

Clauses, Phrases, and Sentences

Phrase A phrase is a group of related words that does not have a subject doing the action of a verb. There are several different types of phrases:

- Noun phrase: A phrase built around a single noun:
 - A vase of roses stood on the table.
 - She was reading a book about the problems of women.
- Verb phrase: A phrase that is the verbal part of a clause:
 - She had been living in London.
 - I will be going to college next year.
- Adjective phrase: A phrase built around an adjective:
 - He had a very interesting life.
 - A lot of the kids really enjoy football.
- Adverbial phrase: A phrase built round an adverb by adding words before and/or after it:
 - The economy recovered very slowly.
 - They wanted to leave the country as fast as possible.
- Prepositional phrase: A phrase where a preposition comes at the beginning:
 - She got a prize for the best story.
 - The dog was hiding under the kitchen table.

Clause A clause is a collection of words with a subject that is doing the action of a verb.

- An independent clause can stand by itself and be a complete sentence:
 - I like young people.
 - The lunch was too big for me.
- A dependent clause has a subject doing the action of a verb, but it can't make a complete sentence by itself. It begins with a conjunction and need another clause to complete its meaning. Dependent clauses often begin with words such as *before, after, while, during, when, because, or if*.
 - because she smiled at him
 - when everybody left the room
 - after he went to school

Sentence Every sentence must have at least one independent clause. A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period ("."):

- A simple sentence has one independent clause:
 - He likes playing games all afternoon and evening.
- A compound sentence has two or more independent clauses joined by a conjunction such as "and" or "but", or joined by a semicolon (";"):
 - He likes playing games all afternoon and evening, but his mother wants him to study.
 - He likes eating at McDonald's; his favorites foods are French fries and chicken.

English Articles

In English, knowing when to use '**a**' or '**the**' can be difficult. Fortunately, there are rules to help you, but you need to know what type of noun you are using.

Grammar rule 1

When you have a single, countable English noun, you must always have an article before it. We cannot say "please pass me pen", we must say "please pass me **the** pen" or "please pass me **a** pen" or "please pass me **your** pen".
Nouns in English can also be uncountable. Uncountable nouns can be concepts, such as 'life', 'happiness' and so on, or materials and substances, such as 'coffee', or 'wood'.

Grammar rule 2

Uncountable nouns don't use '**a**' or '**an**'. This is because you can't count them. For example, advice is an uncountable noun. You can't say "he gave me an advice", but you can say "he gave me **some** advice", or "he gave me **a piece of** advice".
Some nouns can be both countable and uncountable. For example, we say "coffee" meaning the product, but we say "**a** coffee" when asking for one cup of coffee.

Grammar rule 3

You can use '**the**' to make general things specific. You can use '**the**' with any type of noun – plural or singular, countable or uncountable.

"Please pass me **a** pen" – any pen.

"Please pass me **the** pen" – the one that we can both see.

"Children grow up quickly" – children in general.

"**The** children I know grow up quickly" – not all children, just the ones I know.

"Poetry can be beautiful"- poetry in general.

"**The** poetry of Hopkins is beautiful" – I'm only talking about the poetry Hopkins wrote.

More uses of articles in English

Rivers, mountain ranges, seas, oceans and geographic areas all use '**the**'.

For example, "**The** Thames", "**The** Alps", "**The** Atlantic Ocean", "**The** Middle East".

Unique things have '**the**'.

For example, "**the** sun", "**the** moon".

Some institutional buildings don't have an article if you visit them for the reason these buildings exist. But if you go to the building for another reason, you must use '**the**'.

"Her husband is in prison." (He's a prisoner.)

"She goes to **the** prison to see him once a month."

"My son is in school." (He's a student.)

"I'm going to **the** school to see the head master."

"She's in hospital at the moment." (She's ill.)

"Her husband goes to **the** hospital to see her every afternoon."

Musical instruments use '**the**'.

"She plays **the** piano."

Sports don't have an article.

"He plays football."

Illnesses don't have an article.

"He's got appendicitis."

But we say "**a** cold" and "**a** headache".

Jobs use 'a'.
"I'm **a** teacher."

Countries

We don't use 'a' if the country is singular. "He lives in England." But if the country's name has a "plural" meaning, we use 'the'. "**The** People's Republic of China", "**The** Netherlands", "**The** United States of America".

Continents, towns and streets don't have an article.
"Africa", "New York", "Church Street".

Theatres, cinemas and hotels have 'the'.
"**The** Odeon", "**The** Almeida", "**The** Hilton".

