggest (that) he <b>applies/doesn't</b> apply for the job</i>	(present)
<i>I suggest (that) he <b>apply/not</b> apply for the job</i>	(subjunctive)

- **past reference**: affirmative/negative after (*that*):

In past reported suggestions, the (*that*) *should* construction and the subjunctive can be replaced by a past tense:

<i>I suggested (that) <b>they should/shouldn't</b> drive along the coast</i>
<i>I suggested (that) <b>they drive/not</b> drive along the coast</i>
<i>I suggested (that) <b>they drove/didn't</b> drive along the coast</i>

### 75.3 That...should' after certain adjectives

Adjectives referring to desirability or urgency, such as *essential* and *urgent*, can be used in the same way [> App 44]:

<i>It is vital (that) we <b>should be</b> present</i>	(should)
<i>It is vital (that) we <b>are</b> present</i>	(present)
<i>It is vital (that) we <b>be</b> present</i>	(subjunctive)

The reference may also be to the past:

*It was important (that) he **should apply/apply/applied** for the job*

**11.75.4 That...should' after I'm surprised', etc.**

*That should* can be used after phrases with adjectives and nouns expressing feelings and emotions: e.g. *I'm annoyed, I'm surprised, It's funny, It's a pity.*

***I'm surprised that he should feel like that.***

If we wish to be more emphatic, we may use the simple present:

***I'm surprised that he feels like that***

*Shouldn't* is possible but often avoided (because of its ambiguity) in such cases and the negative present or past are preferred:

**present reference:** *I'm surprised that he doesn't feel any remorse*

**past reference:** *I'm surprised that he didn't feel any remorse*

The past or *should have* can be used in: e.g.

*I was surprised that he made/should have made the same mistake*

**11.76 'There' + modal auxiliaries**

Parallel structures to *there is/there are*, etc. [> 10.17] can be formed with modal auxiliaries in various combinations. Here are some examples:

**11.76.1 'There' + modal + 'be'**

***There could be no doubt about it***

***There won't be an election in June***

***There must be a mistake***

**11.76.2 'There' + modal + 'have been' + complement**

***There can't have been any doubt about it.***

***There might have been a strike***

***There oughtn't to have been any difficulty about it.***

**11.76.3 'There' + modal + 'be' + complement + verb'-ing'**

***There can't be anyone waiting outside***

***There never used to be anyone living next door***

***There could be something blocking the pipe.***

**11.76.4 'There' + modal + 'have been' + complement + verb'-ing'**

***There might have been someone waiting outside***

***There must have been something blocking the pipe***

***There could have been someone crossing the road***

**11.76.5 'There' + modal: question forms**

All the usual question forms are possible: e.g.

**Yes/No questions:** ***Could there have been any doubt?***

***Might there have been someone waiting***

**negative questions:** ***Wouldn't there have been a strike?***

***Couldn't there have been an accident***

**question-word questions:** ***When might there be an answer?***

***Why couldn't there have been a mistake<sup>9</sup>***

# 12 The passive and the causative

## The passive: general information about form

### 12.1 Active voice and passive voice

Active voice and passive voice refer to the form of a verb. In the active, the subject of the verb is the person or thing doing the action:

*John **cooked** the food last night*

Other typical active verb forms: *eats, made will take*

In the passive, the action is done to the subject:

*The food **was cooked** last night*

Other typical passive verb forms: *is eaten, was made, will be taken*

The passive occurs very commonly in English: it is not merely an alternative to the active, but has its own distinctive uses.

### 12.2 Form of the passive

Passives can be formed in the following ways:

1 A tense of *be* (> 10.6-14) + past participle:

**active:** *He cooks/has cooked/will cook the food*

*He is/was cooking the food*

**passive:** *The food is/has been/will be + cooked*

*The food is/was being + cooked*

2 Modal (> 11.1) + *be/have been* + past participle:

**active:** *He may cook/may have cooked the food*

**passive:** *The food may be/have been + cooked*

3 Infinitive (> 16.2): *to be/to have been* + past participle:

**active:** *He is/was to cook the food*

**passive:** *The food is to be/was to have been + cooked*

4 *-ing* form (> 16.41): *being/having been* + past participle:

**active:** *Cooking/Having cooked*

**passive:** *Being/Having been + cooked*

### 12.3 Notes on the form of the passive

1 Formation: regular and irregular past participles

We form the passive with a form of *be* and a past participle. The past participle does not necessarily refer to past time. For regular and irregular past participles (> Apps 39, 40). (The past participle is used to form perfect active tenses, e.g. *He has left* [> 9.22], as well as all passives). Rules applying to the use of tenses in the active [> 9.2] apply in the passive. For example, an action in progress *now* requires the present progressive in: e.g.

*Your steak **is being grilled** and will be ready in a minute*

2 Transitive and intransitive verbs

The passive occurs only with verbs used transitively, that is, verbs

## 12 The passive and the causative

that can be followed by an object [> 1.9]:

**active:** *Someone found this wallet in the street*

**passive:** *This wallet was found in the street*

Many verbs can be used transitively or intransitively.

*The door opened* (perhaps by itself)

*The door was opened* (perhaps by someone)

### 3 Personal and impersonal subjects

The passive can refer to things (a *letter was written*, etc.) or people:

**active:** *The company has sent Smithers to California for a year*

**passive:** *Smithers has been sent to California for a year.*

### 4 Direct and indirect objects [> 1.9, 1.13]

Verbs like *bring* and *give*, which can have two objects, e.g. *Tom gave me* (indirect) *a pen* (direct), can have two passive forms:

*I was given a pen by Tom* (indirect object becomes subject)

*A pen was given (to) me by Tom* (direct object becomes subject)

Because we are often more interested in people (or animals) than things, personal subjects tend to be more common than impersonal ones. Thus, *I was given this pen* is more likely to

occur than *This pen was given to me*. In sentences like the

second example, *to* (or *for*) can be omitted before a personal

pronoun (*This pen was given me*) but not usually otherwise: *This*

*pen was given to my father*

### 5 Stative verbs [> 9.3, App 38]

Many stative verbs cannot be used in the passive, even when they are transitive: *I love beans on toast* (active voice only)

Verbs like *measure*, which can be stative or dynamic, can only be passive in their dynamic sense:

**stative:** *This desk measures 125 x 60 cms*

**dynamic:** *This desk has been measured*

### 6 Progressive forms

Only present and past progressive forms are common:

*He is being interviewed now* *He was being interviewed at 10*

However, modals with progressive passive sometimes occur:

*I know Mark was going to have an interview some time this*

*afternoon* *He may be being interviewed at this very moment*

### 7 Phrasal verbs [> 8.23-30]

Transitive constructions with the pattern verb + adverb particle (*A gust of wind blew the tent down*) can be used in the passive:

*Our tent was blown down* (by a gust of wind)

For possible passives with verb + preposition [> Apps 28-30]:

*The newsagent's has been broken into*

Only a few verbs of the type verb + particle + preposition (*We have done away with the old rules*) can be used in the passive:

*The old rules have been done away with*

### 8 The -ing form and the to-infinitive [> 16.13, 16.42, 16.58-59]

Passive constructions are common after verbs followed by the -ing form, such as *enjoy*, *like* and *remember*:

*Most people don't like being criticized*

and after verbs followed by a to-infinitive:

*He hates to be criticized*

## Uses of the passive

We can use the passive (-ing form only) after conjunctions such as *on* and *after* [> 1.62.2, 8.4.4]:

**On/After being informed** that her mother was seriously ill she hurried back to England (i.e. When she was informed...)

### 9 Active verbs with a passive meaning

A few active verbs sometimes have a passive meaning: *This surface cleans easily* really means 'It can be/It is cleaned easily':  
*These clothes wash well* *This wine is selling quickly*  
*What's showing at the cinema this week?*  
*Her novel is reprinting already*

### 10 Verbs generally used in the passive

A small number of verbs are used more frequently in the passive than in the active: e.g. *be born*, *be married*, *be obliged*  
*I'm not obliged to work overtime if I don't want to*

### 11 Adverbs of manner in passive sentences [> 7.53]

Adverbs of manner can occur before or after the participle:  
*This room has been badly painted/painted badly*

### 12 The passive and reflexive verbs

English often uses the passive where other European languages use reflexive verbs: *burn myself*, *hurt myself*, etc. [> 4.25, 4.27]:  
*I was hurt in a car crash last summer*

*Jim was in a fight and his shirt was torn in the struggle*

We do not normally use the passive when responding spontaneously:

*What's the matter? - I've burnt/cut/hurt, etc. myself.*

### 13 We often use abbreviated passive constructions when expressing:

- wishes: *I'd like it (to be) fried/cleaned/repainted, etc.*
- preferences: *I like it (when it is) fried/boiled etc.*

## Uses of the passive

### 12.4 Uses of the passive

#### 12.4.1 Spontaneous and deliberate use of the passive

In fluent English, passives occur naturally and spontaneously, without a conscious change from 'active' to 'passive'. In fact, active equivalents would be hard to produce for sentences like:

*The origin of the universe will probably never be explained*

*Rome was not built in a day*

The passive is sometimes deliberately chosen in preference to the active, especially when speakers do not wish to commit themselves to actions, opinions, or statements of fact of which they are not completely certain:

*This matter will be dealt with as soon as possible*

*Thousands of books are published every year and very few of them are noticed Even those that are reviewed in the papers rarely reach large audiences*

#### 12.4.2 The passive for focus

We use the passive when we wish to focus on a happening which is more important to us than who or what causes the happening - or

when there is simply no need to mention the doer. If we say:

**Our roof was damaged in last night's storm**  
we are mainly concerned with the roof and what happened to it.  
Similarly:

**My cars been scratched' Thousands of beaches are polluted**  
The happening may concern people:

**Charles I was beheaded in 1649**

#### 12.4.3 Avoiding vague words as subjects

We always prefer the passive when we wish to avoid using a vague word as subject (e.g. *someone, a person, etc.*):

**After my talk, I was asked to explain a point I had made**  
Conversely, the passive may be avoided (where we might expect it) when we wish to make what is described personal:

**They operated on father last night**

The passive is used in English where other European languages might prefer an indefinite pronoun subject like *one* [ > 4.9-11]. In a formal context we would avoid *one*- e.g.

**The form has to be signed in the presence of a witness** (Not "*One has to sign...*")

The passive is obligatory in notices such as *English Spoken, Loans Arranged, Shoes Repaired*, etc. (Not "*One...\**"). Such notices are normally abbreviated: *English (is) spoken*

#### 12.5 The use of 'by', etc. + agent after a passive

An **agent** is a 'doer', i.e. the person or thing that performs the action indicated by the verb. *By* + agent in passive constructions tells us who or what did something:

**The window was broken by the boy who lives opposite**

**The window was broken by a stone**

*By* + agent is only necessary when the speaker wishes to say (or the hearer has to know) who or what is responsible for the event in question. The position of *by* + agent at the end of a clause or sentence gives it particular emphasis:

**The window was broken by a slate that fell off the roof**

Information can be given by means of phrases other than *by* + agent.

**This bridge was built in 1816/of stone/before the war** etc.

*By* + agent is often used with the passive of verbs like *build, compose, damage, design, destroy, discover, invent, make, wreck* and *write*. Note now a subject-question in the active is often answered by a passive, so that the important information (i.e. what the questioner wants to know) is emphasized by being at the end.

**Who composed that piece? - It was composed by Mozart**

**What destroyed the village? - It was destroyed by a bomb**

Note the inclusion of *by* in questions with *Who(m)*

**Who(m) was 'Bleak House' written by? ~ Dickens**

*With* is often used with an agent, especially after past participles such as *crammed, crowded, filled, packed*

**During the World Cup our streets were filled with football fans**

## Uses of the passive

But compare *by* + agent and *with* ['means/method', > 7.11] in: e.g.

*He was killed **by a falling stone*** (accidental)

*He was killed **with a knife*** (deliberate) [compare > App 25.17]

### 12.6 'Get' + past participle

*Get* is often used instead of *be* before certain past participles in colloquial English. *Be* can sometimes be replaced by *become*:

*I tried to find my way round London without a map and **got lost***

***I became concerned** when he hadn't come home by midnight*

(Compare *get/become* + adjective in e.g. *get fat/old* [> 10.26]).

*Get* combines with past participles like: *arrested, caught, confused, delayed, divorced, dressed, drowned, drunk, elected, engaged, hit, killed, lost, married and stuck*. We use *get* when:

- we do something to ourselves [compare > 4.26-27]:

*I **got dressed** as quickly as I could.*

- we manage to arrange something in our own favour. Reflexive pronouns can often be used in such cases:

*I wasn't surprised she **got elected** after all the efforts she made*

*I see old Morton **has got himself promoted** at last*

- something (often unfavourable) happens beyond our control:

*We **got delayed** because of the holiday traffic*

A few combinations with *get* + past participle are used as commands

(***Get dressed! Get washed!***) or insults (*Oh, **get lost**, will you!*).

### 12.7 The passive compared with adjectival past participles

Many words such as *broken, interested, shut, worried* [> 6.14-15, 7.51]

can be used either as adjectives or as past participles in passive constructions. A difference can be noted between:

*I was **worried** about you all night* (adjective: a state)

*I was **worried by** mosquitoes all night* (passive: dynamic verb)

If the word is an adjective, it cannot be used with *by* + agent and cannot be transposed into a sentence in the active.

### 12.8 The passive with verbs of 'saying' and 'believing'

We need to be sure of our facts in a statement like *Muriel pays less income tax than she should*. It is often 'safer' to say e.g. *Muriel is said to pay less income tax than she should*. If it seems necessary to be cautious, we can use passive constructions like the following:

- 1 *It* (+ passive + that-clause) with verbs like *agree, allege, arrange, assume, believe, consider, decide, declare, discover, expect, fear, feel, find, hope, imagine, know, observe, presume, prove, report, say, show, suggest, suppose, think, understand*

***It is said that** there is plenty of oil off our coast*

***It is feared that** many lives have been lost in the train crash*

- 2 *There* (+ passive + to be + complement) with a limited selection of verbs: e.g. *acknowledge, allege, believe, consider, fear, feel, know, presume, report, say, suppose, think, understand*:

***There is said to be** plenty of oil off our coast*

***There are known to be** thousands of different species of beetles*



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### 3 Subject other than *it* (+ passive + to-infinitive) with a few verbs:

e.g. *acknowledge, allege, believe, consider, declare, know, recognize, report, say, suppose, think, understand*

***Mandy is said to be some kind of secret agent***

***Turner was considered to be a genius even in his lifetime***

***Homeopathic remedies are believed to be very effective***

Other verbs beside *be* are possible in the infinitive:

***Jane is said to know all there is to know about chimpanzees***

Note how *suppose* has two different meanings in:

***He is supposed to be at work at the moment***

This can mean 'People think he is at work' or 'It is his duty to be at work'. *There + be* also combines with *suppose*

***There is supposed to be a train at 12.37***

## 12.9 Some typical contexts for the passive

### 12.9.1 Formal notices and announcements

*Candidates **are required** to present themselves fifteen minutes*

*before the examination begins. They **are asked** to be punctual*

*Passengers **are requested** to remain seated until the aircraft comes to a complete stop [compare > 11.23].*

### 12.9.2 Press reports

Often the agent is not known or does not need to be mentioned:

*The search for the bank robbers continues. Meanwhile many people **have been questioned** and the owner of the stolen getaway car **has been traced***

### 12.9.3 Headlines, advertisements, notices, etc.

*KENNEDY ASSASSINATED' TRADE AGREEMENTS BROKEN'*

*PRICES SLASHED' ALL GOODS GREATLY REDUCED'*

*PETROL COUPONS ACCEPTED*

### 12.9.4 Scientific writing (to describe 'process')

*The mixture **is placed** in a crucible and **is heated** to a temperature of 300°C. It **is then allowed** to cool before it **can be analysed***

## The causative

### 12.10 Form of the causative

The causative is formed with *have* + object + past participle: e.g.

Tenses:

present:

*We have our house decorated every year*

*We are having our house decorated soon*

past:

*We had our house decorated last year*

present perfect:

*We have just had our house decorated*

future:

*We will have our house decorated next year*

*We'll be having our house decorated next year*

Modals:

'present':

*We may have our house decorated next year*

*We may be having our house decorated soon*

## 12.11 Notes on the form of the causative

- 1 Formation: regular and irregular past participles  
We form the causative with *have* + noun or pronoun object + the past participle of a verb, regular or irregular [> Apps 39, 40]:  
*I've just **had my car repaired** I'm going to **have my hair cut***  
*What about the children? - I'm **having them collected** at 6*  
*Get* can be used in place of *have*, but it has a more limited use and often conveys a slightly different meaning [> 12.13].  
Care must be taken with the word order to avoid confusion:  
*I **had built** a house* (past perfect)  
*I **had a house built*** (causative: simple past)
- 2 Phrasal verbs  
A sentence can end in a preposition or adverb particle [> 8.22]:  
*The fridge isn't working properly I'm **having it looked at***  
There are instances where the past participle can be omitted:  
*I **had a tooth out** this morning (**for pulled out**)*

## 12.12 The causative used for focus

### 12.12.1 The use of the causative for things

The causative is similar to the passive. We focus on what is done to something or someone, not on what someone does:

- active:** ***I'm servicing my car** Jack **is servicing** my car*  
(i.e. I'm doing the job myself; or I know who is doing it)
- passive:** ***My car is being serviced***  
(i.e. someone is doing the job for me)
- causative:** ***I'm having my car serviced***  
(i.e. I'm responsible for causing someone to do the job)

When we use the passive or the causative, we may not know or may not need to name who performs a service for us. However, in contrast to the passive, we use the causative to stress the fact that we are 'causing' someone else to perform a service for us. We therefore often **use it with such verbs as** *build clean, decorate, deliver, develop (a film), mend, photocopy, press print, repair, and service*. We **do not** normally use the active (*I am servicing my car*) to mean that someone else is doing something for us. Nor can we say *I want to cut my hair* when we mean *I want to have my hair cut*. Note that *by* + agent is added only when it is necessary to mention who or what did the action:  
*We're **having/getting the job done by some local builders** They are much cheaper and more reliable than anyone else*

### 12.12.2 The use of the causative for people

The causative with verbs like *coach, instruct prepare, teach and train* can refer to things we cause to be done to other people:

- active:** ***I'm teaching her English***  
(i.e. I'm teaching her myself)
- passive:** ***She's being taught English***  
(i.e. I may not know or wish to name the teacher)
- causative:** ***I'm having her taught English***  
(i.e. I'm responsible for causing someone to do the job)
- Compare the construction 'have someone do something' [> 16.10.1].

**12.12.3 Other related uses of 'have' + object + past participle**

In the sense of 'experience'

*You should understand by now **You've had it explained** often enough' (= it has been explained to you)*

*When he got up to speak the minister **had eggs thrown** at him*

In the sense of allow [compare > 10.38]

*I refuse to **have my house used** as a hotel*

To describe the present result of past action

*We now **have the problem solved***

**12.13 'Get' + object + past participle or infinitive**

**12.13.1 Causative 'have' and 'get' compared**

Though *have* and *get* are often used interchangeably in the causative

[> 12.11n1], *get* is more limited. They are not interchangeable in e.g.

*I **had a tooth out** this afternoon*

*Get* is stronger than *have* (and contains a stronger idea of action by the subject) in e.g.

*I must **get this car serviced** soon*

In e.g.

*I finally **got my roof repaired***

there is a suggestion of difficulty, which would not be conveyed by *had*

*Get* sounds more natural than *have* in the imperative

***'Get your hair cut' 'Get your eyes tested'***

In suggestions with *Why don't you* ? *get* is much stronger than *have*

*Why don't you **have your hair cut?*** (neutral suggestion)

*Why don't you **get your hair cut?*** (almost an order)

**12.13.2 'Get' + to-infinitive to mean 'persuade', 'manage to', etc.**

*Get* with an object before a to-infinitive conveys the idea of 'persuade' or 'manage to'

*I finally **got the car to start** by asking everyone to push it*

Sometimes we use *get* + object + past participle to say that we managed to do something ourselves. The stress is different from the stress in causative sentences. Compare

*I **got the job done*** (stress on object = I did it myself)

*I **got (or had) the job done***, (stress on participle someone else did it)

In the first of these examples, *got* could not be replaced by *had* and is not causative

**12.13.3 Non-causative 'get' and 'have' + object + past participle**

*Get* + object + past participle can be used in a non-causative way for accidents, disasters, etc. that happen beyond our control

*Don't join in their argument or you might **get your nose punched***  
(i.e. that's what might happen to you)

Non-causative *have* can be used in the same way [> 16.10]

*She **had her house destroyed** in an earthquake*

## Yes/No questions and negative statements

### 13.1 Questions/negatives with 'be', 'have' and modals [> 11.5]

<b>questions</b>	(I am late )	I am late	Am I late"
	(He was going )	He was going	Was he going'?
	(He has won )	He has won	Has he won'?
	(She can swim )	She can swim	Can she swim?
	(It will rain )	It will rain	Will it rain'?
<hr/>			
<b>negatives</b>	(I am ready )	<b>full form</b> I am not ready	<b>short form</b> I m not ready
	(He is late )	He is not late	He isn t He s not late
	(We are going )	We are not going	We aren t/We re not going
	(I can see you )	I cannot see you	I can t see you
	(It will rain )	It will not rain	It won t rain

### 13.2 Questions/negatives with 'do', 'does' and 'did' [> 10. 4 10.41-43]

<b>questions</b>	(I You We/They	<b>dance</b> well)
<b>Do</b>	I you we they	<b>dance</b> well?
	(He She It	<b>works</b> well)
<b>Does</b>	he she it	<b>work</b> well'?
	(I You/He/She/It We/They	<b>ran</b> fast)
<b>Did</b>	I you he she it/we they	<b>run</b> fast?
<hr/>		
<b>negatives</b>		
	(I You They <b>work</b> )	
	I (etc ) <b>do not work</b> (full form)	I (etc ) <b>don't work</b> (short form)
	(He She It <b>works</b> )	
	<b>He</b> (etc ) <b>does not work</b> (full form)	<b>He</b> (etc ) <b>doesn't work</b> (short form)
	(I You He She It We They <b>went</b> )	
	I (etc ) <b>did not go</b> (full form)	I (etc ) <b>didn't go</b> (short form)

### 13.3 Yes/No questions: what they are and how they are formed

A Yes/No question is one which asks for Yes or No in the answer

Have you ever been to Egypt? Haven t you ever been there?

**Yes** I have **No** I haven't **Yes** I have **No** I haven't

Does he like fish? Doesn t he like fish?

**Yes** he does **No** he doesn't **Yes** he does **No** he doesn't

- 13.3.1 The formation of Yes/No questions with 'be', 'have' and modals**  
 Statements with *be* [auxiliary or full verb > 10.6-7], *have* (auxiliary or sometimes full verb when have = 'have got' [> 10.27-30]) and modal verbs like *can* [> 11.5.2] can be turned into Yes/No questions by inversion. That is, the appropriate form of *be*, *have* or the modal verb goes in front of the subject.  
**statement** *He is leaving*    **inversion** *He is leaving*  
**question** *Is he leaving?*
- 13.3.2 The formation of Yes/No questions with 'Do', 'Does', and 'Did'**  
 With all other verbs we form Yes/No questions with *Do* ? *Does* ? (simple present) and *Did* ? (simple past). The form of the verb that follows *Do*, *Does* or *Did* (+ subject) is always the bare infinitive (e.g. *go*, *play*, *think* [> 16.1]).  
*Do* goes before *I/you/we/they* for questions in the simple present  
**statement** *I/You/We/They turn left here*  
**Yes/No question** *Do I/you/we/they turn left here?*  
*Does* goes before *he/she/it* for questions in the simple present  
**statement** *He/She/It works well*  
**Yes/No question** *Does he/she/it work well?*  
*Did* is used in all persons to form questions in the simple past  
**statement** *I/You/He/She/It/We/They arrived late*  
**Yes/No question** *Did I/you/he/she/it/we/they arrive late?*
- 13.3.3 General points about Yes/No questions**
- 1 A noun subject is not normally used in front of the auxiliary (Not \* *James is he leaving?*\*) unless we are addressing someone.  
*James are you going into the town?* *Susan do you like fish?*
  - 2 If there are a number of auxiliaries in the same sentence it is always the first one that goes in front of the subject.  
**statement** *He could have been delayed*  
**question** *Could he have been delayed?*
  - 3 The whole subject comes after the auxiliary however long it is.  
*Can everyone in the room hear me?*  
*Does everyone in the room agree?*
  - 4 Questions like the following are possible in conversation when we wish to make it quite clear who or what we are referring to.  
*Has she caught a cold your mother?* *Is it all right that coffee?*  
*Does he play football your brother?*
  - 5 In everyday speech some Yes/No questions can be abbreviated.  
*Leaving already?* (For *Are you* ?)  
*Like another cup of tea?* (For *Would you* ?)  
*Enjoy the party?* (For *Did you* ?)
  - 6 We generally ask Yes/No questions with a rising intonation.  
*Have you finished your supper?* *Did you phone your mother?*
  - 7 Yes/No questions (exaggerated intonation) can be exclamations.  
*Is he mad?* *Can she type?* *Did he annoy me?* (no answers expected)

### 13.4 Negative statements: what they are/how they are formed

A negative statement is the opposite of an affirmative statement. It says or means 'no' and contains a negative word such as *not* or *never* [ $> 13.8-9$ ]. Full negative forms (*do not* etc.) occur in formal style (written and spoken) and in emphatic speech. Contracted forms (e.g. *don't*) are normal in conversational style. In written contracted forms the apostrophe is used where a vowel has been omitted, so for example in the negative it will go between the *n* and the *t*, the two words of the full form *did not*, combine into one word *didn't*.

#### 13.4.1 The formation of negative statements with 'be', 'have' and modals

1 When a sentence contains *be* (auxiliary or full verb), *have* (auxiliary or sometimes full verb when *have* = 'have got'), or a modal auxiliary (*can*, etc.), we form the negative by putting *not* after the auxiliary.

**affirmative** *He is leaving.*

**negative** *He is **not** leaving /He **s not** leaving /He **isn't** leaving*

2 If there are a number of auxiliaries in the same sentence *not* always goes after the first one.

**affirmative** *He **could** have been delayed.*

**negative** *He **could not/couldn't** have been delayed.*

#### 13.4.2 The formation of negative statements with 'do', 'does' and 'did'

*Do not (don't)*, *does not (doesn't)* (simple present) and *did not (didn't)* (simple past) go after the subject to form negative statements with other verbs. The verb that follows *do/does/did + not* is always in the form of a bare infinitive [ $> 16.1$ ].

**simple present** **affirmative** *I/You/We/They turn left here.*

**negative** *I/You/We/They **don't turn** left here.*

**affirmative** *He/She/It works well.*

**negative** *He/She/It **doesn't work** well.*

**simple past** **affirmative** *I/You/He/She/It/We/They stayed in*

**negative** *1/You/He/She/It/We/They **didn't stay** in*

#### 13.4.3 Be', 'have' and modals compared with 'do/does' and 'did'

Note that *do* is not normally required in affirmative sentences and is not used to form tenses in the same way as *be* and *have*.

1 Affirmative statements

subject	auxiliary	predicate
You	<i>re</i>	<i>working too hard</i>
You	<i>ve</i>	<i>eaten too much</i>
You	<i>may</i>	<i>stop now</i>
You		<i>work too hard</i>
You	<i>-</i>	<i>ate too much yesterday</i>

2 Questions

auxiliary	subject	predicate
<i>Are</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>working too hard?</i>
<i>Have</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>eaten too much?</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>stop now?</i>
<i>Do</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>work too hard?</i>
<i>Did</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>eat too much yesterday?</i>

### 13 Questions answers negatives

#### 3 Negative statements

subject	auxiliary	not	predicate
I	am	not	working too hard
You	have	not	eaten too much
You	may	not	go out
I	do	not	work too hard
I	did	not	eat too much yesterday

## Yes/No questions and Yes/No short answers

### 13.5 Form of Yes/No questions and Yes/No short answers

	Yes/No questions	affirmative and	negative short answers
be[>10 6]	Are you ready? Is he leaving? Were you ill?	Yes I am Yes he is Yes we were	No I'm not No he's not/he isn't No we weren't
have [> 10 27]	Have you finished? Has she left?	Yes I have Yes she has	No I haven't No she hasn't
do [> 10 41] does did	Do you like it? Does it work? Did you paint it?	Yes I do Yes it does Yes I did	No I don't No it doesn't No I didn't
modals [> 11 5]	Can I see him?	Yes you can	No you can't

### 13.6 Notes on the form of Yes/No questions and answers

- The first verb in the question (i.e. the auxiliary or modal) is usually repeated in the answer

**Was James late?** - Yes he **was** No he **wasn't**

**Can James play chess?** Yes he **can** No he **can't**

But note **Are you** ? - Yes **I am**/No **I'm not** and **Were you** ?

Yes **I was** No **I wasn't** where the verb is repeated, but in a different form [compare > 11.35.2]

Variations with modals are common when we are not sure of our answers [> 11.31] Auxiliary verbs are often stressed in answers

**Is that Vicki?**/ **Might that be Vicki?**

Yes it **is** Yes it **might be** **It could be** **It must be**

- **No it isn't** **No it might not be** **It couldn't be** **It can't be**

- Full negative short answers (eg **No I do not**) only occur in emphatic or formal speech. In ordinary conversation, contracted forms (e.g. **No I don't**) are normal

- Of course, many other answers are possible in response to Yes/No questions, and sometimes Yes and No can be omitted

**Did you watch the news on TV last night?**

Yes **but not all of it** No **I never watch TV**

**I watched some of it** **I watched a cartoon instead**

**Of course I can't remember** **I think so** **Not really**

Other examples of expressions used in place of Yes No are **certainly** **naturally** **I think so** **I expect so** **perhaps** **maybe** **I don't think so** **of course** **not** **not at all**

### 13.7 When we use Yes/No questions and answers

It is very unusual to answer a Yes/No question in full

*Did James go to the theatre last night?*

- *Yes he went to the theatre last night*
- *No he didn't go to the theatre last night*

It is also unusual to answer very briefly with *Yes* or *No*, as this can easily be interpreted as unfriendly or rude

*Do you like dancing?* - *Yes /No*

Short answers save us from repeating the question and give scope for expression, compared with plain *Yes* or *No*

We use Yes/No questions and answers

- for requesting and supplying information

*Did you lock the back door?* - *Yes I did /No I didn't*

- for expressing agreement or disagreement with statements

statement	agreement	disagreement
<i>It's raining</i>	- <i>Yes it is</i>	- <i>No it isn't</i>
<i>It isn't raining</i>	- <i>No it isn't</i>	- <i>Yes it is</i>

- for expressing confirmation in response to statements

*It was a very good performance* - *Yes it was*

*It wasn't a very good performance* - *No it wasn't*

- in response to the imperative

*Drive carefully!* - *(Yes) I will*

*Don't take any risks* - *(No) I won't* [compare > 10.5.1]

We answer *with will/won't* because the imperative points to the future

## Alternative negative forms

### 13.8 Negative statements with 'negative adverbs' [> 7.59.3 App 19]

We can make negative and near-negative sentences with adverbs like *never seldom rarely ever scarcely ever* (frequency), and *barely hardly scarcely* (= only just). Sentences which include one of these words or phrases are sometimes called 'implied negatives'

*We never see them nowadays* (more emphatic than *We don't see*)

*We hardly (ever)/scarcely (ever) rarely see them nowadays*

For the effect of negative adverbs on word order [> 7.59.3]

### 13.9 Negatives with 'no' and 'not any' [> 4.37.5.11]

No *any* and their compounds form negatives as follows

**'No' and 'no'-compounds**

**affirmative verb**

*I've got no time*

*I've seen no one/nobody*

*I've bought none of them*

*I've done nothing today*

*I've been nowhere today*

**'Any' and 'any'-compounds**

**negative verb**

*I haven't got any time*

*I haven't seen any one/anybody*

*I haven't bought any of them*

*I haven't done anything today*

*I haven't been anywhere today*

The two kinds of negatives have the same meaning though *no* is generally more emphatic than *not any*



### 13.10 Only one negative in any one clause

We cannot normally use a negative adverb or a word like *nobody* in combination with a negative verb Compare

*I **can't** get **any** eggs I **can** get **no** eggs*

*I **can never** (or **hardly**) get **any** information etc*

Two negative words in a sentence make a 'double negative' A double negative can be used to express an affirmative, but this is rare or sometimes heard in joking

***Nobody** did **nothing*** (= Everybody did something )

More than one negative is acceptable when there is co-ordination

*I **ve never** had and **never** wanted a television set*

Negatives are also possible in different clauses

*I **can never** get in touch with Thomas as he has **no** telephone*

And note *We **can't not** go* (= We can't avoid going ) [> 16.14]

### 13.11 Nouns, verbs and adjectives with negative meanings

Other parts of speech besides adverbs have a negative effect

- nouns such as *denial failure refusal*

***His failure** to react quickly enough caused the crash*

(= He did not react quickly enough and this caused the crash )

- verbs such as *deny fail forget refuse*, which can be used in the affirmative and the negative and often attract words like *any* [> 5.10]

*She **refused any** help* (= She did not accept any help )

- adjectives like *improbable unlikely*

***It's now unlikely** that he **ll** be here in time for lunch* (= He probably won't be here in time for lunch )

Compare the negative effect of the preposition *without* [> 16.51]

### 13.12 Cancellation of what has just been said

The word *not* can be used without an auxiliary immediately before a word to cancel what has just been said

*See you Wednesday - **(No), not Wednesday** Thursday*

*Ask Diana **(No), not Diana** Ask her sister*

*I'll see you at 5 - **(No), not at 5** Maybe at 5 30*

We can also use *nor* to replace a negative imperative

*Invite the Smiths **but not** the Robinsons* (= but don't invite)

### 13.13 Beginning a sentence with a negative

Statements can begin with negative words like *nothing* or negative phrases with *no* followed by affirmative verbs [compare > 5.8 5.13]

***Not many people** enjoy washing up*

*He **s** written a lot of books **but not all of them are** novels*

***Nobody** loves a bad loser*

***Nothing** has happened here since you **ve** been away*

When a sentence begins with a negative adverb such as *never* the word order is affected [> 7.59.3]

***Never** has there been such an effort to save whales from extinction*

## Negative questions and Yes/No short answers

### 13.14 Form of negative questions

	negative full form			negative short form		
foe [> 10.6]	Am	I	not late?	Aren't	I	late?
	Are	they	not waiting?	Aren't	they	waiting?
	Was	I	not ill?	Wasn't	I	ill?
have [> 10.27]	Have	I	not finished?	Haven't	I	finished?
	Has	she	not left?	Hasn't	she	left?
do [> 10.41]	Do	you	not like it?	Don't	you	like it?
	Does	it	not work?	Doesn't	it	work?
	Did	you	not paint it?	Didn't	you	paint it?
modals [> 11.5]	Can	I	not see him?	Can't	I	see him?

### 13.15 Notes on the form of negative questions

In negative Yes/No questions there is a difference in word order between the full form and the short form

**full form** *Did he not invite you out?* {not comes after the subject}

**short form** *Didn't he invite you out?* (auxiliary + n t before verb)

Sometimes the subject may be repeated at the end especially in everyday conversation, when we want to make it quite clear who or what we are referring to [compare > 13.3.3n4]

*Aren't they a nuisance these roadworks?*

### 13.16 When we ask negative questions

We generally ask negative questions

- when we are expecting, inviting or hoping for the answer Yes

*Don't you remember that holiday we had in Spain?*

- Yes I do {No I don't would be possible but unexpected}

- when we wish to express surprise, disbelief or exasperation

*Can't you (really) ride a bicycle? ~ No I can't*

- when we wish to persuade someone

*Won't you help me?* (= Please help me) [compare > 11.21]

- Oh all right then /No I'm afraid I can't/won't etc

- when we want to criticize or to express annoyance or sarcasm

*Can't you shut the door behind you?* (no answer expected)

- in exclamations (with falling intonation)

*Didn't he do well? Isn't it hot in here?*

An exclamation can also be used as a reply to a statement

*He has been very successful - Yes hasn't he?*

We use the full form in formal questions or when we require special emphasis to express anger, surprise, etc

*Have I not asked you again and again to be here on time?*

and in rhetorical questions not requiring an answer

*Are there not more than enough weapons of destruction on earth?*

Where the subject is a noun *not* can come after the auxiliary:

**Are not more people dying of cancer these days?**

Full form and short form questions can be answered with Yes/No short answers. The auxiliary does not echo the form of the question (i.e. **Did you?** - Yes, **I did** /No, **I didn't**), but indicates what the facts are:

**Didn't you** (or **Did you not**) **go to a party last night?**

- Yes, **I did** (i.e. I did go to a party last night.)
- No, **I didn't** (i.e. I didn't go to a party last night.)
- No, **I did not** (emphatic denial)

## Tag questions and Yes/No short answers

### 13.17 Form of tag questions: affirmative - negative

	affirmative		negative
<i>be</i> [> 10.6]:	<i>I'm</i>	<i>late,</i>	<i>aren't I?</i>
	<i>They're</i>	<i>waiting</i>	<i>aren't they?</i>
	<i>We were</i>	<i>late,</i>	<i>weren't we?</i>
<i>have</i> [> 10.27]:	<i>I've</i>	<i>finished,</i>	<i>haven't I?</i>
	<i>He's</i>	<i>left,</i>	<i>hasn't he?</i>
<i>do</i> [> 10.41]:	<i>You</i>	<i>like it,</i>	<i>don't you?</i>
<i>does:</i>	<i>It</i>	<i>works,</i>	<i>doesn't it?</i>
<i>did:</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>painted it,</i>	<i>didn't you?</i>
<i>modals</i> [> 11.5],	<i>I can</i>	<i>see him,</i>	<i>can't I?</i>

### 13.18 Form of tag questions: negative - affirmative

	negative		affirmative
<i>be</i> [> 10.6]:	<i>I'm not</i>	<i>late,</i>	<i>am I?</i>
	<i>He isn't</i>	<i>leaving</i>	<i>is he?</i>
	<i>I wasn't</i>	<i>ill,</i>	<i>was I?</i>
<i>have</i> [> 10.27]:	<i>I haven't</i>	<i>finished,</i>	<i>have I?</i>
	<i>He hasn't</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>has he?</i>
<i>do</i> [> 10.41]:	<i>You don't</i>	<i>like it,</i>	<i>do you?</i>
<i>does:</i>	<i>It doesn't</i>	<i>work,</i>	<i>does it?</i>
<i>did:</i>	<i>You didn't</i>	<i>paint it,</i>	<i>did you?</i>
<i>modals</i> [> 11.5]:	<i>I can't</i>	<i>see him</i>	<i>can I?</i>

### 13.19 Notes on the form of tag questions

1 A tag question is a short question (e.g. *have you?/haven't you?*) that follows a statement. Auxiliaries (*be have, can, may*, etc.) used in the statement are repeated at the end followed by the subject (always a pronoun):

**John was annoyed, wasn't he?** (affirmative - negative)

**He wasn't annoyed, was he?** (negative - affirmative)

## Tag questions and Yes/No short answers

- 2 With all other verbs, tag questions are formed with *do/don't* and *does/doesn't* (simple present) and *did/didn't* (simple past):  
 (affirmative - negative) (negative - affirmative)  
*You like fish, don't you?* *You don't like fish, do you?*  
*He likes fish, doesn't he?* *He doesn't like fish, does he?*  
*She ate it all, didn't she?* *She didn't eat it all, did she?*  
 This also applies to *have* and *do* as full verbs:  
*You have tea at 4, don't you?* *You don't have tea at 4, do you?*  
*He does his job, doesn't he?* *He doesn't do his job, does he?*
- 3 The negative tag at the end can be unabbreviated in formal style or for special emphasis, though this form is not very usual:  
*Julia runs five miles a day to keep fit, does she not?*
- 4 Tag questions are also possible with *there*.  
*There'll be a rail strike tomorrow, won't there?*
- 5 Affirmative tags can follow other statements that are negative in meaning [> 13.8]:  
*You never/seldom work on Sundays, do you?*
- 6 Tags can be used after indefinite pronouns [> 4.40]:  
*Nobody's been told, have they?*  
*Everyone's ready to leave now, aren't they?*
- 7 Note that *this* and *that* are replaced by *it* [> 4.36]:  
*This/That (suit) is expensive, isn't it?*

### 13.20 Form of tag questions: affirmative - affirmative

	affirmative	affirmative
toe [> 10 6]	<i>I'm rude,</i> <i>He's leaving,</i> <i>I was impatient,</i>	<i>am I?</i> <i>is he?</i> <i>was I?</i>
have [> 10.27].	<i>I've finished,</i> <i>She's left,</i>	<i>have I?</i> <i>has she?</i>
do [> 10 41 ]. does did.	<i>You like it,</i> <i>It works,</i> <i>You painted it,</i>	<i>do you?</i> <i>does it?</i> <i>did you?</i>
modals [> 11 5].	<i>I can see him,</i>	<i>can I?</i>

### 13.21 Note on the form of affirmative - affirmative tags

This form is less common than the two other kinds of tag questions. A negative - negative form is also grammatically possible, but is very rare and is used to convey aggression:

*So he won't pay his bills, won't he? We'll see about that*  
 For *Let's* [> 11.40.2, 16.4.1] and imperative + tag [> 9.55].

### 13.22 Uses of tag questions + Yes/No short answers

Many languages have a single fixed expression to convey the general idea of 'isn't that so?' to ask people whether they agree with you. By comparison, English has a complex system of tags which can be

used, with varying forms and intonation, to express a subtle range of meanings. Tags are the essence of conversational style and are very important in spoken English. Certain fixed phrases can be used in place of tags: e.g. *isn't that true?*, *don't you think/agree?* in formal style and *right? OK?* and even *eh?* in informal style.

**13.22.1 Affirmative - negative/negative - affirmative: factual information**

When we ask tag questions with a rising tone, we are asking real questions which expect Yes/No answers. However, tag questions often convey more than simple Yes/No questions: as well as asking for information, they can express surprise, anger, interest, etc.:

*You left the gas on, didn't you?* (= Did you leave the gas on?)

*You didn't leave the gas on, did you?* (= I hope you didn't.)

*You couldn't do me a favour, could you?* (= I hope you can.)

**13.22.2 Affirmative - negative/negative - affirmative: confirmation**

When tag questions are asked with a falling tone, they are more like statements: the falling tone suggests greater certainty. They ask for confirmation of what the questioner assumes to be true.

Affirmative - negative expects a positive confirmation:

*You locked the door, didn't you?* - (Yes, I did)

Negative - affirmative expects a negative confirmation:

*You didn't lock the door, did you?* - (No, I didn't)

**13.22.3 Affirmative - affirmative tag questions: confirmation, etc.**

Affirmative - affirmative tag questions with a rising tone sometimes ask for confirmation of something the speaker already knows, expressing friendly interest, etc. (i.e. Tell me more!):

*So she's getting married, is she?* (= Tell me more!)

- Yes, she's got engaged to a doctor The wedding s in June etc

However, with a falling tone, affirmative - affirmative tags are often used to express one's disappointment:

*You sold that lovely bracelet, did you?* (= I'm sorry you did.)

