

VERBS and TENSES

*A comprehensive guide to mastering
the use of English verbs and tenses*

George Davidson

- ◆ Clear and precise guidance on the rules and correct use of verb tenses, modal verbs and much more
- ◆ Information on differences between British and American usage
- ◆ Ample exercises, including contextual ones, for self-testing
- ◆ Extensive 'Help' notes



VERBS OF TENSES

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Preface

For grammarians in the ancient world, the verb was the key word in the sentence, and this view is shared by many modern grammarians too. Whether verbs are actually more important than, say, nouns or adjectives might be debated, but there is no doubt that anyone who wishes to speak any language well must have a firm grasp of the verb grammar of that language.

It is certainly true that in many languages the grammar of verbs is far more complicated than that of any other part of speech. English is one such language. Learners of English must get to grips with the correct use of the **verb tenses**, the meanings of **lexical verbs** and **auxiliary verbs**, the uses of the **modal verbs** (such as *can* and *will*), the spelling rules relating to verbs (*stay* → *stays* but *cry* → *cries*; *rain* → *raining* but *run* → *running*), **irregular verbs** (such as *sing/sang/sung* and *go/went/gone*), and much more besides. Learners also have to cope with the terminology used in describing verb grammar, such as **transitive** and **intransitive**, **finite** and **non-finite**, and **indicative** and **subjunctive**.

Verbs and Tenses aims to help learners of English through the difficulties they may encounter when trying to master English verbs. Chapters 2 to 5 of the book provide a clear, concise, but complete description of all the important rules of English verb grammar and spelling, while in Chapter 1 learners will find a quick introduction to much of the grammatical terminology they will need. Other grammatical terms are introduced and explained in the later sections of the book as and when they are required. Each grammatical point discussed is illustrated with many examples of usage, and at the end of each unit there are exercises by means of which students can test themselves on what they have learnt.

The main focus in **Verbs and Tenses** is on British English, but throughout the book attention is drawn to points of difference between British and American usage.

Thanks are due to Anne Seaton and Y H Mew for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this book, and to Dr Andrew Watson, Principal Teacher of Chemistry in Currie Community High School, Edinburgh, Scotland, for supplying the material on which Exercise B of Unit 24 is based.

What Is a Verb?

A **verb** is a word that either describes an action or an event (what someone or something *does*) or else helps to describe a state or a condition (what someone or something *is* or *is like*).

It rained all day yesterday.

The girl smiled at him.

Her father owns the local newspaper.

Give him a kiss!

The door opened.

If only we had more time!

We arrive in Singapore at nine o'clock at night.

Her mother is a nurse.

Be sensible!

She seems honest.

He looks a bit worried.

It is, of course, quite possible to have two or more verbs in a sentence:

I hope she returned the book to you in good condition.

I suspect that he knew the reason for the delay.

I think that is the tool we need for this job.

I hope to return to Egypt next year.

They wanted to know the reason for the delay.

I saw her put that ring in her pocket.

Unit

1 Action Verbs and Linking Verbs

2 Verb Phrases: Main Verbs and Auxiliary Verbs

3 Word Order in Verb Phrases

4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

5 Phrasal Verbs

6 Finite and Non-finite Verbs

1 Action Verbs and Linking Verbs

Did You Know?

The word 'verb' comes from Latin *verbum*, meaning 'word'. Ancient Greek and Roman grammarians considered the verb to be the most important word in a sentence.

A verb may describe an action or activity, or an event or happening.

*The dogs barked loudly.
Cats and dogs always fight.
My grandmother knits beautiful scarves.
We waited for you for over half an hour.
Johnny ate a cheese sandwich.
No-one spoke.
Tommy leapt over the wall.
Mrs Lee had a cup of coffee.
She closed the book and shut her eyes.
The car crashed into a lamppost.*

Verbs that describe actions, activities, events and happenings are called **action verbs**.

■ An **action verb** may equally well describe a mental process such as thinking, knowing or wanting:

*Anyone who knows anything about computers knows that.
'How very strange,' she thought.
I remember her face but I forget her name.
She immediately realized her mistake.
They fear the loss of their good reputation.
The police suspect a terrorist plot.
'What next?' he wondered.
I want a new carpet.
We need a bigger house.*

■ An **action verb** may also describe something that happens to a person or thing:

*Johnny got first prize in the painting competition at school.
She received an unexpected gift.
The couple sustained severe injuries in the accident.*

Some verbs do not describe actions, thoughts, events, etc, but are used in descriptions of what someone or something *is* or what they *are like*. Such verbs are known as **linking verbs**.