Abbreviations use 'the'.
"**the** UN", "**the** USA", "**the** IMF".

We use 'the' before **classes of people**.
"**the** rich", "**the** poor", "**the** British".

Functions and examples

1. We use *a / an* when we are talking about something for the first time.

He is wearing **a** suit and **a** tie.
They have **a** cat.

2. We use *the* when we are talking about a specific person or thing, or if there is only one, or if it is clear which one we are talking about.

She took **a** glass of water and started to drink. (one of many glasses of water)
She took **the** glass of water nearest to her. (a specific glass)
She took **the** glass of water and started to drink. (there is only one glass of water)
Can you turn on **the** TV? (it's clear we are talking about the TV in this room)
I have to see **the** doctor tomorrow. (it's clear I am talking about my usual doctor)
I need to see **a** doctor. (not any specific doctor)
How many people have walked on **the** moon? (there is only one moon)
The best film I've ever seen is *Top Gun*. (there can only be one best film)

3. We use no article when we are talking about people or things in general.

Carrots are good for you. (carrots in general)
The carrots growing in my garden are almost ready to eat. (specific carrots)
English people drink a lot of tea. (English people in general)
The English people in this hotel are very nice. (specific English people)

4. We use *a / an* to say what kind of person or thing someone or something is (often with an adjective, or to say it belongs to a particular group.

You have **a** nice house.
That's **a** very expensive car!
A cat is **an** animal a bus is **a** vehicle.

5. With school, university, prison, hospital, church, bed, work and home we use *the* when we are talking about a particular one, and no article when we are talking about the *idea* of school, university...

The church on our street was built in the 17th Century. (a particular church)
I go to **church** every Sunday (the idea of church, not a particular building)
My friend works at **the prison** outside the city centre.
My husband is in **prison**.
The work isn't finished yet.
I was feeling sick yesterday so I didn't go to **work**.
The new bed is bigger than the old one.
I put my children to **bed** at 8pm.

6. We use *the* with singular countable nouns to talk about a type of thing.

The computer was invented in the 20th Century. (not a particular computer)

The computer in my office is broken. (a particular one)

The crocodile is very dangerous. (this type of animal)

The crocodile in the river is very big. (a particular one)

She plays **the piano**. (not a particular piano but this type of instrument)

The piano she is playing is very old. (a particular one)

7. We use *the* + adjective to talk about a group of people (including nationalities).

I always give money to **the homeless**.

The unemployed receive money from the government.

The French produce good wine.

8. We use *a / an* to talk about someone's job.

My wife is **an** optician.

She works as **a** mechanic.

9. We use no article with continents, countries, regions, cities, streets, mountains, lakes and parks.

Asia, Italy, California, Bristol, Main St., Mount Everest, Lake Superior, Central Park

We use ***the*** if the country contains *Kingdom, Republic, State, Union*

10. We use *the* with plural names of people and places.

The Smiths, The Netherlands, The United States, The Bahamas, The Alps (also **The Caribbean**)

11. We use *the* with oceans, seas, rivers and canals.

The Atlantic Ocean, The Red Sea, The Nile, The Panama Canal

12. We use *the* with north, south, east and west to talk about the location of a place within another place, but no article to compare the location of two places.

Greece is in **the south** of Europe.

Spain is **south** of France.

We use no article with northern, southern, eastern and western:

Greece is in southern Europe.

13. We normally use *the* with buildings, except if the first word is the name of a place.

The White House, The Sheraton Hotel.

Omission of Articles

Some common types of nouns that don't take an article are:

- Names of languages and nationalities: *Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian* (unless you are referring to the population of the nation: "**The** Spanish are known for their warm hospitality.")
- Names of sports: *volleyball, hockey, baseball*
- Names of academic subjects: *mathematics, biology, history, computer science*

Impersonal passive / nominalisation

It is said that.... [It + passive verb (be + past participle) + that clause]

A common way of reporting what is said by people or by an unspecified group of people

They report the defence minister is to resign

It is reported that the defence minister is to resign

Nominalised: There is a report that the defence minister is to resign

Nominalised: One report is that the defence minister is to resign

They have suggested the lack of funding is part of the problem

It has been suggested that the lack of funding is part of the problem

Nominalised: There has been a suggestion that the lack of funding is part of the problem

Nominalised: One/a suggestion has been (given) that the lack of funding is part of the problem