Affirmative - affirmative tags can also express less friendly feelings like suspicion, disapproval and even threat. The tone falls at the end of the statement and rises only on the tag. No answer is required:

*You call this a day's work, do you?* (= I certainly don't!)

*I'll get my money back, will I?* (= I don't believe it!)

*So you thought you'd fooled me, did you?*

## Statement-questions and Yes/No answers

**13.23 Statement-questions**

Statement-questions are questions which have the same basic grammatical structure as statements but which are expressed by using a rising tone:

*You're coming with us? You aren't hungry? It isn't 4 o'clock?*

## Echo tags

*Surely* can be added for emphasis:

He's *finished*, **surely?** **Surely** he hasn't gone home already?

This is the standard way of asking Yes/No questions in many languages, but it is not common in English.

Statement-questions are used to seek confirmation, expecting the answer Yes if they are affirmative and No if they are negative. They ask for confirmation of what the speaker assumes to be true, or thinks he has misheard or imperfectly recalled:

*You're out of work?*      *You aren't hungry?*

- **Yes**, I am, I'm afraid      - No, I had a big breakfast

The assumption made by the questioner may also be contradicted:

*You turned the lights off?* ~ **No, I didn't.**

We also use statement-questions to echo statements. In doing so, we may express surprise, pleasure, etc. or confirm what we have just heard, or we may be asking for a statement to be explained:

*I forgot the milk* - *You forgot the milk?* (= Please explain!)

## Echo tags

### 13.24 Form of echo tags

	affirmative	negative
<b>be/have:</b> [> 10.6, 10.27]	<i>He's resigning</i> - <i>Is he? He is?</i> - <i>He is isn't he?</i> - <i>He is is he?</i>	<i>He isn't resigning</i> - <i>Isn't he? He isn't?</i> - <i>He isn't, is he?</i>
<b>do/does/did</b> [> 10.41]	<i>I work all night</i> - <i>Do you? You do?</i> - <i>You do, don't you?</i> - <i>You do, do you?</i>	<i>I don't work all night</i> - <i>Don't you? You don't?</i> - <i>You don't do you?</i>
<b>modals:</b> [> 11.5]	<i>I can wait till tomorrow</i> - <i>Can you? You can?</i> - <i>You can can't you?</i> - <i>You can, can you?</i>	<i>I can't wait till tomorrow</i> - <i>Can't you? You can't?</i> - <i>You can't, can you?</i>

### 13.25 Notes on the form of echo tags

1 An echo tag is a response, in tag form, to an affirmative or negative statement by which we may or may not request further information depending on the intonation we use.

**He has resigned**

**Has he ?** etc.

**He hasn't resigned**

**- Hasn't he ?** etc.

2 Where there is no auxiliary (i.e. in the affirmative), *do does* or *did* must be used:

**She works all night**

**Does she?**

**She doesn't work all night**

**Doesn't she?**

3 Echo tags can be formed with *there*:

***There'll be a strike soon.      There won't be a strike tomorrow***  
***Will there?                      - Won't there?***

4 Negative - negative combinations (*He won't, won't he?*) may be used to express anger or menace, but are very unusual.

### 13.26 When we use echo tags

Echo tags are used constantly in everyday conversation to request further information, seek confirmation, to express interest, concern, anger, surprise, disbelief, suspicion, etc., or to show that we are listening.

1 To request more information, express interest, etc., rising tone:

*I've just won £500! - **Have you?/You have?***  
*- You **haven't, have you?** (= How interesting! Tell me more!)*

2 To confirm what might already be known/guessed, falling tone:

*I'm afraid he's made a bad mistake - **He has, hasn't he?***

3 To express anger, disbelief, suspicion, etc.:

*I've got the sack' - **You haven't!** (falling tone)*

Falling tone on the statement, rising on the tag:

*You **haven't, have you?** (= disbelief)*

*You **have, have you?** (= anger)*

### 13.27 Reinforcement tags for emphasis

Reinforcement tags are similar to echo tags: they emphasize the speaker's point of view. They are usually affirmative - affirmative and are typical of colloquial English:

***You're in trouble, you are***  
***Gilbert annoyed me, he did***  
***Jim's lied to me, he has***  
***You're making a fool of yourself, you are***

Tags can also be added to abbreviated statements:

*Likes her comfort, **she does** And note:*

***He likes his beer, does Fred/Fred does***

A noun or noun phrase can serve as a tag in: e.g.

*They're all the same **men***

*Very nice, **these cakes***

## Additions and responses

### 13.28 Form of additions and responses

These additions, etc. work with *be, have, do* and some modals:

statement	parallel addition	contrast
<i>John can speak French</i>	<i>and I can, too</i>	<i>but I can't</i>
<i>John can't speak French</i>	<i>and I can't, either</i>	<i>but I can</i>
<i>John speaks French</i>	<i>and I do, too</i>	<i>but I don't</i>
<i>John doesn't speak French</i>	<i>and I don't either</i>	<i>but I do</i>

<b>statement</b>	<b>parallel addition</b>	<b>contrast</b>
<i>John can speak French</i>	<i>and so can I</i>	<i>but I can't</i>
<i>John can't speak French</i>	<i>and neither/nor can I</i>	<i>but I can</i>
<i>John speaks French</i>	<i>and so do I</i>	<i>but I don't</i>
<i>John doesn't speak French</i>	<i>and neither/nor do I</i>	<i>but I do</i>

<b>statement</b>	<b>parallel response</b>
<i>John can speak French</i>	<i>I can, too or So can I</i>
<i>John can't speak French</i>	<i>I can't, either or Neither/Nor can I</i>
<i>John speaks French</i>	<i>I do, too or So do I</i>
<i>John doesn't speak French</i>	<i>I don't, either or Neither/Nor do I</i>

<b>statement</b>	<b>confirmation, surprised agreement, etc.</b>
<i>She's going to help us</i>	<i>So she is!</i>
<i>Jean retires soon</i>	<i>So she does!</i>

### 13.29 When and how we use additions and responses

#### 13.29.1 Contracted forms with 'so', 'nor', etc.

Additions and responses with *so*, *neither* and *nor* are contracted where possible. These contractions do not normally occur in writing, even in written dialogue, but they are often used in speech: *So'm I*, *Neither m I*, *Nor'm I*. *So's he* (So is he/So has he); *Nor's he* (Nor is he/Nor has he). *So've I*, *Neither've I*, *Nor've I* *So'll I*, *Neither'll I*, *Nor'll I* • *So'd you* (So had/would you); *Neither'd you* (Neither had/would you); *Nor'd you* (Nor had/would you).

#### 13.29.2 The use of auxiliaries with 'so', 'nor', etc.

The auxiliary is repeated in the parallel addition or response. If there is no auxiliary, *do*, *does* or *did* must be used. This makes it unnecessary to repeat a clause:

***You should work less and so should I***

***You shouldn't work so hard and nor should I***

***I went to a meeting last night - So did I.***

#### 3.29.3 'Too' and 'either' in affirmative and negative statements

*Either* must replace *too* in negative statements [> 7.56]:

***I went to the meeting too I didn't go to the meeting either***

Very informally *Me too*, *Nor me*, *Me neither* are often used in responses [> 4.7.2]. Other nouns and object pronouns are possible:

***I'm glad it's Friday - Me too! (I am too) Us too! (We are too)***

***I don't want to go to a political meeting - Nor me/Me neither!***

#### 3.29.4 'So', 'neither' and 'nor' in additions and responses

In parallel additions and responses, *so* is followed by auxiliary + subject: *so did I*, etc. In confirmations *so* is followed by subject + auxiliary: *So you have*, etc. Compare:

***I've got a rash on my arm and so have you***

***I've got a rash on my arm - So you have!***

***I've got a new car - So has John.***

***John's got a new car - So he has!***

*Neither* and *nor* are completely interchangeable in additions and responses [> 13.28].



## Question-word questions: form and use

### 13.30 Form of question-word questions

For subject-questions, eg *Who came?* *What happened?* [> 13.41]

question-word	+ auxiliary	+ subject	
	<i>are/aren I</i>	<i>you ?</i>	<i>be</i> [> 10.6]
<i>Who(m)</i>			
<i>What</i>	<i>have/haven t</i>	<i>you ?</i>	<b>have</b> [>10.27]
<i>When</i>	<i>has/hasnt</i>	<i>she ?</i>	
<i>Which</i>			
<i>Why</i>	<i>do/don t</i>	<i>you ?</i>	<b>do</b> [> 10.41]
<i>Where</i>	<i>does/doesnt</i>	<i>she ?</i>	<b>does</b>
<i>Whose</i>	<i>did/didnt</i>	<i>we ?</i>	<b>did</b>
<i>How</i>			
	<i>can/can t</i>	<i>I ?</i>	<b>modals</b> [> 11.5]

### 13.31 Notes on the form of question-word questions

- 1 In questions of this kind inversion with the auxiliary must occur after the question-word The sequence is question word first, auxiliary next, then the subject

**statement:** *He is isn t working*      **inversion** *He (is; isnh workm^*  
**Yes/No question** *Is he Isn t he working?*  
**question-word** *Why is isn t he working?*

- 2 In the simple present of verbs other than *be*, question-word questions are formed with *do* or *does*, and in the simple past with *did*

**statement** *We arrive at 8*      *We don t arrive at 8*  
**Yes/No question** *Do we arrive at 8?*      *Don t we arrive at 8?*  
**question-word** *When do we arrive?*      *Why don t we arrive at 8?*

**statement** *He arrives at 8*      *He doesn t arrive at 8*  
**Yes/No question** *Does he arrive at 8?*      *Doesn t he arrive at 8?*  
**question-word** *When does he arrive?*      *Why doesn t he arrive at 8?*

**statement** *He arrived at 8*      *He didn t arrive at 6*  
**Yes/No question** *Did he arrive at 8?*      *Didn t he arrive at 8?*  
**question-word** *When did he arrive?*      *Why didn t he arrive at 8?*

- 3 Question words + auxiliaries are frequently contracted in everyday speech and written dialogue This is more common when the question-word ends with a vowel sound (*Who/ll*) than when it ends with a consonant (*Which ll*) Those marked \* commonly occur in informal writing

**Who**    *'Who s ?*      = *Who is ?*      or    *Who has ?*  
           *'Who d ?*      = *Who had ?*      or    *Who would ?*  
           *'Who ll ?*      = *Who will ?*  
**What**    *'Whats ?*      = *What is ?*      or    *What has ?*  
           *Whatve ?*      = *What have ?*  
           *What ll ?*      = *What will ?*

## Question-word questions form and use

'When's ? = When is ? or When has ?  
When've ? = When have ?

**Which** When'll ? = When will ?  
Which've ? = Which have ?

**Why**

Which ll ? = Which will ?

**Where** Whys ? = Why is ? or Why has ?  
Whyd ? = Why had ? or Why would ?  
Why ll ? = Why will ?

'Where s ? = Where is ? or Where has?

**How** Where ve ? = Where have ?  
Where d ? = Where had ? or Where  
Where ll ? = Where will ?

'How s ? = How is ? or How has ?

'How d ? = How had ? or How would?

'How ll ? = How will ?

- 4 When we ask a Wh question using a verb + preposition/particle we normally put the preposition/particle at the end [> 8.22 13.33]

*Who(m) are you going **with**? What are you looking **at**?*

*Where did you get that suit **from**?*

*How on earth can I get these shoes **on**?*

In very formal English, prepositions can precede question-words

***To whom** should I apply for more information?*

***In which** hall will the recital be given?*

- 5 Question-words are followed by prepositions in short questions

*We re off on holiday tomorrow - **Where to**?*

*Will you beat these eggs for me? - **What with**?*

*I want to leave this parcel - **Who for**?*

More formally, prepositions can precede question words

*I'm going out this evening - **With whom**?*

- 6 Short questions consisting of single question-words or limited combinations are common in everyday speech when we are asking for repetition (e g *What?*), brief information or clarification

*We re off to Chicago - **When**?*

*This old lady came up to me and said - **Which (old) lady**?*

*This old lady came up to me and said - She said **what**?*

- 7 Question-word questions can echo statements to express surprise, anger, concern, etc

*I m afraid I used your comb on the dog - You did **what** with it?*

- 8 All question-words except *Which* and *Whose* can combine with *else* to refer to people, things, places, etc

***What else** have you bought? **Where else** did you go?*

### How we use question-words

**We ask question-word + inversion-type questions to elicit any element in a sentence other than the identity of the subject**

**statement** *Elaine went to her mothers by bus yesterday because the trains weren t running*

### 13 Questions, answers, negatives

Note the 'target' of each of the following questions. None of them produces the answer 'Elaine'. The answer may be a single word, a phrase, a clause, or even a whole sentence [but > 13.41-42]

questions	answers	'target'
<i>When did Elaine go to her mother's?</i>	<i>Yesterday</i>	<b>adverb of time</b>
<i>Where did Elaine go yesterday?</i>	<i>To her mother's</i>	<b>adverb of place</b>
<i>How did she get there?</i>	<i>By bus</i>	<b>adverb of manner</b>
<i>Whose house did Elaine go to?</i>	<i>Her mother's</i>	<b>adverb of place</b>
<i>Why did she go by bus?</i>	<i>Because the trains weren't running</i>	<b>clause of reason</b>
<i>What did Elaine do yesterday?</i>	<i>She went to her mother's by bus</i>	<b>whole sentence</b>

Sometimes two or more question-words are used in a question

***Where and when*** shall I pick you up?

***How and why*** did Louis XIV justify the invasion of the Spanish Netherlands'? (This kind of question is common in exam papers.)

## Particular question-words and their uses

### 13.33 'Who(m)...?' as a question-word

*Who(m)* ? asks for the object of a sentence, usually a person's name

	subject	verb	object
<b>statement</b>	<i>Frank</i>	<i>met</i>	<i>Alice</i>
<b>Who(m)-question</b>	<i>Who(m) did Frank</i>	<i>meet?</i>	<i>- Alice</i>

*Who(m)* ? refers only to people and can be used to inquire about masculine, feminine, singular or plural, so the answer to the above question could be *Alice*, *John* or *Alice and John*

Though *Whom* ? is still used in formal English, spoken or written, *Who* ? is generally accepted in everyday style. *Who(m)* ? often occurs in questions with verbs followed by *to* or *for*

***Who(m)*** did you give it to/did you buy it ***for***? [compare > 8.22]

### 13.34 'What...?' as a question-word

*What* ? can be answered by a whole sentence

*What are you doing?* - ***I'm reading 'Kim'***

*What* can also ask about the object of a sentence which might, for example, be a thing, a substance, a date, a measurement, etc

	subject	verb	object
<b>statement</b>	<i>I</i>	<i>am reading</i>	<i>'Kim'</i>
<b>What-question</b>	<i>What are you</i>	<i>reading?</i>	<i>'Kim'</i>

*What?* can also be used in a variety of combinations, such as

#### 13.34.1 'What book/books...?' 'What boy/boys...?' [compare > 13.36.1]

*What* + noun asks about things (singular or plural) or substances

***What book/books*** did you buy? ***What soap*** do you use?

*What* + noun can sometimes ask about the identity of people, male or female, singular or plural

***What boy/boys/girl/girls/people*** did you meet at the party?

but this is less common, since we generally ask about people with

*Who(m)* ? *What* ? on its own refers only to things and to an

unlimited and unspecified choice So, for example, the question *What would you like?* with reference to a menu is not limited - except, of course, by the extent of the menu itself Where the choice is limited and specified, we often prefer *Which* ? as in eg *Which would you prefer beef or lamb?*

#### 13.34.2 'What (be, look, etc.) like?' [compare > 6.1]

We use *What like?* to obtain descriptions of e.g.

- people or things, appearance or characteristics  
*What's your brother like?* (= 'to look at' or 'as a person')  
*What's your car like?* (= 'to look at' or 'as a vehicle/to drive')
- the weather, climate, etc  
*What's the weather like today? What's it like today?*

#### 13.34.3 'What...?': names, etc.

- people *What's he called?* (= What's his name?) *He's called John*
- technical terms, etc *What's this called? It's called a microchip*
- foreign words *What's this called in English? It's called chalk*
- *What + make* *What make is your car? - It's a Volvo*

#### 13.34.4 'What...?': nationality, jobs, etc.

*What nationality are you? - I'm Spanish* (= I'm from Spain )  
*What does she do (for a living)? - She's an optician*  
*And what's her husband? (= What does her husband do?)*

#### 13.34.5 'What time/date/year?'

These combinations are broadly the equivalent of *When* ? except that they ask for more specific information

*What time/date will he arrive? - At 4 /On June 14th*

#### 13.34.6 'What...for?'

This combination asks for a description of the use or purpose of things or substances

*What's this (thing) for? - (It's for) peeling potatoes*

*What + clause + for* can act as the equivalent of *why* ? The answer often begins with *Because* or has a to-infinitive

*What did you do that for?* (= Why did you do that?)

*Because I was signalling that I'm turning left*

- *To signal that I'm turning left*

#### 13.34.7 'What kind(s)/sort(s) of...?' [compare > App 7.16-17]

This combination asks for precise information and we expect a description in the answer

*What kind/sort of picture do you like best?*

*What kinds/sorts of pictures do you like best?*

*What kind of pictures* ? is often heard in speech

#### 13.34.8 'What colour...?', 'What size...?'

*What colour?* and *What colours?* are used to inquire about colour

*What colour is your new tie? - It's red*

*What* combines with nouns such as *size height age length breadth width depth*, to inquire about dimension, etc The structure is parallel to *How big/high/old/long?* etc [> 13.40.2, 6.16]

*What size shoes do you take? - (Size) 41*

*What's the height of Everest? What height is Everest?*

### 13.35 'When...?' as a question-word

We use *When* ? to inquire about time (either precise references or general periods of time) in the present, past or future The answers are usually adverbs of time or prepositional phrases

**adverb of time** *When is your flight?* - **Tomorrow morning**  
**prepositional phrase** *When will he arrive?* - **At 4**

### 13.36 'Which...?' as a question-word

Questions with *Which* ? can ask about the object of a sentence

		subject	verb	object
statement		I	am reading	'Kim'
Which-question	Which novel are	you	reading?	- 'Kim'

*Which* + noun can be used in a variety of combinations

#### 13.36.1 'Which book/books...?' [compare > 13.34.1]

We use *Which* + noun to inquire about things (singular or plural) or substances

**Which book/books** do you prefer? **Which soap** do you like best?

*Which* + noun can be used just as easily to ask about the identity of people, male or female, singular or plural

**Which boy/boys/girl/girls** did you meet at the party?

*Which* always refers to a limited specified choice [> 13.34.1] It can be used on its own in this sense, especially for things

**Which books** did you buy? (i.e. of the ones you were looking at a limited selection of items)

**Which** is the longest river in the world the Amazon or the Nile?

*Which* ? often combines with the comparative and superlative

**Which is the cheaper/the cheapest?** (e.g. of the ones on the shelf)

#### 13.36.2 'Which of them/of the two...?' [compare > Which one(s)? 4.10]

We often use *Which of* ? (the *of* phrase is optional) when we refer to preference and choice between two or more items

I like both these bags **Which (of the two)** do you prefer?

I like all these bags **Which (of them)** do you prefer?

#### 13.36.3 'Which day/month/year...?'

These combinations are more specific than *When* ?

Don't forget Sam's birthday? - I won't **Which/What day** is it?

#### 13.36.4 'Which way...?'

*Which way* ? asks for more precise information than *Where* ?

**Which way** did they go? (i.e. two or more ways to choose from)

### 13.37 'Why...?' as a question-word

#### 13.37.1 'Why...?': reason and purpose [> 1.48, 1.51]

*Why* questions may ask for a reason or reasons which can be supplied with *Because* (Not "Why" \*)

**Why didn't you tell me** John had left you?

- **Because** I didn't want to burden you with my troubles

*Because* is often omitted (and therefore implied) in responses

A to-infinitive or *because* can answer *Why*? [purpose > 16.12.1]

**Why** did you go this way? - **To save** time ('because I wanted to')

**.37.2 Why don't/doesn't...?' and Why not?'**

*Why + don for doesn't can be used to make suggestions*

*I don't like this wallpaper - Then **why don't you change it?***

*Why not followed by a bare infinitive can be used in the same way*

***Why not wait till the winter sales to buy a new coat?***

*Why not?(in place of a Why question) can ask for a reason*

*I'm not going to work today - **Why not?***

*or can be used in response to suggestions*

*Let's eat out tonight - Yes **why not?***

*It can be used defensively in*

*Are you really going to sue them? - Yes **why not?***

**13.37.3 Some functional uses of 'Why...?'**

*Why + verb often conveys the meaning of 'It's not worth the trouble to ' or 'I don't think you should'*

*I think I ought to tidy this place up*

*- **Why bother?** (i.e. it's not worth bothering to)*

*You're fully insured so **why worry?***

*Why combines with modals to convey a variety of emotions, etc*

*- anger*

***Why can't you shut up?***

*- irritation/complaint*

***Why should I do it?***

*- failure to understand*

***Why should the boiling point of water be lower at the top of a mountain?***

**13.38 'Where...?' as a question-word**

*Where is used to inquire about place (either precise references or general ones) The answers to Where questions can be whole sentences, phrases or single words*

***Where is he? - He's over there. Over there! There!***

***Where did you get that ladder from? - From the garage.***

*In everyday speech Where's can combine with a plural subject*

***Where's your keys? - They're here** [compare *Here's* > 7.59.1]*

*Where from? asks for the origin of people or things*

***Where are you from?/Where do you come from? - Spain***

***That's a lovely vase Where's it from? - China***

**13.39 'Whose...?' as a question-word**

*Whose ? asks about possession The possessor is always a person and we expect the answer to be somebody's name + s (*Kate's*) or a possessive pronoun (e.g. *mine*) When the possession is a thing, things, or a substance, the noun can be omitted after *Whose**

***Whose (umbrella) is this? - (It's) mine***

***Whose (umbrellas) are these? - (They're) mine***

***Whose (coffee) is this? - (It's) mine***

*When the 'possession' is a person, *Whose* is followed by a noun*

***Whose son/daughter is (s)he? - Kate's (= Kate's son/daughter)***

***Whose children are they? - The Lakers (= the Lakers' children)***

*Note that questions with *Whose* can also be phrased as*

***Whose is this (umbrella)? Whose are those children?***

**13.40 'How ...?' as a question-word**

**13.40.1 'How much...?/How many...?'**

*How* can combine with *much* to inquire about the quantity of a substance or the volume of a liquid [uncountable nouns > 2.14].

***How much sugar/milk*** do you want in your tea?

*How much* can combine with abstract uncountable nouns as well:

***How much time*** have we? ***How much space*** is there on that shelf<sup>1</sup>

*How much* can also refer to cost:

***How much*** does this cost? (i.e. ***How much money?***)

*How* can combine with *many* to inquire about number (people and things: i.e. plural countable nouns) [> 5.13]:

***How many people*** are invited<sup>9</sup> ***How many windows*** are broken?

**13.40.2 'How...?' + adjective or adverb**

*How* will combine with a variety of adjectives, some of which can also function as adverbs, **such as:** *big, deep, far, hard, long, old, sharp wide* [> 7.13-14 and compare > 6.16]:

***How far*** is it to Banbury? ***How far*** did you drive today?

*How* combines more readily with adjectives expressing a higher, rather than a lower, degree: *How long/old*, etc. rather than *How little/short/young*. We only use *How* + lower degree adjectives when we are particularly concerned about smallness, etc.:

*I think he's* ***too young*** for the job - ***How young*** is he then?

*We need a* ***short*** article to fill the paper - ***How short*** must it be?

*How* + adjectives referring to dimension (e.g. *How long?*) are similar in meaning to *What* + nouns (dimension) e.g. *What length?* [> 13.34.8]:

***How long*** is this pool? (= *What length* is this pool?)

**13.40.3 'How...?' + adverb**

*How* combines with adverbs to ask about:

- **frequency:** ***How often*** do you visit your mother? - *Once a week*

- **degree:** ***How well*** do you know him? - *Nor very well*

- **time:** ***How quickly*** can you do it for me? - *In two days*

**13.40.4 'How...?': manner and process**

*How* ? questions can ask about manner or process. Some questions need a whole sentence in reply:

***How did you spend your time*** while you were on holiday<sup>7</sup>

Some questions like this can be answered with *by* + *-ing*:

***How did you finish the job so soon?*** - ***By climbing*** on to the roof

*How* combines with modals in:

- **rude responses:** *Why ask me?* ***How should I know?***

- **argument/reproof:** ***How can you say*** a thing like that<sup>7</sup>

- **exclamations:** ***How could she do*** such a thing!

Adverbs of manner can sometimes answer *How?* questions:

***How did he speak?*** - (Rather) ***well/inaudibly***

It isn't always clear what kind of answer a *How?* question requires:

***How did she cut Sue's hair?*** - *Beautifully /Very short /With a fringe /With the kitchen scissors*

**13.40.5 'How long...?': time**

*How long* ? (with optional *for*) asks about duration:

**How long** have you known her (**for**)? - (**For**) 20 years  
 I've known her a **long time** **How long (for)**?  
 How can also combine with *long ago* to refer to a point of time:  
**How long ago** did Bach live? - **300 years ago** (ago not optional)

#### 13.40.6 Some social uses of 'How...?'

**introductions:** *How do you do?* is a formula in formal introductions and is never used to inquire about health:

A: *Mrs Simms, this is Mr McGregor*

B: **How do you do?**

C: **How do you do?** (in reply to B)

**health:** Common formulas for asking about health or general well-being are: *How are you?*, *How have you been?* *How are you keeping?*, *How have you been keeping?*

**present circumstances:** *How* is often used to inquire about 'present circumstances' in questions like: *How's life?*, *How are (or How's) things?*, *How's the garden?*, *How's work?*, etc.

**'How...?' and 'What.Mke?'** [> 13.34 2]: These can sometimes be interchangeable in questions which ask for personal reactions:

**How** was the film? (= What was it like? Did you enjoy it or not?)

*How* can be followed by *like* or *enjoy* in such questions:

**How** did you **like/enjoy** the film?

**'Howabout...?' and 'What about...?':** These are interchangeable in offers and suggestions:

**How about/What about** a drink?

and in general reference:

*I'll post your letters.* - **How about/What about** this parcel?

*John's coming with us.* - **How about/What about** Susan?

**invitations:**

**How would you like** to have tea at the Ritz?

This is an elaborate form of the more usual:

**Would you like** to have tea at the Ritz? [> 11.37]

## Question-word questions: subject-questions

### 13.41 Form of subject-questions

subject-questions with 'Who?'	subject-answer + auxiliary	
<i>Who's ready?</i>	<i>I am/John is</i> etc.	<b>be</b>
<i>Who's got my keys?</i>	<i>I have /John has</i> etc.	<b>have</b>
<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>I do/John does</i> etc.	<b>do/does</b>
<i>Who paid the waiter?</i>	<i>I did /John did</i> etc	<b>did</b>
<i>Who can explain this?</i>	<i>I can/John can</i> etc.	<b>modals</b>
<b>subject-questions with 'What?', 'Which?' and 'Whose?'</b>		
<i>What made you jump?</i>	<i>The cat did</i>	
<i>Which one suits me best?</i>	<i>The red one does</i>	
<i>Whose telephone rang?</i>	<i>Mine did</i>	



### 13.42 Notes on the form of subject-questions

- 1 A subject-question normally asks for the identity of the subject.  
There is no inversion and the question has the same word order as the statement [compare > 13.31ns1,2]:

	subject	verb	object	subject-answer
statement:	<b>Someone</b>	<i>paid</i>	<i>the waiter</i>	
subject-question.	<b>Who</b>	<i>paid</i>	<i>the waiter?</i>	<b>John</b> <i>did</i>

Compare a *Who* question which asks for the object of a statement:

	subject	verb	object	object-answer
statement	<i>John</i>	<i>paid</i>	<i>the waiter</i>	
Yes/No question	<i>Did John</i>	<i>pay</i>	<i>the waiter?</i>	
Who(m)>question.	<i>Who(m) did John</i>	<i>pay"</i>		<i>The waiter</i>

- 2 Answers to subject-questions often echo the auxiliary used in the question, either in the affirmative or the negative:  
**Who can play the piano? ~ I can / I can't**  
When the subject question-word is followed by a verb in the simple present or past, then *do*, *does* or *did* may be used in the answer:  
**Who wants a lift? ~ I do Who won? - We did**  
When the answer is a name or a noun, we often omit the auxiliary:  
**Who was at the door? - The postman (was)**  
Informally, *me* is often used in place of *I* in the answer [> 4.7.2]:  
**Who wants some more tea? - Me** (in place of *I* do)  
3 *What*, *Which* and *Whose* can combine with other subject-words:  
**What number is ? Which boy likes ? Whose car is ?**  
4 Subject question-words can be followed by singular or plural verbs. In everyday speech we commonly use a singular verb after, e.g. *Who?* even when we are asking for a plural answer:  
**Who is coming tonight? John is / John and Sally are**  
However, plural verbs can occur quite naturally after subject questions with *Who*, *Which* and *What*:  
**Who are playing in the orchestra?**  
**Who have won Nobel Prizes for literature in the past ten years?**

### 13.43 When we ask subject-questions

We ask subject-questions:

- with *Who* to identify a person or persons:  
**Who takes sugar? - Jane (does) Both of us (do).**
- with *What* to identify a thing or things:  
**What caused the damage? - Rain (did) Falling stones (did)**
- with *What* + noun to identify people or things:  
**What careless boy left the tap on? - John (did)**  
**What paper has the largest circulation? - 'Today' (has)**
- with *Which* to identify people or things:  
**Which girl spoke first? - Jane (did)**  
**Which comes first, A or B? - A (does)**
- with *Whose* to identify a 'possessor':  
**Whose children rang our doorbell? ~ Our neighbour's (did)**
- with e.g. *How* + *many* to elicit a number:  
**How many students understand this? - They all do**

## Questions about alternatives

### 13.44 Form of questions about alternatives

---

*What/Which would you prefer, tea or coffee?*  
*Would you like tea or coffee? Tea or coffee? Milk?*  
*How shall we go, by bus or by train?*  
*Did you go there, or didn't you?*  
*Did you or didn't you go there?*  
*Did you go there or not? Did you or didn't you?*

---

### 13.45 When we ask questions about alternatives

#### 13.45.1 Limited choices

Questions about alternatives narrow a choice to a limited number of items, courses of action, etc.:

- open-ended choice: *What would you like to drink?*
- three items: *What would you like **tea, coffee, or milk**?*
- two items: *Which would you prefer, **tea or coffee**?*

Limited choices can also be presented with two or more verbs:

*Did you **laugh or cry**? Is he **sleeping, reading, or watching** TV?*

Questions about alternatives are often abbreviated: e.g.

- three or more items: ***Tea, coffee, or mineral water?***
- two items: ***Tea or coffee? True or false? Yes or no?***
- one item: ***Milk? Right? Ready? Now?***

Another way of abbreviating a question is not to repeat the verb:

*Did you want a black and white film **or colour**?*

#### 13.45.2 Questions ending in negative tags

A clear choice can be presented by repeating the auxiliary at the end, particularly when we are pressing someone to provide an answer:

*Did you take it **or didn't you**? - Yes, (I did) /No, (I didn't)*

These questions can be differently phrased as follows:

***Did you or didn't you** take it?*

The negative auxiliary can be replaced by **or not?**:

***Did you take it or not?***

Provided both speaker and listener know what is referred to, such questions can be reduced even further:

*Did you or didn't you?* can mean 'Did you (take it) or didn't you?'

*Can you or can't you?* can mean 'Can you (help me) or can't you?'

## Emphatic questions with 'ever', etc.

### 13.46 Form of emphatic questions with 'ever', etc.

---

*Who ever told you a thing like that? What ever made you do it?*  
*What ever did he tell you? How ever do you manage?*  
*Why ever not? Why on earth not?*  
*What ever for? What on earth for?*  
*Why did you ever mention it?*  
*How on earth did you find out about it?*

---

### 13.47 When we ask emphatic questions

We ask emphatic questions to express admiration, anger, concern, etc. *Ever* is written as a separate word from question-words. It can be used after all question-words except *Which?* and *Whose?*. It is often heavily stressed in questions:

**Where 'ever** did you pick that up?

(But note that *ever* also combines with words like *who*, *what*, *when* *how* (not *why*) to form adverbs {*However*, ...}, or pronouns {*Bring whoever you like*}, or to form conjunctions {*Come whenever you like*}).

*Ever* questions can ask for the subject or object of a sentence:

**subject: What ever made you so late?** - *The traffic (made me late)*

**object: What ever did he tell you?** - *(He told me) a secret*

*Ever* can sometimes be transposed:

**Why ever** did you go there? **Why** did you **ever** go there?

Short responses express surprised reactions:

*I didn't vote on polling day* - **Why ever** not?

*I sent them a donation* - **What ever** for?

In everyday speech stronger emphasis in questions can be conveyed by using the expression *on earth* in place of *ever* after the question-word:

**How on earth** did you find out my telephone number?

Even stronger expression is possible if *on earth* is replaced by, e.g. *the blazes*, *the devil*, *the dickens*, *the hell* and by taboo words:

**Who the hell** do you think you are anyway?

*Why* and *Where* can be made more emphatic by simple repetition, often with *oh*:

**Why, (oh) why** did you do it? **Where, (oh) where** has he gone?

# 14 Conditional sentences

## General information about conditionals

### 14.1 Conditions: 'if... (then...)'

A condition is something that has to be fulfilled before something else can happen. *If*, normally meaning 'provided that', is sometimes followed by *then*. If *then* is not stated, it is implied: *If X happens (then) Y follows*:  
*If the rain stops, we'll be able to go for a walk*

Conditional clauses after *if* are not about events, etc. that have occurred, but about events that can or might occur or might have occurred. Sometimes these events are highly probable:

*If the price of oil comes down, more people will buy it*

Sometimes they are impossible (they did not or cannot happen):

*If my horse had won, I would have made a lot of money*

Conditions are often introduced by *if*, but can be introduced by other words [> 14.21]. They can also be implied [> 14.22]:

*I wouldn't (or shouldn't) go that way* (i.e. if I were you)

### 14.2 Types of conditional sentences

Conditional sentences are usually divided into three basic types referred to as Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3. Each has its own variations, but the elements are as follows:

---

**type 1:** *What will you do if you lose your job?*

Asking/talking about something that is quite possible:

**'if' + present + 'will'**

*If I lose my job, I will go abroad*

---

**type 2:** *What would you do if you lost your job?*

Asking/talking about imagined situations/consequences now:

**'if' + past + 'would'**

*If I lost my job, I would go abroad*

---

**type 3:** *What would you have done if you had lost your job?*

Asking/talking about imagined situations/consequences then:

**'if' + past perfect + 'would have'**

*If I had lost my job, I would have gone abroad*

---

The abbreviation *'ll* can be used instead of *will* in all persons, and *shall* can be used instead of *will* after *I* and *we* [> 9.36].

The abbreviation *'d* can be used instead of *would* in all persons, and *should* can be used instead of *would* after *I* and *we*.

The conditional can be expressed with other modal verbs [e.g. > 14.19], as well as with *shall will should* and *would*:

*We could have had a good time* (e.g. if we had had the money)

### 14.3 Mixed tense sequences in conditional sentences

Sense and context permitting, any tense sequence is possible:

<b>type 1</b> <i>If I am as clever as you think,</i>	<b>type 3</b> <i>I should have been rich by now</i>
<b>type 2</b> <i>If you knew me better,</i>	<b>type 3</b> <i>you wouldn't have said that</i>
<b>type 3</b> <i>If I had had your advantages,</i>	<b>type 2</b> <i>I'd be better off now.</i>
<b>type 2</b> <i>If he missed the bus,</i>	<b>type 1</b> <i>he won't be here on time</i>

## Type 1 conditionals

### 14.4 Basic form of Type 1 conditionals

	<b>'if'-clause:</b> <b>present tenses</b> <b>condition to be satisfied</b>	<b>main clause:</b> <b>'shall/will' future</b> <b>likely outcome</b>
be:	<i>If I am better tomorrow,</i>	<i>I will get up</i>
<b>have.</b>	<i>If I have a headache</i>	<i>I will take an aspirin</i>
<b>simple present:</b>	<i>If she finishes early</i>	<i>she will go home</i>
<b>present progressive:</b>	<i>if he is standing in the rain,</i>	<i>he will catch cold</i>
<b>present perfect:</b>	<i>If she has arrived at the station,</i>	<i>she will be here soon</i>
<b>present perfect progressive</b>	<i>If he has been travelling all night,</i>	<i>he will need a rest</i>
<b>can, must.</b>	<i>If I can afford it,</i>	<i>I will buy it</i>

### 14.5 Notes on the form of Type 1 conditionals

1 The most commonly used form is:

**'if + simple present + "IP future**

*If it rains, we'll stay at home*

However, in Type 1 conditionals, all present tenses can be used after *if*, not just the simple present (see 14.4 above).

2 In Type 1, *if* is followed by present tenses, and only exceptionally by *shall* or *will* [> 11.63, 14.24.2]. *If* can also be followed by *should* [> 14.8] and by other modals like *can* (ability), *must* and *needn't*.

3 Other future tenses [> 9.40-43] can be used in the main clause:

*If he gets the job he'll be going abroad*

*If I don't run the train will have left*

*If I stay till May, I'll have been working here for 20 years*

4 Fixed phrases like *if necessary*, *if possible*, *if so*, are really abbreviated *if*-clauses. In formal English (commonly in AmE) the full form is *if + be* (i.e. the subjunctive [> 11.75.1n.2]): *if it be necessary*, etc. Note other phrases with *be*: *if need be*, *be that as it may*, etc:

*Inflation may be rising If (this be) so, prices will go up*

We often use *should before be* in such cases, especially when we wish to suggest that the situation referred to is improbable:

*Sterling may fall If this should be so, interest rates will rise*

#### 4.6 When we use Type 1 conditionals

We use Type 1 conditionals to describe what will or won't happen if we think a future event is probable:

condition to be satisfied	likely outcome
<i>If the weather clears,</i>	<b><i>we'll go for a walk</i></b>
<i>If the weather doesn't clear,</i>	<b><i>we won't go for a walk</i></b>

The condition to be satisfied is real: the weather may really clear up, and if it does, it will have a real effect. That is why such statements are often called 'open' or 'real' conditionals.

#### 14.7 Type 1, Variation 1: 'If + present + modal

	'if'-clause: present tenses condition to be satisfied	main clause: modal [> 11.1] likely outcome
simple present.	<i>If she finishes early,</i>	<i>can/could</i>
Present progressive	<i>If she is arriving today,</i>	<i>may/might</i> <i>phone</i>
Present perfect:	<i>If she has arrived</i>	<i>she. should/ought to</i> <i>me</i>
Present perfect progressive:	<i>If she has been waiting,</i>	<i>must</i>
modal must.	<i>If she can't understand it,</i>	

*Will* in the main clause expresses certainty or near-certainty [> 11.28]. If we do not feel 'certain' enough to use *will*, or if we want to express the idea of e.g. necessity, we can use another modal instead:

condition to be satisfied	likely outcome
	<i>can</i> (we are free to)
	<i>could</i> (we would be able to)
	<i>may</i> (it's possible)
<i>If it's fine tomorrow,</i>	<i>might</i> (it's possible)
<i>we</i>	<i>should</i> (it's advisable)
	<i>ought to</i> (it's advisable)
	<i>must</i> (it's necessary)
	<i>go out</i>

Progressive and perfect combinations with modals are possible:

*If I hear from Tim, I **may be leaving** tonight*  
*If he is in New York **he may not have got** my letter yet*

#### 14.8 Type 1, Variation 2: 'If + should' + e.g. imperative

if'-clause or variation condition to be satisfied	main clause: e.g. imperative request, suggestion, etc.
<i>If you (should) see him,</i>	
<i>Should you see him, please give him my regards</i>	
<i>If you (should) happen to see him,</i>	
<i>Should you happen to see him,</i>	

*If + should* (+ bare infinitive), instead of *if + present*, makes the condition more doubtful:

***If he calls***, tell him I'll ring back (normal Type 1)  
***If he should call***, tell him I'll ring back (*if + should*)

The main clause is not necessarily always an imperative:

*If I should see him, I'll ask him to ring you*

*If + should + imperative* in the main clause is used especially when we want to make polite requests or suggestions, or to tell people (tactfully) what to do:

*If you should write to her, **send her my love***

*If you should go to Nairobi, **go and see the Snake Park***

Imperatives can also be used in ordinary Type 1 conditions:

**Cancel the match** if it rains *If it rains, **cancel the match***

The only kind of negative we can form with *should* is e.g. *should you not* (see example next paragraph); otherwise we must use the negative form of the simple present:

*If you don't see him* (Not *\*If you shouldn't*)

A condition can be expressed without *if* by beginning a sentence with *should*. This is rather formal and is often found, for example, in business letters, not in everyday conversation:

**Should you be interested in our offer, please contact us**

**Should you not wish our agent to call, please let us know**

The more elaborate the construction with *should* and/or *happen to*, the more tactful a speaker is trying to be. Compare the sequence:

<i>If you</i>	<i>see him</i>	<b>fairly likely: neutral</b>
<i>If you should</i>	<i>see him</i>	
<i>Should you</i>	<i>see him</i>	
<i>If you happen to</i>	<i>see him</i>	
<i>If you should happen to</i>	<i>see him</i>	
<i>Should you happen to</i>	<i>see him</i>	
<i>Should you by any chance happen to</i>	<i>see him</i>	<b>unlikely: very tactful</b>

#### 14.9 Type 1, Variation 3: Imperative + conjunction + clause

imperative condition to be satisfied	conjunction	main clause: 'shall/will' likely outcome
<i>Provide the materials</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>we <b>ll</b> do the job</i>
<i>Stop shouting,</i>	<i>or</i>	<i>you'll wake up the neighbours</i>
<i>Put that down,</i>	<i>or else</i>	<i>I'll smack you</i>
<i>Be there on time</i>	<i>otherwise</i>	<i>you'll create a bad impression</i>

Imperatives can be used in place of *If*-clauses to comment, make requests, make a bargain, offer advice, threaten and so on. The use of the imperative conveys more urgency than the *If*-clause:

<b>comment:</b>	<b><i>Fail to pay</i></b> <i>and they <b>ll</b> cut off the electricity</i> ( <i>If you fail to pay, they <b>ll</b> cut off the electricity</i> )
<b>request:</b>	<b><i>Tell us what to do</i></b> <i>and we <b>ll</b> get on with it</i> ( <i>If you tell us what to do we <b>ll</b> get on with it</i> )
<b>threat:</b>	<b><i>Stop eating sweets,</i></b> <i>or you won't get any dinner</i> ( <i>If you don't stop eating sweets, you won't get any dinner</i> )
<b>advice:</b>	<b><i>Take a taxi,</i></b> <i>otherwise you <b>ll</b> miss your train</i> ( <i>If you don't take a taxi, you <b>ll</b> miss your train</i> )

Note the difference between imperative + *or* and imperative + *and* in threats:

*Drop that gun **or** I'll shoot you* (i.e. if you don't drop it)

*Drop that parcel **and** I'll kill you* (i.e. if you do drop it)

## Type 2 conditionals

### 4.10 Basic form of Type 2 conditionals

	'if'-clause: past tense condition to be satisfied	main clause: 'would/should' likely outcome
be:	<i>If I was taller,</i>	<i>I would become a policeman</i>
have:	<i>If he had any money,</i>	<i>he'd leave home</i>
other verbs:	<i>If you took a taxi,</i>	<i>you'd get there quicker</i>
could [> 11.12]:	<i>If you could see me now,</i>	<i>you'd laugh your head off</i>

### 4.11 Notes on the form of Type 2 conditionals

1 The most commonly used form is:

**'if' + simple past + 'd' conditional**

*If it rained tomorrow we'd stay at home*

In Type 2, *if* is followed by a past tense or *could* (= was/were able to). The main clause is normally formed with *would*, though *should* (weakened to in speech but not contracted to 'd in writing) can be used instead of *would* after *I* and *we*. *Would* is generally contracted to 'd in all persons in the main clause. Compare *shall* and *will* [> 9.36]. *If* is followed only exceptionally by *would* [> 14.24.1].