The main linking verbs in English are ***appear, be, become, feel, get, go, grow, keep, look, make, prove, remain, seem, smell, sound, stay, taste*** and ***turn***:

The idea may appear sensible, but I think it has some drawbacks.

My mother is very keen on art.

We became firm friends.

I feel so tired these days.

Her mother got very anxious when she didn't arrive on time.

She went as white as a sheet when she saw him.

We all grow old eventually.

Keep quiet until they've gone.

You look worried.

She would make an excellent teacher.

What we planned to do unfortunately proved impossible.

They remained bitter enemies from then on.

Your plan seems OK to me.

That cake smells nice.

A week off work sounds good to me.

I stayed awake all night worrying about it.

That soup tastes awful.

The weather turned very cold on Monday.

Grammar Help

A **linking verb** is also known as an **intensive verb** or a **copula** /'kɒpjule/. **Copula** is a Latin word meaning 'link'.

Grammar Help

The verbs ***appear, prove*** and ***seem*** are often followed by ***to be***:

They appear to be friendly.

What we wanted proved to be impossible.

The children seemed to be happy.

- Most words that function as linking verbs can be action verbs as well:

The soup smells good. (linking verb – 'smells good' describes what the soup is like)

She leant over the pot to smell the soup. (action verb – 'smell the soup' says what she did)

Did You Know?

Jokes are often based on sentences that can be interpreted in more than one way grammatically. The following joke is based on the use of **make** as both an action verb ('makes' = 'cooks' or 'prepares') and a linking verb ('makes' = 'is'):

*Two cannibals were eating their lunch.
One cannibal said to the other, 'Your wife makes a good stew.'
'Yes,' said the second cannibal, 'but all the same, I'm going to miss her.'*

Grammar Help

- ◆ The person or thing doing the action described by the verb is the **subject** of the verb:
We [subject] waited [verb] for you for over half an hour.
The dog barked loudly.
She immediately realized her mistake.
Cats and dogs always fight.
If only we had some rope!
The police came at once.
The boy kicked the stone over the wall.
They smiled to one another.
- ◆ The person or thing that the action described by the verb is *done to* or affects is the **direct object** of the verb:
The boy kicked [verb] the stone [direct object] over the wall.
The police soon caught [verb] the burglars.
The dog was chasing a cat.
Her mother was reading the newspaper.
She immediately realized her mistake.
We need a bigger house.
- ◆ There is more about the objects of verbs in Unit 4.
- ◆ The word or phrase that follows the linking verb and says something about the subject of the verb is called a **complement**:
That cake smells [verb] nice [complement].
You look very worried.
We all forget things when we get old.
Roses are red, violets are blue.
His father is a teacher, but he really wants to be a farmer.
I felt a bit of a fool.
Their son became a doctor and their daughter became a nurse.
They remained good friends from then on.

Some complements are phrases formed with prepositions (such as **In** or **on**):

It looks in good condition.
She seems very on the ball.

The weather suddenly turned very wet and windy. (linking verb – 'turned very wet and windy' describes what the weather was like)
She turned and walked out. (action verb – 'turned' says what she did)

John made an excellent chairman. (linking verb – 'made an excellent chairman' describes what John was like as a chairman)

John made an excellent apple pie. (action verb – 'made an excellent apple pie' says what John did)

The woman suddenly appeared very anxious. (linking verb – 'appeared very anxious' describes what the woman was like)

The woman suddenly appeared round the corner. (action verb – 'appeared round the corner' says what the woman did)

- ◆ Some linking verbs may be followed not by a complement but by an **adverb**, an **adverb phrase** or a **prepositional phrase**. Such words and phrases do not describe what someone or something *is like*, but say *where* the subject of the verb is, *when* it is, etc:

The boys are here.

Our car is right outside.

The only way over the river was across a narrow bridge.

The meeting is at nine o'clock.

These books are for you.

Do It Yourself

- A** Circle the verbs in the following sentences. (They are all action verbs.)