To infinitive impersonal passives

The subject + passive verb (be+past participle) + to infinitive

They claim the terrorist is living abroad

It is claimed that the terrorist is living abroad

The terrorist is claimed to be living abroad

Nominalised: There is a claim that the terrorist is living abroad

Nominalised: One / a claim is that the terrorist is living abroad

They alleged that three hundred people died in the plane crash

It was alleged that three hundred people died in the plane crash

Three hundred people were alleged to have died in the plane crash

There was an allegation that three hundred people died in the plane crash

One allegation was that three hundred people died in the plane crash

Common verbs: agree / allege / announce / assume / believe / calculate / claim / consider / declare / discover / estimate / expect / find / known / mention / propose / recommend / rumour / show / suppose / suggest / understand

Prepositions

Prepositions are short words (on, in, to) that usually stand in front of nouns (sometimes also in front of gerund verbs). Even advanced learners of English find prepositions difficult, as a 1:1 translation is usually not possible. One preposition in your native language might have several translations depending on the situation. There are hardly any rules as to when to use which preposition. The only way to learn prepositions is looking them up in a dictionary, reading a lot in English (literature) and learning useful phrases off by heart.

The following table contains rules for some of the most frequently used prepositions in English:

Prepositions – Time

Preposition	Usage	Example
on	days of the week	on Monday
in	months / seasons time of day year after a certain period of time (<i>when?</i>)	in August / in winter in the morning in 2006 in an hour
at	for <i>night</i> for <i>weekend</i> a certain point of time (<i>when?</i>)	at night at the weekend at half past nine
since	from a certain point of time (past till now)	since 1980
for	over a certain period of time (past till now)	for 2 years
ago	a certain time in the past	2 years ago
before	earlier than a certain point of time	before 2004
to	telling the time	ten to six (5:50)
past	telling the time	ten past six (6:10)
to / till / until	marking the beginning and end of a period of time	from Monday to/till Friday
till / until	in the sense of <i>how long something is going to last</i>	He is on holiday until Friday.
by	in the sense of <i>at the latest</i> up to a certain time	I will be back by 6 o'clock. By 11 o'clock, I had read five pages.

Prepositions – Place (Position and Direction)

Preposition	Usage	Example
in	room, building, street, town, country book, paper etc.	in the kitchen, in London

Preposition	Usage	Example
	car, taxi picture, world	in the book in the car, in a taxi in the picture, in the world
at	meaning <i>next to, by an object</i> for <i>table</i> for events place where you are to do something typical (watch a film, study, work)	at the door, at the station at the table at a concert, at the party at the cinema, at school, at work
on	attached for a place with a river being on a surface for a certain side (left, right) for a floor in a house for public transport for <i>television, radio</i>	the picture on the wall London lies on the Thames. on the table on the left on the first floor on the bus, on a plane on TV, on the radio
by, next to, beside	left or right of somebody or something	Jane is standing by / next to / beside the car.
under	on the ground, lower than (or covered by) something else	the bag is under the table
below	lower than something else but above ground	the fish are below the surface
over	covered by something else meaning <i>more than</i> getting to the other side (also <i>across</i>) overcoming an obstacle	put a jacket over your shirt over 16 years of age walk over the bridge climb over the wall
above	higher than something else, but not directly over it	a path above the lake
across	getting to the other side (also <i>over</i>) getting to the other side	walk across the bridge swim across the lake
through	something with limits on top, bottom and the sides	drive through the tunnel
to	movement to person or building movement to a place or country for <i>bed</i>	go to the cinema go to London / Ireland go to bed
into	enter a room / a building	go into the kitchen / the house
towards	movement in the direction of something (but	go 5 steps towards

Preposition	Usage	Example
	not directly to it)	the house
onto	movement to the top of something	jump onto the table
from	in the sense of <i>where from</i>	a flower from the garden

Other important Prepositions

Preposition	Usage	Example
from	who gave it	a present from Jane
of	who/what does it belong to what does it show	a page of the book the picture of a palace
by	who made it	a book by Mark Twain
on	walking or riding on horseback entering a public transport vehicle	on foot, on horseback get on the bus
in	entering a car / Taxi	get in the car
off	leaving a public transport vehicle	get off the train
out of	leaving a car / Taxi	get out of the taxi
by	rise or fall of something travelling (other than walking or horseriding)	prices have risen by 10 percent by car, by bus
at	for <i>age</i>	she learned Russian at 45
about	for topics, meaning <i>what about</i>	we were talking about you

SENTENCE KINDS

Declarative

A declarative sentence "declares" or states a fact, arrangement or opinion. Declarative sentences can be either positive or negative. A declarative sentences ends with a period (.).