2 An unnecessary extra negative can occur in Type 2 conditionals:

*I wouldn't be surprised if he **didn't** try to blackmail you*  
(i.e. if he tried to blackmail you)

The *not* in the If-clause does not make a true negative.

### 14.12 When we use Type 2 conditionals

Type 2 conditionals talk about imaginary situations in the If-clause and speculate about their imaginary consequences in the main clause. Though past tenses are used, the reference is not to past time. (That is why this use of the past tense after *if* is often called 'the unreal past'.) By comparison, Type 1 conditionals [> 14.4] talk about things which will possibly happen and consider their real consequences for the future.

Depending on the attitude of the speaker, a Type 2 conditional can be used in place of a Type 1 to describe something that is reasonably possible. So:

*If you **went** by train, you **would** get there earlier*

*If you **didn't stay up** so late every evening, you **wouldn't** feel so sleepy in the morning*

mean the same, but are more 'tentative' than:

*If you go by train, you **will** get there earlier*

*If you **don't stay up** so late every evening, you **won't** feel so sleepy in the morning*

However, Type 2 conditionals more often describe what is totally impossible:

*If I had longer legs, **I'd be able to run faster***



**14.13 Type 2, Variation 1: 'If + were/was' + 'would/should'**

'if'-clause: 'were/was' condition to be satisfied		main clause: 'would/should' likely outcome	
<i>I/he/she/it</i>	<i>were/was</i>	<i>I would (or should)</i>	
<i>If</i>	<i>ready</i>	<i>we would (or should)</i>	<i>go</i>
	<i>you/we/they were</i>	<i>you/they (etc.) would</i>	

**14.13.1 'If I were/If I was'**

*Were* can be used in place of *was* after *If I/he/she/it*. There is no difference in meaning, but *were* is more formal, particularly when we are making doubtful statements:

*If I was/were better qualified, I'd apply for the job*

However, *were* is preferable in purely imaginary statements:

*If I were the Queen of Sheba, you'd be King Solomon*

**14.13.2 'If I were you/If I were in your position' (Not "was")**

We often use these expressions to give advice:

*If I were you/in your position, I'd accept their offer*

(This means: *You* should accept their offer.)

We can also use these expressions to refer to somebody else:

*If I were Jane/in Jane's position, I'd walk out on him*

**14.13.3 'If it were not for/Were it not for' (Not "was")**

This expression explains why something has or hasn't happened:

*If it weren't for your help, I would still be homeless*

In formal contexts, *If it were not for* can be expressed as *Were it not for*, with the negative in full (Not \**Weren't it*\*):

*Were it not for your help, I would still be homeless*

*If it were not for* and *Were it not for* are often followed by *the fact that*.

*Were it not for the fact that you helped me, I would be homeless*

**14.14 Type 2, Variation 2: 'If + past + modal'**

'If'-clause: past tense condition to be satisfied		main clause: modal [> 11.1] likely outcome	
<i>If he knew the facts,</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>could</i>	<i>tell us what to do</i>
<i>If he could get the facts,</i>			<i>might</i>

Another modal can replace *would* in Type 2 conditionals, e.g. when we feel the imaginary consequences are less likely, or when we are referring to ability [> 11.14], possibility [> 11.28], etc.:

condition to be satisfied	likely outcome
<i>If he were here</i>	<i>he could help us</i> (ability)
<i>If he were here</i>	<i>he might help us</i> (possibility)
<i>If he failed,</i>	<i>he ought to/should try again</i> (duty)

Progressive and perfect combinations with modals are possible:

*If she were here now she could be helping us*

*If he was in New York, he could have met my sister*

*If they were in the army they would have been fighting in the jungle most of the time*

## Type 3 conditionals

### 14.15 Type 2, Variation 3: 'If + were to/was to' + 'would', etc.

if-clause: 'were to/was to' condition to be satisfied	main clause: 'would/should', etc. likely outcome
--	---

*If I/he/she/it were to/was to ask,  
you/we/they were to ask,*

*I/we would/should, etc  
he/she/it/you/they would, etc*

Instead of an ordinary verb in the simple past, we can use *were* or *was* + to-infinitive in Type 2 conditional clauses:

***If I were to*** (or ***was to***) ***ask***, *would you help me?*

*Were to* is more common than *was to* after *I/he/she/it* and makes a suggestion sound more tentative and polite. Compare:

***If I asked him***, *I'm sure he'd help us*

- *Do you think he would?*

***Well if I were to ask him nicely***

Modals other than *would* and *should* are possible in the main clause:

***If you were to ask him***, ***he might help*** you

***If Sue were to make an effort***, ***she could do better***

The same kind of conditional can be expressed without *if*, if we begin a sentence with *were* (Not *\*was*). This kind of inversion is common only in very formal contexts:

***Were the government to cut Value Added Tax***, *prices would fall*

There is no negative construction (Not *\*If he were not to*) but negative inversion is possible with the full form:

*There 'd be a clear case for legal action over this matter* ***were it not likely to make*** *life difficult for all of us* (Not *'weren't if*)

## Type 3 conditionals

### 14.16 Basic form of Type 3 conditionals

'if'-clause: past perfect imagined condition	main clause: 'would have/should have' imagined outcome
be	<i>If I had been taller</i> <i>I would have joined the police force</i>
have:	<i>If I had had any sense,</i> <i>I would have kept quiet about it</i>
Past perfect.	<i>If we had gone by car,</i> <i>we would have saved time</i>
Past perfect progressive.	<i>If I had been trying harder I would have succeeded</i>
could have	<i>If I could have stopped</i> <i>there wouldn't have been</i>
an accident	

### 14.17 Notes on the form of Type 3 conditionals

1 The most commonly used form is:

**'if + past perfect + 'would have'** [for *should (have)*, > 14.11n1]

*If it had rained,* *we would have stayed at home*

Progressive forms are possible in the *if*-clause and/or main clause:

***If it had been raining this morning*** *we would have stayed at home*

*If I had not got married,* ***I would still have been living*** *abroad*

## 14 Conditional sentences

- 2 *If* is followed by the past perfect or *could have* (= had been able to)  
*Would have* and *should have* are not used in the *If*-clause  
However in everyday speech (never in writing) the following non-standard form (a kind of 'double past perfect') often occurs and should be avoided  
*If I d have known she was ill I d have sent her some flowers*
- 3 The abbreviation can stand for *had* or *would* and is common in both speech and informal writing  
*If I'd(= I had) left sooner I'd(= I would) have been on time*  
The abbreviations ' *would* ve' and ' *d* ve' for *would have* are common in speech. Only *would* ve and *d* have occur in informal writing  
*If I'd got up earlier I would've/I'd have been on time*

### 14.18 When we use Type 3 conditionals

Type 3 conditionals assume something purely imaginary in the *if*-clause and consider the imagined consequences in the main clause. In this respect they are like Type 2 [ > 14.12]. However Type 3 conditionals refer to consequences which did not and could not (now) ever happen because they refer to something that didn't happen in the past. They are 'hypothetical conditions'.

***If I had worked harder at school, I d have got a better job***

***If I hadn't been wearing a raincoat, I would have got wet***

(referring to something possible often expressing regret)

***If I had won the pools, life would have been much easier***

(referring to an imaginary hoped-for situation in the past)

***If I had lived in the Stone Age, I would have been a hunter***

(referring to a completely impossible situation)

We use Type 3 conditionals to speculate about a range of possibilities from what might have been reasonably expected to what would have been completely impossible.

#### 14.18.1 'If I had been you/in your position'

We often use these expressions to describe a course of action we would have followed in someone else's position.

***If I had been you/in your position, I d have accepted their offer***

(This means: You should have accepted their offer.)

We can also use these expressions to refer to somebody else.

***If I had been Jane, I d have walked out on him years ago***

#### 14.18.2 'If it hadn't been for'

We often use this expression to explain why something didn't happen in the past.

***If it hadn't been for the rain, we would have had a good harvest***

#### 14.18.3 Inversion with 'had' in Type 3 conditionals

The form *Had* (he) is a formal variation of *If* (he) *had*.

***Had the management acted sooner, the strike wouldn't have happened***

A negative inversion is possible with the full form.

***Had it not been for the unusually bad weather the rescue party would have been able to save the stranded climber*** (Not \**Hadn't*\*)

### 14.19 Type 3, Variation 1: 'If + past perfect + modal

'if'-clause: past perfect tense imagined condition	main clause: modal [> 11.1] imagined outcome
<i>If he had known the facts</i>	<i>he could have told us what to do</i>
<i>If he could have got the facts</i>	<i>might</i>

Another modal can replace *would* in Type 3 conditionals e.g. when we feel that the imagined consequences were less likely or when we are referring to ability [> 11.15] possibility [> 11.28] etc

imagined condition	imagined outcome
<i>If he had been here yesterday</i>	<i>he could have told us</i> (ability)
<i>If he had been here yesterday</i>	<i>he might have told us</i> (possibility)
<i>If he had received a present</i>	<i>he should have thanked her</i> (duty)

Progressive and perfect combinations with modals are possible

*If he had been here he could have been helping us in the shop*  
*If she had been here she could have met my sister*

## Other uses of 'if and similar conjunctions

### 14.20 Negatives with 'if...not' and 'unless'

*If not* and *unless* are sometimes interchangeable but there are occasions when it is impossible to use one in place of the other

#### 14.20.1 When 'if...not' and 'unless' are interchangeable

Both *if not* and *unless* can be used in negative Type 1 conditionals without a noticeable change of meaning

*If you don't change your mind I won't be able to help you*

*Unless you change your mind I won't be able to help you*

However *unless* is stronger than *If not* and is sometimes preferable e.g. in an ultimatum

*Unless the management improve their offer there'll be a strike*

#### 14.20.2 When we cannot use 'unless' in place of 'if...not'

*Unless* cannot replace *if not* in a Type 1 sentence like

*I'll be surprised if he doesn't win*

This is because *unless* always means except on the condition that so we cannot normally use it to refer to unreal situations

*She'd be better company if she didn't complain so much*

#### 14.20.3 When we cannot use 'if...not' in place of 'unless'

We often use *unless* in past references to introduce an afterthought. The *unless* clause follows the main clause and is usually separated by a dash rather than a comma

*I couldn't have got to the meeting on time — unless of course I had caught an earlier train*

This means the speaker didn't get to the meeting. He could only have done so by catching an earlier train. If we use *if not* in place of *unless* in the above sentence we get

*I couldn't have got there if I hadn't caught an earlier train*

The sentence now conveys the exact opposite meaning: the speaker *did* get to the meeting because he *did* catch an earlier train

#### 14.20.4 'If and 'unless' clauses in short answers

Note how if-clauses and un/ess-clauses can occur in short answers:

*Will you help us with all this re-decorating?*

- Yes, **if I can** No, **not unless you pay me**

#### 14.21 Conjunctions that can sometimes be used in place of 'if

Conditionals can also be introduced by the following conjunctions, which do not always have precisely the same meaning as *if*. *as long as*, *assuming (that)*, *even if*, *if only* [> 11.41-42], *on (the) condition (that)* *provided/providing (that)*, *so long as* and *unless* [> 14.20]; also *suppose (that)* and *supposing (that)*, which normally introduce questions:

*He'll definitely win, **even if he falls over***

*They'll lend us their flat **on (the) condition (that) we look after it***  
***Providing/Provided (that)** (or **So/As long as**) you clear your desk*  
*by this evening, you can have tomorrow off*

***Suppose/Supposing (that) we miss the train** what shall we do?*

*What if and Say can be used in the sense of 'Let us suppose':*

***What if/Say** he gets home before us and can't get in? What will he do then?*

***What if/Say** you were to run out of money? What would you do?*

We can abbreviate a condition if we begin a new sentence with *If so* *In that case*, or *If not*; or if we continue with *in which case*:

*He may be busy, **in which case** I'll call later*

or: *He may be busy **If so, (In that case,)** I'll call later **If not**, can I see him now?*

*Whether or not* (Not *\*if or not\**) introduces 'alternative' conditionals [compare > 1.24.1, 15.18n7]:

***Whether I feel well or not on Monday**, I'm going back to work*

***Whether or not I feel well on Monday**, I'm going back to work*

*You'll have to put up with it, **whether you like it or not***

#### 14.22 Implied conditionals

Conditionals can be implied (i.e. not directly introduced by *if*) in a variety of ways: e.g.

##### type 1:

***With luck**, we'll be there by tomorrow (= if we're lucky)*

***Given time**, they'll probably agree (= if we give them time)*

##### type 2:

***To hear him talk**, you'd think he was Prime Minister (= if you could hear him talk)*

*I would write to her **but I don't know her address** (= if I knew her address)*

***But for his pension**, he would starve (= if he didn't have)*

##### type 3:

***Without your help**, I couldn't have done it (= if you hadn't helped)*

***In different circumstances**, I would have said yes (= if circumstances had been different)*

'Will' and 'would' after 'if'

#### 14.23 'If with meanings other than 'provided that'

##### 14.23.1 'If meaning 'when'

*If it rains heavily, our river floods* (= on those occasions when)

*If* meaning 'when' often refers to permanent truths. The verb in the main clause may be either *will* or the simple present [> 11.64]:

*If you boil water, it turns* (or *will turn*) *into steam*

People commonly use the phrase *if and when* for emphasis in place of 'only when':

*The dispute will end if and when both sides agree*

##### 44L23.2 'If meaning 'although' or 'even if'

*I'll finish this report if it kills me* (i.e. even if)

Subject and verb can be omitted in clauses of this sort:

He's a pleasant, *if awkward lad* (i.e. even if he is awkward)

##### H.23.3 'As if in exclamations [compare > 1.47.2]

*As if in this* sense is common in exclamations:

*As if I care whether she's offended* (= I don't care)

*As if it matters/mattered!* (= it doesn't matter)

##### 14.23.4 'If in place of 'whether' [> 1.24.1, 15.18n5]

As well as introducing conditionals *if* also introduces indirect questions. In certain circumstances, *if* is more natural than *whether* in indirect questions:

*He wants to know if he can stay to dinner*

### 'Will' and 'would' after if

#### 14.24 'If + 'will' and 'would'

##### 14.24.1 'Will' and 'would' to emphasize willingness and unwillingness

- when asking others to do things/responding to offers of help:

*Shall I hold the door open for you?* - Yes *if you will/would*

*If you will/would/could wait a moment I'll fetch the money*

- with reference to someone else:

*If he will/would/could only try harder, I'm sure he'd do well*

- in polite formulas, particularly in formal contexts:

*I'd be grateful if you will/would let me know soon*

*If you will/you would follow me, I'll show you the way*

*Give me a moment if you would* (or, sometimes, *will*)

- in direct references to willingness/unwillingness:

*If you will/would agree to pay us compensation we will/would agree not to take the matter any further* (i.e. if you're willing)

*If you won't stop smoking, you can only expect to have a bad cough* i.e. if you are unwilling to stop smoking - Not "wouldn't")

##### 14.24.2 'If + will' in Type 1 conditionals

We do not normally use a pure future *will* after *if*. However, though rare, it is just possible when we wish to emphasize the idea of 'not now, but later'. Compare:

*If it suits you, I'll change the date of our meeting* (Type 1)

*If it will suit you*, (i.e. not now, but later) *I'll change the date of our meeting*

# 15 Direct and indirect speech

## Direct speech

### 15.1 When do we use direct speech?

We use direct speech whenever we speak. We use the term **direct speech** to describe the way we represent the spoken word in writing.

### 15.2 Form of direct speech in writing

<b>actual spoken statement</b> <i>I'm waiting '</i>	<b>direct statement in writing</b> <i>'I'm waiting,' John said</i>
<b>actual spoken question</b> <i>'When did you arrive, John?'</i>	<b>direct question in writing</b> <i>'When did you arrive, John?' Mary asked</i>

### 15.3 Notes on the use of punctuation marks

- 1 Quotation marks (or 'inverted commas') go round what is actually spoken and enclose other punctuation marks such as commas (,) full stops (.), question marks (?) and exclamation marks (!). They may be single ('...'), or double ("...") and are placed high above the base-line at the beginning *and* end of each quotation:  
*'Is that you, Jane?'* Bob asked *"Is that you, Jane?"* Bob asked
- 2 What is said, plus reporting verb and its subject, is considered as a whole unit. When the subject + reporting verb [> App 45] comes at the beginning of a sentence, the reporting verb is always followed by a comma (sometimes by a colon (:) in AmE) and the quotation begins with a capital letter:  
*John said 'It's good to see you '*  
When the subject + reporting verb comes after what is said, the quotation has a comma before the second quotation mark:  
*'It's good to see you ' John said*  
But if the quotation ends with an exclamation mark or a question mark, a comma is not used as well:  
*'Where can I get a taxi? John asked*  
Subject + verb can come in the middle of a quotation-sentence:  
*'Where in this wretched town ' John asked 'can I get a taxi?*  
The second part of the quotation does not begin with a capital letter because it is not a separate sentence.
- 3 If there is a 'quote within a quote' (e.g. if we are quoting someone's exact words), we use a second set of quotation marks. If double quotation marks have been used on the 'outside', single ones are used on the 'inside' and vice versa. The inside quotation has its own punctuation, distinct from the rest of the sentence:  
*Ann said 'Just as I was leaving, a voice shouted "Stop!"*  
*'What do you mean? "Are you all right?" Ann asked*

We can also use a second set of quotation marks when we mention the title of e.g. a book, film or play:

*How long did it take you to read "War and Peace"?' I asked*

However, this is often a matter of personal taste. In print, titles often appear in italics without quotation marks.

**4 Noun + reporting verb may be in subject + verb order or may be inverted (verb + subject) [> App 45.1]:**

*'This is a serious offence,' the judge said/said the judge*

**If the subject is a long one, then inversion is usual:**

*'Where's this train going?' asked the lady sitting beside me*

**With a pronoun subject, inversion is rare in modern English:**

*'This is a serious offence,' he said*

**Some reporting verbs, particularly those requiring an object, such as *assure*, *inform* and *tell* cannot be inverted [> App 45.2].**

**Adverbs of manner usually come at the end [compare > 7.16.1]:**

*'Go away!' said Mr Tomkins/Mr Tomkins said angrily*

**5 Quotation marks are generally not required with reporting verbs such as *ask oneself*, *think* and *wonder* **wonder** they are used to describe 'direct thoughts' in 'free indirect speech' [> 15.27.3]:**

*So that was their little game he thought*

*Where are they now, he wondered*

## 15.4 Direct speech in context

### 15.4.1 Printed dialogue

Printed dialogue is particularly common in works of fiction and can occur without connecting narrative:

*A tissue of lies!' Boyle cried*

*'You think so?' the inspector asked*

*'Think so? I know it'*

*'And no doubt you can prove it First there are a few important points that need answering '*

In this kind of dialogue, each new speech begins on a new line in a new paragraph. Once the characters have been established, it is not necessary to go on repeating names (or pronouns) and reporting verbs - except to remind the reader from time to time who is speaking. If a speech goes on for more than a paragraph, we put opening quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph, but closing ones only at the end of the final paragraph.

Dialogue can also occur within connecting narrative:

*Boyle was agitated He paced the room as the inspector reconstructed the crime Finally, he could bear it no longer. A tissue of lies ' he cried*

*The inspector paused and asked with heavy irony, 'You think so?'*

*'Think so? I know it,' Boyle snapped*

*The inspector was unconvinced 'And no doubt you can prove it' he said First there are a few important points that need answering,' he added, glancing quickly at his notebook*

In this kind of dialogue, the words spoken by the characters are quoted within each new paragraph as part of the narration.



## 15 Direct and indirect speech

### 15.4.2 Quotations

We use the conventions of direct speech when we are quoting exact words, e.g. in letters, reports and statements by witnesses:

*I reconstructed the crime and before I had finished speaking, Boyle said, A tissue of lies! I asked the accused if he really thought so and he answered 'Think so! I know it!'*

### 15.4.3 Scripts

Quotation marks are not used in scripts for plays, etc.:

BOYLE ( <i>agitated</i> ):	<i>A tissue of lies!</i>
INSPECTOR WILEY:	<i>You think so?</i>
BOYLE ( <i>sharply</i> ):	<i>Think so! I know it!</i>
INSPECTOR WILEY:	<i>And no doubt you can prove it</i>

## 'Say, 'tell' and 'ask'

### 15.5 Indirect speech and the sequence of tenses [compare > 9.5.2]

We use **indirect speech** (sometimes called 'reported speech') when we are telling someone what another person says or said. The reporting verb (e.g. *say tell*) may be in the present or past (most often in the past) and the tenses of the reported statement are often (but not always) affected by this. Compare:

- actual spoken statement: *I can see him now*
- direct statement in writing: *I can see him now,' the boss says/said*
- indirect statement (present): *The boss **says** (that) he **can see** you now*
- indirect statement (past): *The boss **said** (that) he **could see** you now*

Quotation marks are not used in indirect speech. For verbs that can introduce reported statements and questions [> App 45].

### 15.6 Reporting verbs and adjectives in direct/indirect speech

The commonest reporting verbs in both direct and indirect speech are *say, tell* and *ask*. Many other verbs can be followed by *that* or *if, whether* and can serve as reporting verbs [> App 45]. A number of these do not strictly 'report speech' (actual spoken words), but thoughts, feelings, etc. That is why 'indirect speech', as a term, is preferable to 'reported speech'. Similarly, a number of adjectives, such as *certain, sure* [> App 44] can be followed by *that if, whether (whether) to* and question-words.

### 15.7 The verbs 'say', 'tell' and 'ask'

#### 15.7.1 Basic uses of 'say', 'tell' and 'ask'

These three verbs do not follow the same pattern. The most important thing to remember is that *tell/must* be followed by a personal indirect object (*tell somebody*). *Say* can be followed by an optional *to+* the person who is addressed:

*You haven't got much time, he told me/he said (to me)*

## 'Say', 'tell' and 'ask'

Ask can be followed by an indirect object [> 15.17, 16.20]:

*'Are you comfortable?' he asked (me)*

*He asked (me) if I was comfortable*

In reported requests [> 15.24, 16.20] the inclusion or not of an object affects the meaning:

*She asked to go* (actual spoken words: *'May I go?'*)

*She asked me to go* (actual spoken words: *'Will you go?'*)

The following references give further details about *say*, *tell* and *ask* :

- *say* in direct speech in writing [> 15.2-3, 15.8].
- *say* + *that*-clause, indirect statement [> 15.9-16].
- *say if/whether* + indirect Yes/No question [> 15.18ns3,8].
- *say* + indirect Wh-question [> 15.20n.3],
- *say* + to-infinitive [> 15.24.1].
- *tell* somebody in direct speech in writing [> 15.2-3, 15.8].
- *tell* somebody + *that*-clause, indirect statement [> 15.9-16].
- *tell* somebody + *if/whether* + indirect Yes/No question [> 15.18n8].
- *tell* somebody + indirect Wh-question [> 15.20n.3],
- *tell* somebody + to-infinitive [> 15.23-24, 16.21, 16.25].
- *ask* (somebody) in direct speech in writing [> 15.2-3, 15.8],
- *ask* (somebody) + *if/whether* + indirect Yes/No question [> 15.9, 15.17-18].
- *ask* (somebody) + Wh-question [> 15.19-22].
- *ask* (somebody) + to-infinitive [> 15.23-24, 16.20].
- *ask that* something (*should*) be done [> 11.75.2].

### 15.7.2 Secondary uses of 'say', 'tell' and 'ask'

- *say so*: *'The meeting's off,' Jill said*

*Who says so?*

*'The boss says so/said so,' Jill answered*

- the passive *'He is said to be'* [> 12.8n.3] does not have an active equivalent: Not *"They say him to"*, but: *They say (that) he is*
- *say* + object in fixed expressions: e.g. *say a few words, say no more, say nothing, say (your) prayers, say something*
- *tell* somebody *so*: *'You were right about the meeting.' I said*  
*I told you so,' Jill answered*
- *tell* + object in fixed expressions: e.g. *(can) tell the difference*  
*tell a lie tell a story, tell the time tell the truth*
- *ask for* something: *ask somebody for something*:  
*I asked for a loan I asked Jim for a loan*
- *ask* in fixed expressions: e.g. *ask after someone, ask (for) a favour*  
*ask the price, ask a question, ask the time*

### 15.8 'Say', 'tell' and 'ask' in direct speech

*Say* is commonly associated with direct speech in writing:

*'It's raining, I said*

We can also use *say* with short, ordinary questions in direct speech (not long and complicated ones):

*'Are you all right?' he said/asked* (Not *"told me"*)

## 15 Direct and indirect speech

Say (Not *"told him/asked"*) can introduce a statement or question  
*I said It's raining I said Is it ready?*

Say or *tell* can be used in direct speech [> 15.2-3] and can also introduce direct commands

*Don't touch that!* **he said (to them)/told them**

Ask is used in direct questions

*How are you?* **she asked (me)/said (Not *"told me"*)**

### 15.9 'Say', 'tell' and 'ask' in indirect speech

Say and *tell someone* + optional *that* can introduce indirect statements We never use a comma after *say* or *tell someone*

**He said (that)/told me (that)** *his life was in danger*

If we need to mention the listener, *tell* + indirect object is generally preferable to *say* + *to someone* [> 15.7.1]

When the reporting verb comes at the end of the sentence, we cannot use *that*

*His life was in danger* **he told me/he said**

Ask (with or without a personal indirect object) can report a question

Ask (*someone*) is followed by *if/whether* or a question-word

**She asked (me) if/whether** *I wanted anything*

**She asked (me) what** *I wanted*

We use *say/tell* to introduce noun clauses [> 1.23.2], not to report questions For the use of *ask/tell* to report commands [> 15.23-24]

## Indirect statements: reporting verb in the present

### 15.10 Form with reporting verb in the present

#### actual spoken statements

*I've read Tony's book and I don't understand it*

*I've read Tony's book and I didn't understand it*

#### indirect statements: reporting verb in the present

If the reporting verb in indirect speech is in the present the tenses that follow are usually the same as those used in the original spoken statement This is often the case when we report words that have just been spoken [compare > 952 15 14-16]

*Jim says tells me (that) he's read Tony's book and doesn't understand it*

*Jim says tells me (that) he's read Tony's book and didn't understand it*

### 15.11 Indirect speech in context (reporting verb in the present)

The reporting verb is often in the present when the reference is general or to 'present time' in contexts like the following

- reporting, e.g. a rumour

A *A little birdie tells me you're applying for a new job*

B *Who tells you?*

A *Never you mind!*

## Indirect statements with tense changes

- passing on messages  
A *Come in now Jim Dinner's ready*  
B *What does your mother say?*  
C *She says you must come in now dad (She says) dinner's ready*
- reading a newspaper, etc and reporting  
A *What does the article say?*  
B *It's about the kitchen of the future The writer says we'll have robots which can understand instructions and carry them out*
- general (no special time)  
A *So how are we supposed to wire this plug?*  
B *The instructions say that the brown wire means live and it goes into the hole marked L It says here that the blue means neutral and it goes into the hole marked N*
- reporting something someone says very often  
*Mary's always talking about money She's always complaining that things are expensive and she's always asking how much I've paid for one thing and another*

## Indirect statements with tense changes

### 15.12 Form with reporting verb in the past

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#### actual spoken statements in the present (simple and progressive)

TOM *I need to go to the bank* PAM *I'm waiting for Harriet*

#### indirect statements: present past

*Tom said (that) he needed to go to the bank Pam said (that) she was waiting for Harriet*

#### actual spoken statement in the present perfect

*I've moved to another flat*

#### indirect statement: present perfect past perfect (past perfect obligatory)

*Sylvia said (that) she had moved to another flat*

#### actual spoken statements in the past (simple and progressive)

*I moved to another flat I was waiting for Harriet*

*I had been waiting for hours before you arrived*

#### indirect statements: past -> past or past perfect (past perfect optional)

*She said (that) she moved/had moved to another flat*

*He said (that) he was waiting had been waiting for Harriet*

*He said (that) he had been waiting for hours (past perfect does not change)*

#### actual spoken statements with the 'present' form of modals

*I can see you tomorrow I'll help you*

#### indirect statements: modal 'present' -> 'conditional' or 'past' [> 11.8.3]

*She said (that) she could see me the next day*

*She said (that) she would help me*

#### actual spoken statements with the 'past' or 'conditional' form of modals

*I could see you tomorrow I would complain if I were you*

#### indirect statements: the 'past' or 'conditional' modal does not change

*He said (that) he could see me the next day*

*She said (that) she would complain if she were me*

---

### 15.13 Notes on the form of indirect speech with tense changes

#### 1 'Rules' in indirect speech

Tense changes often occur in indirect speech because there is an interval between the original spoken words and the time when they are reported, but these changes are not always obligatory [> 15.10, 15.14-16]. It is the changing viewpoint of the reporting speaker or writer that decides the choice of appropriate forms, not complicated rules. The notes that follow are not 'rules', but are based on observation of what often happens in practice.

#### 2 Linking phrases

Indirect speech rarely occurs in sets of unrelated sentences, but is found in continuous paragraphs of reported language. Continuity is achieved by the use of linking phrases, such as: *she went on to say, he continued, he added that*, and by varying the reporting verbs: *he observed, noted, remarked*, etc. Such forms remind the reader that the language is reported. Many features present in direct speech, such as Yes/No short answers and speech 'fillers', such as *Well*, etc., disappear in indirect speech.

#### 3 Tense changes [> 9.5]

In indirect speech we do not usually repeat the speaker's exact words. Reporting usually takes place in the past, so the reporting verb is often in the past. As a result, the tenses of the reported clause are usually 'moved back'. This 'moving back' of tenses is called **backshift**. A useful general rule is 'present becomes past and past becomes past perfect'. 'Past' modals and the past perfect are unchanged when reported, since no further backshift is possible [> 15.12]. We must normally use the past perfect to report a statement whose verb was in the present perfect:

*7 have lived in the south for years, Mrs Duncan said*

*Mrs Duncan told me (that) she had lived in the south for years*

If the verb in the original statement was in the simple past, we do not usually need to change it to the past perfect (unless we wish to emphasize that one event happened before another):

*I lived in Scotland in the 1970's Mrs Duncan said*

*Mrs Duncan said that she (had) lived in Scotland in the 1970's*

#### 4 Pronoun changes

Pronouns change (or not) depending on the view of the reporter:

*'I'll send you a card Sue'* (actual words spoken by Ann)

*Ann told Sue she'd send her a card* (reported by someone else)

*Ann said/told me she would send me a card* (reported by Sue)

*I told Sue (that) I'd send her a card* (reported by Ann)

Some typical pronoun changes are:

<i>I</i>	<i>he/she</i>	<i>me/you</i>	<i>him/her</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>his/her</i>
<i>we</i>	<i>they</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>mine</i>	<i>his/hers</i>	<i>ours</i>	<i>theirs</i>	<i>myself</i>	<i>himself/herself</i>

#### 5 Time and place changes

It is often necessary to make time and place changes in relation to

## Indirect statements with tense changes

tense changes. For example, on Tuesday, A says:

*'A card came yesterday saying Sue will arrive tomorrow'*

B, reporting this on Wednesday, might say:

*A told me a card had come the day before yesterday/on Monday saying Sue would arrive today/on Wednesday*

But time and place changes are not always necessary. If, for example, it was still Tuesday when the statement above was reported, B might say:

*A told me a card came (or had come) yesterday saying Sue will (or would) arrive tomorrow*

Examples of possible time and place changes:

<b>time:</b>	<i>now</i>	<i>immediately/then</i>
	<i>two days ago</i>	<i>two days before/earlier</i>
	<i>today</i>	<i>that day</i>
	<i>tonight</i>	<i>that night</i>
	<i>tomorrow</i>	<i>the next/the following day</i>
	<i>yesterday</i>	<i>the previous day/the day before</i>
	<i>last night</i>	<i>the night before</i>
<b>place:</b>	<i>here</i>	<i>there</i> when what is referred to is clear
	<i>this place</i>	<i>that place</i>
	<i>these places</i>	<i>those places</i>
<b>verbs:</b>	<i>come/bring</i>	<i>go/take</i>

## 6 Modal verbs

'Modal present' becomes 'modal past' [> 11.8.3]:

e.g. *can* becomes *could*; *will* becomes *would*; *may* becomes *might*:

*7 'can/will/may see you later,' he said*

*He said he **could/would/might** see me later*

### **shall**

When *shall* is used with future reference for prediction, speculation, etc. it becomes *would* in indirect speech:

*I **shall** tell him exactly what I think, she said*

*She said she **would** tell him exactly what she thought*

When *shall* is used in offers, suggestions or requests for advice it becomes *should* (even after the second and third persons):

***Shall** I speak to him in person?' she asked*

*She asked whether she **should** speak to him in person*

### **should/shouldn't**

When *should* or *shouldn't* refer to desirability, obligation or likelihood, they remain unchanged in indirect speech:

*'You **should** see a specialist,' he told me*

*He told me I **should** see a specialist.*

*Should* used in place of *would*, e.g. in conditional sentences [>

14.2. 14.11n1], becomes *would* [compare *shall* above]:

*'If I were you, I **should** get another lawyer'*

*She said (that) if she were me, she **would** get another lawyer*

### **would, could, might, ought to, needn't have, used to**

These (including negative forms where applicable) remain unchanged in indirect speech in all combinations:

## 15 Direct and indirect speech

*'I **would** like an appointment tomorrow, I said to my dentist  
I told my dentist (that) I **would** like an appointment the next day  
'You **ought to** slow down a bit, the doctor told him  
The doctor told him (that) he **ought to** slow down a bit*

### 'perfect' and 'past' modal forms [> 11.8.4]

Forms such as *must have* and *could have* remain unchanged:

*7 **must have slept** through the alarm ' she said  
She said she **must have slept** through the alarm*

### **must**

When referring to the past, *must* can remain unchanged in indirect speech when it is used to indicate inescapable obligation. Or we can use *had to* (the past of *have to*) in its place:

*I **must** warn you of the consequences,' he said  
He told me he **must/had to** warn me of the consequences*

*Must*, indicating future necessity, can remain unchanged, or can be replaced by *would have to* or sometimes *had to*:

*'We **must** go early tomorrow ' she said  
She said they **must** go early the next day (or She said they **would have to go/they had to go** )*

When *must* is used to indicate deduction or possibility, it remains unchanged in indirect speech. It cannot be replaced by *had to*:

*'George **must** be a fool to behave like that' he said  
He said George **must** be a fool to behave like that*

*Mustn't* (prohibition) remains unchanged or changes to *couldn't*:

*'You **mustn't/can't** cross the border,' the guard said  
The guard said we **mustn't/couldn't** cross the border*

### **needn't**

*Needn't* (absence of necessity) can remain unchanged or can be replaced by *didn't have to* in indirect speech:

*'You **needn't/don't have to** come in tomorrow ' the boss said  
The boss said I **needn't/didn't have to** come in the next day*

## 7 Conditional statements [> 14.2]

Type 1 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you **pass** your test, I'll buy you a car' he said  
He said that if I **passed** my test he **would** buy me a car*

Type 2 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you **passed** your test I **would** buy you a car' he said  
He said that if I **passed** my test he **would** buy me a car*

Type 3 conditional statements are reported as follows:

*'If you'd **passed** your test I'd **have bought** you a car' he said  
He said that if I'd **passed** my test he'd **have bought** me a car*

## 8 Exclamations

Note the word order in reported exclamations:

*'What a silly boy **you are**' she exclaimed  
She told him what a silly boy **he was**  
She told him that **he was** a silly boy*

## Indirect statements with mixed tense sequences

### 15.14 Form of indirect statements with mixed tense sequences

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**actual spoken statement**

*I've read Tony's book and I don't understand it*

**indirect statements with mixed tense sequences**

*Jim says he's read Tony's book and didn't understand it*

*Jim said he's read Tony's book and doesn't understand it*

*Jim said he'd read Tony's book and doesn't understand it*

*Jim said he'd read Tony's book and didn't understand it*

---

### 15.15 Indirect speech: the speaker's viewpoint [compare > 15.10-11]

A speaker can choose to report a statement or a question using the tenses that match his viewpoint, based on the facts of the situation as he sees them at the time of speaking. Note the different viewpoints expressed in the following examples:

*Jim says (now) he's read Tony's book and didn't understand it*

(then, when he finished reading, or then, while he was reading).

*Jim said (then) he's read Tony's book (now) and didn't understand it (then).*

*Jim said (then) he'd read Tony's book (then) and doesn't understand it (now).*

*Jim said (then) he'd read Tony's book (then) and didn't understand it (then).*

### 15.16 Reporting permanent states, facts, habits

Permanent states and conditions are often reported in the simple present after a reporting verb in the past to show that they are matters of fact now [> App 45 for reporting verbs]:

*Copernicus **concluded** that the earth **goes** round the sun*

However, the 'proximity rule' [> 9.5.2] would also allow us to say:

*Copernicus **concluded** that the earth **went** round the sun*

A change in tense can lead to ambiguity. Compare:

*He told me **he works** as a builder (at present)*

*He told me **he worked** as a builder (at present or in the past?)*

## Indirect Yes/No questions

### 15.17 Form of indirect Yes/No questions

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The rules about tense sequences [> 9.5, 15.10, 15.12-16] also apply to questions:

**actual spoken questions**

**Indirect questions**

**be:** *'Are you ready?'* *He asked (me) if/whether I am/was ready*

**have:** *'Have you finished?'* *He asked (me) if/whether I (have)/had finished*

**do** *'Do you play chess?'* *He asked (me) if/whether I play/played chess*

**modals:** *'Can I have it?'* *He asked (me) if/whether he can/could have it*

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### 15.18 Notes on the form of indirect Yes/No questions

1 Quotation marks and question marks

Quotation marks and question marks are not used in indirect questions and there is a change in word order (notes 2 and 3 below).

2 Word order: *be*, *have* and modal auxiliaries

The inversion in the direct question changes back to statement word order (subject + verb) in the reported question and, if necessary, the tense is changed at the same time. Modals may change from their 'present' form to their 'past' form [> 11.8.3]:

**direct statement:** *He is ready* ' (subject + verb)

**direct Yes/No question:** *Is he ready?* ' (inversion)

**indirect question:** *She asked me if he was ready* (if + subject + verb)

3 Word order: *do*, *does* and *did*

*Do/does/did* in Yes/No questions disappear in reported questions:

**direct statement:** *He went home*

**direct Yes/No question:** *Did he go home?*

**indirect question:** *She asked me if he went home*

or: *She asked me if he had gone home*

This reflects normal usage, but in everyday speech it is not uncommon to hear direct questions embedded in indirect speech: *She said she was going to the shops and (asked me) did I want anything while she was out*

4 Reporting Yes/No questions

All kinds of Yes/No questions [> 13.5, 13.14, 13.17-23] are reported in the same way. If necessary, phrases like *in surprise* can be added to interpret intonation, etc. [> 15.25]:

*'Do you play chess?'*

*'Don't you play chess?'* *He asked me if/whether*

*'You don't play chess, do you?'* *I played chess*

*'You play chess, don't you?'* etc.

5 *If* and *whether* [compare > 1.24.1, 14.23.4, 16.24]

*If* and *whether* are interchangeable after *ask*, *want to know*, *wonder* etc., but *whether* conveys slightly greater doubt. Some verbs, like *discuss* [> App 45], can only be followed by *whether*.

*If* or *whether* must always be used when reporting Yes/No questions and cannot be omitted (unlike *that* in reported statements):

*Tom asked if/whether it was raining*

*Whether* is usually preferred when there are alternatives [> 13.44-45]:

*She asked me whether I wanted tea or coffee*

6 *That* and *whether* in short answers

Short answers can be given with *that* and *whether/if*:

*What did she tell you?* *What did she ask you?*

- *That she would be late* - *Whether/If I would be late*

7 Reporting Yes/No questions with *or not* [> 1.24.1, 13.44-45, 14.21]

*'Do you want any dinner or not?'*

*He wants to know if/whether we want any dinner or not*

*He wants to know whether or not we want dinner* (Not *'if or not'*)

- 8 Indirect Yes/No questions with reporting verbs other than *ask*  
 Many reporting verbs can be used other than *ask*, *want to know*, etc.  
 in combinations with *whether* and (sometimes) *if* [> App 45]:  
*He didn't tell me if/whether he would be arriving early or late*  
*She didn't say if/whether she was coming to lunch*  
*I don't know if/whether I've passed my exam yet*  
*I wonder if/whether they've heard the news yet*

## Indirect question-word questions

### 15.19 Form of indirect question-word questions

ie rules about tense sequences [> 9.5, 15.10, 15.12-16] also apply to questions<sup>1</sup>

#### actual spoken questions indirect questions

<b>be</b>	<i>Where are you going?</i>	<i>He asked (me)</i>	<i>where I was going</i>
<b>have.</b>	<i>'Why haven't you finished?</i>	<i>He wanted to know why</i>	<i>I (haven't)/hadn't finished</i>
<b>do.</b>	<i>'What do you think of it?'</i>	<i>He wanted to know what</i>	<i>I (think/thought of it</i>
<b>modals</b>	<i>'When must I be there?'</i>	<i>He asked (me)</i>	<i>when he must be/had to be there</i>

### 15.20 Notes on the form of indirect question-word questions

- Word order: *be*, *have* and modal auxiliaries [compare > 15.18n2]  
 The inversion after a question-word in a direct question changes  
 back to statement word order (subject + verb) in the reported  
 question and, if necessary, the tense is changed at the same time.  
 Modals may change from 'present' form to 'past' form [> 11.8.3]:  

<b>direct statement:</b>	<b><i>We are going home</i></b>
<b>direct Wh-question:</b>	<b><i>Where are you going?</i></b> ( <i>Wh-</i> + inversion)
<b>indirect question:</b>	<i>He asked (us) <b>where we were going</b></i> ( <i>Wh-</i> + subject + verb)
- Word order: *do*, *does* and *did* [compare > 15.18n.3]  
*Do/does/did* in direct questions disappear in reported questions:  

<b>direct statement:</b>	<b><i>I gave it to John</i></b>
<b>direct Wh-question:</b>	<b><i>When did you give it to John?</i></b>
<b>indirect question:</b>	<i>He asked me <b>when I gave it to John</b></i>
- Indirect question-word questions with verbs other than *ask*  
 Many different reporting verbs can be used other than *ask*, *want to know*, etc. [> App 45]:  

<i>I <b>know</b></i>	<i>where he lives</i>
<i><b>She didn't say</b></i>	<i>why she was coming home late</i>
<i><b>He didn't tell me</b></i>	<i>how he did it</i>
- Question-words in short answers  
 Short answers can be given with *Why*, *When*, etc.:  
*What did she want to know? - **Why/When** we were leaving*  
 (= She wanted to know why/when we were leaving.)