1. The man parked his car outside the shop.
2. I hate cabbage!
3. She ran downstairs and opened all the windows.
4. Scotland beat England 3–2.
5. The car needs a good wash.
6. I washed the car before we went into town yesterday.
7. I hope his sister comes too.
8. He thanked the woman for her kindness.
9. Archaeologists believe that an earthquake destroyed the city of Troy.
10. They paid more than \$10,000 for the ring.
11. She laughed as she walked with him to the door.
12. The waitress asked him what he wanted.
13. Go and fetch a doctor.
14. He saw someone he knew on the other side of the road.
15. The man soon returned with the tools he needed.

Handy Hint

To find the action verb in a sentence, ask yourself which word describes what someone or something is doing or thinking or what is happening.

There may be more than one subject and more than one verb in a sentence.

- B** Circle the verbs in the following passage and underline their subjects.

The taxi left at 6.24 and arrived at the airport at 6.31. So we were right after all: ten minutes is more than enough time for the journey. The taxi company was quite wrong when they said the journey took at least 25 minutes. The journey cost \$8.60, but while I searched in my bag for change, since I wanted to

Handy Hint

There are both action verbs and linking verbs in this exercise.

give the driver a tip, he just got back into his taxi and drove away again. Perhaps he was in a hurry. Maybe he had another customer.

The plane reached Luton early, and our bus was early too, so we were home by ten o'clock! The house is OK, but I realize from the pile of letters behind the front door that five weeks is far too long an absence. And the garden looks as awful as I expected. It is full of weeds now and needs a good tidying-up.

Warning!

Not all the verbs in the following sentences are linking verbs. Some are action verbs.

C Circle the linking verbs in the following sentences and underline the complements.

1. Bread gets more expensive every week.
2. I got a letter from my aunt in Canada this morning.
3. He doesn't want to be a chartered account. He wants to be a lion-tamer.
4. The cabinet looks badly damaged.
5. I've made breakfast for you.
6. Bacon and eggs make a good breakfast.
7. The hotel sounds nice.
8. These cakes look jolly good.
9. She looked at her husband in amazement.
10. She felt the satin sheets. They felt beautifully soft and smooth.

2 Verb Phrases: Main Verbs and Auxiliary Verbs

A **verb phrase** is a group of two or more words that have the same function as a single verb in a sentence.

Johnny eats an apple every day. (verb)

Johnny is eating an apple. (verb phrase)

Gerry ate three cheese sandwiches. (verb)

Gerry has eaten three cheese sandwiches. (verb phrase)

She showed me the photos of her little granddaughter. (verb)

She had shown me the photos of her little granddaughter.
(verb phrase)

She was showing me the photos of her little granddaughter.
(verb phrase)

We waited for you for over an hour. (verb)

We have been waiting for you for over an hour. (verb phrase)

We went to the cinema yesterday. (verb)

We could go to the cinema again tomorrow. (verb phrase)

I wrote to them last week. (verb)

I will write to them this evening. (verb phrase)

I have been writing letters all evening. (verb phrase)

Maria knew what to do. (verb)

Maria would have known what to do. (verb phrase)

The **main verb** in a verb phrase is the word that expresses the activity, event, feeling, etc that is being described in the sentence.

Grammar Help

A **main verb** is also known as a **lexical verb**.

All **main verbs** are either **action verbs** or **linking verbs**.

Her brother was singing loudly in the shower.

Mrs Lee had slipped on a patch of ice.

*My aunt will **arrive** tomorrow night.*

*Cats will always **chase** birds.*

*It will **be** dark soon.*

*It may **seem** simple to you but it may **look** very complicated to her.*

*They could **understand** nothing of what the man was **saying** to them.*

*You must **come** at once!*

*You may **start** work on Wednesday.*

Other examples of main verbs or lexical verbs are **ask**, **become**, **bite**, **build**, **buy**, **catch**, **clean**, **cook**, **deny**, **fall**, **find**, **finish**, **get**, **learn**, **love**, **make**, **move**, **play**, **run**, **swim**, **talk**, **teach**, **walk**, **wash** and **work**.

An **auxiliary verb** is a verb that is used along with a main verb to make different tenses or to express ideas such as possibility, necessity and permission.

Auxiliary verbs are sometimes called **helping verbs**.