Examples

1. I'll meet you at the train station.
2. The sun rises in the East.
3. He doesn't get up early.

Imperative

The imperative commands (or sometimes requests). The imperative takes no subject as 'you' is the implied subject. The imperative form ends with either a period (.) or an exclamation point (!).

Examples

1. Open the door.
2. Finish your homework
3. Pick up that mess.

Interrogative

The interrogative asks a question. In the interrogative form the auxiliary verb precedes the subject which is then followed by the main verb (i.e., Are you coming?). The interrogative form ends with a question mark (?).

Examples

1. How long have you lived in France?
2. When does the bus leave?
3. Do you enjoy listening to classical music?

Exclamatory

The exclamatory form emphasizes a statement (either declarative or imperative) with an exclamation point (!).

Examples

1. Hurry up!
2. That sounds fantastic!
3. I can't believe you said that!

SENTENCE TYPES

- Simple
- Compound
- Complex
- Compound - Complex

Simple Sentences

Simple sentences contain no conjunction (i.e., and, but, or, etc.).

Examples

1. Frank ate his dinner quickly.
2. Peter and Sue visited the museum last Saturday.
3. Are you coming to the party?

Compound Sentences

Compound sentences contain two statements that are connected by a conjunction (i.e., and, but, or, etc.).

Examples

1. I wanted to come, but it was late.
2. The company had an excellent year, so they gave everyone a bonus.
3. I went shopping, and my wife went to her classes.

Complex Sentences

Complex sentences contain a dependent clause and at least one independent clause. The two clauses are connected by a subordinator (i.e, which, who, although, despite, if, since, etc.).

Examples

1. My daughter, who was late for class, arrived shortly after the bell rang.
2. That's the man who bought our house.
3. Although it was difficult, the class passed the test with excellent marks.

Compound - Complex Sentences

Compound - complex sentences contain at least one dependent clause and more than one independent clause. The clauses are connected by both conjunctions (i.e., but, so, and, etc.) and subordinators (i.e., who, because, although, etc.)

Examples

1. John, who briefly visited last month, won the prize, and he took a short vacation.
2. Jack forgot his friend's birthday, so he sent him a card when he finally remembered.
3. The report which Tom complied was presented to the board, but it was rejected because it was too complex.

Subject and Verb Agreement

Basic Rule. The basic rule states that a singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb. NOTE: The trick is in knowing whether the subject is singular or plural. The next trick is recognizing a singular or plural verb.

Hint: Verbs do not form their plurals by adding an s as nouns do. In order to determine which verb is singular and which one is plural, think of which verb you would use with *he* or *she* and which verb you would use with *they*.

Example: *talks, talk*
Which one is the singular form? Which word would you use with *he*? We say, "He talks."
Therefore, *talks* is singular. We say, "They talk." Therefore, *talk* is plural.

Rule 1. Two singular subjects connected by *or* or *nor* require a singular verb.

Example: *My aunt or my uncle is arriving by train today.*

Rule 2. Two singular subjects connected by *either/or* or *neither/nor* require a singular verb as in Rule 1.

Examples: *Neither Juan nor Carmen is available.*

Either Kiana or Casey is helping today with stage decorations.

Rule 3. When *I* is one of the two subjects connected by *either/or* or *neither/nor*, put it second and follow it with the singular verb *am*.

Example: *Neither she nor I am going to the festival.*

Rule 4. When a singular subject is connected by *or* or *nor* to a plural subject, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

Example: *The serving bowl or the plates go on that shelf.*

Rule 5. When a singular and plural subject are connected by *either/or* or *neither/nor*, put the plural subject last and use a plural verb.

Example: *Neither Jenny nor the others are available.*

Rule 6. As a general rule, use a plural verb with two or more subjects when they are connected by *and*.

Example: *A car and a bike are my means of transportation.*

Rule Sometimes the subject is separated from the verb by words such as *along with*, *as well as*, *besides*, or *not*.

7. Ignore these expressions when determining whether to use a singular or plural verb.

Examples: *The politician, along with the newsmen, is expected shortly.*

Excitement, as well as nervousness, is the cause of her shaking.

Rule 8. The pronouns *each*, *everyone*, *every one*, *everybody*, *anyone*, *anybody*, *someone*, and *somebody* are singular and require singular verbs. Do not be misled by what follows *of*.

Examples: *Each of the girls sings well.*

Every one of the cakes is gone.