## Indirect subject-questions

### 15.21 Form of indirect subject-questions

	actual spoken questions	indirect questions
<b>be:</b>	'Who is in charge here?'	He asked (me) who was in charge there
<b>present:</b>	'Which firm makes these parts?'	He asked (me) which firm (makes) made those parts
<b>past:</b>	'What caused the accident?'	He asked (me) what caused/had caused the accident
<b>modals:</b>	'Whose novel will win the prize?'	He asked (me) whose novel would win the prize

### 15.22 Note on the form of indirect subject-questions

Tense changes and changes in modals occur in the usual way, but the word order of the direct question is retained in the indirect question. Reporting verbs other than *ask* can be used to introduce indirect subject-questions [> App 45]:

*Please tell me who delivered this package*  
*I want to know which piece fits in this puzzle*

## Uses of the to-infinitive in indirect speech

### 15.23 Form of the to-infinitive in indirect speech

actual spoken words	reported version
'Keep a record of your expenses'	I told him to keep a record of his expenses
'Don't make a mess in the kitchen'	I told him not to make a mess in the kitchen
'How do I prepare the sauce?'	He wanted to know how to prepare the sauce
I want to speak to the manager	She asked to speak to the manager

### 15.24 Form and use of the infinitive in indirect speech

#### 15.24.1 The imperative: affirmative and negative

Imperatives (usually orders, requests, advice, etc.) are reported with appropriate verbs followed by a to-infinitive. Commonly-used verbs (always followed by a personal object in indirect speech) are: *advise ask instruct remind tell warn*, etc. [> App 45.3]. In each case the reporting verb must match the function of the imperative (asking, telling, advising, etc.) [compare > 16.20-21]:

*Keep a record of your expenses* I said  
**tell:** I told him to keep a record of his expenses  
*Remember to switch off all the lights* she said  
**remind:** She reminded me to switch off all the lights

When a negative imperative (e.g. *Don't make a mess!*) is reported, *no* always goes before the to-infinitive [but compare > 16.14]:

She told 'asked/warned him **not to make** a mess in the kitchen  
 Direct orders can also be reported with *be to*:  
*'Wait for me* He says I **am to wait** for him He said I **was to**

## When we use indirect speech

Or we can use the passive with verbs other than *say*:

*I have been told/was told to wait for him*

**Note the informal use of *say* in: *He said (not) to wait for him***

Ask, when a speaker is asking permission or making a request, may be followed by the infinitive:

*I asked to speak to the manager*

and by the passive infinitive [> 12.2]:

*He asked to be kept informed about developments*

*I asked for two items to be added to the list*

### 15.24.2 The infinitive after question-words [compare > 16.24]

Direct suggestions and requests for advice and information with *Shall I ? Should I ?*, *Do you want me to ?* etc. (expecting Yes/No answers) can be reported in two ways:

**direct request:** *Shall/Should I phone her?*

**indirect request:** *He wanted to know if/whether he should phone her*

**whether + infinitive:** *He wanted to know whether to phone her*

Requests, etc. with question-words can also be reported in two ways:

**direct request:** *How shall I prepare the sauce?*

**indirect request:** *He wanted to know how he should prepare it*

**question-word + infinitive:** *He wanted to know how to prepare it*

Other examples: *when she should be/to be at the station*

*where she should park/to park*

*She wanted to know which she should choose/to choose*

*who(m) she should ask/to ask*

*what she should do/to do*

Note that *why* or *if* cannot be followed by a to-infinitive.

## When we use indirect speech

### 15.25 Interpreting direct speech

Indirect speech requires a great deal more than the mechanical application of 'rules', for we must interpret what we hear or read before reporting it. We need to convey the manner in which the words were spoken or written. So, for example, stress and intonation in direct speech can be 'reported' by means of adverbs or emphatic reporting verbs, such as *insist* and *suggest*:

*'You really must let me pay the bill,' Andrew said*

**Andrew insisted on paying the bill.**

*'Why don't we go sailing?' Diana said*

**Diana suggested they should go sailing.**

*'You've just won a lottery!' Tom said*

*'Really' Jennifer exclaimed*

**Jennifer was amazed when Tom told her that she had won a lottery.**

### 15.26 Oral reporting

Oral reporting *may* be concerned with other people's conversations, gossip, instructions, conveying the gist of lectures and so on. In oral reporting, direct speech is often quoted and there may be sudden changes in the sequence of tenses. A few examples are:

#### 15.26.1 Reporting everyday conversation

*'Mrs Come asked me how we all are and I told her all our news Her eldest son has just got his exam results and has done very well, apparently "What do you expect?" I said to her, "he's always been a bright lad " "Oh, he is that," she says, "but he's really lazy " I told her I didn 't think he was lazy '*

#### 15.26.2 Passing on instructions

*'The boss wants you to go to the airport to pick up the company s guests She says you 're to take the company car. Oh - and she asked me to tell you to phone if there are any flight delays '*

#### 15.26.3 Giving the gist of e.g. a lecture

*'Or Barnaby gave us a very interesting talk on boat-building in ancient times. He explained how boat-building methods changed over a period of about 1500 years He also had some slides showing us how the ancient world lost most of its forests because so much wood was needed for boats. He began his talk by telling us about Ancient Greece at around 300 BC '*

### 15.27 Written reporting

Written reporting includes newspaper reports, records of conferences, minutes of meetings, reports of debates and so on. Consistency in such matters as the sequence of tenses is carefully maintained, particularly in formal reporting. A few examples are:

#### 15.27.1 Company reports

*The Chairman opened his address to the shareholders by pointing out that pre-tax profits had fallen for the second year running, which was disappointing Market conditions were difficult for almost every company and the combination of high interest rates and the strong dollar had affected profit margins*

#### 15.27.2 Parliamentary reports

*Mr Harry Greene said that airlines were losing money because of their cheap air fares policies We could only expect airlines to fail unless they were supported by massive government grants*

#### 15.27.3 'Free indirect speech'

The following is an example of fiction in which indirect speech is freely woven into the narrative to reveal a person's thoughts, motives, etc.:  
*Opening his case he found a handkerchief inside it It was certainly not his for the initials M D B were stitched into the corner So that was their little game, he thought Someone had opened his case to plant this evidence But how did they open the case? How did they even know the case was his, he wondered, as he slowly unfolded the dead man's handkerchief*

# 16 The infinitive and the '-ing' form

## The bare infinitive

### 16.1 The infinitive and the '-ing' form

The base form of a verb (*go*) often functions as an infinitive. It is called the **bare infinitive** because it is used without *to*. We must distinguish it from the **to-infinitive**, where *to* is always used in front of the base form of the verb (*to go*). The *-ing* form of a verb (*going*) sometimes functions as a gerund (i.e. a kind of noun) and sometimes as a present participle [> 16.38]. Many verbs and adjectives, and some nouns, can be followed by *one or other* of these forms, and in some cases by more than one form. From the student's point of view, the problem is knowing which form is appropriate. This may be because only one form is grammatically correct, e.g. *enjoy doing* [> 16.42], *fail to do* [> 16.19]. Or it may be because only one form suits what we want to say, e.g. *remember doing* or *remember to do* [> 16.59].

### 16.2 Forms of the infinitive [compare -ing > 1.56, 16.41]

	active	passive
present infinitive:	(to) ask	(to) be asked
present progressive infinitive:	(to) be asking	
perfect or past infinitive:	(to) have asked	(to) have been asked
perfect/past progressive infinitive:	(to) have been asking	

### 16.3 The bare infinitive after modal verbs

The main use of the bare infinitive is after modal verbs. All the modal verbs [except *ought*, > 11.6 in.2] must be followed by a bare infinitive (except in short responses like *Yes, I can*):

*I can/could/may/might/will/shall/should/must leave soon*  
*Dare/need*, when they are modal, are similar (*Dare/Need we ask?*).  
The negative is formed by adding *not* before the infinitive:  
*I cannot/can't go*, etc. [> 11.5.1].

### 16.4 The bare infinitive after 'let' and 'make'

#### 16.4.1 'Let' as an auxiliary verb

We commonly use the imperative form *Let's* (the contraction of *Let us*) as an auxiliary verb followed by a bare infinitive when making suggestions for actions that include the speaker. *Let's* is often associated with *shall we?* [> 11.40]:

***Let's take a taxi*** *Let's take a taxi*, ***shall we?*** ***Do let's***

The negative of *Let's* in suggestions is:

***Let's not/Don't let's argue about it.***

Informally, *Let's* can relate to / in e.g. offers and requests:

***Let's give you a hand*** (= I'll) ***Let's have a look*** (= Can I?)

*Let* as an auxiliary need not always be followed by *us*:

***Let XYZ be a triangle Let them eat cake Let there be light***

***Don't let me*** (or, very formal, ***Let me not***) ***interrupt you***

#### 16.4.2 **Let as a full verb**

The basic meaning of *let* is *allow*, and in this sense it is a full verb, always followed by a noun or pronoun object before a bare infinitive. If the object is *us*, it cannot be reduced to *let's*:

***Please let us have more time, will you?*** (= allow us to)

***Don't let the children annoy you***

***I won't let you ride my bicycle***

*Let.* can be followed by a passive infinitive:

***He let it be known he was about to resign***

but is not normally used in the passive to mean 'be allowed'.

Compare:

***They didn't let us speak. We were not allowed to speak***

#### 16.4.3 **'Make' (= compel) + bare infinitive**

*Make* (active) + noun/pronoun object can be followed by a bare infinitive. It means 'compel' or 'cause to':

***Miss Prouty made the boys stay in after school***

***That beard makes you look much older than you are***

However, in the passive, *make* in these senses is followed by *to*:

***He was made to work twenty hours a day***

Unlike *let*, *make* (= compel) can never be followed by a passive infinitive. But compare *make* in a different sense:

***Rules were made (= created) to be broken***

#### 16.4.4 **Fixed phrases with 'let' and 'make' + bare infinitive**

The bare infinitive occurs in a number of fixed verb phrases with *let* and *make* - e.g. ***let fall, let go let me see, let slip, live and let live, make believe, make do***

***The dog's got a stick between his teeth and he won't let go***

***You'll have to make your pocket money do I can't give you more***

#### 16.5 **The bare infinitive after 'would rather', etc.**

We use the bare infinitive after expressions in which *y* can be replaced by *would* or *had* [> 11 44-17]:

1 *d* = *would* *d* *rather* *d* *sooner*

But note that *had rather* and *had sooner* sometimes occur

2 *d* = *had*: *'d better 'd best* (less common than *y better*).

***I'd rather work on the land than work in a factory***

***We'd better/best be going*** - Yes, we'd ***better/we'd best be***

These forms can often be followed by the passive infinitive:

***I'd rather be told the truth than be lied to***

*Not* can be used after *y rather/sooner/better/best*:

***You'd better not go near the edge***

Informally, *better* or subject + *better* often occur without *had*:

***Mr Murphy will be here any minute - Better get his file then***

***You better stop arguing and do as you're told***

## 16.6 The bare infinitive after 'Why?' and 'Why not?'

For bare infinitive uses after *Why/Why not?* [> 13.37.2-3]

## The infinitive with or without 'to'

### 16.7 'Help' and 'know' + bare infinitive or to-infinitive

We may use a bare infinitive or a to-infinitive after a few verbs like *help* and *know* ■ The use of a to-infinitive is more formal:

*Mother **helped me (to) do** my homework*

We do not usually omit *to* after *not*:

*How can I **help** my children **not to worry** about their exams?*

*Help* can be used without a noun or pronoun object:

*Everyone in the village **helped (to) build** the new Youth Centre*

or with a noun or pronoun object:

*Can anyone **help me (to) fill in** this tax form?*

In the passive, *to* is obligatory after *help* :

*Millie **was helped to overcome** her fear of flying*

*Help* + the passive infinitive is possible, though rare:

*I'm sure this treatment will **help him (to) be cured***

*Know* + infinitive normally requires a noun or pronoun object. The omission of *to* is only possible with the perfect form of *know*:

*I've **never known her (to) be late** before*

*I've **never known her not (to) be late***

In the passive, *to* is obligatory;

*He **was known to have/to have had** a quick temper as a boy*

### 16.8 Infinitives joined by 'and', etc.

Infinitives can be joined by *and*, *but*, *except*, or *and then* [> 8.4.4]. *To* is usually dropped before the second infinitive:

*Which would you prefer **to win** a million pounds **or (to) have** a brain like Einstein's?*

Other infinitive forms can combine in this way:

*I'd like **to be flying** over the Alps **and (to be) looking down/and be looking** down at the mountains*

*I'd like **to have been offered** the job **and (to have been) given/and been given** the opportunity to prove myself*

Where the second infinitive follows on closely from the first, it is normal to omit *to* before the second infinitive:

*I'd like **to lie down and go** to sleep (Not \*to go\*)*

## The bare infinitive or the '-ing' form?

### 16.9 The bare infinitive or '-ing' after verbs of perception

#### 16.9.1 Verbs without a noun or pronoun object + '-ing'

The verbs *hear* *smell* and *watch* can be followed by the *-ing* form without a noun/pronoun object when an action is perceived in a



general way; *-ing* functions as the object of the verb [> 16.40.3]:

*We could **hear shouting** in the distance*

*People can stand on this platform and **watch building** in progress*

#### 16.9.2 Verb + noun or pronoun object + bare infinitive or '-ing'

These verbs can be followed by a noun or pronoun object + bare infinitive or the *-ing* form: *feel, hear, listen to, look at, notice observe perceive see, smell, watch* [compare > 16.45.1, App 38.4].

The bare infinitive generally refers to the complete action:

*I **watched a pavement-artist draw** a portrait in crayons*

(i.e. probably from start to finish)

The *-ing* form generally refers to an action in progress:

*I **watched a pavement-artist drawing** a portrait in crayons*

(i.e. the action was probably in progress when I arrived)

Either the bare infinitive or *-ing* can describe a short action:

*I **heard someone unlock the door/unlocking** the door.*

But we do not use the *-ing* form for very short actions. Compare:

*I **heard him cough**, (once) 'can hear him **coughing**' (repeatedly)*

For a series of actions, we prefer the bare infinitive:

*The crowd **watched the fireman climb** the ladder, **break** a window on the first floor, and **enter** the building*

The passive *-ing* form [> 16.41] (but not the passive infinitive) can follow a verb of perception:

*I **saw him being taken away** by the police*

The past participle can sometimes follow the object directly:

*I **saw him taken away** by the police*

#### 16.9.3 The passive of verbs of perception + '-ing' or to-infinitive

The verbs *hear observe, perceive* and *see* are often used in the passive followed by *-ing* or by a to-infinitive:

*They **were seen waiting** on the corner* (action in progress)

*They **were seen to climb** through the window* (action completed)

#### 16.10 Have' + bare infinitive or the '-ing' form

##### 16.10.1 'Have' + personal object + bare infinitive

We use this construction to show that one person is causing another to do something [compare the causative, > 12.10]:

***Have the next patient come in** now please, nurse*

*He wanted a job to do, so I **had him paint** the kitchen*

And note *have* + verbs like *believe and know* in: e.g.

*I can't imagine what he'll **have you believe** next*

*I'll **have you know** that I'm a qualified engineer*

##### 16.10.2 Have' + object + '-ing' form

We use this construction to refer to the results we are aiming at:

*I'll **have you speaking English** in six months*

*Within five minutes, Archie **had us all playing** hide-and-seek*

We can also refer to consequences which may not be intended:

*Don't shout' You'll **have the neighbours complaining***

When we use this construction with *won't* or *can't*, we refer to circumstances we are not prepared to tolerate:

*I **won't/can't have you speaking** like that about your father*

## The to-infinitive

Sometimes this construction refers to happenings beyond the speaker's control. Compare a similar construction with *There* [> 10.20]:  
***We have salesmen calling/There are salesmen calling*** every day  
Sometimes, but not very often, the bare infinitive is possible:  
***I've never had such a thing happen(ing) to me before***

### 16.11 'Rather/Sooner than' + bare infinitive or '-ing'

*Rather than* and *sooner than* can be followed by a bare infinitive or *-ing*. *Rather than* is **more common**:  
***Rather than waste/wasting your time doing it yourself, why don't you call in a builder?***

## The to-infinitive

### 16.12 Some common uses of the to-infinitive

#### 16.12.1 'To/in order to/so as to' to express purpose [compare > 1.51.1]

We can use *to*, *in order to* or *so as to* to refer to purpose:  
*I went to live in France **to/in order to/so as to learn** French*  
*She was sent to England **to/in order to/so as to be** educated*  
*Not to* can be used to refer to alternatives:  
*I went to France **not to study** French, **but to study** architecture*  
We express 'negative purpose' with *so as not to/in order not to*:  
*I shut the door quietly, **so as not to wake** the baby*  
When there is a change of subject we may use *for* + infinitive:  
*I bought a second car **(in order) for my son to learn** to drive*  
*For* + noun/pronoun + infinitive is more economical than [> 1.51.2]:  
*I bought a new car **in order that my wife might learn** to drive*  
Other verbs, e.g. *bring, buy, need, take, use, want*, often introduce an object + to-infinitive (but not an object + *in order to/so as to*).  
The infinitive tells us about the purpose of the object, which is often an indefinite pronoun like *something* [> 4.37]:  
***I want something to cheer me up***  
***I need a spoon to eat this ice-cream with***  
***Bring me a chair to sit on I brought a chair for you to sit on***  
Other verbs can be followed by *for* + object + to-infinitive, e.g. *apply, arrange, ask, call, plan, plead, phone, pray, ring, send, vote, wait, wish*. *For* marks the subject of the infinitive:  
***How long have you been waiting for the train to arrive?***

#### 16.12.2 '(Only) to': sequences [compare > 7.55.1]

Sometimes a to-infinitive in the second part of a sentence is used for the 'later' event in a sequence. The to-infinitive (which can be replaced by *and* + verb) describes an event which is unexpected, sometimes unwelcome - especially when *only* is used in front of *to*:  
*We came home after our holiday **to find** our garden neat and tidy.*  
(= and found)  
*He returned after the war, **(only) to be told** that his wife had left him* (= and was told)  
A similar construction occurs with *never*:  
***She left home never to return/never to be seen again***

**16.12.3 The to-infinitive referring to the future or to an imaginary past**

We can refer to the future with verbs like *hope*, *intend*, *mean* and (*would*) *like to*. A perfect infinitive is often used after a past verb, but it is not usually necessary. Compare:

/ **would like to see that film** (now, or in the future)

/ **would like to have seen it** (before now, so I did not see it)

/ **would have liked to see it** (but didn't have a chance then)

/ **would have liked to have seen it** (interchangeable with ' *would have liked to see it*; *to have seen* is unnecessary)

**16.13 The to-infinitive as the object of a verb [> 16.19]**

A great many verbs are strongly linked with the to-infinitive, e.g. *decide*, *need* *wish* [> App 46]:

/ **want to leave** / **want to be left alone**.

In such cases the infinitive serves as the object of the verb. However, some verbs like *think* require *it* + adjective + infinitive: ' *think it best to go* (Not \**I think to go is best*\*)' [compare > 1.14, 4.15, 16.22]. A few verbs like *appear*, *seem* [> 1023] can also be followed by more complex infinitive forms: *He seems to be leaving/to have left/to have been leaving*, etc.

**16.14 Contrasting negatives [compare > 1.23.5, 13.10, 16.12.1]**

We form the negative of a to-infinitive by putting *not* before *to*.

/ *soon learnt **not to/never to swim** near coral reefs*.

Compare ordinary negatives:

/ **didn't learn/never learnt to swim** when I was a child.

With many verbs (e.g. *advise*, *ask*, *instruct* *remind*, *tell*, *warn*) the placing of the negative seriously affects the meaning [> 15.24.1]:

/ *He told me **not to feed** the animals.* (He said, 'Don't feed...')

/ *He **didn't tell** me to feed the animals* (He didn't say anything.)

/ **Don't ask Rex** to phone I'll ring him myself

/ *Ask Rex **not to phone**.* I don't want to be disturbed

The placing of the negative has a similar effect on meaning with adjectives and nouns + infinitive:

/ **wasn't sorry to go** (= | went)

/ **was sorry not to go** (= | didn't go)

/ **It wasn't a surprise to hear from him** (| heard from him)

/ **It was a surprise not to hear from him.** (| didn't hear from him)

Negatives are sometimes possible in both parts of a sentence:

/ **can't promise not to be late.** My car is very *unreliable*

but this would generally be expressed more simply: e.g.

/ **can't promise to be on time**

**16.15 The split infinitive**

'Splitting an infinitive' (i.e. putting an adverb or phrase between *to* and the verb) is usually considered unacceptable and should generally be avoided. For instance *clearly* could not come between *to* and *read* in the following:

/ *want you **to read** that last sentence **clearly***

Verb (+ noun/pronoun) + to-infinitive

However, we often do separate to from the infinitive in spoken English, depending on where the emphasis falls:

*I want you **to clearly understand** what I'm telling you*

This is often the case with adverbs like *completely fully really* and *truly*; sometimes there is no other suitable place to put them:

*It's difficult **to really understand** the theory of relativity*

#### 16.16 The uses of 'be' + to-infinitive

The to-infinitive can be used as the complement of be [> 10.9.10]:

*Your mistake **was to write** that letter*

The verb *do* can be followed by *be* + (optional) *to*:

*What you **do is (to) mix** the eggs with flour*

*All I **did was (to) press** this button*

The to-infinitive can be active in form but passive in meaning:

*This house is **to let/to be let** Who is **to blame/to be blamed**<sup>9</sup>*

Some constructions can only be in the passive:

*He's (only) **to be admired/envied/pitied** All this is **to be sold***

*For be to*: future duties, instructions, etc. [> 9.47-48].

#### 16.17 Leaving out the verb after 'to'

To avoid repetition, we can often leave the verb out after *to*:

*You don't have **to eat** it if you don't **want to***

*Would you like **to come** to a party? - I'd **love to***

*Don't **spill** any of that paint, will you? - I'll **try not to***

Sometimes even *to* can be dropped:

*Try **be back** by 12, won't you? - OK. I'll **try***

With verbs that are followed by *-ing* but never followed by a to-infinitive, e.g. *enjoy* [> 16.42], we must use an object:

*Would you **like to come** sailing? - Oh yes I'd **enjoy it/that***

#### 16.18 The to-infinitive in fixed phrases

Some fixed phrases are introduced by a to-infinitive: e.g. *to be honest, to begin with to cut a long story short, to get (back) to the point, not to make too much of it, to put it another way, to tell you the truth*

***To tell you the truth**, I've never heard of Maxwell Montague*

### Verb (+ noun/pronoun) + to-infinitive

#### 16.19 Verb + to-infinitive (not + '-ing' or 'that...') [compare > 16.42]

We can say:

*I **can't afford** a car She **hesitated** for a moment*

But if we want to use a verb after *can('t) afford* or *hesitate*, this verb can only be in the form of a to-infinitive:

*I **can't afford to buy** a car I **hesitate to disagree** with you*

**Other verbs like can('t) afford and hesitate are:** *aim, apply, decline fail, hasten hurry long, manage offer, prepare, refuse, seek, shudder, strive, struggle*. For more examples [> App 46]. The perfect/past form of the infinitive (e.g. *to have run*) is rare after such verbs.

### 16.20 Verb + optional noun/pronoun + fo-infinitive

Some verbs can be used with or without a noun or pronoun before a to-infinitive: *ask beg, choose expect hate help intend, like, love need prefer prepare promise want wish* [> App46.1]. (*Trouble* can also be used in this way, normally in questions and negatives.) Note how the meaning changes:

*I want to speak to the manager* (= I will speak)

*I want you to speak to the manager* (= you will speak)

*Promise* is an exception: there is a difference in emphasis but not in meaning between *I promise to* and *I promise you to*

*Like love, hate and prefer* are often used in the simple present to refer to habitual personal choice and preference [compare > 16.58]:

*I like to keep everything tidy* (refers to *my* actions)

*I like you to keep everything tidy* (refers to *your* actions)

These verbs can also be used after *would* to make specific offers, requests etc. [> 11.35, 11.37-39 and compare > 16.12.3]:

*I'd like to find you a job* (refers to *my* possible future action)

*I'd like you to find him a job* (*your* possible future action)

### 16.21 Verb + compulsory noun/pronoun + fo-infinitive

Some verbs must normally always be followed by a noun or pronoun when used with a to-infinitive: *advise allow, assist, bribe, cause, caution challenge, charge, command, compel condemn dare* (= challenge), *defy direct drive* (= compel), *enable, encourage, entitle forbid force impel implore incite induce, instruct invite oblige order, permit persuade, press* (= urge), *recommend remind request, teach tell tempt, urge and warn*. All these verbs can be used in the passive as well as the active:

*I advise you to leave* *You were advised to leave*

*It takes/took* + object + to-infinitive often refers to time in relation to activity. An indirect object is optional:

*It takes/took (me) ten minutes to walk to the station*

The same idea can be expressed with a personal subject:

*I take/took ten minutes to walk to the station*

### 16.22 Verb + object + 'to be' and other infinitive forms

Some verbs can be followed by an object + *to be* (and by a few stative verbs [> 9.3] like *to have*): *acknowledge assume, believe, calculate consider, declare, discover estimate, fancy, feel, find guess imagine judge know maintain proclaim prove reckon, see show suppose, take* (= presume), *think understand*

*I consider him to be one of the best authorities in the country*

*She is known to have the best collection of stamps in the world*

Other infinitive forms are sometimes possible:

*She is believed to be going/to have gone to the USA*

These verbs are very frequently used in the passive and can often be followed by passive infinitives:

*He is thought to have been killed in an air crash*

Verb + to-infinitive or {that-} clause

All these verbs (except *take* - *I take it (that)...*) can also be followed directly by that-clauses (*I assume (that) ...*). [> App 45]

A few verbs like *believe expect, intend, like, love, mean, prefer, understand, want* and *wish* can be followed by *there to be*:

*I expect there to be a big response to our advertisement*

## Verb + to-infinitive or (that-)clause

### 6.23 Verbs followed by a to-infinitive or a that-clause

Many verbs can be followed directly by a to-infinitive or a that-clause:

*agree, arrange, beg (not) care, choose claim contrive, decide demand, determine, expect, hope, intend, learn, plan, prefer pretend, promise, resolve swear, threaten* and *wish*;

*I decided to ask for my money back*

*I decided that I would ask for my money back*

Most of these verbs point to the future, so they are not normally followed by the perfect form of the infinitive. However, verbs referring to intentions, hopes, etc. can be followed by a perfect infinitive, parallel to the use of the future perfect [> 16.12.3]:

*I hope(d) (etc.) to have finished by 12*

Some of these verbs (most commonly *agree, arrange, decide*) are used in the passive after *It* to introduce a that-clause [> 12.8n.1]:

*It was agreed/arranged/decided that we should meet again later*

### 6.24 Verb + question-word + to-infinitive or a clause

All question-words except *why can* come before the to-infinitive with

'verbs of asking' [> 15.24.2] and the following: *consider, decide, discover, explain, find out, forget, hear, (not) know learn, observe perceive remember, see, understand* and *wonder*

*I don't know what/which/who(m) to choose*

*I wondered how/when/where to get in touch with them*

The above verbs can also be followed by a clause introduced by any question word (including *why*) or *that*;

*I don't know why the accident happened*

*I didn't know that there had been an accident*

When we are discussing alternatives or expressing doubt, we can use *whether should* or *whether to* after most of the above verbs:

*I haven't decided whether I should go/whether to go to Spain*

We can sometimes use *if* as an alternative to *whether* before a clause, but not before an infinitive [compare > 15.18n.5, 15.24.2].

*Remember* and *forget* can be followed directly by a to-infinitive:

*I remembered to/forgot to switch off the lights* [>16.59]

*Learn* can be followed by *to* or *how to* without any change in meaning when it refers to acquiring a skill:

*I learnt to/how to ride a bicycle when I was four*

However, *learn* must be followed only by *to* (Not "how to") when it conveys the idea of learning from experience:

*We soon learnt to do as we were told in Mr Spinks' class'*

## 16.25 Verb + object + question-word + to-infinitive or a clause

*Advise, instruct remind, teach and tell* can have an object +

- a to-infinitive [> 15.24.1]:

*He told us to run My sister taught me to swim*

- any question word (except *why*) + to-infinitive:

*The receptionist told me where to wait*

- a clause [> 15.24.2]:

*The union leader told the men that they should go back to work*

*The union leader told the men when they should go back to work*

*Persuade and warn* can have *that* but not a question-word:

*He warned me to stay away He warned me (that) I was in danger*

The verb *show* can be used like the verbs above, except that it always requires a question-word before the to-infinitive:

*Please show me how to start the engine*

Object + *whether* + to-infinitive can be used after: *advise/not advise ask/not ask show/not show not teach, not tell* and in questions with these verbs:

*Can you advise me whether to register this letter?*

*You haven't told me whether to sign this form*

## Adjective + to-infinitive

### 16.26 Form of the to-infinitive after adjectives

Many adjectives can be followed by to-infinitives:

*I'm pleased to meet you*

*Can you do me a favour? - I'd be glad to* [compare > 16.17]

Other infinitive forms [> 16.2] are possible, e.g. *sorry to have missed you pleased to have been given this opportunity, nice to be sitting by the fire* For contrasting negatives with adjectives [> 16.14].

### 16.27 Pattern 1: *He was kind to help us.*

We use this pattern and its variations (see below) when we are praising or criticizing people. (Not all adjectives in this pattern combine with *I* or *we*.) The subject of the main verb (*be*) and the subject of the infinitive are the same person, and sometimes we can express the same idea with an adverb [> 7.16.2]:

*He was very kind to help us He very kindly helped us*

Here are some adjectives which are used in this pattern: *brave careless, but not careful* [> 16.28], *clever foolish generous good (un)kind polite right/wrong, rude, (un)selfish silly, wicked* [> App 44].

#### 16.27.1 Subject + 'be' + adjective + to-infinitive

*The government would be brave to call an election now*

*Joan was foolish not to accept their offer*

Variations on this pattern with some of the adjectives listed above are possible with *so* as to (which is formal) and, less formally, with *enough*:

*Would you be so good as to let me know as soon as possible?*

*Would you be good enough to let me know as soon as possible?*

Adjective + to-infinitive

**16.27.2 'It' + 'be' + adjective + 'of noun/pronoun + to-infinitive**

This use of *It* as 'preparatory subject' [> 4.13] is much more common than a personal subject. It occurs with all the adjectives listed in 16.27 above and with some *-ing* adjectives like *annoying*, *boring*, *trying*. If it is obvious who is referred to, the *of*-phrase can be omitted:

***It was kind of her to help us***

***It was silly (of us) to believe him***

***It was most selfish of him not to contribute anything***

***It was annoying of John to lose my keys***

Verbs like *seem/look* [> 10.23-25] can be used in this pattern:

***It would look rude to refuse their invitation***

**16.27.3 Adjective + to-infinitive in exclamations**

Exclamations in this pattern are very common:

***How kind of him to help us! Wasn't he kind to help us!***

***Wasn't it kind (of him) to help us!***

**16.28 Pattern 2: *He is eager to please.***

As in Pattern 1, the subject of the main verb (be or sometimes *feel*, *look*, etc.) and the subject of the infinitive are the same person. When using this pattern, we are often concerned with people's feelings about an action or situation, and *I/we* fit naturally. There is no alternative structure with *It*. Here are some adjectives which are used in this pattern: *afraid*, *anxious*, *ashamed*, *careful*, but not *careless* [> 16.27], *curious*, *determined*, *due*, *eager*, *fit*, *free*, *frightened*, *glad*, *keen*, *prepared*, *quick*, *ready*, *reluctant*, *slow*, *sorry*, *willing* [> App 44]:

***He is always prepared to take a lot of trouble***

***She is determined not to offend her mother-in-law***

*For* + noun/pronoun can be used after a very limited number of adjectives, such as *anxious*, *determined*, *eager* and *keen*, referring to situations that have not yet occurred:

***She's anxious for her daughter to win the competition***

Very occasionally, this pattern has an inanimate subject:

***My car is reluctant to start in cold weather***

***Our boiler is slow to get going in the mornings***

A few adjectives referring to possibility and probability can be included here: *bound/certain to*, *(un)hkeely to* and *sure to*:

***He is bound/certain/likely/sure to sign the contract***

*It* can be used as a preparatory or empty subject [> 1.23.1, 4.12-13]:

***It's certain/likely/unlikely that he'll sign the contract.***

***It's bound/sure to rain on our wedding day***

**16.29 Pattern 3: *He is easy to please.***

The infinitive in this pattern usually refers to things done to someone or something. The subject of the sentence is also the object of the infinitive; the *It* structure is very common here:

***He is easy to please /It is easy to please him***

Adjectives like the following fit into this pattern: *agreeable*, *amusing*, *boring*, *difficult*, *easy*, *hard*, *impossible*, *nice*

***She is amusing to be with Polyester is easy to iron***



A negative infinitive (*not to*) is rare after *he/she*, but possible after *it*:

***It is impossible not to offend Mrs Rumbold***

**16.30 Pattern 4: *It is good to be here.***

A very large number of adjectives fit into this pattern. The infinitive subject is normally replaced by *it* [compare > 16.47]:

***To accept their offer would be foolish It would be foolish to accept their offer***

***Not to accept their offer would be foolish It would be foolish not to accept their offer***

Compare the uses of *it* in these two sentences:

*Have a drive in my new car It (= the car) is easy to start*

*It ['preparatory subject', > 4.13] is easy to start it (the car)*

*For* + noun/pronoun can occur after many of these adjectives:

*It won't be easy for Tom to find a new job*

The *-ing* form can occur after some of these adjectives [> 16.47]:

*It is hard speaking in public*

A number of adjectives used in this pattern (e.g. *advisable important necessary, vital*) refer to advice, necessity, duties, and can also be followed by *that, should* [> 11.75.3]:

*It's important to reply to her letter*

*It's important that we (should) reply to her letter*

**16.31 Pattern 5: *He is the first to arrive.***

The following can be used in this pattern: *the first, the second*, etc.; *the next/the last*, and superlatives like *the best, the most suitable*.

These can be followed optionally by a noun or *one(s)*:

*She's always the first (guest) to arrive and the last to leave*

*Is a solicitor the best person to advise me about buying a house?*

*The only* must always be followed by a noun or *one(s)*:

*You're the only person (the only one) to complain*

**16.32 Adjective patterns with 'too' and 'enough'**

**16.32.1 'Too' + adjective + to-infinitive**

*Too* comes before the adjective and has the sense of 'excessive'; compare *very*, which merely strengthens the adjective [> 7.48]. In patterns with to-infinitives, *too* often combines negative ideas:

***He isn't strong He can't lift it. → He is too weak to lift it***

In the above example, the subject of the main verb is also the subject of the infinitive. In the following example, the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive:

***He's too heavy I can't lift him → He is too heavy (for me) to lift.***

Note the optional *for*-phrase, and note that we never put an object after the infinitive in sentences like this (Not *'This bread is too stale for me to eat it'*).

Generally, *-ed* adjectives [> 6.15] have a personal subject + *too*:

***I'm too tired to stay up longer***

and *-ing* adjectives have an impersonal subject + *too*:

***The race was almost too exciting to watch***

### 5.32.2 Adjective + 'enough' + to-infinitive

*Enough* comes after the adjective and means, e.g. 'to the necessary degree'. In to-infinitive patterns it combines two ideas:

He's **strong**. **He can lift it.** He's **strong enough to lift it**

He's **weak**. **He can't lift it** He **isn't strong enough to lift it**

In the above examples, the subjects of the main verb and of the infinitive are the same. In the following example, the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive:

**The pear is ripe I can eat it.** - *It is ripe enough (for me) to eat*

The for-phrase is optional and we do not repeat the object in this type of sentence. (Not '*for me to eat it*').

For+ noun/pronoun can combine with *too much/little, not enough* etc.:

*The baby's too much for her to cope with*

*There's too little work/not enough work for me to do*

## Noun + to-infinitive

### 16.33 The to-infinitive after nouns related to verbs

1 Some nouns are often associated with the infinitive:

*Our **decision to wait** was wise*

Such nouns may correspond to verbs [compare > 16.13, 16.19]:

***We decided to wait***

A noun may have the same form as a verb or a different form:

*They **wish to succeed** It's their **wish to succeed***

*She **refused to help** Her **refusal to help** surprised us*

2 Not all such nouns can be followed by an infinitive. Some are followed by a preposition + the *-ing* form [> 16.53]:

*We cannot **hope to find** him There's **no hope of finding** him*

Some nouns can be followed by an infinitive or by a preposition:

*It's a **pleasure to be** with you.*

*There's nothing to compare with the **pleasure of being** with you*

3 Some nouns combine with other infinitive forms [> 16.2], e.g.

*a surprise to be/to have been invited, a change to be sitting in*

*the sun* For contrasting negatives with nouns [> 16.14],

### 16.34 The to-infinitive after nouns related to adjectives

Many of the adjectives which can be followed by to-infinitives have equivalent nouns (usually different in form, e.g. *brave/bravery*)-

However, not all such nouns can be followed by to-infinitives. We can use noun + to-infinitive here:

*She's **determined/eager/willing to help***

*Thank you for your **determination/eagerness/willingness to help***

But we must use noun + preposition + *-ing* form here:

*It was **generous/kind (of you) to contribute** so much*

*Thank you for your **generosity/kindness in contributing** so much*

Noun/adjective equivalents do not always have the same meaning:

*It's **fun to be here** It was **funny (= odd) of Sam to do that***

*It's a **pity to leave** so early Her sobs were **pitiful to hear***

**16.35 Noun + to-infinitive to express advisability, etc.**

The to-infinitive is often used after a noun to convey advice, purpose, etc. This construction is like a relative clause [> 1.33-34]:

*The **person to ask** is Jan* (= the person whom you should ask)

*I've got **an essay to write*** (= an essay which I must write)

Sometimes active and passive infinitives are interchangeable:

*After the fire, there was some **re-decorating to do/to be done***

When the subject of the sentence is the person who is to do the action described by the infinitive, we do not normally use the passive:

*I have **a meal to prepare*** (Not \*to be prepared\*)

**16.36 The to-infinitive after nouns, 'something', 'a lot', etc.**

The to-infinitive can be used after nouns and words used in place of nouns, such as *something*, *someone*, *a lot* [compare > 16.12.1]:

*I want **a machine/something to answer the phone***

Active and passive infinitives are sometimes interchangeable:

*There was **a lot to do/a lot to be done***

or they can have different meanings:

*There was **nothing to do** so we played computer games* (i.e. we were bored)

*He's dead There's **nothing to be done*** (i.e. we can't change that)

Sometimes a to-phrase is included:

*He talks as if there's **nothing left in life for him to do***

**16.37 Adjective + noun + to-infinitive**

Here are some examples of structures with adjective + noun + to-infinitive:

- with *too* and *enough* [compare > 16.32]:

Note the position of *a/an*

*He's **too clever a politician to say** a thing like that in public*

*He isn't **a clever enough politician to have** any original ideas*

In sentences beginning *There* the quantifier *enough* can go before or after the noun:

*There is **enough time to take care of** everything*

*There is **time enough to take care of** everything* (more formal)

- with *so* as to and *such a/an* as to [compare > 16.27.1]:

*I'm not **so stupid (a fool) as to put it in writing***

*I'm not **such a (stupid) fool as to put it in writing***

- in exclamations [> 3.13]:

*What **an unkind thing to say!***

Sometimes the adjective is omitted if we are criticizing:

*What **a thing to say!** What **a way to behave!***

## The '-ing' form

**16.38 The two functions of the '-ing' form**

Gerunds and present participles are formed from verbs and always end in *-ing*. Therefore words like *playing*, *writing* etc. can function as

gerunds or as participles. The *-ing* form is usually called a **gerund** when it behaves like a **noun** and a **participle** when it behaves like an **adjective**. However, there is some overlap between these two main functions and it is often difficult (and unnecessary!) to make formal distinctions. The term the **-ing form** is used here to cover gerund and participle constructions and the term 'participle' is used in The sentence' [> 1.56] to refer to part of a verb. In broad terms, the **gerund** can take the place of a noun, though it can, like a verb, have an object:

<i>I like</i>	<i>coffee</i>	<i>John likes</i>	<i>planes</i>
	<b><i>swimming</i></b>		<b><i>flying</i></b>
			<b><i>flying planes</i></b>

The **participle** can take the place of an adjective [> 6.2, 6.14]:

<i>This is a</i>	<i>wide</i>	<i>stream</i>
	<b><i>running</i></b>	

## 16.39 The '-ing' form: gerund or present participle?

### 16.39.1 The '-ing' form as gerund

As a gerund, the *-ing* form often functions in general statements as an uncountable noun with no article. It can also be replaced by *it*:

***Dancing is fun I love it*** [> 3.26.2]

Sometimes the *-ing* form functions as a countable noun which can be replaced by *it* (singular) or *they* (plural) [> 2.16.5]:

*Dickens often gave readings of his work They were very popular*

We can use a gerund after determiners like *a, the this, a lot of* and *some*, or after possessives and adjectives:

*Brendel has made a new recording The recording was made live*

*The sinking of the Titanic has never been forgotten*

*I enjoy a little light reading when I go away on holiday*

*What's all this arguing?*

*I did some/a lot of/a little shopping this morning*

*I appreciate your helping me Your quick thinking saved us all*

The gerund also has some of the characteristics of a verb: e.g.

- it can be followed by an adverb or adverbial phrase:

***Walking quickly/Walking in step is difficult***

- and it can take an object:

***Washing the car seems to be your main hobby***

- and it can have a perfect form and even a passive [compare > 1.56]:

*I'm sorry for having wasted your time*

*I can't forgive myself for having been taken by surprise*

### 16.39.2 The '-ing' form as present participle

Participles are associated with verbs when they refer to actions in progress, e.g. in progressive tenses [> 9.2]. Participle phrases also commonly stand for clauses [> 1.58]:

***Walking in the park the other day, I saw a bird building a nest***

(= I was walking, the bird was building)

### 16.39.3 The gerund in nouns; the present participle as adjective [> 2.7]

*Here are your running-shoes* (shoes for running: gerund)

*I love the sight of running water* (water which is running: adjective)

**16.40 Some common uses of the '-ing' form (gerund)**

The *-ing* form can be used in the active or passive in a large number of different ways. Here are some examples (note the formation of the negative with *not* + *-ing*):

**16.40.1 As a noun complement to the verb 'be'**

*My favourite pastime is **bird-watching***

*As far as he's concerned, it's **not doing** something wrong that matters, but **not being caught** doing something wrong*

**16.40.2 As the subject of a verb**

Before *be*:

***Jogging isn't** much fun. **Being lost** can be a terrifying experience*

***Not being tall** is not a serious disadvantage in life.*

Before verbs other than *be*:

***Rowing keeps** you fit **Not being punctual** makes him unreliable*

**16.40.3 As the object of a verb**

*I **enjoy dancing** He doesn't like **not being taken** seriously*

*I **hear shouting** [<sup>7</sup> 16.9.1] She **taught us dress-making***

**16.40.4 After 'do' + the' referring to jobs [<sup>7</sup> 10.44.4]**

*Who **does the cooking/the shopping/the washing-up** here<sup>7</sup>*

**16.40.5 'The' + '-ing' form + 'of'**

Without an article, the *-ing* form can have a direct object:

***Lighting the fire** used to be a daily chore in Victorian times*

After an article (or other determiner), the *-ing* form cannot be directly followed by an object. We must use *of*.

