

The present simple

This guide covers the main features of the present simple tense

The sentences in the table below show the form of the present simple tense.

Statements

Subject	Verb	
Students	work	in the library between lectures.
The student	works	in the library between lectures.

Negative sentences

Subject	Auxiliary verb (AV)	<i>not</i>	Bare infinitive (BI)	
Students	do	not	work	in the library between lectures.
The student	does	not	Work	in the library between lectures.

Grammar note: 'Auxiliary' means 'giving help or support'. Auxiliary verbs 'help' with the construction of some verb tenses. The auxiliary verb *do* is used with the present simple to form:

- negative sentences
- questions.

Present simple of the verb *to be*

Grammar note: If the main verb is *to be*, the auxiliary verb *do* is not used in negative sentences and questions.

Statements

Subject	Verb		
Students	are		young.
He/She	is		young.

Negative sentences

Subject	Verb		
Students	are	not	young.
He/She	is	not	young.

Questions

Verb	Subject		
Are	the students		young?
Is	he/she		young?

Grammar note: In spoken English, we often use short forms of verbs like *be*, *will*, *have*: for example,

They're students;

He's not young.

In academic writing, however, you should use full forms.

Subject-verb agreement

The noun or pronoun that controls the verb is called the subject. It is important to match the subject with the verb. This is called **subject-verb agreement**. Study the examples.

Examples of singular subject and verb

Singular noun Subject	Singular verb Verb	
Tokyo	has	good public transport.
This law	is	unpopular.
The book	contains	useful information.

Examples of plural subject and verb

Plural noun Subject	Plural verb Verb	
Major cities	have	good public transport.
These laws	are	unpopular.
Books	contain	useful information.