NOTE: *Everyone* is one word when it means *everybody*. *Every one* is two words when the meaning is *each one*.

Rule 9. With words that indicate portions—*percent*, *fraction*, *part*, *majority*, *some*, *all*, *none*, *remainder*, and so forth—look at the noun in your *of* phrase (object of the preposition) to determine whether to use a singular or plural verb. If the object of the preposition is singular, use a singular verb. If the object of the preposition is plural, use a plural verb.

Examples: *Fifty percent of the pie has disappeared.*
Pie is the object of the preposition *of*.

Fifty percent of the pies have disappeared.
Pies is the object of the preposition.

One-third of the city is unemployed.

One-third of the people are unemployed.
NOTE: Hyphenate all spelled-out fractions.

All of the pie is gone.

All of the pies are gone.

Some of the pie is missing.

Some of the pies are missing.

None of the garbage was picked up.

None of the sentences were punctuated correctly.

Of all her books, none have sold as well as the first one.

NOTE: Apparently, the SAT testing service considers *none* as a singular word only. However, according to *Merriam Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, "Clearly *none* has been both singular and plural since Old English and still is. The notion that it is singular only is a myth of unknown origin that appears to have arisen in the 19th century. If in context it seems like a singular to you, use a singular verb; if it seems like a plural, use a plural verb. Both are acceptable beyond serious criticism" (p. 664).

Rule 10. When *either* and *neither* are subjects, they always take singular verbs.

Examples: *Neither of them is available to speak right now.*

Either of us is capable of doing the job.

Rule 11. The words *here* and *there* have generally been labeled as adverbs even though they indicate place. In sentences beginning with *here* or *there*, the subject follows the verb.

Examples: *There are four hurdles to jump.*

There is a high hurdle to jump.

Rule 12. Use a singular verb with sums of money or periods of time.

Examples: *Ten dollars is a high price to pay.*

Five years is the maximum sentence for that offense.

Rule 13. Sometimes the pronoun *who*, *that*, or *which* is the subject of a verb in the middle of the sentence. The pronouns *who*, *that*, and *which* become singular or plural according to the noun directly in front of them. So, if that noun is singular, use a singular verb. If it is plural, use a plural verb.

Examples: *Salma is the scientist who writes/write the reports.*

The word in front of *who* is *scientist*, which is singular. Therefore, use the singular verb *writes*.

He is one of the men who does/do the work.

The word in front of *who* is *men*, which is plural. Therefore, use the plural verb *do*.

Rule 14. Collective nouns such as *team* and *staff* may be either singular or plural depending on their use in the sentence.

Examples: *The staff is in a meeting.*
Staff is acting as a unit here.

The staff are in disagreement about the findings.

The staff are acting as separate individuals in this example.

The sentence would read even better as:

The staff members are in disagreement about the findings.

USES OF TENSES

Present Simple Tense

The present simple is used for established facts and things in general.

It is also used for habitual activities or routines.

The simple tenses are generally used with **verbs of perception**: *sound, seem, appear, smell, taste, look and feel* (note that *look* and *feel* can also be used with the continuous tenses).

The present simple is used with *hear*, and with *see* (except when it means 'to meet').

The simple tenses are always used with so called **state (or stative) verbs**, such as *agree, approve of, believe, belong to, consider* (hold an opinion), *consist of, contain, cost, depend, disagree, gather* (understand), *hate, have* (own), *know, like, loathe, love, mean, own, need, possess, prefer, realize, regret, remember, resemble, suppose, think* (hold an opinion), *understand, want, wish*, etc.

The present simple is *usually* used with so called **performative verbs** (i.e. utterances that actually constitute an action), such as *accept, acknowledge, admit, advise, apologize, assume, deny, guarantee, hope, inform, predict, promise, recommend, suggest, warn*, etc.

It is used for schedules drawn up by others.

It is often employed when telling jokes or funny stories.

The present simple is favored by live sports commentators for word economy and to convey a sense of excitement and directness.

The present simple is also preferred in newspaper headlines for succinctness where space is at a premium.

Present Continuous Tense

The present continuous is used for temporary actions or events going on at or around the time of speaking.

It is used for self-made schedules, generally for the not too distant future.

It is also used for longer-term enterprises.

'A banana **is** never quite straight.'
'Malaysia **exports** rubber.'

The President **gets up** at five and **starts** work at seven.

Going to Fiji **sounds** just great because the beaches **appear** less crowded and the prices **seem** reasonable.