***The lighting of fires** is forbidden*

***A ringing of bells** marked the end of the old year*

**16.40.6 The art of writing', etc.**

Many combinations are possible, e.g. *the act of listening, the art of writing, the skill of speaking*, etc.:

***The skill of speaking** a foreign language takes time to acquire*

**16.40.7 After 'No' in prohibitions**

This is common in public signs: e.g. *No smoking No parking*

**16.40.8 After 'like' (= for example) [<sup>7</sup> App 25.25]**

*Why don't you find something to do **like cleaning** the car for me<sup>7</sup>*

*If you want to get on, there's nothing **like being** hard-working*

**16.40.9 After 'for' (the purpose of) [<sup>7</sup> App 25.20]**

*What's that? - It's a tool **for making** holes in metal*

*This is a tool that's used **for cutting** hedges*

Compare a parallel use of the to-infinitive in: e.g.

*What's that for<sup>7</sup> - It's **to make** holes in metal (with)*

**16.40.10 The '-ing' form after adjectives and possessives**

***Slow cooking** makes tough meat tender*

***Your denying** everything will get you nowhere*

***Jenny's not having been trained** as a dancer is her one regret*

**16.40.11 The '-ing' form after 'What about...?', 'How about...?' [<sup>7</sup> 13.40.6]**

***What about/How about sending** them a postcard<sup>7</sup>*

## Verb + '-ing' form

### 16.41 Form of '-ing' after verbs [compare > 1.56]

Verbs like *enjoy*, *deny* can be followed directly by the *-ing* form:

**active:** *I deny/denied taking it*

**passive:** *He resents/resented being accused.*

And note the perfect or past form: *having* + past participle:

**active:** *I deny/denied having taken it*

**passive:** *He resents/resented having been accused*

Contrasting negatives [> 16.14] are possible with these forms: e.g.

*I don't enjoy having to . . . I enjoy not having to . . .*

### 16.42 Verb + '-ing' form (not + to-infinitive) [compare > 16.19, App 45]

When we want to use another verb immediately after the following verbs, the second verb can only be an *-ing* form, never a to-infinitive:

*admit, appreciate, avoid, celebrate, consider, contemplate, defer, delay, deny, detest, discontinue, dislike, dispute, endure, enjoy, it entail(s), escape, excuse, explain, fancy, feel like, finish, forgive, can't help, hinder, imagine, it involve(s), keep, loathe, it mean(s), mention, mind(= object to), miss, it necessitate(s), pardon, postpone, practise, prevent, recall, report, resent, resist, risk, suggest, understand-*

*I don't fancy going for a walk in the rain*

*Imagine not knowing the answer to such an easy question!*

*Deny and regret* are often followed by *having* + a past participle:

*Susan denies/regrets having said anything*

### 16.43 The '-ing' form after 'come' and 'go'

The *-ing* form relating to outdoor activities (e.g. *climbing, driving, fishing, riding, sailing, shopping, skiing, walking, water-skiing, wind-surfing*) is often used after *go* and *come*, e.g. when we are:

- making suggestions: *Why don't we go swimming?*

- inviting: *Come dancing this evening*

- narrating: *Yesterday we went sight-seeing*

Compare *go/come for a walk*, etc. and *have been* + *-ing* [> 10.13.4],

### 16.44 The '-ing' form after 'need' and 'want'

The *-ing* form can follow *need*, *want* (and less commonly) *require*:

*He needs (a lot of) encouraging*

*The front gate needs/wants/requires mending*

The *-ing* form has a passive meaning here and can be compared to the passive infinitive (*He needs to be encouraged*).

### 16.45 Verb (+ accusative or possessive) + '-ing' form

With some of the verbs which can be followed by an *-ing* form, we can put another word between the verb and *-ing*. Sometimes this word must be an accusative (e.g. an object pronoun like *me*, a name like *John*); sometimes it must be a possessive (i.e. a possessive adjective like *my*; or *'s*, e.g. *John's*); sometimes it can be either.

### 16.45.1 Verb (+ accusative) + '-ing'

After the following verbs, the *-ing* form functions as a participle. We can include an accusative (e.g. *me*, *John*) between the verb and the *-ing* form: *hear*, *keep*, *smell*, *start*, *stop* and *watch*. Compare:

*When are you going to **start working**?*

*When are you going to **start him working**?*

The following must always have an accusative before *-ing*: *catch*, *find*, *leave*, *notice*, *observe*, *perceive* and *see* [> App 38.4]:

*I'd better not **catch you doing** that again'*

Verbs of perception like *hear* and *see* can also be followed by an object + bare infinitive [> 16.9.2]: *saw him climb the tree*

### 16.45.2 Verb (+ possessive) + '-ing'

The following verbs can be followed by the *-ing* form on its own or by a possessive (e.g. *my*, *John's*) + *-ing*. Here the *-ing* form functions as a gerund (i.e. a noun), so we can use a possessive form (referring to people, but not things) in front of it: *appreciate*, *avoid*, *consider* (usually in questions and negatives), *defer*, *delay*, *deny*, *enjoy*, *postpone*, *risk* and *suggest*:

*I don't think the children **enjoy your/his/John's teasing***

### 16.45.3 Verb (+ accusative or possessive) + '-ing'

Here is a selection of verbs that can be followed by *-ing* on its own or by an accusative or a possessive before *-ing*: *anticipate*, *contemplate*, *detest*, *dislike*, *dispute*, *endure*, *escape*, *excuse*, (*can't*) *face*, *fancy*, *forgive*, *hate*, *hinder*, *imagine*, *it involve(s)*, *like*, *love*, *mention*, *mind* (= object to), *miss*, *it necessitate(s)*, *pardon*, *prevent*, *resent*, *resist*, *understand*, *can't bear*, *can't help*, *can't stand*

In everyday speech, the accusative is generally preferred to the possessive, though not all native speakers approve of its use:

**informal (accusative)**

**formal (possessive)**

*I **can't imagine my mother approving***<sup>1</sup>

***my mother's approving***

*Please **excuse him not writing** to you*

***his not writing** to you*

***Fancy you having noticed***

***your having noticed***

The 's can be included or omitted with people's names:

*I **can't understand John/John's making** such a fuss*

However, with more than one name 's is unlikely:

*I **can't imagine Frank and Mabel paying** so much for a piano*

## Adjectives and nouns + '-ing' form

### 16.46 Form of '-ing' after adjectives and nouns

Many adjectives, nouns and expressions can be followed by *-ing* forms *active* and *passive* [> 16.41], e.g. *It's nice **seeing him again***, *It's fun **being taken to the zoo***. Contrasting negatives, e.g. *not fun **having to***, *fun **not having to*** [> 16.14] are possible.

### 16.47 The '-ing' form with adjectives

Like the to-infinitive, the *-ing* form (gerund) can be used as the subject of a sentence and can be replaced by a construction with

## Prepositions + '-ing' form

'preparatory if' [> 4.13]. There is not much difference in meaning between *-ing* and the to infinitive: *-ing* may refer to an action in progress, whereas the to-infinitive may imply 'in general':

***It's difficult finding your way around in a strange city***

***It's difficult to find your way around in a strange city***

We rarely begin statements with the to-infinitive but often begin with *-ing*, particularly when we are making general statements:

***Finding work is difficult these days*** ***Wind-surfing is popular***

Compare the *-ing* form (participle) [> 1.58] after adjectives such as *bored, busy, fed-up, frantic, happy, occupied and tired with a personal subject* (Not \*If\*):

***Sylvia is frantic getting everything ready for the wedding***

(= Sylvia is frantic. She is getting everything ready...)

Adjectives can be followed by the accusative (me, you, him, etc.) or the possessive (my, his, John's, etc.):

***It's strange him/his behaving like that***

Normally only a possessive is possible when *-ing* begins a sentence:

***His knowing I had returned home unexpectedly is strange***

Either *-ing* or a to-infinitive can follow *it's/it was* + adjective + *of* (him) without much difference in meaning [> 16.27.2]:

***It was rude of her interrupting (to interrupt) you all the time***

### 16.48 The '-ing' form after nouns

Many nouns, both countable and uncountable, can be followed by the *-ing* form after 'preparatory if' [> 4.13]. Examples are: *a catastrophe, a disaster, fun, hell, luck, a mistake, a pain, a pleasure, a relief, a tragedy*.

***It's a nightmare worrying where the children might be***

***It's a tedious business attending so many meetings***

If we want to use another word before the *-ing* form, a possessive is preferable to an accusative (though both are possible):

***It's a catastrophe their/them shutting all those factories.***

### 16.49 Common expressions with '-ing'

*Typical expressions that can be followed by the -ing form are: it's no good, it's no use, it's little use; it's hardly any use; it's not worth, it's hardly/scarcely worth, it's worthwhile; spend money/time, there's no, there's no point in; there's nothing worse than; what's the use/point*

***It's no good complaining*** ***This clock is hardly worth repairing***

***There's no telling what will happen*** ***Don't waste time talking***

Some expressions can be followed by a possessive or accusative:

***It's no good his/him apologizing*** ***now the damage has been done***

## Prepositions + '-ing' form

### 16.50 Form of '-ing' after prepositions

Prepositions can be followed by all *-ing* forms, active and passive [> 16.41], e.g. *without eating breakfast, without being told, without having*



*been told* Contrasting negatives e.g. *not sorry for telling him* *sorry for not telling him* [> 16.14] are possible

**16.51 The '-ing' form after prepositions** [compare > 1.60 1.62.2]

We may use the *-ing* form (not a *to* infinitive) after prepositions such as *about after by for instead of to* [> 16.56] *without*  
*I have learnt a lot about gardening from my father*  
***After changing*** some money *I went sight-seeing* [> 1.58.2 8.4.4]  
*You open this door by turning the key twice in the lock*  
*The teacher punished Jimmy for talking in class*  
***Instead of making*** a fuss *you should have complained quietly*  
*You shouldn't try to leave the restaurant without paying* [> App 25.36]

Prepositions can sometimes be followed by an accusative pronoun by a name or a noun or by a possessive adjective or noun + *s*  
*You should offer to help without me/my having to ask*

**16.52 'There being' and 'it being' after prepositions**

*There is/There will be* and *'I is/it will be* can be replaced by *there being* and *it being* after prepositions [compare > 10.20] *There being* can often be omitted

***Is there any chance of (there being) a vacancy in this hotel tomorrow?***(= will there be a vacancy)  
***If I bring in my suit for dry cleaning is there any chance of it being ready by tomorrow?***(= will it be ready)

**16.53 The '-ing' form after adjective or noun + preposition**

Many adjectives can be followed by prepositions [> App 27] e.g. *afraid of bored with fond of good at happy about interested in keen on sorry for (be) used to* etc The *-ing* form (not a *to* infinitive) may be used after them

*I'm interested in acting* *He's good at ski-ing*

Possessive and/or accusative forms can be used before *-ing*

*You can't be too sure of his/him agreeing*  
***I'm surprised at your/you not having noticed***

The *-ing* form may be used after noun + preposition e.g. *concern about fear of interest in* [> Apps 27-29]

*Erica could never overcome her fear of flying*  
*His interest in hang-gliding proved to be fatal*

Accusative (informal) and possessive forms can be used

*My main interest at present is in him/his doing well at school*

**16.54 The '-ing' form after verb + preposition** [> Apps 28-30]

Many verbs are followed by prepositions, e.g. *apologize for approve of insist on prevent somebody/something from thank somebody for* The *-ing* form may be used after a verb + preposition and may be preceded by an object (informal) or a possessive

*I must insist on paying* *I must insist on him/his paying*

The to-infinitive or the -ing form?

### 16.55 The '-ing' form after verb + particle [> Apps 32-33 ]

An adverb particle may be followed by the *-ing* form

*Everyone **burst out laughing** I've **given up smoking***

We can use a possessive before a gerund

*We'll have to **put off their coming** by another week*

We cannot use a possessive before a participle

*We'll have to **put them off coming***

(= They are conning We'll have to put them off)

### 16.56 The '-ing' form after 'to' as a preposition

*To* is either a preposition or a part of the infinitive. It is part of the infinitive in *I want to go home* but a preposition governing a noun/gerund in *I object to noise* *I object to smoking*. In the following expressions *to* is a preposition so we may use the *-ing* form after it: *accustom (oneself) to be accustomed to face up to in addition to look forward to object to be reduced to resign oneself to be resigned to resort to sink to be used to*

*I **object to being** kept waiting I'm **used to doing** the shopping*

Accusative and possessive forms are possible

*I **object to people/him/his smoking** in restaurants*

Some nouns and adjectives can also be followed by *to* + *-ing* e.g.

*alternative to close/closeness to dedication/dedicated to*

*opposition/opposed to similarity/similar to*

## The to-infinitive or the '-ing' form?

### 16.57 Verb + to-infinitive or '-ing': no change in meaning

Some verbs can be followed by a to-infinitive or by *-ing*. Sometimes there is little or no change in meaning, sometimes there is

These verbs can be followed by a to-infinitive or *-ing* without any change in meaning: *attempt begin can't bear cease commence continue intend omit and start*

*I **can't bear to see/seeing** people suffering*

After *can't bear* the accusative can be used before the infinitive; the accusative or possessive can be used before the *-ing* form

*I **can't bear you to shout** in that way*

*I **can't bear you/your shouting** in that way*

We do not normally use the *ing* form after the progressive forms of *begin cease continue* or *start*. This is because the repetition of the two *-ing* forms sounds awkward

*He **was beginning to recover** when he had another attack*

However we can use *-ing* after the progressive forms of verbs which cannot be followed by a to-infinitive [> 16.42]

*We **were considering catching** an earlier train*

Stative verbs like *know* and *understand* cannot normally be used with an *-ing* form after *begin cease* and *continue*

*I soon **began to understand** what was happening*

Some verbs such as *allow*, *advise*, *permit* and *forbid*, which can be followed by a to-infinitive after an object [> 16.21], can also be followed directly by *-ing*:

*Would you **advise phoning**, or shall I wait a bit longer?*

*Would you **advise me to phone**, or shall I wait a bit longer?*

### 16.58 Verb + to- or '-ing': some changes in meaning

These verbs can be followed by a to-infinitive or *-ing*: *dread*, *hate*, *like*, *love*, *prefer*. We often use a to-infinitive after these verbs to refer to a specified future event and the *-ing* form to refer to an activity currently in progress or existing in general. Some examples are:

#### acceptable examples

1a / **love/like to watch TV.**

b / **love/like watching TV**

2a / **hate to disturb you**

b / **hate disturbing you**

3a / **dread to think** what has happened to him

b / **dread going to the dentist**

4a / **prefer to wait here**

b / **prefer waiting here**

c / **prefer swimming to cycling.**

5a **Would you like to eat out?**

b **I'd like to. I'd love to.**

c **I'd love sailing** if I could afford it

d **I'd hate to disturb him** if he's busy

e **You'd hate to live on a desert island**

6a / **wouldn't like you to think** I'd forgotten you

b / **like him/his playing the guitar**

#### comment

Same (general) meaning,

(but I am just about to do so), (= I'm disturbing you and I'm sorry) or general use.

(so I dare not try to). *\*I dread thinking* is unacceptable,

(= whenever I go, I'm terrified). *\*I dread to go* is unacceptable.

(so I'll wait here if you don't mind),

(= I'm waiting here and I prefer doing that).

Not the infinitive here.

Not the gerund here,

**Or. I'd like it. I'd love it.**

**I'd love to sail** if I

**could afford it** Also acceptable,

**I'd hate disturbing him if...**

is doubtful,

**You'd hate living on a desert island** is also acceptable.

**I wouldn't like you thinking...**

is doubtful,

**I like him to play the**

**guitar** is also acceptable.

### 16.59 Verb + to- or '-ing': different meanings

The to-infinitive and *-ing* never mean the same when used after these verbs: *remember*, *forget*, *regret*, *try*, *stop* and *go on*:

*Remember* + to-infinitive refers to an action in the future (or to a 'future' action as seen from the past):

**Remember to post the letters** (= don't forget to)

**I remembered to post the letters** (= I didn't forget to)

*Remember* + *-ing* refers to the past:

**I remember posting/having posted the letters**

(= I posted them and I remember the action)

*Forget + to-infinitive* refers to future actions (or to a 'future' action as seen from the past):

***Don't forget to ask Tom I forgot to ask Tom***

*Forget + -ing* refers to the past:

***Have you forgotten meeting/having met her?*** (i.e. you met her)

*Regret + to-infinitive* refers to future or present:

***We regret to inform you that your account is overdrawn***

*Regret + -ing* refers to present or past:

***I regret(ted) leaving the firm after twenty years***

(*I regret(ted) having left* would refer to the past only.)

*Try + to-infinitive* means 'make an effort':

***You really must try to overcome your shyness***

*Try + -ing* means 'experiment':

***Try holding your breath to stop sneezing***

*Stop + to-infinitive* refers to purpose [> 16.12.1]:

***On the way to the station I stopped to buy a paper***

*Stop + -ing*: *-ing* is the object of the verb, [compare > 16.42, 16.45.1].

***When he told us the story, we just couldn't stop laughing***

*Go on + to-infinitive* refers to doing something different:

***After approving the agenda we went on to discuss finance***

*Go on + -ing* means 'continue without interruption' [> App 32.9.1]:

***We went on talking till after midnight***

## 16.60 Adjective/noun + to-or + preposition [compare > 8.20]

Some adjectives and nouns can be followed by a to-infinitive or by a preposition [> App 27].

---

<b>adjective + 'to-'</b>	<b>adjective + preposition</b>
<i>interested to (do/be)</i>	<i>interested in (doing/being)</i>
<i>sorry to (disturb)</i>	<i>sorry for (disturbing)</i>
<b>noun + 'to-'</b>	<b>noun + preposition</b>
<i>chance to (meet)</i>	<i>chance of (meeting)</i>
<i>opportunity to (buy)</i>	<i>opportunity of (buying)</i>

---

Often there is little difference in meaning between the to- and -ing structures:

***I'm sorry (not) to mention it*** (more likely)

***I'm sorry for (not) mentioning it*** (less likely)

***I couldn't resist the opportunity to greet such a great actor***

***I couldn't resist the opportunity of greeting such a great actor.***

Sometimes there are differences in meaning between the to- and -ing structures:

***I'm interested to hear your opinion*** (it interests me)

***I'm interested in emigrating to Canada*** (I might do this)

***I'm sorry to interrupt*** (= I'm sorry, but I'm going to interrupt)

***I'm sorry for interrupting*** (= I'm sorry for what has happened)

# Appendix

## Appendix 1 |> 1.9,1.10,112,4.16.2]

### Transitive and intransitive verbs

#### 1.1 Verbs which are always transitive:

afford, allow, blame, bring, contain, deny, enjoy, examine, excuse, fetch, fix, get, greet, have, hit, inform, interest, let, like, love, make, mean, name, need, omit, owe, prefer, prove, put, question, remind, rent, rob, select, wrap

#### 1.2 Verbs which are always intransitive:

faint, hesitate, lie (lied), lie (lay/lam), occur, pause, rain (it), remain, sleep, sneeze

#### 1.3 Verbs which are transitive/intransitive:

answer, ask, begin, borrow, choose, climb, dance, eat, enter, fail, fill, grow, help, hurry, jump, know, leave, marry, meet, obey, pull, read, see, sell, touch, wash, watch, win, write

## Appendix 2 |> 2.2]

### Some common noun endings

#### 2.1 People who do things: e g

**-ant:** assistant, **-an** beggar, **-eer:** engineer, **-ent:** president, **-er:** driver, **-ian:** historian, **-ist** pianist, **-or:** actor

#### 2.2 People who come from, etc: e g

**-an:** Roman, **-er:** Londoner, **-ese:** Milanese, **-ian:** Athenian, **-ite:** Muscovite, socialite

#### 2.3 Nouns derived from verbs: e g

**-age:** postage, **-al:** arrival, **-ance:** acceptance, **-ence:** existence, **-ery:** discovery, **-ion** possession, **-ment:** agreement, **-sion,:** decision, extension, **-Won:** attention

And note the **-ing** form *running*, etc |> 16 39 1]

#### 2.4 Nouns related to adjectives: e g

**-ance/ence:** abundance absence, **-ancy/-ency:** constancy, consistency, **-ety:** anxiety, **-ity:** activity, **-ness:** happiness

#### 2.5 Nouns derived from other nouns: e g

**-cy:** lunacy, **-dom:** kingdom, **-ful:** mouthful, **-hood:** boyhood, **-ism:** sexism

#### 2.6 Nouns used to mean 'small': e g

**-en:** kitten, **-ette:** maisonette, **-ie:** laddie, **-let:** booklet, **-ling:** duckling, **-y:** dolly

## Appendix 3 |> 2.3]

### 3.1 Nouns/verbs distinguished by stress:

<sup>1</sup> abstract/'ab'stract	'impnnt/im'print
'conduct/con'duct	'permit/per'mjt
'contest/con'test	'produce/pro'duce
<sup>1</sup> 'desert/de'sert	'rebel/re'bel
<sup>1</sup> dispute/dis'pute	'record/re'cord

### 3.2 Nouns/verbs: same spelling and pronunciation: e g

act, attempt, blame, book, call, climb, copy, cost, dance, drink, drive, fall, fear, help, joke, kiss, laugh, try, vote, wait, walk, wash, wish  
**Noises** bang, bark, buzz, grunt, hiccup, moan  
**Jobs/Actions** butcher, judge, model, nurse

## Appendix 4 |> 2.17]

### Nouns not normally countable in English:

accommodation, advice, anger, applause, assistance, baggage, behaviour, bread, **business (= trade), capital (= money),** cardboard, cash, chaos, chess, china, clothing, coal, conduct, cookery, countryside courage, crockery, cutlery, damage, dancing, dirt, education, evidence, flu, food, fruit, fun, furniture, garbage, gossip (= talk about other people), **grass, hair {hairs = separate strands of hair, hair = all the hairs on the head},** happiness, harm, help, homework, hospitality, housework, information, jealousy, jewellery, knowledge, laughter, leisure, lightning, linen, luck, luggage, macaroni, machinery, meat, money, moonlight, mud, music, news, nonsense, parking, patience, peel, permission, poetry, the post (= letters), produce, progress, rubbish, safety, scaffolding, scenery, seaside, sewing, shopping, smoking, soap, spaghetti, spelling, steam, strength, stuff, stupidity, sunshine, thunder, timber, toast (= bread), traffic, transport, travel, underwear, violence, vocabulary, wealth, weather, work, writing

## Appendix 5 |> 2.18.2,2.32]

### 5.1 Partitives: specific items or amounts:

a bar of chocolate/soap, a block of cement, a book of matches/stamps, a cake of soap, a cloud of dust, a flash of lightning, a head of hair, an item of news, a jet of water, a loaf of bread, a peal of thunder, a pile of earth, a portion of food, a roll of paper, a slice of meat

### 5.2 Partitives: 'containers': e g

a barrel of beer, a basket of fruit, a bottle of milk, a can of beer, a carton of cigarettes, a flask of tea, a glass of water, a jug of water, a mug of cocoa, a tin of soup, a vase of flowers

### 5.3 Partitives: small quantities: e g

a blade of grass, a breath of air, a crust of bread, a dash of soda, a grain of rice, a lock of hair, a pat of butter, a scrap of paper

### 5.4 Partitives: measures: e g

a gallon of petrol, a length of cloth, a litre of oil an ounce of gold a pint of milk, a pound of coffee, a spoonful of medicine, a yard of cloth

### 5.5 Partitives: 'a game of': e g

billiards, bridge, cards, chess, cricket, darts, squash, table-tennis, tennis, volleyball

### 5.6 Partitives: abstract: e g

a bit of advice, a branch of knowledge, a fit of anger, a piece of research, a spot of trouble

### 5.7 Partitives: types/species: e g

a brand of soap, a kind of biscuit, a species of insect, a type of drug, a variety of pasta

### 5.8 Partitives: 'a pair of': e g

boots, braces, glasses, knickers, pants, pliers, pyjamas/pajamas, scissors, shears, shoes, shorts, skates, skis, slippers, socks, stockings, tights, tongs, trousers

## Appendix 6 [> 2.19]

### Collective nouns followed by 'of': e.g.

a band of soldiers, a bouquet of flowers, a bunch of grapes, a circle of friends, a clump of trees, a collection of coins, a colony of ants, a crew of sailors, a crowd of people, a deck of cards, a drove of cattle, a fleet of ships, a gang of thieves, a group of people, a herd of cattle, a hive of bees, a horde of children, a mass of people, a mob of hooligans, a pack of cards, a panel of experts, a party of visitors, a plague of locusts, a school of fish, a set of teeth, a shelf of books, a string of pearls

## Appendix 7 [> 4.35]

### Uses of 'this/that' and 'these/those'

#### 7.1 Identification

Things *This is my room*

People *There he is That's him* (Not "he")

#### 7.2 Introductions

*This is Mrs Amsworth*

*This is Tom Smith, and this is Jane Mills*

*This is Mr and Mrs Amsworth* (i.e. one unit)

#### 7.3 Telephoning

*This is Tom here Is that you, Elizabeth?*

#### 7.4 'This' = 'here'

*In this school/firm/house we like punctuality*

#### 7.5 'Pointing' to people, etc.: contrast

*777's boy wants tea and that one wants milk*

*These boys are in class 1 and those are in 2*

*Take this home and give these to Caroline*

#### 7.6 Demonstrating (with gestures)

*He went that way Do it like this/that*

#### 7.7 Forward and backward reference

Only **this** can be used for forward reference

*This is how you do it Press this button*

Compare backward reference

*He was very late This/That delayed us*

*These and those are never used, even if more than one event is referred to*

*I broke my leg and my sister's house burnt down - When did this/that happen?*

#### 7.8 Story-telling, narration (informal)

**This** sometimes replaces *a/an* to make a story sound more amusing or interesting and to show that the narrator will explain more

*There was this Frenchman who went to a cricket match*

#### 7.9 Time references [> App 48]

*I'll see you this afternoon*

*These days life is hard for old people*

*I was born in 1935 In those days there was no TV At that time my father was a miner*

#### 7.10 Comparisons

*\$500? It cost a lot more than that*

In formal use, **that of** and **those of** sometimes replace a noun with *of*

*The area of the USA is larger than that of Brazil*

*Tom's essays are better than those of the other boys*

#### 7.11 Contrast

*This is my car and that is John's*

#### 7.12 Clarification

*Is this the man you saw, the one here?*

*I didn't mean that Tom, but the one next door*

*...that is* is often used to clarify

*I'll arrive on the 2nd, that is, on Friday*

#### 7.13 'This'/'that' + 'wh-'/'how' clauses

*You're late That's why we're waiting*

*Sue lent me 50p This/That is how I got home*

#### 7.14 'Derogatory' reference with 'that'

*It's that man again* (let's avoid him)

#### 7.15 'That' in advertisements, etc.

**That** is sometimes used colloquially to point to common 'shared' knowledge

*Bovril prevents that sinking feeling*

#### 7.16 'This' and 'that' with 'kind' and 'sort'

*I like this/that kind (or sort) of person/bicycle*

#### 7.17 'These' and 'those' with 'kinds'/'sorts'

*I enjoy these/those kinds (or sorts) of films*

However, in everyday speech we often hear

*I enjoy these/those kind (or sort) of films*

We cannot use *these* and (*those* after *in*, e.g.

*I enjoy films of this/that kind (or sort)*

#### 7.18 'This' and 'that' to indicate 'degree'

Very informally **this** and **that** can be used like *so* as intensifiers [> 6 30 2, 7 51 1]

*It's about this/that big* (+ gesture)

*Does it really cost this/that much?*

*I can't walk this/that far* Let's get a taxi'

#### 7.19 Some expressions with 'this' and 'that'

*We discussed this, that and the other*

*What's all this* (= What's going on?)

*I know you're tired and all that, but*

*That's that* We've finished'

## Appendix 8 [> 6.2]

### 8.1 Adjectives formed with suffixes: e.g.

**-able** (capable of being, able to be)

**changeable**, **-ible** (like **-able**) **possible**, **-ful**

(full of, having) **beautiful**, **-ful/-less**: **careful** - **careless**, **-i(a)n** (historical period, etc.)

**Victorian**, **-ish** (have the - sometimes bad -

quality) **foolish**, (colour) **reddish**, (age)

**thirtyish**, **-ive** (capable of being or doing this)

**attractive**, **-less** (without) **lifeless**, **-like**

(resembling) **businesslike**, **-ly** (have this

quality) **friendly**, (how often) **hourly** Others

**-al**: **mechanical**, **-ant**: **hesitant**, **-ar**: **circular**,

**-ary**: **visionary**, **-ate**: **affectionate**, **-ent**:

**sufficient**, **-eous**: **gorgeous**, **-esque**:

**picturesque**, **-ic**: **energetic**, **-ic/-ical**: **economic**

- **economical**, **-ious**: **glorious**, **-ist**: **sexist**, **-ory**:

**sensory**, **-ous**: **humorous**, **-some**: **fearsome**

### 8.2 Adjectives formed with prefixes: e.g.

**dis-**: **dishonest**, **il-**: **illegal**, **im-**: **impossible**, **in-**:

**indifferent**, **ir-**: **irresponsible**, **non-**: **non-stick**,

**on-**: **unthinkable** Others **a-**: **amoral**, **anti-**:

**antiseptic**, **hyper-**: **hyperactive**, **mal-**:

**maladjusted**, **over-**: **overdue**, **pre-**: **prewar**,

**pro-**: **pro-American**, **sub-**: **subnormal**, **super-**:

**superhuman**, **under-**: **undercooked**

## Appendix 9 [> 6.12.2]

The<sup>1</sup> + adjective, e.g. 'the young'

### 9.1 The group as a whole': e.g.

*the aged, the blind, the dead, the deaf, the dumb, the elderly, the guilty, the handicapped, the healthy, the homeless, the innocent, the living, the middle-aged, the old, the poor, the rich, the sick, the unemployed, the young*

### 9.2 Abstract combinations: e.g.

*from the sublime to the ridiculous, take the rough with the smooth*

## Appendix 10 [> 6.15, 7.51]

Some more '-ed/-fng' adjectival participles:

*alarmed/alariming, amused/amusing, appalled/appalling, astonished/astonishing, bewildered/bewildering, confused/confusing, depressed/depressing, disgusted/disgusting, distressed/distressing, embarrassed/embarrassing, exhausted/exhausting, frightened/frightening, horrified/horrifying, irritated/irritating, moved/moving, relaxed/relaxing, satisfied/satisfying, shocked/shocking, surprised/surprising, terrified/terrifying, worried/worrying*

## Appendix 11 [> 6.19]

Common adjectives easily confused

### 11.1 'Fat/thin': people/animals

*a fat/thin man, a fat/thin woman a fat/thin cat*

### 11.2 'Thick/thin': usually apply to things

*a thick/thin book, thick/thin material*

### 11.3 'Fat' for a few names of things

*a fat book, a fat dictionary*

### 11.4 'Thick' (= stupid) - people

*Some of my students are really thick*

### 11.5 'Tall/short': people/height

*a tall/short man, a tall/short woman, etc*

### 11.6 'Tall': buildings, mountains, trees, etc.

The opposite is **small** *a tall building/mountain/tree, a small building/mountain/tree*

### 11.7 'High/low': buildings and things

*a high/low building, a high/low stool*

**High** for mountains, but **low** for hills  
*a high mountain a low hill*

**High** and **low** can also refer to sound  
*a high/low voice, a high/low note*

### 11.8 'Long/short': length, time, distance

*a long/short skirt, a long/short time, walk, etc*

### 11.9 -Loud/soft'; 'hard/soft'

*a loud/soft knock, a loud/soft thud*

**Soft** (opposite **hard**) also applies to texture  
*a hard/soft apple, a hard/soft mattress*

### 11.10 Old/young': people

*an old/young man, an old/young woman*

### 11.11 'Old/new': things

*an old/new handbag, an old/new house*

**New** is used for a person who is a 'newcomer'  
*a-new boss, a new secretary*

### 11.12 'Large/big/great': people or things

**Large** and **big** generally refer to size  
*a large/big man or woman, a large/big box*  
**Great** generally refers to importance  
*a great man, a great cathedral, a great idea*

### 11.13 'Small/little'

**Small** is the opposite of **large/big**, **small** is gradable and is attributive/predicative  
*a small boy, a small house* (attributive)  
*My house is very small* (predicative)  
**Little** is usually attributive and can replace **small** in many contexts (*a little boy, a little house*), it is also a quantifier (*a little sugar* = a small amount of) **Little** is used particularly to express love, pity, etc *your sweet little baby*

## Appendix 12 [> 6.24, 6.29]

Comparatives/superlatives confused and misused e.g.

### 12.1 'Better/worse'

**Better** is the comparative of **well**, **worse** is the comparative of **ill** when referring to health

*How's Liz? - She's (much) better/nearly well*  
*How's Bob? - He's still ill - much worse*

### 12.2 'Little'

We use the comparative/superlative of **small**  
*a small/little boy, a smaller/the smallest boy*  
The forms **littler**, **the littlest** are typical of children's speech and refer to size and age  
*Don't hit him He's littler than you are I'm 7*  
*Susie's 6, and Jimmy's the littlest He's 4*

### 12.3 'Elder/eldest'; 'older/oldest'

**Elder** and **eldest** are used (attributive only) with reference to people in a family, **elder** is therefore never followed by **than**

*my elder brother/son, the eldest child*

The noun is often deleted after **the eldest/youngest**

*I'm the eldest and Pam's the youngest*

**The elder** is possible in e.g. *I'm the elder*

### 12.4 'Old/older/oldest'

These are used attributively and predicatively with reference to people and things

*my older brother, my oldest son/oldest child*

*My brother is older than I am Tim is the oldest in our family*

*an older tree/book the oldest tree/book*

*This oak tree is older than that yew tree*

*This book is older than that one It's the oldest book I have in my library*

## Appendix 13 [> 6.30.1]]

Expressions with 'as' + adjective + 'as':

*as blind as a bat, as bold as brass, as bright as a button (= intelligent) as cheap as dirt, as clear as a bell, as cool as a cucumber, as deaf as a post, as dry as dust (= boring) as easy as pie as fat as a pig, as free as a bird, as hard as nails, as keen as mustard as large as life, as mad as a hatter as pleased as Punch, as pretty as a picture, as quick as lightning, as right as rain, as safe as houses*

**Appendix 14 [> 6.6,7.3.2,7.5,7.13]****Adjectives and adverbs with the same form**

The adjectival use is given first

<b>airmail:</b>	<i>airmail letter, send it airmail</i>
<b>all day:</b>	<i>an all day match, play all day</i>
<b>all right:</b>	<i>I'm all right, you've done all right</i>
<b>best:</b>	<i>best clothes, do your best</i>
<b>better:</b>	<i>a better book speak better</i>
<b>big:</b>	<i>a big house, talk big</i>
<b>cheap:</b>	<i>a cheap suit buy it cheap</i>
<b>clean:</b>	<i>clean air cut it clean</i>
<b>clear:</b>	<i>a clear sky, stand clear</i>
<b>close:</b>	<i>the shops are close, stay close</i>
<b>cold:</b>	<i>a cold person, run cold</i>
<b>daily:</b>	<i>a daily paper, they deliver daily</i>
<b>dead:</b>	<i>a dead stop, stop dead</i>
<b>dear:</b>	<i>a dear bouquet, sell it dear</i>
<b>deep:</b>	<i>a deep hole, drink deep</i>
<b>direct:</b>	<i>a direct train go direct</i>
<b>dirty:</b>	<i>dirty weather, play dirty</i>
<b>downtown:</b>	<i>a downtown restaurant (AmE)</i>
<b>duty-free:</b>	<i>a duty-free shop, buy it duty-free</i>
<b>early:</b>	<i>an early train, arrive early</i>
<b>easy:</b>	<i>an easy book, go easy</i>
<b>everyday:</b>	<i>my everyday suit, work every day</i>
<b>extra:</b>	<i>an extra blanket, charge extra</i>
<b>fair:</b>	<i>a fair decision, play fair</i>
<b>far:</b>	<i>a far country, go far</i>
<b>farther:</b>	<i>on the farther side, walk farther</i>
<b>fast:</b>	<i>a fast driver, drive fast</i>
<b>fine:</b>	<i>a fine pencil cut it fine</i>
<b>firm:</b>	<i>a firm belief hold firm</i>
<b>first:</b>	<i>the first guest, first I'll wash</i>
<b>free:</b>	<i>a free ticket, travel free</i>
<b>further:</b>	<i>further questions, walk further</i>
<b>hard:</b>	<i>a hard worker, work hard</i>
<b>high:</b>	<i>a high note, aim high</i>
<b>home:</b>	<i>home cooking, go home</i>
<b>hourly:</b>	<i>hourly bulletin phone hourly</i>
<b>inside:</b>	<i>the inside story, stay inside</i>
<b>kindly:</b>	<i>a kindly man act kindly</i>
<b>last:</b>	<i>the last guest, come last</i>
<b>late:</b>	<i>a late train, arrive late</i>
<b>long:</b>	<i>long hair don't stay long</i>
<b>loud:</b>	<i>a loud noise talk loud</i>
<b>low:</b>	<i>a low bridge, aim low</i>
<b>monthly:</b>	<i>a monthly bill, pay monthly</i>
<b>outside:</b>	<i>an outside lavatory wait outside</i>
<b>overseas:</b>	<i>overseas travel, travel overseas</i>
<b>past:</b>	<i>the past week, walk past</i>
<b>quick:</b>	<i>a quick worker, come quick</i>
<b>quiet:</b>	<i>a quiet evening sit quiet</i>
<b>right:</b>	<i>the right answer answer right</i>
<b>sharp:</b>	<i>sharp eyes, look sharp</i>
<b>slow:</b>	<i>a slow train, go slow</i>
<b>straight:</b>	<i>a straight line think straight</i>
<b>sure:</b>	<i>I'm sure Sure, I'll do it (AmE)</i>
<b>thin/thick:</b>	<i>a thin/thick slice, cut it thin/thick</i>
<b>through:</b>	<i>a through train, go through</i>
<b>tight:</b>	<i>a tight fit sit tight</i>
<b>weekly:</b>	<i>weekly pay, pay weekly</i>
<b>well:</b>	<i>I am well, do well</i>
<b>wide:</b>	<i>a wide room, open wide</i>
<b>worse:</b>	<i>worse marks, do worse than</i>
<b>wrong:</b>	<i>a wrong guess, answer wrong</i>
<b>yearly:</b>	<i>a yearly visit go there yearly</i>

**Appendix 15 [> 7.13,7.14]****Adverbs with two forms****15.1 Two forms used in the same way:**

All forms without -ly can also be used as adjectives [compare > App 14]  
*cheap/cheaply, clean/cleanly clear/clearly*  
*close/closely, dear/dearly, fair/fairly fine/finely*  
*firm/firmly, first/firstly, loud/loudly quick/quickly, quiet/quietly, slow/slowly thin/thinly*

**15.2 Two forms used in different ways: e.g.**

<b>deep/deeply:</b>	<i>drink deep, deeply regret</i>
<b>direct/directly:</b>	<i>go direct, I'll come directly</i>
<b>easy/easily:</b>	<i>go easy, win easily</i>
<b>flat/flatly:</b>	<i>fall flat, flatly refuse</i>
<b>free/freely:</b>	<i>travel free, freely admit</i>
<b>full/fully:</b>	<i>full in the face, fully realize</i>
<b>hard/hardly:</b>	<i>work hard, hardly any food</i>
<b>high/highly:</b>	<i>aim high, think highly of you</i>
<b>just/justly:</b>	<i>just finished, deal justly with</i>
<b>last/lastly:</b>	<i>arrive last, lastly, I think</i>
<b>late/lately:</b>	<i>arrive late, lately I've seen</i>
<b>near/nearly:</b>	<i>go near, nearly finished</i>
<b>pretty/prettily:</b>	<i>sit pretty, smile prettily</i>
<b>real/really:</b>	<i>real glad (AmE) I really like</i>
<b>rough/roughly:</b>	<i>sleep rough, roughly twenty</i>
<b>sharp/sharply:</b>	<i>10 am sharp speak sharply</i>
<b>short/shortly:</b>	<i>stop short, see you shortly</i>
<b>strong/strongly:</b>	<i>going strong, strongly feel</i>
<b>sure/surely:</b>	<i>I sure am late (AmE), surely</i>
<b>wide/widely:</b>	<i>open wide widely believed</i>

**Appendix 16 [ 7.53]****Some '-ly' intensifiers: typical combinations**

*absolutely delicious, I absolutely love peaches*  
*amazingly good at, amazingly well*  
*awfully nice, do something awfully well*  
*badly mistaken, I badly want*  
*beautifully simple, beautifully organized*  
*bitterly cold bitterly disappointed*  
*brilliantly clever, brilliantly designed*  
*completely successful, completely finished*  
*considerably better considerably cheaper*  
*cruelly disappointed, cruelly afflicted*  
*dangerously ill, dangerously wounded*  
*dearly loved, I'd dearly like to*  
*deeply sorry, deeply hurt*  
*definitely mistaken I'm definitely leaving*  
*dreadfully late dreadfully annoyed*  
*entirely irresponsible, I entirely agree*  
*(e)specially nice, I (e)specially enjoyed*  
*exceedingly good, do it exceedingly badly*  
*extremely interesting, extremely surprised*  
*fearfully boring, fearfully confused*  
*fully satisfied, I fully appreciate*  
*gravely ill gravely worried*  
*greatly impressed, I greatly appreciate*  
*hideously ugly, hideously expensive*  
*highly intelligent, I highly disapprove*  
*hopelessly badly, hopelessly confused*  
*horribly painful, horribly wounded*  
*immensely rich, I was immensely pleased*  
*incredibly beautiful, incredibly surprised*  
*intensely cold, intensely concerned*  
*keenly competitive, keenly interested*



## Appendix 17-19

*largely compatible, largely altered  
lightly salted, lightly cooked  
literally amazing, he literally believes  
madly exciting, they clapped madly  
mortally ill, mortally offended  
outstandingly good/well/original  
painfully shy, painfully embarrassed  
particularly clever, I particularly enjoyed  
perfectly sweet, I perfectly understand  
pleasantly agreeable, pleasantly surprised  
richly deserved, richly rewarded  
seriously upset, seriously depressed  
severely ill, severely criticized  
sharply accurate, sharply critical  
simply wonderful, I simply love  
strikingly attractive, strikingly obvious  
superbly fit, superbly cooked  
terribly rude, drive terribly fast  
thoroughly ted-up, I thoroughly enjoyed  
totally idiotic, I totally agree  
utterly stupid, I utterly agree  
violently ill, violently opposed to  
wonderfully clever, do it wonderfully well*

### Appendix 17 [>7.57]

#### Some viewpoint adverbs

##### 17.1 = 'I'm sure of the facts': e g

*actually, as a matter of fact, certainly, clearly,  
definitely, honestly, in actual fact, naturally,  
obviously, really, strictly speaking*