*Her brother **was** sitting in the lounge.*

*Mrs Lee **had** forgotten to bring her umbrella.*

*Spring **will** soon **be** here.*

*Cats and dogs **do** fight.*

*They **could** make more of an effort to understand what I **am** telling them.*

*It **might** not rain tomorrow.*

*You **must** try to be patient!*

*The painters **may** finish the job next week.*

Grammar Help

The auxiliary verbs are usually divided into two groups: **be**, **have** and **do** are called the **primary auxiliaries** and the others are known as **modal** /'moudəl/ auxiliaries.

Modal auxiliaries are also called **modal verbs** or simply **modals**.

The main auxiliary verbs in English are **be**, **have**, **do**, **can**, **could**, **may**, **might**, **shall**, **should**, **will**, **would** and **must**.

There may be more than one auxiliary verb within a verb phrase:

*The cat **has** been frightening the canary again.*

*My aunt **will** be leaving next week.*

*It **might** **be** raining tomorrow.*

*You **could** **have** tried harder.*

*By the end of next month, I **will** **have** **been** working here for five years.*

And one auxiliary verb may relate to more than one main verb in a sentence:

People were [auxiliary verb] **singing** [main verb] **and dancing** [main verb] **in the streets.**

They had been **cutting** and **stitching** for days to get the dress finished on time.

Reporters have been **coming** and **going** all day.

She is either **laughing** or **crying.**

Grammar Help

The verbs **be**, **have** and **do** are slightly irregular:

I **am**, you **are**,
he/she/it **is**

we **are**, they **are**

I **was**, you **were**,
he/she/it **was**
we **were**, they **were**

I **have**, you **have**,
he/she/it **has**

we **have**, they **have**

I **had**, you **had**,
he/she/it **had**
we **had**, they **had**

I **do**, you **do**,
he/she/it **does**

we **do**, they **do**

I **did**, you **did**,
he/she/it **did**
we **did**, they **did**

Grammar Help

Most verbs in English are *either* lexical verbs *or else* auxiliary verbs. However, **be**, **have** and **do** can act *both* as lexical verbs *and also* as auxiliary verbs:

be

I am her brother. (lexical verb – a 'linking verb' relating the complement 'her brother' to the subject 'I')

I am working at the moment. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'working', and 'am' simply indicates the tense of the verb)

Maggie was ill. (lexical verb – a 'linking verb' linking the complement 'ill' to the subject 'Maggie')

Maggie was singing. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'singing', and 'was' indicates the tense of the verb)

have

The Smiths have a new car. (lexical verb; 'have' = 'possess' or 'own')

The Smiths have bought a new car. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'bought', and 'have' indicates the tense of the verb)

Fortunately they had some chocolate with them. (lexical verb; 'had' = 'were carrying')

Fortunately they had brought some chocolate with them. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'brought', and 'had' shows the tense of the verb)

do

We did a lot of interesting things on our holiday. (lexical verb, describing an activity)

We did not see anything interesting at all. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'see', and 'did' indicates the tense of the verb)

We do all we can to help. (lexical verb, describing action)

We do want to help. (auxiliary verb – the main verb is 'want', and 'do' makes the statement more emphatic, as well as indicating the tense of the verb)

The main verb in a verb phrase takes different forms depending on the auxiliary verb that comes before it.

- If the auxiliary verb is **be**, then the main verb will be in the form of a **present participle** (the **-ing** form of a verb):

The birds were singing in the trees outside.

I was working in the garden all weekend.

Everybody is talking about his new book.

There is more about present participles in Unit 21.

- If the auxiliary verb is **have**, then the main verb will be in the form of a **past participle** (the form of the verb that ends in **-ed**, **-t**, **-n**, etc):

Have you packed your swimming costume?

I've brought everything we need.

The girls said they had never seen the man before.

I have made a list of the things we need to buy.

Grammar Help

An infinitive without the word **to** in front of it is known as a **bare infinitive**.

The **base form** of a verb is the form that you find listed, for example, in a dictionary or vocabulary book. It has no endings such as **-s**, **-ing** or **-ed**.

When a lexical verb is followed by the infinitive of another verb, the second verb is in the form of a **to-infinitive**, that is, the infinitive of the verb preceded by **to**:
I want to know what happened.

She loves to go for long walks.

We expect to arrive sometime tomorrow.

I will try to come.

Modal verbs are followed by **bare infinitives**; lexical verbs are followed by **to-infinitives**.

There is more about past participles in Unit 22.