This French bread **smells** quite fresh, **tastes** delicious, **feels** very soft and **looks** just great.
COMPARE: 'I **am** not **feeling** very well today' and 'You **are looking** wonderful in that new dress, my dear, but what happened to the curtains?'

'I **hear** footsteps. Quick, someone's coming!'
'I **see** you don't understand what I mean.'
COMPARE: 'She **is seeing** the dentist tomorrow.'

'Some people **believe** in UFOs, but I **think** they're misguided.'

'Henry **regrets** what he did and **wishes** to make amends.'

'Although, of course, I don't normally **approve of** gossip, I do **like** her new autobiography. It **contains** a number of sensational revelations about the world of showbiz!'

'He **admits** he made a big mistake, **acknowledges** full responsibility, **accepts** the consequences, **apologizes** from the bottom of his heart and **promises** not to do it again.'

'His ship **sails** at dawn.'
'The next train **leaves** at half-past six.'

'A man **wanders** into a restaurant and **says** he **can** eat a horse. The waiter **tells** him he's come to the wrong place.'

'Agassi **leads** four games to one in the first set.'
'The crowd **roars** as Tyson **takes** a huge bite out of Holyfield's ear.'

'Iraq **Invades** Kuwait'
'Man **Steals** Clock, **Faces** Time'
'Fake Cardiologist **Breaks** Woman's Heart'

'The electrician **is mending** a fuse.'
'It's **snowing**.'
'In London John **is staying** at the Savoy.'

'Lucia's **leaving** for Milan after lunch.'
'Dan and Crystal **are getting married** in June.'

'He's **studying** hard to become a doctor.'

Used with adverbs of (high) frequency to express disapproval of annoying habits.

The present continuous also used to set the scene for jokes or funny stories told in the present simple.

The present continuous of *to be* is used to react to behavior perceived as uncharacteristic for someone.

The present continuous must be used with *have* when it is an **action verb**.

Remember that so called **state verbs** cannot be used in continuous tense forms.

Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect is used to emphasize the **results** in the present of a recently completed **past activity**.

It is used to emphasize the **results** in the present of a **recent event**.

American English prefers the simple past tense to convey personal news. It thereby loses the subtlety of British English to clearly distinguish between recent and not so recent events.

It is used for breaking news headlines or when wishing to emphasize *that* something has occurred rather than exactly *when* it occurred.

The present perfect is used with *already*, *just* and *yet*.

Note that American English often uses the simple past tense with *already*, *just* and *yet*.

It is used to refer to a person's entire life experience since they were born.

It is used with *ever* to question a person's entire life experience of something in particular.

American English, on the other hand, prefers the simple past tense with *ever*.

The present perfect is also used to **quantify** something done or progress made so far.

Present Perfect Continuous Tense

Used to emphasize **activities** that were in progress right up to or shortly before the time of speaking and so have a direct influence on the current situation.

Used with *for* or *since* to say **how long** an ongoing or continuing

'Joe Lieberman's **running** for President.'

'He **is** always **complaining**.'
'She's forever **losing** her keys.'

'This guy **is sitting** all by himself in a bar **looking** pretty inebriated, so the barman **refuses** to serve him another drink.'

'He really **is being** stupid' (meaning this person is normally more sensible).
COMPARE: 'He really **is** stupid' (meaning he is stupid the whole time).

'She **is having** another baby / filet steak for dinner / a shower / a heart attack / etc.'

'She ~~is having~~ **has** a lot of money.'
'She ~~is knowing~~ **knows** how to fly a plane'
'He ~~is preferring~~ **prefers** coffee to tea.'

'Someone **has eaten** my sandwiches' (which explains why the plate is empty and I'll have to go hungry).

'I've **lost** my passport' (hence I can't leave the country).

'I lost my passport.' (Today? Last week? Last year?)

'Two lions **have escaped** from Chessington Zoo.'
'Powerful tornadoes **have hit** Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas'

'Samantha **has** already **left**, but Cindy **has** just **arrived**, so I guess the party **hasn't finished** yet.'

'Samantha already left, but Cindy just arrived, so I guess the party didn't finish yet.'

'Dan **has traveled** a great deal, but he **has** never **been** to Greenland.'

'**Have** you ever **seen** a straight banana?'
'**Has** Chuck ever **done** an honest day's work in his life?'

'Did you ever see a straight banana?'
'Did Chuck ever do an honest day's work in his life?'

'Harry **has driven** 200 miles since breakfast.'
'Meg **has saved** \$8,000 toward her new BMW.'