##### 17.2 = 'I'm less sure of myself/the facts':

*apparently, arguably, as far as I know, at a  
guess, by all accounts, evidently, maybe,  
perhaps, possibly, probably, quite likely*

##### 17.3 = 'I'm making a generalization': e g

*as a (general) rule, basically, by and large, for  
the most part, in general, in principle, in a way,  
normally, on the whole, to a great extent*

##### 17.4 = 'I'm going to be brief': e g

*anyhow, briefly, in brief, in effect, in a few  
words, in short, to put it simply*

##### 17.5 = 'I'm expressing my opinion': e g

*as far as I'm concerned, frankly (speaking), in  
my opinion, in my view, personally I think, in  
all frankness, in all honesty, to put it bluntly*

##### 17.6 = 'I don't want you to repeat this': e g

*between ourselves, between you and me,  
confidentially, in strict confidence*

##### 17.7 = 'You won't believe this': e g

*amazingly, astonishingly, curiously, funnily  
enough, incredibly, oddly enough, strangely,  
surprisingly, to my amazement, to my surprise*

##### 17.8 = 'It's just as I expected': e g

*characteristically, inevitably, logically, naturally,  
needless to say, not surprisingly, of course,  
plainly, predictably, typically*

##### 17.9 = 'I'm pleased/I'm not pleased': e g

*agreeably, annoyingly foolishly, fortunately,  
happily, ideally, interestingly, luckily, mercifully,  
preferably, regrettably, sadly, unfortunately,  
unhappily, unwisely, wisely*

### Appendix 18 [> 1.17,7.58]

#### Connecting words and phrases

##### 18.1 Enumerating/stressing facts: e g

*above all, chiefly, (e)specially, finally, first(ly)/  
secondly, in the first place, last(ly), mainly,  
primarily, principally, to begin with, then*

##### 18.2 Making an addition; reinforcing: e g

*additionally/in addition, again, also, another  
thing is that, apart from this, aside from that,  
as well as that, besides, for that matter,  
furthermore, indeed, moreover, what is more*

##### 18.3 Stating an alternative: e g

*alternatively, apart from this, conversely,  
except for, excepting, instead, so far as*

##### 18.4 Giving an example: e g

*according to, as far as is concerned, for  
example, for instance, namely, such as*

##### 18.5 Making a comparison or a contrast:

*as compared to, by/in comparison with,  
conversely, equally, however, in contrast,  
in reality, in the same way, likewise*

##### 18.6 Making a concession: e g

*admittedly, after all, all the same, anyhow,  
anyway, at all events, at any rate, at least, at  
the same time, despite this, however, I grant  
you, in so far as, nevertheless, none the less*

##### 18.7 Making something clear: e g

*I mean, in other words, put another way, to  
put it differently, that is to say*

##### 18.8 Time references: e g

*afterwards, at the same time, concurrently, in  
the meantime, meanwhile, subsequently*

##### 18.9 Showing results/causes: e g

*accordingly, as a result, because of this, by  
this means, consequently, for this reason,  
hence, in the event, in this way, on account of  
this, owing to this, so, therefore, thus*

##### 18.10 Summarizing: e g

*all in all, all told, and so forth, and so on,  
essentially, in brief, in conclusion, in effect, in  
short, to all intents and purposes, to conclude,  
to sum up, to summarize, ultimately*

##### 18.11 Moving to a different topic: e g

*as far as is concerned, as for, as regards, as  
to that, by the by, by the way, coincidentally,  
funnily enough, incidentally, in passing, to  
return to, Well, with reference to*

### Appendix 19 [> 7.59.3]

#### Some negative adverbs/adverb phrases

*barely, hardly when, hardly ever, least of all,  
little, never, never again, never before, at no  
time, by no means, in/under no circumstances,  
in no way, on no account, on no condition, no  
sooner than, neither nor, not a, not  
only but, not until/till, nowhere, only after,  
only at that moment, only by, only if, only in  
some respects, only later, only on rare  
occasions, only then, only when, only with,  
rarely, scarcely when, scarcely ever seldom*

**Appendix 20** [> 1.23.3,8.2,8.4,8.22]

## Some common prepositions

**20.1 Single-word prepositions:** e.g.

'= cannot be separated from the words they refer to [> 8.22] *about, above, across, after, against, along, alongside, amid(st), among(st), around, as, at, 'bar, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, 'besides, between, beyond 'but (= except), by, "despite down, 'during, "except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, "minus, near of, off, on, onto, opposite, out (AmE, informal BrE), outside, over, past, "per, "plus round, "since, than, through, 'throughout, till, to, towards, under, underneath, 'unlike, until, up, upon, "via, with, within, without, "worth*

**20.2 Single-word prepositions with '-ing':**  
*barring, concerning, considering, excepting, excluding including, regarding***20.3 Prepositions of two or more words:**

*according to, ahead of, along with, apart from, as for, as from, as regards, as a result of as to as well as, away from, because of, but for, by comparison with, by means of, due to, except for, for the sake of, from among, from under, in addition to, in between, in case of, in charge of, in common with, in comparison to/with, in connexion with, in favour of, in front of, in line with in place of, in spite of, instead of, in view of, near to, next to, on account of, on behalf of, on the left/right of, out of, owing to, regardless of, together with, up to, with the exception of, with reference to, with regard to*

**Appendix 21** [> 3.20,3.28.3,8.9.1, 10.13.4]

## 'to' + noun; 'at' + noun

*(He's gone to/been to He's at He's been at)*

**21.1 Social/business activities:**

*a concert, a conference, a dance, a dinner (formal), a funeral, a meeting, a wedding*

**21.2 Public places/buildings:**

*the airport London Airport, the station, Waterloo Station, the bus station, the bus stop, the/an art gallery, the Tate Gallery, the/a museum, the British Museum, the zoo, London Zoo, the car park, the/a filling station, the/a garage, the shops, Harrods, the butcher's, the chemist's, the shoe shop, the supermarket, the bank, the library, the police station, the town hall the consulate, the embassy, the/a hotel, the Grand Hotel, the/a restaurant, the dentist's, the doctor's, the hospital*

**21.3 Zero article + noun:**

*go home/be at home, church, college school university Highfield School, Bristol University*

**21.4 Addresses:**

*his sisters, 24 Cedar Avenue, Rose Cottage*

**21.5 Points inside a building or area:**

*the booking office. Reception, the Customs a lift/an elevator may be at the first/second floor, a person is on the first/second floor*

**Appendix 22** [> 3.20 3.28.3, 8.9.2, 10.13.4]

## 'to' + noun; 'in' + noun

*(He's gone to/been to He's in He's been in)*

**22.1 Large areas, countries, states:**

*Europe/Asia, Texas/Kent, the Andes, the Antarctic, the Sahara Desert, the Mediterranean, the Pacific*

**22.2 Towns/parts of towns**, except when we think of them as points on a route [> 8.6]

*Canterbury, Chelsea, Dallas, Manhattan, New York, Paris, the East End*

**22.3 Outside areas** (*go into* is preferable

*with e.g. garden, street)*

*the garden, the park, Hyde Park, the square, the street, Bond Street, the old town, the desert, the forest, the jungle, the mountains*

**22.4 Rooms** (*go into* or *go to*)

*the bathroom, his bedroom, the garage, the kitchen, Mr Jones's office, the waiting room, the bar, the cloakroom, the lounge, the Gents'*

**22.5 Zero article + noun:**

*bed, chapel, church hospital, prison*

**Appendix 23** [>3.20,3.28.3, 8.9.3, 10.13.4]

## 'to' + noun; 'at' or 'in' + noun

We use **at** when we think of a place as e.g. a meeting point, **in** when we think it is 'enclosing' *the airport the cinema, the theatre, the zoo, the car park, the garage, the office, the chemist's, the flower shop, the bank, the library, the post office, the hotel the Grand (Hotel), the restaurant at/in church (e.g. to pray), at/in the church (for some other reason), at school (as a pupil), at/in the school (as e.g. a teacher), in prison (as a prisoner), at/in the prison (as e.g. a visitor), in hospital (as a patient) at/in the hospital (as e.g. an outpatient)*

**Appendix 24** [> 2.13.1,3.21,8.12-13]**24.1 Days of the week**

Sunday	Sun	Thursday	Thur(s)
Monday	Mon	Friday	Fri
Tuesday	Tue(s)	Saturday	Sat
Wednesday	Wed		

**24.2 Months and seasons** [> App 47 4.2]

months	seasons
January	Jan (the) Spring or spring
February	Feb (the) Summer or summer
March	Mar (the) Autumn or autumn
April	Apr (or AmE (the) fall)
May	- (the) Winter or winter
June	
July	
August	Aug
September	Sept
October	Oct
November	Nov
December	Dec

## Appendix 25 [> 8.10, 8.15]

Particular prepositions, particles and contrasts [see also > App 32]

### 25.1 'about', 'on' and 'over'

**About** and **on** can be used to mean 'concerning' or 'relating to' a subject *On* tends to be used in more formal, academic contexts than **about**

*Have you seen this article on the Antarctic?*

*I've read lots of books about animals*

**About** (Not 'on') is used after verbs such as *know, read, tell, think* and adjectives such as *anxious, concerned, worried* **About** or **on** are used after nouns such as *idea(s), opinion(s)*

**Over** is often used in the sense of 'about' particularly in news reports on radio/TV after e.g. *argue, argument, concern, dispute*, often where some sort of confrontation is involved

### 25.2 'according to' and 'by'

**According to** can mean 'as shown by'

*According to the forecast, it'll be wet*  
and 'as stated by'

*According to Dr Pirn, the sea is rising*

**According to** is used to refer to information coming from other people or sources (*according to him, according to the timetable*, etc.), but not to information coming from oneself (Not 'according to me') **According to** cannot be used with *opinion*, *in* must be used

*In my opinion, none of this is true*

*By* can only replace **according to** when the reference is highly specific e.g. to a clock or timetable, etc., but never to people

*It's now ten past by/according to my watch*

**According to** can also mean 'depending on'

*I get to work at nine or just after according to the amount of traffic on the road*

### 25.3 'across' and 'over'

Both these prepositions can be used to mean 'from one side to the other' if we are referring to a line (e.g. *a road, a river, a frontier* etc.) When combining with verbs like *run walk* (*run across/over, walk across/over*) they can express the same idea as the verb *cross*

*Children are taught not to run over/across the road without looking* (i.e. not to cross)

*There's a newsagent's over/across the road*

However, **over** cannot be used when we are referring to the surface of a wide area

*They're laying a pipeline across Siberia*

With verbs which can suggest 'aimless movement' (*stroll wander*, etc.) **over** can be used to describe movement inside an area (not necessarily from one side to another) suggesting 'here and there'

*We wandered over the fields*

*We skated over the frozen lake*

**Across** must also be used when we are referring to movement through water

*Erna Hart swam across the Channel*

**Across** cannot be used when we wish to express 'go up and come down again' (from one side of something high to the other)

*They escaped by climbing over the wall*

### 25.4 'across' and 'through'

**Across**, meaning 'from one side to the other' can refer to a surface

*We skated across the frozen lake*

**Through**, meaning 'from one side to the other' or 'from one end to the other' can suggest more effort than **across** **Through** refers to

- a hollow

*Water flows through this pipe*

- something three-dimensional which 'encloses' (e.g. a country, a crowd, a forest long grass, mud)

*It was difficult to cut through the forest*

- a 'barrier' (e.g. the Customs, a door, a net a roadblock a window)

*Look through the window*

The use of **across** and **through** depends on the sort of thing you are talking about In

*Let's walk across/through the park* they are interchangeable because in the speaker's mind **across** refers to a surface and **through** to a three-dimensional area

### 25.5 'after' and 'afterwards'

Both these words mean 'later', but **after** can be a preposition (followed by an object) and a conjunction (followed by a clause) When this is the case **afterwards** cannot replace **after**

*Come and see me after work*

*Come and see me after you've finished*

**Afterwards** can only be used as an adverb (that is, with no noun or pronoun object)

*We made the house tidy and our guests arrived soon afterwards*

We can also use **after** as an adverb in the above sentence (*our guests arrived soon after*) Or we may use *and then* or *and soon after that* (*and then/and soon after that our guests arrived*) **After** as an adverb is often modified by *soon* or *shortly* and occurs in expressions like *happily ever after* It cannot be used in an initial position to refer to the second of two distinct events

*We had a swim in the sea*

*Afterwards we lay on the beach*

### 25.6 '(a)round' and 'about'

**(A)round/about** are interchangeable when they

- refer to lack of purpose or lack of definite movement or position

*We stood about/(a)round waiting*

- refer to mindless activity

*I wish you'd stop fooling about/around*

- are used to mean 'approximately'

*The telex was received (at) around/about 8*

- are used to mean 'somewhere near'

*I lost my purse about/(a)round here*

**About** cannot replace **around** to refer to

- circular movement

*Millie's having a cruise (a)round the world*

- distribution

*Would you hand these papers (a)round?*

- 'every part'

*Let me show you (a)round the house*

- 'in the area of'

*He lives somewhere (a)round Manchester*

**25.7 'at'** [for time phrases > App 47 5]

**At** commonly follows

- adjectives associated with skill  
*good/bad/clever/better/worse at*  
*I'm not very good at figures*
- a few nouns associated with skill  
*a dunce at, a genius at*  
*I'm a dunce at arithmetic*
- verbs used to suggest action directed towards a target or destination (often suggesting aggression), such as *aim, laugh, shout, stare, strike, talk, throw* *At* often suggests taking aim Compare

**Throw the ball to me** (for me to catch)

**That boy is always throwing stones at**

**birds** (aiming at them to harm them)

**She shouted to us across the valley**

(to communicate with us)

**The children got very dirty and she shouted**

**at them** (to scold them)

**Against** (but not *at*) can be used after verbs like *fight throw*, where there is no idea of taking aim

*He threw the ball against the wall*

*We fought against the enemy*

- adjectives which indicate a reaction to circumstances, events, etc *amazed, annoyed, astonished, surprised* etc + *at* [> App 10]

*I'm surprised at all the calls we've had*

**At** can often be replaced by **by** (*surprised by*)

after words like *surprised* when these are used

as past participles in the passive [> 12 7]

**At** is also used with reference to price/speed

*We have some combs at \$2 each*

(This use of *at* is sometimes symbolically

represented by '<@>' in price lists, etc )

*Ron is driving at 100 miles an hour*

**25.8 'away'** [> 8.4.3]

**Away** is an adverb particle and is never followed by an object It commonly combines with the adverb *far* (*far away*) and the preposition *from* (*away from*) and verbs which convey the idea of 'distance'

*I see storm clouds far away in the distance*

*I live twenty miles away from here*

Note uses with verbs (e.g. *fire away* = begin and don't stop, *put away* = put something in its place *work away*, i.e. without interruption)

**25.9 'because' and 'because of'**

**Because** (conjunction) introduces a clause

*I couldn't do the work because I was ill*

**Because of** (preposition) takes an object

*I can't do the work because of my illness*

**On account of** + object can be used in place of **because of** in formal contexts

*Farms are going bankrupt on account of the crisis in agriculture*

**25.10 'before' and 'in front of'**

**Before** is normally used to refer to time

*Make sure you're there before 7.*

**Before** can refer to space when used with verbs like *come go lie, stand*, and in fixed expressions such as *appear before the magistrate before* (or *in front of*) *your very eyes come before the court* (*before* = 'in the

presence of in some of these expressions) **In front of** (and its opposite, **behind**) refers to position or place **Before** is not possible in most ordinary contexts to refer to position

*I'll wait in front of the shop* (Not "before")

**Before** (like **after**) combines with e.g. *come/go* and is interchangeable with **In front of**

*You come before (after) me in the queue*

*Why don't you go before (after) me?*

**Before** and **in front of** are interchangeable when we refer to big geographical areas

*There, before/in front of us, lay the desert*

or when they are used metaphorically to refer to big stretches of time etc

*Your whole life lies before/in front of you*

**25.11 'behind', 'at the back (of)', 'back'**

**Behind** can be used as a preposition

*There's a big garden behind this house*

or as an adverb

*There's a garden in front and one behind*

**Behind** can be replaced by **at the back (of)**

*There's a garden at the back of the house*

*There's a garden at the back*

**Back** is an adverb and often combines with verbs like *keep put, stand* and *stay*

*I wish you'd put things back in their places*

*Keep this book I don't want it back*

**Back** must not be confused with **again** in, e.g.

*Our neighbours invited us to dinner a month ago and we must invite them back* (return their hospitality)

*We enjoyed having our neighbours to dinner and we must invite them again* (on another occasion)

When the idea of *back* is contained in the verb, the adverb *back* must not be used

*We had to go back early*

*We had to return early* (Not "return back")

**Back** can also be used in the sense of 'ago'

*I saw him four years back/ago.*

**25.12 'beside' and 'besides'**

**Beside** is a preposition meaning 'next to'

*Come and sit beside me*

**Besides** is a preposition or an adverb meaning 'in addition to' or 'as well as'

*There were many people there besides us*

*This vehicle is very fast Besides, it's got four-wheel drive*

**Besides** should not be confused with **except**

*All of us went besides Bill*

(= Bill went and we went too )

*All of us went except Bill*

(= Bill didn't go but we did )

**25.13 'between' and 'among'**

**Between** is most commonly used to show a division or connexion between two people, things or times

*Divide it equally between the two of you*

*There's a good service between here and the island*

*We'll be there between 6 and 6.30*

It can also occasionally be used to refer to more than two things, etc when they are viewed separately and there are not many

*Please don't smoke between courses*

Switzerland is **between** France, Germany, Austria and Italy

**Between** is often used in comparisons and differences when there are two things, etc

*What is the difference **between** these two watches?*

It can also be used to refer to 'shared activity' when there are two or more than two

*The scouts collected money for the blind*

**Between** (or **Among**) *them they got £800*

**Among** (and the less common **amongst**) + plural noun refers to a mass of things, etc which cannot be viewed separately

*Were you **among** the members present?*

It is often used to refer to three or more

*Professor Webster is **among** the world's best authorities on Etruscan civilization*

#### 25.14 'but (for)' and 'except (for)'

**But** *for* introduces a condition [> 14. 22]

*We would have been able to get here on time **but for** the heavy snow*

**Except for** means 'with the exception of'

*Everyone has helped **except for** you*

**But** and **except** are used without *for* to mean 'with the exception of, especially after every/any/no compounds. However, we cannot use **but** and **except** as prepositions without *for* to begin a sentence

*Everyone **but/except** you has helped*

**Except/But for** *you everyone has helped*

We can only use **except** (not **except for**) in front of a prepositional phrase

*We go to bed before 10, **except in** the summer.*

We use **but** (not **except**) in questions like

*Who **but** John would do a thing like that?*

For **but** and **except** as conjunctions [> 8.4.4]

#### 25.15 'by', 'near' and 'on'

These words can be used to mean 'not far from'

**By** can mean 'right next to' or 'beside' a person, object or place and is interchangeable with **beside** and **next to**

*I sat **by** the phone all morning*

**Near** usually suggests 'a short way from' rather than 'right next to'

*We live **near** London - just 20 miles south*

**Near** (not **by**) is associated with **not far from**

*We live **near/not far from** the sea*

The opposite of **near** is **a long way from** or **(quite) far from**

*We live **a long way from/(quite) far from** the sea*

**Near** (but not **by**) can be modified by **very**

*The play is **very near** the end*

**By** can be modified by **right** and **close** for emphasis [> 8.2.1]

*The hotel is **right by/close by** the station*

**On** can mean 'right next to' or 'beside' when we refer to a line

*Our house is **right on** the road/on the river.*

***On my right** I have Frank Milligan and **on my left** I have Frank Mulligan*

**On** is often found in place-names for towns, etc by the sea or on rivers

*Southend-on-sea, Stratford-(up)on-Avon*

#### 25.16 'by' and 'past'

Both words are often interchangeable with verbs of motion (*go, run, walk, etc*) to mean 'beyond a point in space or time'

*He went **right by/past** me without speaking*

*Several days went **by/past** before I had news*

#### 25.17 'by', 'with' and 'without'

**By** and **with** can be used to mean 'by means of' but they are not generally interchangeable

**By** occurs in fixed phrases [> App 26.2] like *by bus*, and in passive constructions [> 12.5]

*Our dog was **hit by** a bus*

**By** (often + -ing) can refer to 'method'

*You can lock this window **by moving** this catch to the left* (that is how you must do it)

**By** can refer to time, measure or rate

*I'm paid **by** the hour/day/week*

*You can only buy eggs singly, not **by** the pound*

We also use it when referring to any kind of measurement against a scale

*He's shorter than I am **by** six inches*

*Interest rates have gone up **by** 3 per cent*

We use **by** to mean 'via' when referring to routes

*We drove to the coast **by** the main road*

**With** and **without** refer to things (especially tools/instruments) which we use or need to use

*You might get it open **with** a bottle-opener* (i.e. that is what you need to use)

*It won't open **without** a bottle-opener*

**With** can also refer to 'manner'

*Paul returned my greeting **with** a nod*

#### 25.18 'down', 'up', 'under' and 'over'

**Down** is the opposite of **up** and indicates direction towards a lower level

*Let's **climb up** the hill, then **climb down***

Though **down** is most commonly used with verbs of movement, it can (like *across, along* and *up*) be used with position verbs to indicate a place away from the speaker. There is no suggestion of 'at a lower level' in this use

*We live **down** the street*

**Under** conveys the idea of 'being covered'

*Let's sit **under** this tree*

*There are a lot of minerals **under** the sea*

**Over** can have the meaning 'covering'

*Keep this blanket **over** you*

#### 25.19 'due to' and 'owing to'

Some grammars draw a distinction between these two prepositions on the grounds that **due** is an adjective and must therefore be associated with a noun + *be*. It can be replaced by **caused by**

*Our delay (noun) was **due to/caused by** heavy traffic*

**Owing to** is associated with a verb. It can be replaced by **because of**

*The broadcast was **cancelled** (verb) **owing to/because of** the strike*

In practice, this distinction is ignored by many educated speakers who use **due to** in the same way as **owing to** or **because of**

*He lost his job **due to/owing to/because of** a change in management*

## 25.20 'for' [&gt; 7.32 16.40.9]

## Common uses:

- purpose *The best man **for** the job*
- + -ing *I need this **for** sewing*
- destination *This is the train **for** York*
- recipient *Here's a gift **for** you*  
*I've got news **for** you*
- reason *I did it **for** the money*
- duration *He's been away **for** days*
- exchange *I bought it **for** £5*
- meaning *What's French **for** 'cat'?*
- (= as) *I did it **for** a joke*
- (= instead of) *Ill do it **for** you* [> 1 13 3]
- (= in favour of) *Are you in favour of this?*  
*- res, I'm **all for** it*  
*The opposite is **against***  
*I'm **against** the idea*
- intention *Let's go **for** a swim*  
*(After go and come for is not followed by -ing)*
- specific time reference (not 'period of time')  
*I'll order a taxi **for** 11*
- for and to *For* is not used in (rant of a to-infinitive, but can be followed by a gerund to express purpose or reason  
*I used this tool **to** drill a hole*  
*This tool is used **for** drilling holes*  
*He was praised **for** being punctual*

## 25.21 'from' [&gt; 8.9]

**From** is often used to indicate origin. The reference can be to

- a place *Gerda is **from** Berlin*
- a person *Who's that letter **from**?*
- a group *We're **from** the council*
- a quotation *This line is **from** 'Hamlet'*
- distance *She's **away from** work*
- abstract *He died **from** a stroke*  
*I acted **from** self-interest*

## 25.22 'in' and 'out'

Used as particles, **in** and **out** often refer to 'entrance' and 'exit' as in *Way In* and *Way Out* or simply *In* and *Out*. The meaning can be extended to cover incoming and outgoing mail, as in the nouns *in-tray* and *out tray*.

## 25.23 'in spite of, etc.'

**(Although)** is a conjunction and introduces a clause. By comparison, **in spite of** (always three words), **despite** and **notwithstanding** do not, and are very formal. Here is a 'scale'

*The temperature has dropped, **but** it is still warm*

*It is still warm **(although)** the temperature has dropped*

*It is still warm, **in spite of** the drop in temperature*

*It is still warm, **despite** the drop in temperature*

*It is still warm, **notwithstanding** the drop in temperature*

**Notwithstanding** can be used at the end of a sentence to convey even greater formality

*It is still warm the drop in temperature **notwithstanding***

**In spite of, despite and notwithstanding** are often followed by **the fact that**

***In spite of the fact that** he has failed so often he has entered for the exam again*

**In spite of/despite** can be followed by -ing  
***In spite of losing** a fortune, he's still rich*  
**For all** conveys the same idea less formally  
***For all her money**, Mrs Hooper isn't happy*  
Compare **with all** (= taking into account)  
***With all this rain**, there'll be a good crop*

## 25.24 'instead' and 'instead of'

**Instead** is an adverb, **instead of** is a complex preposition. When **instead** is used as an adverb it is usually placed at the end  
*!! you don't want a holiday in Wales why don't you go to Scotland **instead**?*  
We use **instead of** + noun, pronoun or ing  
*We eat margarine **instead of** butter*  
*Why can't Marion drive you into town **instead of me**?*

**Instead of moaning** why don't you act?

## 25.25 'like' and 'as' [&gt; 1 47 6 30 1 16 40 8]

**Like** as a preposition is followed by a noun, pronoun or -ing

*There's no business **like** show business*  
(= to compare with)

*There's no one **like** you* (= to compare with)  
*Why don't you try something **like** doing a bit of work for a change?* (= such as)

*There were lots of people we knew at the party **like** the Smiths and the Frys*  
(= such as/for example)

**Like** can sometimes be replaced by **such as** (not by **as**)

**Like** can convey the idea of 'resemblance'  
*It was **like** a dream* (= similar to)

The opposite is **unlike**

*The holiday was **unlike** any other*

**Like** can suggest in the manner of  
He acts **like** a king (= in the same way as)

**As** (= in the capacity of) can be used as a preposition and should not be confused with **like** (= resemblance). It can refer to people and things

*I work **as** a hotel receptionist*

***As** a lawyer, I wouldn't recommend it*

*Who's used this knife **as** a screw-driver?*

**As** can be a conjunction introducing a clause  
***As** the last bus had left, we returned on foot*  
Used as a conjunction, **as** can convey similarity

*She's musical **as** was her mother/as her mother was*

**Like** (= as/as if) is often used as a conjunction, especially in informal AmE which is influencing BrE in this respect. This use has not gained full acceptance in BrE

***Like** I told you, it's an offer I can't refuse*  
(i.e. as I told you)

*She's spending money **like** there was no tomorrow* (i.e. as if)

**Like** and **unlike** can behave like adjectives when we use them after *very*, *more* or *most*

*He's **more like** his mother than his father*

*- I don't agree. They're **very unlike***

## 25.26 'of', 'out of', 'from', 'with'

All these prepositions can combine with **made** (*of* *out of* *from* *with*) to indicate the materials or ingredients out of which something is

created **Made of** and **made out of** are used when we can actually recognize the material (s) *made of wood, iron, etc*

*You rarely find toys **made (out) of solid wood***

**Made from** is used when the ingredient or ingredients are not immediately obvious

*Beer is **made from hops***

*Bronze is **made from copper and tin***

**Made with**, to suggest 'contains', is often used to identify one or more of the ingredients used

*This sauce is **made with fresh cream***

These prepositions can follow the past participles of other verbs, e.g. *built/constructed of/out of/from/with* and occur in expressions such as *paved with tiles, loaded with hay* etc

### 25.27 'of and off'

**Of/off** are not interchangeable, but their similar spellings cause confusion. **Of** never occurs as a particle, **off** is both preposition and particle

**Of**

For possessive uses [> 2.47] Other uses are

- origin *Mrs Ray **of** Worthing*
- direction ***north/south/west/east of***
- institutions ***The University of London***
- age *A woman **of** 50*

**Off**

- separation *I(s) **just off the motorway***  
*Take the **top off** (this jar)*
- departure ***We set off** at dawn*
- disappearance ***Has her headache worn off?***

### 25.28 'on' and 'in'

**On** and **in** are often used with reference to the body. **On** refers to position on a surface

*There's a black mark **on** your nose*

*The X-ray shows a spot **on** the lung*

**In** is used in relation to space or area to suggest 'embedded'

*I've got a speck of dust **in** my eye*

and to refer to

- pains *I've got a pain **in** my back/ear/stomach*
  - deep wounds *I've got a cut **in** my foot*
- Superficial wounds can take **on**
- I've got a scratch **on** my arm*

### 25.29 'on' and 'off'

**On** and **off** are generally used as prepositions or particles to refer to the supply of power, especially electricity and water

***Turn the light/tap on/off***

They are also used in connexion with feelings

*Ray **turns his affections on and off***

Both prepositions are often found on switches, appliances etc **ON/OFF**

### 25.30 'opposite (to)'

**Opposite** can be used as an adverb

*Where's the bank? - It's **opposite***

Or it can be used as a preposition, with or without to (though to is often unnecessary)

*There's a bank **opposite (to)** my office*

**Opposite** can be used as a predicative adjective

*The house **opposite** is up for sale*

and as an attributive adjective

*They both have **opposite points of view***

### 25.31 'out of', 'outside', 'out' [> 8.4.3, 8.9.6]

**Out of** is the opposite of **into** when we are describing movement

***We ran out of the burning building***

Compare

***We got into the car in a hurry***

**Out of** is the opposite of **in** when there is no movement involved

*Mr Ray **is out of the office** (= He is not in)*

*Mr Ray **is in his office** (= He is not out)*

**Out** is sometimes used informally as a preposition

***Don't throw your bus ticket out the window***  
(= out of the window)

**Outside** can sometimes replace **out of** to describe movement

***We ran outside the burning building***

But, without further information, this can also be taken to mean that we were already outside it when we began to run

**Inside** and **into** stand in the same relationship

***We ran inside the burning building.***

can also be taken to mean we were already inside it when we began to run

Without movement **outside** cannot replace **out of**

***He is outside his office***

means 'he is (standing) immediately outside it'

***He is out of his office***

means 'he is not here, he is somewhere else'

**Outside** and **inside** can be used as adverbs

***into** and **out of** can only be used as*

*prepositions [> 8.9.5-6]*

***He is inside/outside***

***We rushed inside/outside***

It is always safer to use **into** and **out of** as prepositions rather than **outside** and **inside** to mean 'from one place to another'

**In/out** can be used as adverbs [> App 25.22]

*He's **in/out***

### 25.32 'over', 'above', 'on top of'

**Over** can have the sense of 'covering' (and sometimes 'touching'), and its opposite is **under** (= covered by)

**Above** stresses the idea of 'at a higher level' (i.e. not touching)

***Keep the blankets over you***

***I can't sleep with a light on above my head***

**On top of** generally suggests 'touching'

***Don't put anything on top of the TV please***

For **across** and **over** [> App 25.3]

**Above** and **over** can often be used interchangeably with verbs of movement

***I'd like to fly above/over the Amazon***

**Over** and **above** can be used interchangeably in the sense of 'vertically at a higher level'

***The helicopter was over/above the lifeboat***

***My bedroom is over/above the kitchen***

However, they are not interchangeable when all we are concerned with is 'a higher level'

(not *vertically* at a higher level) If for example

we were referring to two cats on a tree we

would say that A was **above** B, not **over** it

In general terms **over** and **under** indicate

vertical relationships, while **above** and **below**

refer simply to levels

**Over** and **above** have different figurative uses  
**Over** means 'in charge of'

*We don't want anyone like that **over** us*

**Above** can mean 'a higher rank'

*Major is **above the rank** of Captain*

**Over** (and less commonly *above*) can mean 'more than'

*He isn't **over (above/more than)** ten*

**Above** (not *over*) is used to measure on a scale

*His work is **above average***

Both **over** and **above** combine with *see* (see *over* (= look at the next page), see *above* (= look further up the same page/refer to the previous page))

**Over** can combine with *turn*, in *turn over* (a page) and its opposite is *turn back*

### 25.33 'to' [> 8.9]

When *to* is associated with the infinitive it is not a preposition / *want to go* *She began to cry*, etc However, after verbs such as *object* or adjectives such as *accustomed*, *to* is a preposition This means it can be followed by a noun or a gerund [> 16.56]

*I'm accustomed **to hard work***

*I'm accustomed **to working hard***

### 25.34 'towards'

*To* in / *go from X to V* covers the whole movement, starting at X and arriving at Y  
**Towards** indicates general direction and does not cover the whole movement It can convey the following

- direction/movement ***Walk slowly towards me***
  - ~ 'in the direction of' *The church looks **towards the river***
  - near *I feel tired **towards the end of the day***
  - 'in relation to' *His attitude **towards***
  - 'for the purpose of' *Pay **towards a pension***
- Toward* is more common in AmE than *towards*

### 25.35 'under', underneath', beneath', 'below'

**Under** means 'covered by (and sometimes 'touching') and 'at a lower place than (not 'touching')

*There's nothing new **under the sun***

It can also be used with verbs of movement

*We walked **under the bridge***

**Under** can have the meaning of 'less than'

*I think she's **under seventeen***

**Below** is also possible in certain contexts

*Millie can't be **below 40***

**Underneath** means 'completely covered by' (touching or not touching)

*Put a mat **underneath that hot dish***

**Beneath** is less common and more literary but it can replace *under* and *underneath*

*Our possessions lie **beneath the rubble***

**Below** is the opposite of **above** It is interchangeable with *under* and *underneath* when it means 'at a lower level'

*He swam just **below the surface***

*We camped **below/under/underneath the summit***

But it is not generally interchangeable when referring to place or position

*The stone hit me just **below the knee***

**Under** can be used to mean 'commanded by'

*Our foreman has ten people **under him***

**Below** can be used figuratively to refer to rank

*What's the **rank below** Captain"*

### 25.36 'with' and 'without' [> 1.60, 16.51]

**With** and **without** can be used to mean

'accompanied by' or 'not accompanied by'

*I went to the zoo **with my sister***

*What was your life like **without any sisters**?*

*I can't manage **without you***

*With* can be a replacement for 'having' in e.g.

*He stood **with his hands in his pockets***

***With his background**, he should go far*

**Without** can suggest and not do something'

*We must get inside **without waking her***

**With** can suggest 'taking into consideration'

***With the cost of living so high**, we are*

*cutting down on luxuries*

***With so many accidents on the road**, the*

*use of seat-belts was made compulsory*

**With** (but not *without*) follows common

adjectives to express feelings *angry*, *annoyed*,

*furios*, etc (*with* someone, but *at* something)

And note *blue with cold*, *green with envy* etc

**With** also follows verbs e.g. *cope*, *fight*, *quarrel*

### 25.37 'with', 'without', 'in', 'of'

**With** and **without** can be used to mean

'carrying or 'not carrying', [> 10.31.4]

*Who's the woman **with the green umbrella**?*

*I'm **without any money***

or it can mean '(un)accompanied by'

*The camera comes **with/without a case***

**With** and **without** can be used to mean

'having or 'not having physical characteristics'

*He's a man **with a big nose and red hair***

This can be extended to external characteristics such as hairstyles and make-up, in e.g. *the woman with pink lipstick*

*In* can be used to mean 'wearing'

*Who's (he) woman **in the green blouse**?*

and can refer to voice-quality

*He spoke **in a low/loud voice/in a whisper***

*Of* can be used to describe

- personal qualities *He's a man **of courage***

- age *He's a man **of about 40***

- wealth *He's a man **of means***

### 25.38 'with regard to', etc.

A number of prepositions can be used when we wish to make formal references or focus attention e.g. *as far as*, *is concerned*, *as for*,

*as regards*, *as to* *regarding*, *with reference to*

*with regard to*

***As regards your recent application for a***

*job, we haven't made up our minds yet*

*We haven't had a reply from our neighbours*

***regarding their proposal to build a garage***

*I am writing to you **with reference to your***

***inquiry of November 27th***

However, informal uses can occur

*I didn't ask too many questions **as to his***

***whereabouts***

***As for your interest in this business**, I have*

*no comment to make*

***As far as I'm concerned**, you can do*

*as you please*



**Appendix 26** [> 7.11, 8.17]

## Some prepositional phrases

**26.1 Some phrases with 'at'**

at + meals ( <i>lunch</i> , etc )	at length
at + place [> Apps 21.23]	at a loss
at + points of time [> 8.11]	at the moment
at all events	at most
at all times	at once
at any rate	at pains
at best/worst	at peace/at war
at fault	at play/at work
at first	at present
at first sight	at a profit
at hand	at sea
at km per hour	at sight
at last	at table
at least	at the time
at leisure	at times

**26.2 Some phrases with 'by'**

by + bus etc [> 3.28.4]	by hand
by + time [> 7.34]	by heart
by + weight	by land/sea/air
by accident	by luck
by air	by marriage
by all means	by means of
by any/no means	by mistake
by birth	by name
by chance	by post
by cheque/credit card	by night(s)
by day/by night	by stages
by degrees	by surprise
by design	by virtue of
by far	by the way
by force	by way of

**26.3 Some phrases with 'for' and 'from'**

for + period of time [> 7.32]	from A to Z
for the better/the best	from bad to worse
for a change	from the first
for ever	from good to bad
for once	from the heart
for sale	from now on
for a walk, etc [> 10.13.4]	from then on

**26.4 Some phrases with 'in'**

in + place [> App 22-23]	in the end
in + time [> 8.13-14]	in fact
in action	in full
in addition	in general
in all	in half/in halves
in any case, in any event	in a hurry
in brief	in ink/in pencil
in business	in love
in case of	in a minute
in cash	in no time
in the circumstances	in order
in comfort	in pain
in comparison	in person
in conclusion	in practice
in control	in public
in danger	in return
in debt	in short
in demand	in tears
in depth	in time
in detail	in turn
in doubt	in view of

**26.5 Some phrases with 'off'**

off duty	off the record
off one's head	off the road
off the point	off school, off work

**26.6 Some phrases with 'on'**

on + day/date [> 8.12]	on holiday
on account of	on the hour
on approval	on the job
on average	on a journey
on behalf of	on loan
on business	on no account
on condition	on offer
on the contrary	on one's own
on credit	on purpose
on demand	on the radio/TV
on display	on sale
on duty	on strike
on fire	on the (tele)phone
on foot	on time
on guard	on a visit
on hand	on the way

**26.7 Some phrases with 'out of'**

Those marked * form their opposite with in	
out of breath	out of the ordinary
'out of character	'out of pain
'out of control	'out of place
"out of danger	"out of pocket
out of date	'out of practice
"out of debt	out of reach
"out of doors	"out of season
"out of fashion	'out of sight
"out of favour	'out of step
"out of focus	"out of stock
"out of hand	'out of style
out of hearing	"out of touch
out of humour	"out of tune
'out of love	'out of turn
"out of luck	'out of use
"out of order	'out of work

**26.8 Some phrases with 'past' and 'to'**

past belief	to advantage
past care	to a great extent
past control	to hand
past hope	to the point

**26.9 Some phrases with 'under'**

under age	under orders
under control	under pressure
under cover	under repair
under one's feet	under the rules
under the impression	under suspicion
under (no) obligation	under the weather

**26.10 Some phrases with 'up to', 'with', 'within', 'without'**

up to date	within the law
up to mischief	within range
(not) up to much	within reach
up to no good	without bothering
up to one's ears	without ceremony
up to (you)	without delay
with regard to	without a doubt
with respect to	without exception
with the exception of	without fail
within one's income	without prejudice

**Appendix 27 [> 4.29,6.8.4,8.1.9,]**

8.20, 16.53, 16.60]

**Some adjectives and related nouns + prepositions**Key: *sby* = *somebody*, *stg* = *something*

adjective	noun
absent from a place	absence from
afraid of <i>sby/stg</i>	fear of <i>sby/stg</i>
amazed at/by <i>sby/stg</i>	amazement at
angry at/about <i>stg</i>	anger at/about <i>stg</i>
angry with <i>sby</i>	anger with <i>sby</i>
annoyed at/about	annoyance at/abt
annoyed with <i>sby</i>	annoyance with
anxious about/over <i>sby/stg</i>	anxiety about/over
ashamed of <i>sby/stg</i>	shame at <i>stg</i>
aware of <i>sby/stg</i>	awareness of
awful at (doing) <i>stg</i>	
bad at (doing) <i>stg</i>	
bored by/with <i>sby/stg</i>	boredom with
busy at or with <i>stg</i>	
capable of (doing) <i>stg</i>	capability for
careful of/with <i>sby/stg</i>	carefulness with
careless of danger	carelessness of
certain of/about facts	certainly of/about
clever at (doing) <i>stg</i>	cleverness at/in
content with <i>stg</i>	contentment with
contrary to advice	
curious about <i>sby/stg</i>	curiosity about <i>stg</i>
different from/to <i>sby/stg</i>	difference from/to
eager for <i>stg</i>	eagerness for <i>stg</i>
easy{- not worried) about -	
excited about/at/by/over	excitement abt/at
faithful to <i>sby/stg</i>	faithfulness to
famous for (doing) <i>stg</i>	fame as
fond of <i>sby/stg</i>	fondness for
free from danger	freedom from
free of charge	freedom of speech
full of <i>stg</i>	
glad about <i>stg</i>	gladness about
good/no good at (doing) <i>stg</i> -	
good with one's hands	
grateful to <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	gratitude to/for
happy about/at/over/with	happiness at/over
interested in/by <i>sby/stg</i>	interest in <i>sby/stg</i>
jealous of <i>sby/stg</i>	jealousy of <i>sby/stg</i>
keen on (doing) <i>stg</i>	keenness on
kind to <i>sby</i>	kindness to <i>sby</i>
late for work	lateness for work
married to <i>sby</i>	marriage to <i>sby</i>
nervous of <i>sby/stg</i>	nervousness about
obliged to <i>sby/stg</i>	obligation to
pleased about/with <i>sby/stg</i>	pleasure about
ready for <i>sby/stg</i>	readiness for <i>stg</i>
right about <i>sby/stg</i>	
sad about <i>sby/stg</i>	sadness about
safe from <i>stg</i> /for <i>sby</i>	safety from <i>stg</i>
satisfied with <i>sby/stg</i>	satisfaction with
separate from <i>stg</i>	separation from
slow at (doing) <i>stg</i>	slowness at
sorry about/for (doing) <i>stg</i>	sorrow for (doing)
sorry for <i>sby</i>	
surprised about/at/by	surprise about/at
terrible at (doing) <i>stg</i>	
thankful to <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	thankfulness to/for
worried about <i>sby/stg</i>	worry about/over
wrong about <i>sby/stg</i>	

**Appendix 28 [> 1.9,4.29,8.20,8.27,]**

12.3n.7, 16.53-54]

**Type 1 [8.27.2]: Verb + preposition****transitive (non-idiomatic)****Related nouns + most common prepositions**

Nouns can be formed with -ing [&gt; 2.16.5 16.39.1]