- If the auxiliary verb is **do** or a **modal auxiliary**, then the main verb will be in the form of an **infinitive** without **to** (that is, the base form of the verb):

I do like ice-cream.

We could come tomorrow if you like.

I will see you next week.

Why worry? It might never happen.

There is more about infinitives in Unit 23.

The verbs **dare**, in the sense of ‘be willing to risk (doing something dangerous)’, **need**, **ought to** and **used to** are often counted among the modal auxiliaries.

I daren't tell her that I've forgotten to buy her a birthday present.

You needn't leave yet. There's plenty of time.

I think we ought to leave now.

He used to live in that house over there.

There are a number of important and rather unpredictable features in the grammar of these four verbs, which will be discussed in detail in Unit 19.

Do It Yourself

A Circle the main verbs and underline the auxiliary verbs in the following sentences.

1. She could hear him clearly.
2. I have never liked opera.
3. Where will you go now?
4. What on earth have you been doing?
5. We can provide all the necessary training facilities at the college.
6. Passengers must not leave their luggage in the corridor.
7. Mrs Kim had returned with more vegetables than she could possibly use.
8. May God bless this country and its people.
9. The children were cheering and waving flags.
10. I can never ever remember her name.
11. Do you know why they are not coming?
12. I simply must tell you what has been happening here.

Handy Hint

Remember that there may be more than one auxiliary verb in a verb phrase and that there may be more than one verb phrase in a sentence.

B Say whether the words in **bold** in the following passage are main verbs or auxiliary verbs.

They **had been** searching for him for hours. He **was** lying under a tree when they found him, and **was** fast asleep, snoring loudly. He might just **have been** very tired, but he might **have been** drinking. He **had** certainly bought a bottle of whisky earlier in the day. He **had** wanted to buy two bottles but **had only had** enough money for one. His friends **had** often told him he shouldn't drink, but he **didn't** listen to them. He just **did** as he pleased. Some day the alcohol would kill him, but he **didn't** seem to care. He **was** beyond hope, some people said. Certainly it seemed that he **had** lost all hope and **had** nothing to live for.

3 Word Order in Verb Phrases

Auxiliary verbs always come before main verbs in a verb phrase.

She was [auxiliary verb] *singing* [main verb] *loudly*.

I have seen many strange things in my life.

I do know what I am talking about!

I'm sure that we could help you.

The doctor will come again tomorrow.

Do you think that she did not know where they had hidden the money?

Modal auxiliaries come before primary auxiliaries.

I suppose they could [modal auxiliary] *have* [primary auxiliary] *done* [main verb] it.

Madonna will be appearing on the Parkinson Show next week.

We would have been here sooner if the traffic had not been so bad.

But you must have seen her!

I may have seen her. I'm not sure.

The auxiliary **have** comes before the auxiliary **be**.

What have you been doing?

I had been working in the garden all day.

Fortunately, the thieves have been caught by the police.

Grammar Help

There can only be *one* modal verb in a verb phrase. It would NOT be grammatical to say, for example, *we will can go tomorrow*, since both *will* and *can* are modal verbs. Similarly, it would be wrong to say *we will must go*, since both *will* and *must* are modal verbs.

It is, however, sometimes possible to use a lexical verb or a phrase in sentences like these, so making the sentences grammatical:

We will be able to go tomorrow.

NOT *We will can go tomorrow.*

We will have to go.

NOT *We will must go.*

The verbs that form a **verb phrase** usually stand together in a sentence, but they may sometimes be separated by one or more other words, such as adverbs.

- The words in a verb phrase may be separated by adverbs, such as **not**, **-n't**, **never**, **always**, **often**, **just** or **only**:

We did not see anything interesting at all.

They might not always be able to help you.

The parcels may not even have arrived yet.

The boys haven't done anything wrong.

I was only trying to help.

I have never been here before.

My mother had often warned me not to talk to strangers.

- The verb phrase may be split by the words **both**, **all** and **each**:

You can all come with us.

The boys are both coming.

You may each choose a story.

- In questions, the verb phrase may be split by the *subject* of the verb:

Did you see anything?

Is she coming here too?

Has the parcel arrived yet?

Will you be staying long?

Will the painters have finished by next week?

- The verb phrase may, of course, be split by the subject of the verb **and** one or more other words:

Have you ever been here before?

Are the girls all coming?

Are they definitely coming?

Did you two really see a ghost?