'She **has been using** a computer all day' (so her eyes are now bloodshot).
'Someone **has been eating** my sandwiches' (so half of them are missing).

'Harry **has been driving** for three hours.'

activity has been in progress.

In many other cases the present perfect continuous can be exchanged for the present perfect simple, although when the latter is chosen one tends to feel that change might be in the offing.

Remember that so called **state verbs** cannot be used in continuous tense forms.

Past Simple Tense

The past simple is used for activities or events completed at a specific time in the past (which is either understood or indicated by a time expression).

It is used for two or more completed past activities or events that occurred in sequence rather than in parallel.

The past simple corresponds to the **foreground** in a painting. It is used for the action in a story (the past continuous sets the scene).

It is used with adverbs of frequency to talk about repeated actions or events in the past; *would* and *used to* are also used to talk about past habits and routines.

It is used with verbs of perception: *sound, seem, appear, smell, taste, look* and *feel* (note that *look* and *feel* can also be used with the continuous tenses).

The simple tenses are always used for so called **state verbs** such as *agree, approve of, believe, belong to, consider* (hold an opinion), *consist, contain, cost, depend, disagree, gather* (understand), *hate, have(own), know, like, loathe, love, mean, own, need, possess, prefer, realize, regret, remember, resemble, suppose, think* (hold an opinion), *understand, want, wish*, etc.

Usually preferred with so called **performative verbs** (i.e. utterances which actually constitute an action) such as *accept, acknowledge, admit, advise, apologize, assume, bet, deny, guarantee, hope, inform, predict, promise, recommend, suggest, warn*, etc.

Past Continuous Tense

The past continuous corresponds to the **background** in a painting. It sets the scene for all the action reported in the past simple.

It is used for temporary actions or events that were going on at or around a particular time in the past when something of shorter duration occurred.

'Meg **has been saving** for her BMW for ten months.'

'I **ve been living** here for ten years (in other words, I feel almost like a native).'

'I **have lived here** for ten years (so perhaps it's about time I moved on to pastures greener).'

Manchester United **thrashed** Chelsea 4:1.
The ice sculptures **attracted** many visitors.
Many of the bars **closed** at midnight.

I **went** into town at ten, **booked** my summer holiday at the travel agent's, **ate** lunch at Pizza Hut, **saw** the new Bond film at the Odeon cinema, **did** my shopping for the weekend and **arrived** home in time for tea at four.

The rock group were performing when the earthquake **struck**. Nobody **noticed**.

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher often only **slept** four hours a night. She **would** go to bed at one in the morning and get up at five to read the morning papers. The first thing she **used to** check was what they were saying about her.

The bread **smelt** fresh, **tasted** delicious, **felt** very soft and **looked** just great.
COMPARE: 'Max **wasn't feeling** very well today. He really **was looking** under the weather.'

'The minister ~~was agreeing~~ **agreed** to resign even though he ~~wasn't thinking~~ **didn't think** he ~~was needing~~ **needed** to.'

'Although the rich oil sheik **promised** (was promising) the Hollywood actress a million dollars in cash, a new Mercedes and a house in Palm Beach, her lawyer **advised** her not to marry him.'

'I **was sitting** in my armchair **looking** up at the night sky. The moon **was beaming** brightly. All the stars **were twinkling**. Then it **came** to me: I **had** to get the roof fixed!'

'While I **was waiting** for the ferry I **ate** lunch in a sushi bar.'

'While I **was wolfing** down my sushi a small piece of fish **started** moving.'

It is also used for two activities of similar duration that were going on in parallel.

Remember that so called state verbs cannot be used in continuous tense forms.

Past Perfect Tense

This tense is used to talk about the pre-past, i.e. activities or events **completed before** (but relevant to) subsequent activities or events referred to in the past simple.

If, however, the second action is a direct result of the first, then the past simple is used for both.

The past perfect tense is used to report on past intentions that were sadly never realized.

Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The past perfect continuous is used to report on an **activity of interest or direct relevance** that was still in progress up until or immediately prior to a subsequent event in the past.

Remember that so called state verbs cannot be used in continuous tense forms.

Future Simple Tense

WILL: used to express pure futurity (i.e. without any element of willpower).

WILL: used when making predictions based upon one's knowledge of a person's character.

WILL: used for plain, informal requests, as well as orders given to subordinates.

Stressed WILL: used with stress to express irritation over the bad habits of others.

WILL/SHALL: used for spontaneous offers or plans made at the time of speaking, or to agree to something.

WILL/SHALL: used for promises.