Verbs marked " are often passive

Key *sby* = *somebody*, *stg* = *something*

verb	noun
'advise against doing <i>stg</i>	advice against
agree about <i>stg</i>	agreement about
'agree to a proposal	agreement to
agree with <i>sby</i>	agreement with
aim at/for a target	aim at/for
apologize to <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	apology to <i>sby</i>
'apply to <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	application to
"approve of <i>sby/stg</i>	approval of
arrive at/in [> 8.9.3]	arrival at/in
"ask for <i>sby/stg</i>	
become of <i>sby</i>	
begin with <i>stg</i> /by doing	
believe in <i>sby/stg</i>	belief in <i>sby/stg</i>
belong to <i>sby/stg</i>	
"borrow from <i>sby</i>	
choose between	choice between
confess to <i>sby/to stg</i>	confession to
"deal with <i>sby/a problem</i>	
'depend on <i>sby/stg</i>	dependence on
differ from <i>sby/stg</i>	difference from/to
dream about/of (doing)	dream of
emerge from a place	emergence from
fail in an exam	failure in
"guess at the truth	guess at
identify with <i>sby</i>	identification with
insist on (doing) <i>stg</i>	insistence on
knock at the door	knock at
'know of/about	knowledge of
'laugh at/about <i>sby/stg</i>	laughter at <i>stg</i>
'listen to <i>sby/stg</i>	
'look after <i>sby/stg</i>	
"look at <i>sby/stg</i>	
look for <i>sby/stg</i>	
meet with <i>sby</i> (AmE)	meeting with
"object to <i>sby/stg</i>	objection to
"pay for <i>sby/stg</i>	pay(ment) for
quarrel with <i>sby/about stg</i>	quarrel with/about
"read about <i>stg</i>	
reason with <i>sby</i>	
'refer to <i>sby/stg</i>	reference to
'rely on <i>sby/stg</i>	reliance on
"reply to <i>sby</i>	reply to <i>sby</i>
"report on <i>sby/stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	report on
resign from a job	resignation from
retire from one's job	retirement from
'search for <i>sby/stg</i>	search for
(it) smell of <i>stg</i>	smell of <i>stg</i>
succeed in (doing) <i>stg</i>	success in (doing)
suffer from an illness	
"talk to <i>sby</i> about <i>stg</i>	talk to <i>sby</i> about
(it) taste of <i>stg</i>	taste of <i>stg</i>
trade with <i>sby/in stg</i>	trade in <i>stg</i>
trust in <i>sby/stg</i>	trust in <i>sby/stg</i>
'vote for/against <i>sby/stg</i>	vote for/against
wait for <i>sby/stg</i>	(long) wait for
"wish for	wish for
'write to <i>sby/about stg</i>	

**Appendix 29 [> 1.9, 4.29, 8.20, 8.27, 16.53-54]****Type 1 [8.27.3]. Verb + object + preposition transitive (non-idiomatic)****Related nouns + most common prepositions**

Nouns can be formed with *-ing* [> 2 16 5 16 39 1]  
 A prepositional phrase is not always obligatory after the object Nouns can be followed by *of* (= belonging to) All these verbs (not *absent oneself*) can be used in the passive

**Key** *sby* = somebody, *stg* = something

verb	noun
absent oneself from work	absence from
accuse <i>sby</i> of <i>stg</i>	accusation of
adapt <i>stg</i> to <i>stg</i>	adaptation to
add <i>stg</i> to	addition to <i>stg</i>
admire <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	admiration for
advise <i>sby</i> about <i>stg</i>	advice to/about
appoint <i>sby</i> as/to a post	appointment as/to
arrange <i>stg</i> for <i>sby</i>	arrangement for
assess <i>stg</i> at a price	assessment of/at
associate <i>sby/stg</i> with	association with
attach <i>stg</i> to <i>stg</i>	attachment to
betray a secret to <i>sby</i>	betrayal of
blame <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	blame for <i>stg</i>
charge <i>stg</i> to my account	charge to
charge <i>sby</i> with a crime	charge against
claim <i>stg</i> from <i>sby</i>	claim to <i>stg</i>
combine <i>stg</i> with <i>stg</i>	combination of/with
compare <i>sby/stg</i> with	comparison with
compensate <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	compensation for
congratulate <i>sby</i> on <i>stg</i>	congratulations on
connect <i>sby</i> with <i>stg</i>	connexion with
convert <i>sby</i> to <i>stg</i>	conversion to
defend <i>sby</i> from <i>stg</i>	defence against
describe <i>stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	description of
discuss <i>stg</i> with <i>sby</i>	discussion with
divide a number	division by
excuse <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	excuse for <i>stg</i>
explain <i>stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	explanation of
forgive <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	forgiveness of/for
hide <i>stg</i> from <i>sby</i>	
identify <i>stg</i> with/as <i>stg</i>	identification with
include <i>stg</i> in <i>stg</i> else	inclusion of <i>stg</i> in
inform <i>sby</i> of/about <i>stg</i>	information about
insure <i>sby</i> against <i>stg</i>	insurance against
interest <i>sby</i> in <i>stg</i>	interest in <i>stg</i>
invest money in <i>stg</i>	investment in
lend <i>stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	loan to <i>sby</i>
neglect <i>sby/stg</i> for <i>sby/stg</i>	neglect of
refer <i>sby/stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	reference to
remind <i>sby</i> of <i>sby/stg</i>	reminder of <i>stg</i>
repeat <i>stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	repetition of <i>stg</i>
reserve <i>stg</i> for <i>sby</i>	reservation for
return <i>stg</i> to <i>sby</i>	return of <i>stg</i> to
rob <i>sby</i> of <i>stg</i>	robbery of
search <i>sby</i> for <i>stg</i>	search for <i>stg</i>
share <i>stg</i> with <i>sby</i>	share of/with
steal <i>stg</i> from <i>sby</i>	(theft) off/from
stop <i>sby</i> from doing <i>stg</i>	
tell <i>sby</i> about <i>stg</i>	
translate <i>stg</i> from/into	translation into
turn <i>stg</i> into <i>stg</i> else	
use <i>stg</i> for <i>stg</i> else	use of <i>stg</i> for

**Appendix 30 [> 1.9, 8.27, 16.54]****Type 1 [8.27.4]: Verb + preposition transitive (idiomatic)**

Verbs marked \* can go into the passive  
*eggs don't agree with me* (= have a bad effect)  
*you answer to him* (= explain yourself)  
*appear for me in court* (= represent)  
*you're asking for trouble* (= seeking/inviting it)  
*you can't bank on his help* (= rely on)  
 \**I didn't bargain for this* (= not prepared for)  
*please bear with me* (= listen patiently)  
*she's broken with him* (= parted from)  
*she burst into the room/burst into tears*  
*'please call for me at 6* (= come and collect)  
*can I call on you tomorrow'* (= visit you)  
*I came across this old book* (= found it)  
*he came at me with a knife* (= attacked)  
*'where did you come by this'* (= obtain)  
*he came into a lot of money* (= inherited)  
*what came over you?* (= affected)  
*'can I count on you for help?'* (= rely)  
*"my aunt descended on me* (= visited)  
*'you can't dictate to me* (= give me orders)  
*he's dying for a drink* (= wants one badly)  
 stop *digging at me* (= finding fault with me)  
*this dress will do for Jane* (= be all right for)  
*shall I do for you now?* (= clean your room)  
*I could do with a drink* (= want one badly)  
*I can't do without you* (= manage without)  
*'bills are eating into my savings* (= using up)  
*"he's entered for an exam/into a discussion*  
*he's fallen for her* (= fallen in love with)  
*I won't fall for that trick* (= be deceived by it)  
*he fell on his food* (= ate it greedily)  
*she's finished with him* (= parted from)  
*she flew into a rage* (= became very angry)  
*I gather from John that* (= understand)  
 please *gather round me now* (= support)  
 stop *getting at me* (= constantly criticizing)  
*he got into trouble/debt/difficulties*  
*she's got over her illness* (= recovered from)  
*'you can't get round me* (= persuade)  
*"how do we get round this problem"* (= solve)  
*I'm going about my business/work*  
*let's go after him* (= try and catch)  
*the dog went for the postman* (= attacked)  
*the picture went for £1,000* (= was sold for)  
*"I'll go into the matter* (= consider, investigate)  
*the house grew on me* (= became attractive)  
*I must hand it to you* (= praise you for it)  
*It hangs on this agreement* (= depends)  
 stop *harping on it* (= always referring to)  
*he headed for home* (= went)  
*I won't hear of it* (= refuse to consider it)  
*help him to some potatoes* (= serve him with)  
*I hit on this idea* (= had/got this idea)  
*"you must hold to our agreement* (= keep to it)  
*'he jumped at the idea/suggestion/opportunity*  
*'don't jump on me for this* (= blame me for this)  
*keep at it* (= work persistently)  
*'you can't keep a secret from me* (= not tell)  
*'who keeps him in money'* (= supplies him)  
*I'm keeping off tobacco* (= not indulging in)  
*"please keep to the point/plan, etc*  
*he kicked up a fuss/a noise*

"someone **landed** me into trouble  
 "I **we been landed with** this (= given a bad task)  
 please **lay off** him (= stop attacking him)  
 'leave it **to me** (= give me the responsibility)  
 leave him **to it** (= let him get on with it)  
 he **lives on** fruit (i e that s what he eats)  
 he **lives with** her (i e but is not married to her)  
 "we'll **have to look into** this (= investigate it)  
 you can **look over** the house (= inspect it)  
 she **looked right through** me (= ignored me)  
 I hope we can **look to** you for help/support  
 "I can't **make anything of** this (= understand it)  
 you won't **pass for** a nun (= be accepted as)  
 "let's **pass over** that (= avoid the subject)  
 don't **pick/peck at** (= eat without appetite)  
 he **plays at being** a teacher (i e he's not serious)  
 don't **play on** my feelings (= try to gain my sympathy)  
 \*I'll **press for** a rise in pay (= try hard for)  
 "how much do you **put it at?** (= value it)  
 "put some money **on** a horse (= make a bet)  
 "I'll **put money towards** it (= contribute money)  
 she's **reading for** a degree (= studying)  
 "can you **read much into** this? (= understand)  
 he's **rolling in** money (= has a lot of money)  
 we'll be **rooting for** you (AmE) (= supporting)  
 he suddenly **rounded on** me (e g in anger)  
 I **ran across/into** her (= met by chance)  
 will he **run for** president? (= try to be elected)  
 we'd better **run for** it (= escape quickly)  
 "a bus **ran into** my car (= hit it)  
 we've **run into** difficulties/trouble/problems  
 the cost **runs into** millions (= reaches)  
 he **ran through** a fortune (= spent quickly)  
 I can't **run to** a new car this year (= afford)  
 'don't **rush into** it (without consideration)  
 I'll **see about** fixing that fence (= arrange)  
 can we **see over** the house? (= examine)  
 \*I **saw through** it (= understood the truth)  
 "will you **see to** the supper? (= attend to it)  
 "he **sat on** my application (= did nothing)  
 we **sat through** a boring film/lecture, etc  
 I'll **sleep on** your suggestion (= decide later)  
 I hope you'll **stand by** me (= support me)  
 she's **standing for** parliament (to be elected)  
 I won't **stand for** your rudeness (= tolerate it)  
 don't **stand over** me (= supervise me)  
 we must **step on** it (= hurry up)  
 I hope you'll **stick by** me (= remain loyal)  
 I **swear by** this medicine (= have confidence)  
 he **takes after** his father (= resembles)  
 he **took to** English quickly (= found it easy)  
 work is **telling on** him (having a bad effect)  
 "he didn't **touch on** the subject (= mention it)  
 \*I **toying with** it (= considering lightly)  
 he's **turned against** us (= become hostile)  
 'I've been **turned off** it (= lost interest)  
 I (turns **on** this letter (= depends on)  
 'you can **turn to** me for help (= ask me for)  
 I **waded through** it (= finished with difficulty)  
 "who's **waiting on** you? (= serving)  
 I **walked into** a job (= got a job easily)  
 I **walked into** a trap (i e carelessly)  
 Arsenal **walked over** Chelsea (= beat easily)

## Appendix 31 [ > 2.9 2.11, 8.28.1g]

### Some nouns formed from Type 2 verbs: e.g. 'breakdown'

Only nouns actually derived from verb + particle are given in this list, not nouns (like *hangover*) which appear to derive from verbs but in fact have no verb equivalents  
 a *back-up*, a *blow-up*, a *breakdown* a *cleanout*, a *cover-up*, a *fill-up*, a *follow-up* a *foul up*, a *get-up*, a *giveaway*, a *handover*, a *hold-up*, a *knockout*, a *layoff*, a *layout*, a *letdown*, a *let-out*, a *markdown*, a *markup*, a *mix-up*, a *putdown*, a *put-on*, a *rip-off* a *run-through*, a *send-up*, a *setback*, a *shake-up*, a *shutdown*, a *take-off*, a *takeover*, a *tip-off*, a *turn off*, a *turn-out*, a *washout*, a *write-off*

## Appendix 32 [ > 1.9, 8.28. 2 8.28.4 8.29.2, 16.55]

### Type 2 [8.28. 4]: Verb + particle (transitive)

Particles strengthen or extend the effect of the verb Asterisks indicate that the object (usually personal) does not normally follow the particle  
**Key** sby = *somebody*, stg = *something*

#### 32.1 'about'/'around' (= here and there)

'blow stg about/around "carry stg about/around, "follow sby about/around, "kick stg about/around

32.2 'across' (= from one side to the other)  
 "allow sby across, 'bring sby/stg across, "help sby across, "lead sby across, 'let sby across, 'pull sby/stg across "push sby/stg across

#### 32.3 'along'

32.3.1 (= in a forward direction)

"carry stg along, "help sby along, "hurry sby along, 'lead sby along, 'pass stg along

32.3.2 (reinforcing 'inviting', 'sending' etc )

'ask sby along, bring sby/stg along 'get sby/stg along, send sby/stg along

#### 32.4 'away'

32.4.1 (= distance)

'call sby away, "carry sby/stg away, clear stg away, drive sby/stg away, frighten sby away, hide stg away, 'push sby/stg away

32.4.2 (= detachment)

break stg away, cut stg away, knock stg away, pull stg away, snatch stg away, take stg away

32.4.3 (= disappearance)

eat stg away, file stg away, sweep stg away, wash stg away, wear stg away, wipe stg away

32.4.4 (= replacement/tidying)

file stg away, (= put in a file), fold stg away (eg a tent), lock stg away, pack stg away, put stg away, shut stg away, store stg away

#### 32.5 'back'

32.5.1 (= returning)

'ask sby back, claim stg back, 'get sby/stg back, give stg back, pay sby/stg back, "phone sby back, put stg back, "ring sby back

32.5.2 (= in a backwards direction)

cut stg back, fold stg back, "move sby/stg back, 'push sby/stg back, tie stg back

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### 32.5.3 (= retaliation)

*'hit sby back, "kick sby back*

### 32.5.4 (= prevent from coming forwards)

*hold sby/stg back, keep sby/stg back*

### 32.5.5 (= repetition)

*play stg back, read stg back*

### 32.6 'down'

*32.6.1 (= in a downwards (or southerly) direction)*

*bring sby/stg down, drop stg down, "get sby/stg down, "help sby down, "invite sby down, press stg down, put stg down, "send sby/stg down, throw stg down*

*32.6.2 (= to the ground - often intending destruction)*

*break stg down, burn stg down, cut stg down, knock sby/stg down, "pull sby/stg down, "push sby/stg down*

*32.6.3 (= securing firmly - often 'downwards')*  
*fix stg down, glue stg down, nail stg down, pin stg down, screw stg down, strap stg down*

### 32.6.4 (= reduction)

*boil (a liquid) down, let (tyres) down, turn (the heating) down, wear (one's heels) down*

### 32.6.5 (= completeness)

*close (a shop) down, drink stg down, hunt sby/ an animal down, wash stg down, wipe stg down*

### 32.6.6 (= writing)

*copy stg down, note stg down, write stg down*

### 32.6.7 (= prevent from rising)

*hold sby/stg down, "keep sby/stg down*

### 32.7 'in'

*32.7.1 (= movement from outside to inside)*

*"bring sby/stg in, collect stg in, drive (a car) in, give (homework) in, "let sby/an animal in*

### 32.7.2 (= arrival/location)

*"book sby in, "find sby in (at home)*

### 32.7.3 (= confine to an area)

*fence stg in, keep sby/stg in, "lock sby/stg in*

### 32.7.4 (= inclusion/addition/attachment)

*add stg in, fit sby/stg in, leave stg in, paint stg in, plug stg in, type stg in, write stg in*

### 32.7.5 (= inwards-often intending destruction)

*beat (a door) in, drive (a nail) in, smash stg in*

### 32.8 'Off'

*32.8.1 (= detachment/removal from a surface)*

*blow (a hat) off, brush stg off, cut stg off, knock stg off (a shelf), "let sby off (a bus), pull stg off, take stg off (a surface), wash stg off*

### 32.8.2 (= distance)

*beat (an animal/insects) off, frighten sby/an animal off, keep sby/stg off, "take sby off (to a place)*

### 32.8.3 (= division/disconnection)

*divide stg off, fence stg off, shut (a street) off, switch (the lights) off, turn (the lights) off*

### 32.8.4 (= completion)

*finish stg off, read stg off (a list), round stg off (= complete stg)*

### 32.9 'on'

*32.9.1 (= attachment/connection/continuity)*

*fit stg on, "get (a lid) on, have stg on (wear), keep (a light) on, put (a coat) on, screw (a lid) on, stick stg on, switch (a light) on*

### 32.9.2 (= in a forward direction)

*pass stg on, "send sby/stg on, wind stg on*

### 32.10 'out'

*32.10.1 (= movement inside to outside)*

*drive (a car) out, "help sby out (of a car), put (a cat) out, spit stg out, throw stg out (of a )*

### 32.10.2 (= general idea of movement 'out')

*call (a doctor) out, "find sby out (not at home), pay (money) out, pick sby/stg out (choose)*

### 32.10.3 (= exclusion/prevention)

*fence (animals) out, leave stg out (not include)*

*32.10.4 (= removal/disappearance/ disconnection)*

*clean (a stain) out, cross (a line) out, cut (a picture) out, shake (dust) out, turn (lights) out*

### 32.10.5 (= extension)

*hold (a hand) out, open (a newspaper) out, put (your hand) out, reach (your arm) out, roll (a map) out*

### 32.10.6 (= making something audible or clear)

*beat (a rhythm) out, call stg out, copy stg out, read stg out, shout stg out, write stg out*

### 32.10.7 (= thoroughly)

*check stg out, clean stg out, empty stg out, "hear sby out, sort stg out, wash (a basin) out*

### 32.10.8 (= distribution)

*divide things out, give things out, pass (exercise books) out, serve (food) out, share things out*

### 32.10.9 (= to a conclusion)

*"argue stg out, "talk stg out, "think stg out*

### 32.11 'over'

*32.11.1 (= from one side to the other)*

*"carry sby/stg over, "help sby over*

### 32.11.2 (with verbs of 'inviting', etc )

*"ask sby over, "bring sby/stg over, "fetch sby/stg over, "run (= drive) sby over*

### 32.11.3 (thoroughness verbs of 'checking')

*check stg over, "do stg over (= again), "read stg over (= again), "think (a problem) over*

### 32.11.4 (= to the ground)

*"knock sby/stg over, "push sby/stg over*

### 32.12 'round'

*32.12.1 (= circular movement/direction)*

*"drive (a car) round, "wave stg round*

### 32.12.2 (= enclosing)

*fence (a garden) round, "put (things) round*

### 32.12.3 (with verbs of 'inviting', etc )

*"ask sby round, fetch sby/stg round, "have sby round, invite sby round, "show sby round*

### 32.12.4 (= distribution)

*pass stg round, share things round*

### 32.12.5 (= changing position)

*"change things round, "move things round*

### 32.13 'through'

*32.13.1 (= from one side/place to another)*

*"drive (a car) through, knock stg through, "let sby through, "send sby/stg through, "show sby through*

### 32.13.2 (= to a conclusion/thoroughly)

*"argue stg through, "heat stg through, "plan stg through, sort stg through, "think stg through*

### 32.13.3 (= in two pieces)

*cut stg through, saw stg through, slice stg through*

**32.14 'up'**

**32.14.1** (= in an upwards/northerly direction)  
*bring 'sby/stg up, "get stg/sby up, keep (your hand) up, pull "sby/stg up, turn (the sound) up*  
**32.14.2** (= from off a surface floor, etc.)  
*clean stg up, collect stg up, pick stg up*  
**32.14.3** (= completely)  
*add (numbers) up, cover sby/stg up, drink stg up, eat stg up, fill stg up, hurry sby/stg up, load stg up, mix (two things) up, open stg up*  
**32.14.4** (= for a purpose)  
*learn stg up (for a test), measure sby/stg up (for a dress), phone soy up, start (a car) up*  
**32.14.5** (= into smaller pieces - destruction)  
*break stg up, burn stg up, chop stg up, cut stg up, rip stg up, saw stg up, smash stg up*  
**32.14.6** (= out of bed)  
*'find sby up, 'get sby up, 'let sby up*  
**32.14.7** (= confining/fastening/mending, etc.)  
*bank (a river) up, board (a window) up, button (a coat) up, close stg up, lock stg up, pack stg up, sew stg up, stick stg up, wrap stg up*

**Appendix 33 [> 1.9,8.28.5,16.55]****Type 2 [8.28.5]: Verb + particle transitive (idiomatic)**

Verbs marked \* take the object *before* the particle  
*he 'answered me back* (= contradicted)  
*blow the balloon up* (= inflate)  
*they blew it up* (= destroyed by explosion)  
*she broke the engagement off* (= ended)  
*who brought it about* (= caused to happen)  
*they brought down the ruler* (= defeated)  
*we'll bring the job off* (= succeed in doing so)  
*they'll bring your article out* (= publish)  
*'bring him round* (= to consciousness)  
*I brought up her son well* (= rear, educate)  
*don't bring that up again* (= mention)  
*he tried to buy me off* (= eg bribe me)  
*call the meeting off* (= cancel)  
*call up your mother* (= phone her)  
*he's been called up* (i e for military service)  
*he carried it off* (= managed it successfully)  
*we'll carry out a test* (= conduct)  
*he 'cleaned me out* (= won all my money)  
*she's cooked up an excuse* (= invented)  
*they're covering the facts up* (= concealing)  
*I've been cut off* (= interrupted on the phone)  
*please 'cut it out* (= stop being annoying)  
*I'll dash off a letter* (= write one quickly)  
*dish out these leaflets* (= distribute)  
*he 'did everybody down* (= cheated them)  
*shall I do your room out?* (= clean it)  
*we've done the house up* (= decorated)  
*help me draw up this document* (= draft it)  
*she 'dressed them down* (= rebuked them)  
*I dressed myself up* (= put on fancy clothes)  
*drop her off here* (= let her get out of the car)  
*don't explain away the facts* (= find excuses)  
*fill this form in/out* (= supply details)  
*they'll find him out* (that he's been dishonest)  
*fit me in* (= give me an appointment)  
*let's fix a date up* (= make arrangements)  
*the police followed it up* (= investigated it)

*he "got his message across* (= conveyed)  
*the news "gets me down* (= depresses me)  
*get a builder in* (= e g to do the job)  
*"get him round here* (= persuade him to visit)  
*you gave away the secret* (= revealed it)  
*I "gave myself away* (= showed I'd been lying)  
*who'll give the bride away?* (at the wedding)  
*I've given up smoking* (= stopped the habit)  
*mil they 'give themselves up?* (= surrender)  
*he s 'having us on* (= deceiving as a joke)  
*'have it out with him* (= discuss grievance)  
*they've "hit it off* (= they get on well together)  
*we were held up in [the fog]* (= delayed)  
*he's keeping us on* (= continuing to employ)  
*he knocked back two pints* (= drank quickly)  
*"knock him down* (= make him cut the price)  
*"knock him out* (= make him unconscious)  
*I've laid off 100 men* (= stopped employing)  
*I can't lay out more* (= spend more money)  
*he's been "laid up a year* (= e g by illness)  
*he's let us down* (= not fulfilled expectations)  
*please let the children off* (= don't punish)  
*someone's let the secret out* (= revealed it)  
*please look over this essay* (= scrutinize)  
*look the word up* (= i e in the dictionary)  
*look me up when you're back* (= contact me)  
*I can't make him out* (= understand him)  
*I can just make him out* (= see him)  
*you've made that story up* (= invented it)  
*you've made yourself up* (= used cosmetics)  
*you've missed out my name* (= not included)  
*I'm packing in smoking* (= stopping)  
*she was 'passed over* (= not chosen)  
*I'll pay you back for this* (= get my revenge)  
*point it out to me* (= show or explain)  
*we've pulled off a deal* (= been successful)  
*he can't 'put the ideas across* (= communicate)  
*they had to 'put him away* (= e g in prison)  
*can we put off the meeting?* (= postpone it)  
*she 'puts me off* (= discourages, repels)  
*I've put out my hip* (= dislocated)  
*put me up* (= give me accommodation)  
*I've been ripped off* (= overcharged)  
*he always runs her down* (= criticizes unfairly)  
*he was run over by a car* (= knocked down)  
*come and "see me off* (= say goodbye to me)  
*he's sending me up* (= ridiculing by imitating)  
*the strike set us back* (= delayed/cost us money)  
*he set up the whole scheme* (= organized it)  
*I can't shake this cold off* (= get rid of it)  
*'shut him up* (= make him stop talking)  
*sort this company out* (= organize it)  
*I'll spell it out* (= make it absolutely clear)  
*we must step up production* (= increase)  
*I'm not taken in by this* (= deceived)  
*how many are they taking on?* (= employing)  
*he's going to take me out* (= e g for a meal)  
*I can't tell them apart* (= distinguish between)  
*you're always telling me off* (= reprimanding)  
*top up the battery* (= fill)  
*they're turning us out* (= making us leave)  
*win him over* (= persuade him to agree)  
*I wiped out the village* (= destroyed)  
*we must work this problem out* (= solve it)  
*his car was written off* (= unreparable)

## Appendix 34 [> 8 28 5]

Some fixed expressions with verbs: e.g. 'make up your mind'

Typical verb + particle combinations are  
*bite one's tongue off, cancel each other out, cry one's eyes out, eat one's head off, eat one's heart out, get a move on, get one's own back, get a word in (edgewise), give the game away, have one's head screwed on, keep one step ahead, keep your hair on, laugh one's head off, live it up, pull one's socks up, put the boot in, put one's feet up, put one's foot down, put two and two together, stick one's heels in, take the easy way out, talk one's head off, throw one's weight about*

## Appendix 35 [> 2.9, 2.11, 8.29.1d]

Some nouns formed from Type 3 verbs: e.g. 'break-up'

Only nouns actually derived from verb + particle are given in this list, not nouns (like *backchat*) which appear to derive from verbs, but in fact have no verb equivalents  
*a backdown, a blowout, a carry-on, a climb-down, a cutback, a dropout, a flare up, a get-away, a get-together, goings on, a hangout, a kickoff, a lie-in, a lift-off, make-up, an onlooker, an outbreak, a pile-up, a sellout, a show off, a slip-up, a split up, a summing up, a touchdown, a walkout, a warm-up, washing-up*

## Appendix 36 [> 1.9, 8.29.3]

Type 3: Verb + particle  
 intransitive (idiomatic)

*that boy's acting up* (= behaving badly)  
*all this doesn't add up* (= make sense)  
*she's just blown in* (= arrived unexpectedly)  
*prices bottomed out* (= reached bottom)  
*my car's broken down* (= it won't go)  
*the prisoners broke out of gaol* (= escaped)  
*I'll call by/in/round tomorrow* (= visit briefly)  
*please calm down* (= don't panic)  
*sorry, I don't catch on* (= understand)  
*cheer up\** (= change your mood, be cheerful)  
*when do you clock in/out?* (= start/finish)  
*how did that come about?* (= happen)  
*prices have come down* (= been reduced)  
*my plan came off* (= succeeded)  
*the subject came up again* (= was mentioned)  
*you'd better cough up* (= pay)  
*please don't cut in* (= interrupt)  
*my engine's cut out* (= stopped working)  
*the sound died away* (= became fainter)  
*that custom has died out* (= become extinct)  
*let's dress up* (= put on best/fancy clothes)  
*I'll drop by/in on the way home* (= visit you)  
*dad's just dropped off* (= fallen asleep)  
*you should ease off* (= work less hard)  
*where will we end up?* (= finish our journey)  
*we fell about* (= collapsed with laughter)  
*his argument fell down* (= failed to convince)  
*the roof fell in* (= collapsed)  
*Jim and his wife have fallen out* (= quarrelled)  
*my plan fell through* (= was unsuccessful)

*you really get about/around* (= travel)  
*don't you want to get ahead?* (= succeed)  
*he got off* (= wasn't punished)  
*we really get on* (= have a good relationship)  
*it's time you got up* (= rase from bed)  
*I'll never give in* (= surrender)  
*the bomb went off* (= exploded)  
*what's going on?* (= happening)  
*will this food go round?* (= be enough)  
*he hung up on me* (= put the phone down)  
*don't hold back now* (= hesitate)  
*it's hard to keep on* (= continue)  
*I can't keep up* (= stay at your level)  
*I'm going to knock off* (= stop work)  
*I wish you'd lay off* (= stop being annoying)  
*please don't let on* (= reveal the secret)  
*I love to lie in* (= stay in bed late)  
*I'd like to look on* (= be a spectator)  
*look out!* (= take care! i.e. danger)  
*things are looking up* (= improving)  
*he took it and made off* (= e.g. ran away)  
*he messes about* (= acts in a lazy fashion)  
*mind out!* (= be careful! i.e. danger)  
*later, he opened up* (= talked more freely)  
*come on, own up* (= confess)  
*he passed away/on/over last year* (= died)  
*when I heard it, I passed out* (= fainted)  
*your scheme didn't pay off* (= succeed)  
*trade's picking up* (= improving)  
*the car's playing up* (= not working properly)  
*pull in here* (= stop the car at the roadside)  
*you pulled up suddenly* (= used the brakes)  
*we'd better push on* (= continue our journey)  
*I've got to ring off* (= end the phone call)  
*our supplies have run out* (= been used up)  
*we're selling up* (= selling all we have)  
*winter has set in* (= begun and will continue)  
*when do you set out?* (= start your journey)  
*we all set to* (= began working energetically)  
*I've settled down* (= got used to a situation)  
*when will he settle up?* (= pay his bills)  
*don't show off* (= act boastfully)  
*he showed up at 1* (= arrived (probably) late)  
*shut up!* (very informal) (= be quiet!)  
*the news has sunk in* (= been understood)  
*slow down!* (= live less energetically)  
*speak out!* (= make your views public)  
*his work stands out* (= is of high quality)  
*they are staying out* (= remaining on strike)  
*did you stay up all night?* (= not go to bed)  
*who heard them steal away?* (= leave quietly)  
*you'd better step in and help* (= intervene)  
*I've switched off* (= I'm not listening)  
*did the plane take off?* (= leave the ground)  
*when did the plane touch down?* (= land)  
*I'm going to turn in* (= go to bed)  
*how did things turn out?* (= finish)  
*look who's turned up* (= suddenly appeared)  
*don't wait up for me* (= not go to bed)  
*don't walk out* (= stop work because of dispute)  
*who's going to wash up?* (= wash the dishes)  
*watch out!* (= be careful! i.e. danger)  
*the pain's worn off* (= disappeared)  
*the evening wore on* (= passed slowly)  
*he can't wind down* (= relax after effort)  
*how did your plan work out?* (= develop)

## Appendix 37 [> 8 30 3]

Type 4: Verb + particle + preposition  
(idiomatic)

it **backs on to** the railway (= overlooks)  
 It **boils down to** this (= can be summarized as)  
 he's **broken out in** a rash (i.e. on his skin)  
 I must **brush up on** my English (= improve)  
 I'm **bursting out of** my clothes (= am too fat)  
 cash **in on** the price-rise (= take advantage of)  
 come **across with** the money (= provide it)  
 it **comes down to** this (= means this)  
 his work has **come in for** criticism (= received)  
 can I **come in on** your plan" (= be included)  
 the bill **comes out at** \$ 100 (i.e. as a total)  
 he **came up with** a good idea (= produced)  
 we **cried out against** the idea (= protested)  
 he's **crying out for** help (= is in great need)  
 they **did away with** the bad law (= abolished)  
 face **up to** it (= accept it with courage)  
 we **fell back on** our savings (= had to use)  
 I don't **feel up to** it (= feel capable of it)  
 can you **fill me in on** this? (= inform me)  
 get **away with** it (= manage to deceive)  
 he **got back at** me in the end (= retaliated)  
 I **got down to** work (= began to tackle)  
 I'll **get on to** him (= contact him)  
 he's **getting up to** something (= e.g. mischief)  
 our house **gives on to** the river (= overlooks)  
 I won't **go back on** my word (= fail to honour it)  
 he's **gone in for** painting (= started as hobby)  
 can't **go through with** it (= finish difficult thing)  
 he's **grown out of** his coat (= got too big for)  
 he **has it in for** me (= is very hard on me)  
 don't **hold out on** me (= keep secret from me)  
 keep **in with** him (= stay on good terms)  
 let me **in on** it (= let me share, e.g. the secret)  
 I can't **live up to** it (= maintain high standard)  
 he **looks down on** us (= considers us inferior)  
 I **look forward to** it (= expect to enjoy)  
 look **out for** my book (= keep constant watch)  
 she **looks up to** you (= admires, respects)  
 this won't **make up for** it (= compensate for)  
 what do you **put it down to**? (= how explain?)  
 put **in for** a rise (= make a formal request)  
 who **put you up to** this? (= gave you the idea)  
 I won't **put up with** it (= tolerate)  
 read **up on** its history (= improve knowledge)  
 his luck **rubbed off on** me (= benefited)  
 we've **run out of** rice (= used up all we had)  
 she's **run out on** him (= abandoned him)  
 I'm **running up against** problems (= meeting)  
 I've **set up in** business (= started a business)  
 he's **shown me up as** a liar (= revealed truth)  
 speak **up for** him (= state your support)  
 I'll **stand in for** you (= act in your place)  
 stand **up for** your principles (= defend)  
 don't **start in on** him (= criticize him)  
 stick **out for** more (= insist on receiving)  
 we'll **stick up for** you (= support you)  
 don't **take it out on** me (= treat me unfairly)  
 I'll **take the matter up with** Jim (= discuss it)  
 she's **taken up with** Jim (= become friendly)  
 talk **him out of** it (= persuade him not to do it)  
 don't **throw that back at** me (= remind me of)  
 that **ties in nicely with** my plan (= fits)

## Appendix 38 [> 6.17,9.3

10.24,10.31,

12.3n5, 16.92, 16.45.1]

Some stative verbs

\* = these have non-stative meanings/uses

### 38.1 Feelings, emotions ('I like', etc.): e.g.

'admire, adore, "(it) appeal to, "appreciate, (it) astonish, "(it) attract, believe in, care about "dare detest, dislike, doubt, envy, esteem, fear 'hate, "hope, "(it) impress, "(it) interest, 'like, 'love, 'mean, 'mind, (it) please, prize, 'regret, "respect, (can't) stand, "swear by, trust, "value

### 38.2 Thinking, believing ('I know', etc.): e.g.

agree, 'appreciate, 'assume, believe, 'bet (informal), (can't) comprehend, (can't) conceive of, 'consider, (can't) credit, disagree, disbelieve, 'estimate, 'expect, 'feel, figure (AmE), 'find, 'gather, get it (= understand, informal), 'guess (AmE), "hear(= be told), hear about (= get to know), hear of (= know about), 'hope, "imagine (= think) know, 'presume (= suppose), "realize, 'recognize, 'recollect, 'regard, 'see (= understand), "see through, "suppose, "suspect, "(can't) tell 'think (= believe), understand, "wonder

### 38.3 Wants and preferences ('I want', etc.):

desire, fancy, need, prefer, require, want, wish

### 38.4 Perception and the senses: e.g.

'catch (= understand), (can) 'distinguish, (can) "hear, (can) make out, notice, "observe, perceive, (can) 'see, (can) "smell, (can) 'taste

### 38.5 Being, seeming, having, owning, etc.:

add up (= make sense), (can) afford, 'appear (= seem), belong, belong to, "chance, come about, come from (your place of origin), comprise, (it) concern, consist of, constitute, contain, 'correspond to/with, 'cost, "count, "depend, deserve, differ from, equal, "exceed, excel in, "feel, 'fit, happen to, have/have got [> 10 27], "hold(= contain), "(it) include, "(it) involve, keep -ing, know sby, "lack, 'look (= appear), (it) matter, (it) mean, "measure merit 'number (= reach total), own, possess, "prove "(it) read, "represent, resemble, (it) result from, (it) say, seem, signify, "(it) smell (of), "(it) sound (= seem) "(it) stand for, (it) suit (= be suitable) "(it) taste (of), "tend 'weigh

## Appendix 39 [> 9.13-14,9.22,12.3n1 ]

Some common regular verbs

Key bold = spelling change from base form

### 39.1 Pronounced / d / in the past: e.g.

'b' bribed, described, **robbed, rubbed**  
 'g' **begged, dragged, plugged, tugged**  
 'ng' **banged, belonged, longed**  
 'nge' arranged, changed, exchanged  
 'dge' damaged, emerged, judged, managed  
 'l' called, filled, pulled, smiled, travelled  
 'm' assumed, claimed, combed  
 'n' cleaned, explained, listened, opened  
 vowel + 'r' answered, appeared, dared  
 V arrived, lived, loved, moved, proved  
 'z' accused, closed, excused, refused



## Appendix 40

'th'	<i>bathed, lathed</i>	<i>creep</i>	<i>crept</i>	<i>crept</i>
'ay'	<i>delayed, obeyed, played, weighed</i>	<i>cut</i>	<i>cut</i>	<i>cut</i>
'ee'	<i>agreed, freed, guaranteed</i>	<i>deal</i>	<i>dealt</i>	<i>dealt</i>
'oy'	<i>annoyed, destroyed, employed, enjoyed</i>	<i>dig</i>	<i>dug</i>	<i>dug</i>
'cry'	<i>cried, denied, dried, fried, qualified, replied, satisfied, terrified, tried</i>	<i>dive</i>	<i>dived (dove AmE)</i>	<i>dived</i>
'bury	<i>buried, carried, hurried, married, worried</i>	<i>do<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>did</i>	<i>done</i>
'o/ow'	<i>borrowed, followed, showed, videoed</i>	<i>draw<sup>6</sup></i>	<i>drew</i>	<i>drawn</i>
'ue'	<i>argued, continued, rescued, reviewed</i>	<i>dream</i>	<i>dreamt/dreamed</i>	<i>dreamt/dreamed</i>
39.2	Pronounced /t/ in the past: e g	<i>drink</i>	<i>drank</i>	<i>drunk<sup>7</sup></i>
/k/	<i>asked, joked, liked, locked, looked, picked, talked, thanked, walked, worked</i>	<i>drive</i>	<i>drove</i>	<i>driven</i>
/s/	<i>addressed, crossed, danced, discussed, faced, guessed, missed</i>	<i>dwelt</i>	<i>dwelt/dwelted</i>	<i>dwelt/dwelted</i>
/tʃ/	<i>matched, reached, switched, touched</i>	<i>eat<sup>8</sup></i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>eaten</i>
/ʃ/	<i>crashed, finished, pushed, washed</i>	<i>fall<sup>9</sup></i>	<i>fell</i>	<i>fallen</i>
/f/	<i>coughed, laughed, stuffed</i>	<i>feed</i>	<i>fed</i>	<i>fed</i>
lp/	<i>camped, developed, dropped, helped, hoped, jumped, shopped, stopped</i>	<i>feel</i>	<i>felt</i>	<i>felt</i>
/x/	<i>axed, boxed, foxed, relaxed, waxed</i>	<i>fight</i>	<i>fought</i>	<i>fought</i>
39.3	Pronounced /d/ in the past: e g	<i>find</i>	<i>found</i>	<i>found</i>
base form ending in /d/	<i>added, afforded, attended, avoided, decided, ended, handed, included, mended, minded, needed, provided, reminded, skidded</i>	<i>flee</i>	<i>fled</i>	<i>fled</i>
base form ending in /t/	<i>admitted, attempted, collected, completed, counted, dated, educated, excited, expected, greeted, hated, insisted, invited, lifted, painted, posted, printed, rested, shouted, started, tasted, visited, waited, wanted, wasted</i>	<i>fling</i>	<i>flung</i>	<i>flung</i>
		<i>fly</i>	<i>flew</i>	<i>flown</i>
		<i>forbid</i>	<i>forbade</i>	<i>forbidden</i>
		<i>forget</i>	<i>forgot</i>	<i>forgotten</i>
		<i>forgive</i>	<i>forgave</i>	<i>forgiven</i>
		<i>forsake</i>	<i>forsook</i>	<i>forsaken</i>
		<i>freeze</i>	<i>froze</i>	<i>frozen</i>
		<i>get</i>	<i>got</i>	<i>got [gotten AmE]</i>
		<i>give</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>given</i>
		<i>go<sup>10</sup></i>	<i>went</i>	<i>gone</i>
		<i>grind</i>	<i>ground</i>	<i>ground</i>
		<i>grow<sup>11</sup></i>	<i>grew</i>	<i>grown</i>
		<i>hang<sup>12</sup></i>	<i>hung/hanged</i>	<i>hung/hanged</i>
		<i>have</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>had</i>
		<i>hear<sup>13</sup></i>	<i>heard /</i>	<i>heard</i>
		<i>hew</i>	<i>hewed</i>	<i>hewn/hewed</i>
		<i>hide</i>	<i>hid</i>	<i>hidden/hid</i>
		<i>hit</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hit</i>
		<i>hold<sup>14</sup></i>	<i>held</i>	<i>held</i>
		<i>hurt</i>	<i>hurt</i>	<i>hurt</i>
		<i>keep</i>	<i>kept</i>	<i>kept</i>
		<i>kneel</i>	<i>knelt/kneeled</i>	<i>knelt/kneeled</i>
		<i>knit<sup>15</sup></i>	<i>knit/knitted</i>	<i>knit/knitted</i>
		<i>know</i>	<i>knew</i>	<i>known</i>
		<i>lay<sup>16</sup></i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laid</i>
		<i>lead<sup>17</sup></i>	<i>led / led /</i>	<i>led</i>
		<i>lean</i>	<i>leant/leaned</i>	<i>leant/leaned</i>
		<i>leap</i>	<i>leapt/leaped</i>	<i>leapt/leaped</i>
		<i>learn</i>	<i>learnt/learned</i>	<i>learnt/learned<sup>18</sup></i>
		<i>leave</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>left</i>
		<i>lend</i>	<i>lent</i>	<i>lent</i>
		<i>let</i>	<i>let</i>	<i>let</i>
		<i>lie<sup>19</sup> (lie down)</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lam</i>
		<i>light</i>	<i>lit/lighted</i>	<i>lit/lighted</i>
		<i>lose</i>	<i>lost</i>	<i>lost</i>
		<i>make<sup>20</sup></i>	<i>made</i>	<i>made</i>
		<i>mean /mi:n / meant /ment/</i>	<i>meant / I ment/</i>	<i>meant / I ment/</i>
		<i>meet</i>	<i>met</i>	<i>met</i>
		<i>mow</i>	<i>mowed</i>	<i>mown/mowed</i>
		<i>pay<sup>21</sup></i>	<i>paid</i>	<i>paid</i>
		<i>prove</i>	<i>proved</i>	<i>proved, proven</i>
		<i>put</i>	<i>put</i>	<i>put</i>
		<i>quit</i>	<i>quit/quitted</i>	<i>quit/quitted</i>
		<i>read<sup>22</sup></i>	<i>read</i>	<i>read</i>
		<i>rid</i>	<i>rid/riddled</i>	<i>rid/riddled</i>
		<i>ride<sup>23</sup></i>	<i>rode</i>	<i>ridden</i>
		<i>ring</i>	<i>rang</i>	<i>rung</i>
		<i>rise</i>	<i>rose</i>	<i>risen</i>