SHALL: sometimes used instead of WILL in the first person singular and plural in more formal style to express futurity, especially in cases where the element of willpower is involved.

SHALL: used when seeking others' approval of offers or suggestions.

'I **was washing** the car while my wife **was cleaning** the house.'

'I ~~was knowing~~ **knew** Samantha very well.'

'I **had just prepared** a candlelight dinner for two when the Jehovah's Witnesses **called**.'

'Jacky, who **was** quite breathless, **had climbed** ten flights of stairs.'

'Mandy **had studied** Finnish for 3 years before she **emigrated** to Finland.'

'When the artist ~~had~~ finally **appeared** on stage, everyone **applauded**.'

'The boss **had hoped** to slip off to the golf course for the rest of the afternoon but head office **wanted** to speak to him about disappointing sales figures.'

'When the chemistry teacher **returned** to the lab, he **sniffed** and **stopped** smiling. Someone **had been making** a stink bomb.'

'Police **arrested** the chief executive whose company **had been cooking** the books.'

'In 1994 I **had** already ~~been knowing~~ **known** Samantha for 10 years'.

'The sun **will** rise tomorrow morning.'

'Linda **will** help you, I'm sure.'

'Darling, **will** you post this letter for me?'

'Sally, **will** you show Mr. Anderson to the accounts department, please?'

'My husband will always invite his friends round for a drink just as I'm putting the kids to bed!'

'If you do decide to buy this car model, sir, we **ll** include a satellite navigation system.'

'Okay, I **ll** ask my bank manager for a loan.'

'Don't worry, I **won't/shan't** tell a soul!'

'I **shall (will)** be late this evening.'

'We **shan't (won't)** go that nightclub anymore; the prices are exorbitant.'

'We **shall** overcome!'

'I **shall** succeed!'

'**Shall** I buy you a watch for your birthday?'

'**Shall** we all go out to dinner?'

SHALL: used to elicit more information.

GOING TO: used to talk about plans already made before the time of speaking.

GOING TO: used when forecasting what is likely or inevitable because all the signs are there.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS: often used instead of **GOING TO** for self-made plans and voluntary schedules, especially for the not too distant future.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS: *usually* preferred to the **GOING TO** future with **GO** and **COME**.

PRESENT SIMPLE: used for schedules decided by others.

Future Continuous Tense

Used for actions or events forecast to be in progress at or around a particular time in the future.

Used for future events that are the result of previous arrangements or decisions.

The future continuous tense can be used instead of the present continuous with future meaning.

It is also used to make extra polite enquiries about someone's future plans.

Remember that so called state verbs cannot be used in the continuous tense forms.

Future Perfect Tense

Used for activities or events forecast to be **completed** by a particular time in the future.

Used to quantify progress forecast to have been made at a given time in the future.

Future Perfect Continuous Tense

Used for activities forecast still to be **in progress** at some time in the future.

Remember that so called state verbs cannot be used in continuous tense forms.

'Which restaurant **shall** we go to?'

'I'm **going to** buy a new digital camera. My old one doesn't seem to produce sharp enough pictures.'

'Look over there. That crazy driver's lost control. He's **going to** crash!'
'I feel awful after that raw fish. I think I'm **going to** throw up.'

'We're **having** a party on Friday night.'
'She's **leaving** home right after breakfast and **driving** all the way up to Tallahassee in her grandma's old car.'

'He is **going to** ~~go to~~ New York after he leaves Washington.'
'The Smiths are ~~going to come~~ **coming** home from Canada next spring'.

'He **flies** to Cairo on business at noon tomorrow.'

'The kids **will be sleeping** when I get home.'
'Some Japanese schoolboys **will** no doubt still **be donning** 19th century black Prussian military uniforms in a hundred years' time.'

'As you know, I'll **be working** overtime this evening.'
'Nancy **will be staying** at her parents' home over Christmas (she always does).'

'She'll **be leaving** home after breakfast.'

'**Will** you **be needing** your laptop at work today?'
'**Is IBM going to be recruiting** any new personnel in the near future?'

'The museum is well sign-posted, so you **will be** ~~knowing~~ **know** which way to go.'

'No matter what their academic performance, many students at Japan's most prestigious universities **will have found** a job one whole year before they graduate.'

'He smokes 20 a day, so this time next year he **will have** happily **puffed** his way through another 584 meters of cigarette.'

'By the end of 2013 we **will have been flying** in planes for 110 years.'

'Next summer I **will have** ~~been knowing~~ **known** Samantha for 20 years.'