### Appendix 40 [> 9.14.1, 9.15, 9.22, 12.3n1, 12.11n1]

#### Some common irregular verbs

verb	past tense	past participle
<i>arise</i>	<i>arose</i>	<i>arisen</i>
<i>awake</i>	<i>awoke</i>	<i>awoken</i>
<i>be</i>	<i>was/were</i>	<i>been</i>
<i>bear</i>	<i>bore</i>	<i>borne, born<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>beat</i>	<i>beat</i>	<i>beaten</i>
<i>become</i>	<i>became</i>	<i>become</i>
<i>begin</i>	<i>began</i>	<i>begun</i>
<i>bend</i>	<i>bent</i>	<i>bent</i>
<i>bet</i>	<i>bet/betted</i>	<i>bet/betted</i>
<i>bid (money)</i>	<i>bid</i>	<i>bid</i>
<i>bind</i>	<i>bound</i>	<i>bound</i>
<i>bite</i>	<i>bit</i>	<i>bitten/bit</i>
<i>bleed</i>	<i>bled</i>	<i>bled</i>
<i>blow</i>	<i>blew</i>	<i>blown</i>
<i>break</i>	<i>broke</i>	<i>broken</i>
<i>breed</i>	<i>bred</i>	<i>bred</i>
<i>bring</i>	<i>brought</i>	<i>brought</i>
<i>build</i>	<i>built</i>	<i>built</i>
<i>burn</i>	<i>burned/burnt</i>	<i>burned/burnt</i>
<i>burst</i>	<i>burst</i>	<i>burst</i>
<i>bust</i>	<i>bust/busted</i>	<i>bust/busted</i>
<i>buy</i>	<i>bought</i>	<i>bought</i>
<i>cast<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>cast</i>	<i>cast</i>
<i>catch</i>	<i>caught</i>	<i>caught</i>
<i>choose</i>	<i>chose</i>	<i>chosen</i>
<i>cling</i>	<i>clung</i>	<i>clung</i>
<i>come<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>came</i>	<i>come</i>
<i>cost<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>cost</i>	<i>cost</i>

run <sup>24</sup>	ran	run	wed	wed/wedded	wed/wedded
saw	sawed	sawn/sawed	weep	wept	wept
say/sei/	said /sed/	said/sed/	wet	wet/wetted	wet/wetted
see <sup>25</sup>	saw	seen	win	won	won
seek	sought	sought	wind <sup>41</sup>	wound	wound
sell <sup>26</sup>	sold	sold	wring	wrung	wrung
send	sent	sent	write <sup>42</sup>	wrote	written
set <sup>27</sup>	set	set			
sew	sewed	sewn/sewed	1 Also forbear overbear She s borne ten sons I was born in 1960		
shake	shook	shaken	2 Also broadcast forecast miscast recast		
shear	sheared	shorn/sheared	3 Also overcome compare become		
shed	shed	shed	4 Note regular verb cost I ve costed the work		
shine <sup>28</sup>	shone	shone	5 Also outdo overdo redo underdo undo		
shoot <sup>29</sup>	shot	shot	6 Also overdraw, withdraw		
show	showed	shown/showed	7 Note the adjective drunken a drunken man		
shrink	shrank/shrunk	shrunk <sup>30</sup>	8 Also overeat		
shut	shut	shut	9 Also befall		
sing	sang	sung	Note regular verb fell We ve felled that tree		
sink	sank	sunk <sup>31</sup>	10 Also forego undergo		
sit	sat	sat	11 Also outgrow, overgrow		
slay	slew	slain	12 Also overhang, overhung overhung		
sleep <sup>32</sup>	slept	slept	Note hanged (= put to death)		
slide	slid	slid	13 Also overhear mishear rehear		
sling	slung	slung	Note hear /his I and heard /hə:d /		
slink	slunk	slunk	14 Also behold, uphold withhold		
slit	slit	slit	15 Note knit (= make from wool) is regular		
smell	smelt/smelled	smelt/smelled	16 Also inlay mislay relay waylay		
sow	sowed	sown/sowed	Note the present, lay (laid, laid) should not be confused with the past of lie (lay, lam)		
speak	spoke	spoken	17 Also mislead Compare pronunciation of lead /lɪv.d/ (verb) and lead /led/ (noun)		
speed	sped/speeded	sped/speeded	18 Note the adjective <b>learned</b> /ə:nɪd/ [> 6 14]		
spell <sup>33</sup>	spelt/spelled	spelt/spelled	19 Note lie (lied lied) (regular) (= tell a lie)		
spend <sup>34</sup>	spent	spent	20 Also remake unmake		
spill	spilt/spilled	spilt/spilled	21 Also overpay repay underpay		
spin	spun/span	spun	Note spelling of paid laid, compare played		
spit	spat (spit AmE)	spat	22 Also misread, re-read		
split	split	split	Note the pronunciation of the present read /ri:d / and the past read /red/		
spoil	spoilt/spoiled	spoilt/spoiled	23 Also override		
spread	spread	spread	24 Also outrun overrun, re-run		
spring	sprang/sprung	sprung	25 Also foresee oversee Compare see, saw, seen and saw sawed sawn/sawed		
stand <sup>35</sup>	stood	stood	26 Also outsell, resell undersell		
steal	stole	stolen	27 Also beset, reset, upset		
stick	stuck	stuck	28 Also outshine Shine (= polish), can be regular, especially in AmE		
sting	stung	stung	29 Also overshoot		
stink	stank/stunk	stunk	30 Compare the adjective shrunken		
strew	strewed	strewn/strewed	31 Compare sunken a sunken ship		
stride	strode	stridden	32 Also oversleep		
strike	struck	struck <sup>36</sup>	33 Also misspell		
string	strung	strung	34 Also overspend, underspend		
strive	strove/stnved	stnven/stnved	35 Also withstand, compare understand		
swear	swore	sworn	36 Compare awestruck, poverty-stricken		
sweep	swept	swept	37 Also betake, mistake overtake retake undertake		
swell	swelled	swollen/swelled	38 Also foretell retell		
swim	swam	swum	39 Also overthrow		
swing	swung	swung	40 Also misunderstand		
take <sup>37</sup>	took	taken	41 Also rewind, unwind		
teach	taught	taught	Note regular verbs wind [wind] was winded by the blow wound I wound /		
tear	tore	torn	He was wounded in the war		
tell <sup>38</sup>	told	told	42 Also rewrite, underwrite		
think	thought	thought			
throw <sup>39</sup>	threw	thrown			
thrust	thrust	thrust			
tread	trod	trodden/trod			
understand <sup>40</sup>	understood	understood			
wake	woke/waked	woken/waked			
wear	wore	worn			
weave	wove	woven			

## Appendix 41 [>10.11]

Some words which combine with 'be' to describe temporary behaviour

### 41.1 Adjectives (*He's being naughty*)

*amusing, awful, babyish, bad (= naughty), boring, brave, careful, careless, cautious, childish, critical, daring, difficult, extravagant, foolish, frank, friendly, funny, greedy, helpful, idiotic, impatient, impossible, ironic, just (= fair), kind, lazy, mean, naive, nasty, naughty, nice, obedient, obliging, odd, patient, peculiar, pedantic, polite, practical, rough, rude, sensible, silly, sincere, snobbish, stupid, tactful, tedious, tiresome, tiring, ungrateful, unpleasant, vain, wasteful*

### 41.2 Nouns (*He's being a baby*)

*a baby, a bore, a brute, a bully, a coward, a darling, a devil, a fool, a (good) friend, hell, an idiot, a liar, a miser, a nuisance, a problem, a show-off, a silly, a snob, a threat, a worry.*

## Appendix 42 t> 3.28.2, 10.37]

'Have', 'give', 'take': some common combinations

### 42.1 'Have' + noun

**42.1.1** Eating/drinking (*Have breakfast/a drink*)  
*breakfast/lunch/tea/supper/dinner, a meal, a snack, a drink, a/some coffee, a sandwich*

### 42.1.2 Rest/sleep (*Have a rest*)

*a rest/a sleep/a lie-down/a nap, a day off, a holiday, a dream, a nightmare*

### 42.1.3 Washing, etc (*Have a bath*)

*a bath/a wash/a shower, a shave, a haircut/a shampoo/a set/a perm/a tint, a massage.*

### 42.1.4 Appointments, etc (*Have a date*)

*an appointment, a date, an interview, a meeting, a lesson, a game, a break, a good time, fun, a nice day, a ride, a walk* [> 10 38].

### 42.1.5 Travel (*Have a trip*)

*a trip, a drive, a lift, a good journey/flight*

### 42.1.6 The weather (*We had some/a lot of rain*)

*good/bad weather, rain, fog, a lovely day*

### 42.1.7 Illnesses/medical (*Have a cold*)

*a cold, a cough, a headache, a temperature, flu, measles, a pain, a baby, a breakdown.*

### 42.1.8 Personal qualities (*Have a bad temper*)

*a bad temper, (no) brains, a cheek, an eye for, green fingers, guts, no conscience, sense, a sense of humour, a sweet tooth*

### 42.1.9 Relationships, opportunities, etc

*an advantage, an affair, an argument, a chat, a choice, difficulty, a discussion, an effect, a guess, a hand in, influence, luck, a nerve, no business, the/an opportunity, a problem, a reason, a row, sex, a talk, the time*

### 42.1.10 Emotional/mental states, reactions

*a brainwave, a clue, cold feet, have had enough, a feeling, a fit, an idea that, the faintest idea, a good laugh (about something), a lot to be grateful for, a lot to put up with, a mind to, an opinion, a plan, a point of view, second thoughts, a shock, a suggestion*

## 42.2 'Give' + noun (*Give advice*)

**42.2.1** 'Give' (somebody) + noun  
*advice/information/news, an answer, one's attention, a bath, a call/a ring, a chance, a description, an explanation, a guess, help, a kiss, a lead, lessons, a lift, an opportunity, permission, the sack, a shock, a surprise, the time, trouble, a warning, a welcome.*

### 42.2.2 A few verb phrases with 'give'

*give birth to, give evidence (in court), give the game away (= reveal a secret), give heed to, give the lie to, give one's life for, give a party/a dance, give place to, give a shout, give thanks for, give thought to, give way (= collapse), give way to (= allow to go first).*

## 42.3 'Take' + noun (*Take action*)

*action, advice, aim (at), a bath/a shower, to one's bed, something to bits, a break, care, the chair (at a meeting), charge of, a class, courage, somebody to court, a decision, effect, an exam, exception to (= disapprove), fright, heart (from something), a/the hint, a holiday, a pke, liberties, a look, one's medicine, note of, offence, the opportunity to, pains to, part in, a photograph, pity, place (= happen), possession of, pride in, a rest, risks, root, a seat, shape, the strain, a turn, a walk.*

## Appendix 43 [> 10.45]

'Do' and 'make': some common combinations

### 43.1 Some combinations with 'do': e.g.

**43.1.1** As in *Do (somebody)* *a favour, damage, good, no good, harm, no harm, an injury, justice, a kindness, a service*  
**43.1.2** (= be engaged in an activity)  
*business, a deal (with), one's duty, a job, something for a living, one's job/work*  
+ household tasks: *the cooking, the gardening, the ironing, the shopping, the washing, the washing-up*  
+ places *the sights, Rome (in a day)*  
+ speed, distance *This car does 100 miles an hour, thirty miles to the gallon*  
+ subjects, etc.: *Art, French, an experiment, one's homework, a lesson, research.*  
= arrange, clean, etc. *the beds, the flowers, the kitchen, one's hair, one's nails, one's teeth*

### 43.2 Some combinations with 'make': e.g.

*an accusation, an agreement, an apology, an application, an attempt, a bargain, a bed, a (phone) call, a change, a choice, a claim, a comment, a contribution, a criticism, a decision, a deduction, a demand, a discovery, an effort (to), an escape, an excuse, a fortune, a guess, a habit of something, history, an impression, an inquiry, a journey, a law, a loss, love, a mess, a mistake, money, a move (= start to go), a name for oneself, a noise, an offer, a profit, progress, a promise, a proposal, a record, a reference, a remark, a report, a request, room (for), rules, sense (of), a start, a success of, a trip, trouble, use of, war, one's way to a place (= go there), a will*

**Appendix 44** [>1.23-24,4.13,11.75.3, 15.6, 16.27-28]

**Some adjectival combinations**
**Key:**

<b>I'm</b>	<b>personal subject:</b> He's <i>able to drive</i> I'm <i>afraid (that) he's out</i> I'm <i>busy cleaning the house</i>
<b>It's</b>	<b>preparatory 'it':</b> It's <i>advisable to book in advance</i> It's <i>likely (that) he'll arrive tomorrow</i>
<b>I'm/It's</b>	<b>personal subject or preparatory 'it'</b> He's <i>kind to help</i> It's <i>kind (of him) to help</i>
<b>IS).</b>	<b>that-clause with should + verb:</b> It's <i>advisable that he should phone</i>
<b>or</b>	<b>subjunctive</b> [> 11.75.1] It's <i>advisable that he keep in touch</i>
<b>or'</b>	<b>present/past tense:</b> It's <i>advisable that he keeps in touch</i>
<b>(sh).</b>	<b>that-clause often with 'should', but not with subjunctive:</b> It's <i>odd (that) you should say that</i> <i>that</i> not usually omitted in <b>that-clause:</b> It's <i>cruel that he should be punished</i>

**adjective to-infinitive (that) '-ing'**

able/unable	I'm		
absurd	I'm/It's	*It's (sh)	I'm/It's
advisable	It's	*It's (S)	
afraid	I'm	I'm	
alarmed <sup>1</sup>	I'm	I'm (sh)	
alarming <sup>1</sup>	It's	"It's (sh)	
angry	I'm	"I'm (sh)	
anxious	I'm	"I'm (S)	
ashamed	I'm	I'm (sh)	
aware <sup>2</sup>	-	I'm	
awful	I'm/It's	It's (sh)	I'm/It's
bad	I'm/It's	It's (sh)	It's
better/best	It's	It's (S)	It's
brave	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
busy	-	-	I'm
careful	I'm	"I'm (sh)	I'm
careless	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
certain <sup>3</sup>	I'm/It's	I'm/It's	
cheap	It's	-	It's
clear <sup>4</sup>	-	"I'm/It's	
clever	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
content	I'm	"I'm (sh)	I'm
cruel	I'm/It's	"It's (sh)	I'm/It's
dangerous	It's	-	It's
determined	I'm	I'm (S)	
difficult	I'm/It's	-	It's
due	I'm		
eager	I'm	"I'm (S)	
easy	I'm/It's	-	It's
enjoyable	It's	-	It's
enough	It's	"It's (sh)	
essential	It's	"It's (S)	
expensive	It's	-	It's
fair	I'm/It's	"It's (sh)	-
first, etc	I'm		
fit	I'm		
foolish	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
fortunate	I'm	It's (sh)	I'm/It's
free	I'm/It's		

adjective	to-infinitive	(that)	'-ing'
friendly	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
funny <sup>5</sup>	I'm/It's	It's (sh)	I'm/It's
glad	I'm	I'm	
good	I'm/It's	"It's	I'm/It's
no good	-	-	It's
grateful	I'm	"I'm	
great	It's	It's	It's
happy	I'm	I'm	I'm
hard (= difficult)	It's/I'm	-	It's
(= unfair)	-	*It's (sh)	It's
helpful	I'm/It's	It's	It's
(dis)honest	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
hopeful	-	I'm	
hopeless	It's	-	It's
horrible	I'm/It's	*It's (sh)	I'm/It's
important <sup>6</sup>	It's	It's (S)	
just	I'm/It's	"It's (S)	
keen	I'm	"I'm (S)	
(un)kind	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
last	I'm		
liable	I'm		
(un)likely	I'm	It's	
lovely	It's	"It's	It's
(un)lucky	I'm/It's	I'm/It's	I'm/It's
(un)natural	It's	It's (sh)	
(un)necessary	It's	"It's (S)	
nice	I'm/It's	"It's	I'm/It's
obliged	I'm		
obvious	-	It's	
odd	I'm/It's	It's (sh)	I'm/It's
pleasant	It's	"It's (sh)	It's
pointless	It's	-	It's
(im)polite	I'm/It's		
(im)possible	It's	"It's	
prepared	I'm		
quick	I'm	-	I'm/It's
ready	I'm		
right	I'm/It's	"It's (S)	
rude	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
sad	I'm/It's	I'm/It's (sh)	I'm/It's
safe	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
silly	I'm/It's	"It's (sh)	I'm/It's
slow	I'm	-	I'm/It's
sorry	I'm	I'm (sh)	
strange	I'm/It's	It's	I'm/It's
stupid	I'm/It's	-	I'm/It's
sure (= likely)	I'm		
(= certain <sup>7</sup> )	-	I'm	
thankful	I'm	I'm	
(un)true	It's	It's	
useful/less	It's	-	It's
vital	It's	"It's (S)	
(un)wise	I'm/It's	-	It's
worth	-	-	It's
wrong	I'm/It's	"It's (sh)	I'm/It's

1 Also adjectival participles [> App 10]

2 Also *aware how to, when to, etc*

3 Also *(not) certain whether/wh- to; (not) certain whether/wh-+clause*

4 Also *(not) clear whether to, (not) clear whether/wh- + clause*

5 Also *funny when, where, etc + clause*

6 Also *not important whether/wh- + clause*

7 Also *(not) sure whether/wh- to, (not) sure whether/wh-+ clause*

## Appendix 45 [> 1.23.2, n 75, 15.3/5/6/16/18/20/24, 16 22]

### Some reporting verbs

#### 45.1 Some reporting verbs (1)

##### Key:

*that* = *that* is not usually omitted

(sby) = optional personal object before clause  
*He warned (me) that I'd better go*

Q = verb may be followed by question clauses

*He asked when I would be ready*

*if* = verb can be followed by *if/whether*

*He asked if/whether Jim had arrived*

\* = verb can report direct speech in writing with inversion usually possible  
*'I'm ready,' John said/said John*

<i>accept that</i>	<i>fancy (= imagine)</i>
<i>acknowledge that</i>	<i>fear</i>
<i>'add that</i>	<i>feel (= think)</i>
<i>'admit Q</i>	<i>find out, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>advertise that</i>	<i>follow it follows that</i>
<i>affirm that</i>	<i>forecast that/Q</i>
<i>'agree Q (if/whether)</i>	<i>forget Q if/whether</i>
<i>allege that</i>	<i>gather, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>allow (= admit) that</i>	<i>guess, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>'announce</i>	<i>happen it that</i>
<i>'answer that</i>	<i>hope</i>
<i>appear it appears</i>	<i>imagine (= think), Q</i>
<i>appreciate that</i>	<i>imply that</i>
<i>'argue that, about Q</i>	<i>indicate that, Q</i>
<i>'ask (sby) if/whether, Q</i>	<i>'inquire if/whether/Q</i>
<i>assert that</i>	<i>know, Q if/whether</i>
<i>assume</i>	<i>learn, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>look it looks as if</i>
<i>I bet (= I'm sure)</i>	<i>maintain</i>
<i>'boast, about Q</i>	<i>matter that, if/wh/Q</i>
<i>(not) care if/whether, Q</i>	<i>mean</i>
<i>'caution (sby)</i>	<i>mind if/whether</i>
<i>certify that</i>	<i>note that, Q</i>
<i>chance it chanced that</i>	<i>notice, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>charge that</i>	<i>observe that (= say)</i>
<i>check that, if/whether, Q plan Q</i>	
<i>choose Q, whether</i>	<i>'point out, Q</i>
<i>claim</i>	<i>'predict that/Q</i>
<i>'complain</i>	<i>pretend</i>
<i>'conclude</i>	<i>'promise (sby)</i>
<i>'confess, Q whether</i>	<i>prove, Q, whether</i>
<i>confirm that, Q whether</i>	<i>question (sby) Q only</i>
<i>consider, Q</i>	<i>realize Q</i>
<i>(I)daresay (present only)</i>	<i>record that/Q/if</i>
<i>decide, Q, if/whether</i>	<i>regret</i>
<i>'declare</i>	<i>'remark (= say) that</i>
<i>deny</i>	<i>'repeat that</i>
<i>depend on whether/Q</i>	<i>'reply that</i>
<i>describe Q only</i>	<i>'report that, Q</i>
<i>disagree that</i>	<i>'respond that</i>
<i>discuss Q, whether only</i>	<i>'say, Q, if/whether</i>
<i>doubt, if/whether</i>	<i>see, if/Q</i>
<i>dream that</i>	<i>show that Q.if</i>
<i>emphasize that, Q</i>	<i>'state that, Q</i>
<i>ensure that</i>	<i>'suggest, Q</i>
<i>estimate that, Q</i>	<i>suppose</i>
<i>'exclaim that</i>	<i>suspect, Q</i>
<i>expect</i>	<i>teach that, Q/whether</i>
<i>'explain, Q, whether</i>	<i>(not) tell if/whether/Q</i>

*'think, Q, whether*      *'warn (sby)*  
*understand, Q if/whether wish*  
*vote that*      *wonder it/whether/Q*  
*'want to know that if/Q*      *write (sby) that*

#### 45.2 Some reporting verbs (2)

These have a personal object before a clause

*He told me (that) he would be late*  
*assure convince, inform, instruct sby that*  
*notify sby that, remind sby that, tell sby that*

#### 45.3 Some reporting verbs (3)

Most of the following can be used to report commands with a to-infinitive Those marked \* can also be followed by *that should*, those marked *that should* cannot be followed by to  
*'advise sby to, 'ask sby to, 'beg sby to, cause sby to, command sby to, compel sby to, 'demand to, 'direct sby to, forbid sby to, get sby to, insist that should, 'instruct sby to, oblige sby to, 'order sby to, 'persuade sby to, propose that should, 'recommend sby to, 'request sby to, suggest e g where to/ that should, 'telex sby to, 'tell sby to, 'urge sby to, want sby to, wish sby to*

## Appendix 46 [> 16.13/19/20]

### 46.1 Some verbs followed by a fo-infinitive

sby/stg = object required before to

(sby/stg) = optional object

*allow sby, appoint sby assist sby, attempt, begin, bribe sby, bring in sby, bring up sby, can t bear, care (= want), cease, commence, compete, condemn sby, consent, continue dare (= be brave enough), dare sby, deserve, dislike (sby/stg), elect sby, employ sby, enable sby, encourage sby, fail, get (sby/stg), grow, hasten, hate have (got) [> 11 47], help (sby), hurry, lead sby, like (sby/stg), long, love (sby), manage, need (sby/stg) [> 11 1], neglect, offer, pay, prefer (sby/stg), refuse, rely on sby/stg scheme, seek, select sby/stg, send (for) sby/stg, start, stop, struggle, tram (sby) try unite (can't) wait, want (sby/stg), wish (sby/stg)*

### 46.2 Verb + fo-infinitive or Q-word + to-infinitive

All these verbs are also commonly followed by (that-clauses or question-word clauses

*agree to/Q to, ask to/Q to, chance to, consider Q to, decide to/Q, discover Q to, forget to/Q to, happen to, hear (= learn) Q to, hope to, know Q to learn to/Q to, mean to, notice Q to, observe Q to occur it occurs to sby to, plan to/Q to, pretend to profess to promise to, prove to, realize Q to reckon (= expect) to regret to, remember to/Q to show sby Q to, teach sby to/Q to, wonder Q to*

### 46.3 Verb + clause or object + 'to be'

*I declare him to be the winner*  
*accept arrange (for), believe, calculate certify consider declare deny, discover estimate, fancy, feel (= consider), find (= consider), guess hold, imagine, infer, intend judge, know, mean, perceive, prefer, presume recognize, remember, report request require, sense, suppose suspect take understand*

## Appendix 47 [ > 2.37, 3.1, 3.11, 5.91 Numbers

### 47.1 Numerals

Words in bold italics cause spelling problems  
**cardinal numbers**      **ordinal numbers**

0	
1 <i>one</i>	1st <i>first</i>
2 <i>two</i>	2nd <i>second</i>
3 <i>three</i>	3rd <i>third</i>
4 <i>four</i>	4th <i>fourth</i>
5 <i>five</i>	5th <i>fifth</i>
6 <i>six</i>	6th <i>sixth</i>
7 <i>seven</i>	7th <i>seventh</i>
8 <i>eight</i>	8th <i>eighth</i>
9 <i>nine</i>	9th <i>ninth</i>
10 <i>ten</i>	10th <i>tenth</i>
11 <i>eleven</i>	11th <i>eleventh</i>
12 <i>twelve</i>	12th <i>twelfth</i>
13 <i>thirteen</i>	13th <i>thirteenth</i>
14 <i>fourteen</i>	14th <i>fourteenth</i>
15 <b><i>fifteen</i></b>	15th <b><i>fifteenth</i></b>
16 <i>sixteen</i>	16th <i>sixteenth</i>
17 <i>seventeen</i>	17th <i>seventeenth</i>
18 <i>eighteen</i>	18th <i>eighteenth</i>
19 <i>nineteen</i>	19th <i>nineteenth</i>
20 <i>twenty</i>	20th <i>twentieth</i>
21 <i>twenty-one</i>	21st <i>twenty-first</i>
22 <i>twenty-two</i>	22nd <i>twenty-second</i>
23 <i>twenty-three</i>	23rd <i>twenty-third</i>
24 <i>twenty-four</i>	24th <i>twenty-fourth</i>
25 <i>twenty-five</i>	25th <i>twenty-fifth</i>
26 <i>twenty-six</i>	26th <i>twenty-sixth</i>
27 <i>twenty-seven</i>	27th <i>twenty-seventh</i>
28 <i>twenty-eight</i>	28th <i>twenty-eighth</i>
29 <i>twenty-nine</i>	29th <i>twenty-ninth</i>
30 <i>thirty</i>	30th <i>thirtieth</i> , etc
40 <b><i>forty</i></b>	40th <i>fortieth</i> , etc
50 <b><i>fifty</i></b>	50th <i>fiftieth</i>
60 <i>sixty</i>	60th <i>sixtieth</i>
70 <i>seventy</i>	70th <i>seventieth</i>
80 <b><i>eighty</i></b>	80th <i>eightieth</i>
90 <i>ninety</i>	90th <i>ninetieth</i>
100 <i>one hundred</i>	100th <i>one/the hundredth</i>
101 <i>one hundred and one</i>	101st <i>one/the hundred and first</i>
200 <i>two hundred</i>	200th <i>the (two hundredth)</i>
1,000 <i>one thousand</i>	1,000th <i>one/the thousandth</i>
1,001 <i>one thousand and one</i> , etc	1,001st <i>one/the thousand and first</i> , etc
10,001 <i>ten thousand and one</i> , etc	10,001st <i>one/the ten thousand and first</i> , etc
100,000 <i>one hundred thousand</i> , etc	100,000th <i>one/the hundred thousandth</i> , etc
1,000,000 <i>one million</i>	1,000,000th <i>one/the millionth</i>

#### NOTES

1 0 (nought/zero)

The spoken form of 0 is a) *nought* (AmE zero) or oh. Oh is used especially when giving telephone numbers [ > App 47.2 ], and often when saying the year e.g. 1906 can be said *nineteen oh six*, in the 24 hour clock, e.g. 0903 can be spoken as n/ne oh three hours

b) When talking scientifically, e.g. when giving temperatures, 0 is pronounced zero, e.g. -20° = twenty *degrees below zero*

c) When giving the scores of most games, e.g. football, 0 is pronounced nil or *nothing*. *Hull 6, Leeds 0* is said *Hull six, Leeds nil* (or *nothing*). When giving the scores of a few other games, e.g. tennis we use *love* for 0. *Becker leads by two sets to love* (2-0).

2 -teen and -ty endings pronunciation

Even native speakers sometimes find it hard to hear the difference. *Did you say thirteen or thirty?* Note the stress. *I said thirteen / "thirty*

3 *one hundred, one thousand, one mill/on*, etc

In ordinary speech, a is often used instead of *one*. However, *one* is preferable in calculations, etc because it sounds more accurate. For numbers between 1,000 and

1,900 it is common to say *eleven hundred*, etc instead of *one thousand one hundred*.

4 Writing numbers of more than four figures

We separate large numbers with commas, not stops. Commas may be omitted from four-figure numbers, but they are important in

numbers with five or more figures, since they make the structure of large numbers clear.

5 *and* in numbers over 100

In AmE this can be omitted, e.g. *six hundred sixty-eight* instead of *six hundred and*

6 Numbers after people's names

When writing the names of kings, we use Roman numerals. We write *George IV* (no -th), but we say *George the Fourth*. Some rich American families do the same. *Henry Ford II*

7 *A dozen* (i.e. twelve)

Certain things, e.g. eggs, *bread rolls*, oranges, are often bought in dozens.

*A/One/Two dozen eggs please* (No -s)

8 Uncertain numbers

The word *odd* may be used with round numbers over twenty to give an approximate figure.

*It's a hundred odd pounds* (i.e. about)

*She's sixty odd* (i.e. about 60 years old)

-ish, or so and or *thereabouts* can also be

used when giving approximate numbers.

*He's sixtyish. I'll meet you nineish.*

*It cost a hundred pounds or so.*

*He's arriving on the seventh or thereabouts.*

### 47.2 Telephone numbers

Telephone numbers are written with gaps between each group of numbers, not usually with dashes or full stops. e.g. 01 339 4867

The first group is usually the dialling code for a particular place and is often in brackets (01)

339 4867. 0 in phone numbers is pronounced

*oh*. Numbers are pronounced separately and double figures are usually given as e.g. *double three oh one, double three* (or *three three*)

*nine, four eight six seven*

Treble figures are normally spoken as follows

6222 *six two double two*. A number like 2222

would be spoken *double two double two*

Other long numbers, like bank account

numbers, national insurance numbers and so on are usually spoken in the same way

## Appendix 47

### 47.3 Mathematical symbols, fractions, decimals

#### 47.3.1 Mathematical symbols

##### = ('the equals sign')

This is spoken as *equal* or *equals*, *is equal to* or (less formally) *is/are* or *make/makes* so  
2 + 2 = 4 could be spoken as  
2 and 2 (or 2 plus 2) equal 4 2 and 2 equals 4  
2 and 2 is four 2 and 2 are 4  
2 and 2 make 4 2 and 2 makes 4

##### + ('the plus sign')

This is spoken as *plus* or *and*  
2 plus 2 makes 4 2 and 2 make(s) 4

##### - ('the minus sign')

This is spoken as *minus* or (less formally) *take away* or *from*

9 - 3 = 6 could be spoken as

9 minus 3 equals 6

9 take away 3 equals 6

3 from 9 equals/is/makes 6

##### x ('the multiplication sign')

This is spoken as *multiplied by* or *times*

9 x 3 = 27 could be spoken as

9 multiplied by 3 equals 27

9 times 3 is 27

Three nines (or nine threes) are 27

##### ÷ ('the division sign')

This is spoken as *divided by* or *over*

9 ÷ 3 = 3 could be spoken as

9 divided by (or over) 3 equals 3

3 into nine is/goes 3

##### % ('the percentage sign')

This is usually said *per cent*

3% = three per cent

3 1/2% = three and a half per cent

3.5% = three point five per cent

#### 47.3.2 Fractions [> 5.9.3]

Fractions are usually printed and written with a horizontal line not a diagonal line

1/4 = a (or one) quarter, 2 1/4 = two and a quarter

1/2 = a (or one) half, 2 1/2 = two and a half

3/4 = three quarters, 3 3/4 = three and three quarters

#### 47.3.3 Decimals [> 5.9.4]

The decimal point is usually raised i.e. it is not written as if it was a full stop. A comma is never used. We say each number after the decimal point separately: 45.987 = forty five point nine eight seven

### 47.4 Dates [> 3.21.4, 8.12, 8.13]

#### 47.4.1 Centuries, years

35 BC ('Before Christ'), AD 100 = AD one hundred (i.e. 'Anno Domini', 'in the year of our Lord' in Latin). AD is not usually necessary except with the early centuries to avoid possible confusion. BC is usually necessary.

Pompey died in 48 BC

Tiberius died in AD 37

The 11th the 20th century will always be taken to mean AD. The name of the century is 'one ahead' of the way the years in it are written/said: e.g. 1500-1599 is the sixteenth century. We can refer to the fifteen twenties, etc. and in this century to the fifties, the sixties. We refer to 1900-1910 as the nineteenth hundreds.

Years are said in two parts

1066 *ten sixty-six*, 1917 *nineteen seventeen*. The early years of a century, e.g. from (19)01 to (19)12 have two forms: *nineteen hundred and one*, or *nineteen-(oh)-one*. Years ending in '00' are said with 'hundred': 1900 *nineteen hundred*, but note 2,000 the year *two thousand*.

#### 47.4.2 The date

We can write the date in different ways: e.g. Day/month/year: 6th January, 1990 (or '90). Month/day/year: January 6th 1998 (or '98). The letters that follow the numbers {-st, -nd, -rd -th} may be omitted, as can the comma before the year. Abbreviations can be used for months [App 24]. The date can also be written entirely in figures: 6 1 90, or 06 01 90. In BrE this means *January 6, 1990*. In AmE it means *June 1, 1990* since the number of the month is written before the day. When we say the date we add *the January the sixth*, or *the sixth of January* (BrE), but *January sixth* (AmE).

#### 47.5 The time [> 7.21, 8.11]

##### 47.5.1 Telling the time in everyday speech

If a clock shows (say) 10.00, the fullest answer to the question 'What's the time?' is *It's ten o'clock*. But we can also say *Ten* (very informal) or *It's ten*. The word *o'clock* is used only with exact hours, never with other times: *It's five past ten*, etc. Where the hour is known, we can just say *(It's) five past (It's) five to*, etc.

For past the hour we say: e.g. *(It's) five past (ten)*, *(a) quarter (Not "fifteen") past (ten)*, *ten/twenty past (ten)*, *twenty-five past (ten)*.

For before the hour we say: e.g. *(It's) twenty-five to (eleven)*, *twenty to (eleven)*, *(a) quarter to (eleven)*, *ten/five to (eleven)*. With all other combinations before the hour and past the hour, we say *minutes*, e.g. *three minutes to ten*, *twenty-two minutes to eleven*. In AmE *after* is commonly used in place of *past* and of instead of *to*: *a quarter of eleven*. Informally we sometimes say, e.g. *half ten* instead of *half past ten* and *ten fifteen*, *ten thirty* instead of using *a quarter* and *half*. Sometimes we say *am* (= ante meridiem, i.e. before midday) or *pm* (= post meridiem, i.e. after midday) for times before and after 12 noon: *I'll meet you at 5 pm*. We also sometimes say *at noon* or *at midnight* for 12 a.m. or 12 p.m.

##### 47.5.2 The time in schedules and timetables

The twenty-four hour clock is generally used for, e.g. railway timetables. These are written and spoken as follows:

09 00 *nine hundred* 21 00 *twenty-one hundred*

09 03 *nine oh three* 21 03 *twenty-one oh three*

09 10 *nine ten* 21 10 *twenty-one ten*

09 15 *nine fifteen* 21 15 *twenty-one fifteen*

09 30 *nine thirty* 21 30 *twenty-one thirty*

09 36 *nine thirty-six* 21 36 *twenty-one thirty-six*

09 45 *nine forty-five* 21 45 *twenty-one forty-five*

Which tram do you want to catch?

- I think I'll try to get **the ten eighteen**

**Appendix 48** [> 2.13,3.21,3.27.3,3.28,7.21,7.22,8.12,9.4,918,9.25.1,9 38]**Some adverbs of definite time: 'points of time'**

yesterday	today	tomorrow
yesterday morning	this morning	tomorrow morning
yesterday at noon	at noon	tomorrow at noon
yesterday afternoon	this afternoon	tomorrow afternoon
yesterday evening	this evening	tomorrow evening
last night	tonight	tomorrow night
the day before yesterday		the day after tomorrow
the night before last		the night after next
the day before yesterday in		the day after tomorrow in
the morning/afternoon/evening		the morning/afternoon/evening
last Monday	this Monday	next Monday
the Monday before last		the Monday after next
last January	this January	next January
the January before last		the January after next
last Christmas	this Christmas	next Christmas
the Christmas before last		the Christmas after next
last week	this week	next week
the week before last		the week after next
last month	this month	next month
the month before last		the month after next
last year	this year	next year
the year before last		the year after next
last century	this century	next century
the century before last		the century after next
this time next week/next year etc		
this time last week/last year etc		
today week - a week from today		
a week (or a fortnight two weeks a month) tomorrow = a week etc from tomorrow		
a week (or a fortnight two weeks a month) yesterday = a week etc from yesterday		
a week/two weeks/a fortnight from yesterday from today from tomorrow etc		
a month/two months from today from tomorrow from Monday etc		
a month/two months last Tuesday etc		
a month/two months next Tuesday etc		

**NOTES**

- 1 *Last night* is usually preferable to *yesterday night*
- 2 In everyday speech days of the week are often referred to without *this last next* or on  
*I'm seeing him Monday* (i.e. this next on) / *saw him Monday* (i.e. last on)
- 3 When we wish to draw attention to approaching time we may use the expression *this coming*  
*This coming week there are three good films on TV*
- 4 *This morning this afternoon this evening and tonight* can refer to
  - a) now / *I feel terrible this morning/tonight* etc
  - b) the morning which is passing or has just passed / *spoke to him this morning* (= earlier)
  - c) later on today / *I'll speak to him this morning*
- 5 *This Monday etc* refers to the nearest Monday from now and can be replaced by *next Monday*  
*I'm seeing him this Monday/next Monday*
- 6 *This week this month this year* refer to
  - a) the part of the week etc which has passed / *saw him this week/earlier this week*
  - b) the part of the week etc which is still to come / *I'm going to Majorca this week*
- 1 *This January etc* refers to the one that is nearest to us and can be replaced by *next*  
*We're spending this/next January, Christmas (etc.) in Switzerland*
- 8 *The other + day Monday morning* etc refers to one that has recently passed every  
*other + day Monday morning* etc refers to alternating ones  
*I got a letter from Jill the other morning* [compare > 5.27]  
*Mrs Mopp comes in and cleans the house every other day* [compare > 5.23]
- 9 *Today week* can be replaced by the more formal *this day week*
- 10 *One + day Monday morning* etc is often used in narrative [compare > 3.11]
- 11 For time references in indirect speech [> 15.13n5]



**Appendix 49** [> 2.27,3.9 3,3.19.2,6.12.2,6.20.3]

## Some nationality words

**49.1 Group 1: Identifying characteristics**

1 The adjective and noun have the same form

**adjective:** *the Japanese language* **noun:** *Nakamurasan is (a) Japanese*

2 There is no difference between singular and plural adjectives/nouns

**singular:** *Nakamurasan is Japanese* **plural:** *Nakamurasan and Sanseidosan are Japanese*3 When referring to 'all the people', *the* is always required **The Japanese are very clever people**

country	adjective	countable noun	plural or collective noun
Japan	Japanese	a Japanese (man/woman), two Japanese (men)	the Japanese

Similarly e.g. *Burma/Burmese, China/Chinese, Lebanon/Lebanese, Malta/Maltese, Portugal/Portuguese, Sudan/Sudanese, Surinam/Surinamese, Taiwan/Taiwanese, Switzerland/Swiss*

**49.2 Group 2: Identifying characteristics**

1 The adjective and singular noun have exactly the same form

**adjective:** *an Italian car* **noun:** *Mario is (an) Italian.*2 The plural noun adds -s *the* is optional in the plural **(The) Italians are very creative** [> 3.19.2]

country	adjective	countable noun	plural or collective noun
Italy	Italian	an Italian (man/woman), two Italians (men)	(the) Italians

Similarly e.g.

- a) **-ian** endings add -n to countries ending in **-ia** *Algeria(n), Asia(n), Australia(n), Austria(n), Colombia(n), Indonesia(n), Nigeria(n), Russia(n), Scandinavian, Syria(n), Tanzania(n), Tunisia(n)*  
 other **-ian** endings *Argentina/Argentinian, Belgium/Belgian, Brazil/Brazilian, Canada/Canadian, Egypt/Egyptian, Hungary/Hungarian, Iran/Iranian, Jordan/Jordanian, Norway/Norwegian*  
 b) generally add -n or **-an** *Africa(n), America(n), Chile(an), Costa Rica(n), Cuba(n), Korea(n), Latin America(n), Libya(n), Mexico/Mexican, Paraguayan, Uganda(n), Venezuela(n), Zimbabwe(an)*  
 c) other endings *Cyprus/Cypriot, Germany/German, Greece/Greek, Iraq/Iraqi, Kuwait/Kuwaiti, Oman/Omani, Pakistan/Pakistani, Qatar/Qatari, Saudi Arabia/Saudi/Saudi Arabian, Thailand/Thai*

**49.3 Group 3: Identifying characteristics**

1 The adjective and singular noun are different

**adjective:** *Finnish timber* **noun:** *He is a Finn*2 The singular noun adds -s to form the plural, *the* is optional in the plural**(The) Finns often visit Sweden**

country	adjective	countable noun	plural or collective noun
	Arabic (lang.)	an Arab (man/woman), two Arabs (men)	(the) Arabs
	Arabian (desert)		
Denmark	Danish	a Dane (man/woman), two Danes (men)	(the) Danes or the Danish
Finland	Finnish	a Finn (man/woman), two Finns (men)	(the) Finns or the Finnish
Philippines	Philippine	a Filipino (man/woman), two Filipinos (men)	(the) Filipinos
Poland	Polish	a Pole (man/woman), two Poles (men)	(the) Poles
Spain	Spanish	a Spaniard/two Spaniards (men), a Spanish woman	(the) Spaniards or the Spanish
Sweden	Swedish	a Swede (man/woman), two Swedes (men)	(the) Swedes/the Swedish
Turkey	Turkish	a Turk (man/woman), two Turks (men)	(the) Turks

**49.4 Group 4: Identifying characteristics**1 The adjective and plural noun (meaning 'all the people') are the same, *the* is always required**adjective:** *English customs* **noun:** *The English are very inventive*2 The singular noun is composed of the adjective + **-man** or **-woman**

country	adjective	countable noun	plural or collective noun
England	English	an EnglishmanZ-woman, two EnglishmenZ-women	the English (also Englishmen)
France	French	a FrenchmanZ-woman, two FrenchmenZ-women	the French (also Frenchmen)
Holland (or the Netherlands)	Dutch	a DutchmanZ-woman, two DutchmenZ-women	the Dutch (also Dutchmen)
Ireland	Irish	an IrishmanZ-woman, two IrishmenZ-women	the Irish (also Irishmen)
Wales	Welsh	a WelshmanZ-woman, two WelshmenZ-women	the Welsh (also Welshmen)

**49.5 Group 5: Two exceptions**

Britain	British	a Briton (man/woman), Britons (fairly rare) a Britisher (AmE)	the British Britishers (AmE)
Scotland	Scottish	a Scot (man/woman), a ScotsmanZ-woman two ScotsmenZ-women (and note Scotch whisky)	(the) Scots