Have the girls only just arrived?

Do It Yourself

A Underline all the words that form verb phrases in the following sentences.

1. Graham has arrived at last.
2. The medicine is definitely making me better.
3. We must meet for lunch some day.
4. The girl had been accused of stealing money from her employers.
5. I really do believe you.
6. How can those people be so stupid?
7. They may not have completely understood the nature of the problem.
8. If only I could have been there with you!
9. I have just been speaking to my mother on the phone.
10. I was just thinking how nice it would be if we could stay here for a few more days.
11. If it hadn't been raining, she too would have run out into the garden.
12. Could we please have another jug of water?

B Answer the following questions using the adverb given in brackets.

Example

Question: Have you been to Japan before? (never)
No, I _____ to Japan.

Answer: No, I **have never been** to Japan.

1. Did you apologize to them? (not)

No, I _____ to them.

2. Will you remember what I told you? (always)

Yes, I _____ what you told me.

3. Have they seen us? (-n't)

No, they _____ us.

4. Have you played billiards before? (often)

Yes, I _____ billiards.

5. Are you coming? (just)

Yes, I _____ .

6. Must we wait at the gate for you? (always)

Yes, you _____ at the gate for me.

7. Will they ever come back again? (almost certainly)

Oh, they _____ back again.

8. Can you see them yet? (just)

Yes, I _____ them now.

9. Are you going away on holiday this year? (definitely)

Yes, we _____ away on holiday this year.

10. Would I be right in thinking they lost all their money?
(probably)

Yes, you _____ right in thinking they lost all their
money.

11. Could there be another reason for her disappearance?
(well)

Yes, there _____ another reason for her
disappearance.

12. Do you like lychees? (-n't)

No, I _____ lychees at all.

13. Have you been waiting long? (-n't)

No, we _____ very long.

14. Could they have known where to look? (-n't possibly)

No, they _____ where to look.

4 Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs

A lexical verb that has a *direct object* is a **transitive verb**. Some transitive verbs have both a *direct object* and an *indirect object*.

I like dogs.

The boys were kicking a ball.

They could hear a strange noise.

The little girl was wearing a red jersey.

Don't disturb Daddy. He's reading the newspaper.

Why did you hit your little brother?

I cut my finger when I was slicing the meat.

Please put your shoes in the cupboard.

I've only got \$4 and I need \$5.50.

Can you lend me \$1.50?

All transitive verbs are **action verbs** (see Unit 1).

- The **direct object** of a transitive verb is the person or thing that is most directly affected by the action or condition described by the verb. For example, the direct object may describe what the subject of the verb *has*, or *gets*, or *thinks*, or *likes*, or *does something to*, or *does something with*:

Did You Know?

'Transitive' comes from the Latin word *transire*, meaning 'to go across'. The action of the verb 'goes across' from the subject of the verb to the direct object of the verb.

I like dogs.

The boys were kicking a ball.

He got \$5 from his uncle.

She hugged him and kissed him.

Foxes eat rabbits and mice and other small animals.

What are you holding in your hand?

Who did you see?

Which cake do you want?

The direct object of a transitive verb may not always be a noun or a noun phrase. It may sometimes be a clause with another verb in it:

I hope you will join us.

I like paddling in the sea.

We were wondering where you were.

I'd hate to be poor.

- The **indirect object** of a transitive verb is the person or thing that the direct object is given *to*, done *for*, etc:

I gave her my book. (= I gave my book to her)

He bought the children some sweets. (= He bought some sweets for the children)

I'd love to show you my garden. (= I'd love to show my garden to you)

Keep me a seat, will you? (= Keep a seat for me, will you?)

Depending on what follows the verb in the sentence, transitive verbs fall into three different classes:
monotransitive, ditransitive and complex transitive verbs.

- 1 **Monotransitive** /mənou'trænsitiv/ verbs have only one object, a **direct object**:

I know the answer.

I need a new dictionary.

He cut himself.

We saw a lovely pair of shoes in the shop window.

Some silly boy threw a stone through our window.

Did You Know?

Mono- means 'one': monotransitive verbs have *one* object.

- 2 **Ditransitive** /daɪ'trænsitiv/ verbs have two objects, a **direct object** and an **indirect object**:

I told [verb] him [indirect object] the answer [direct object].

I gave her my dictionary.

She took her mother a bunch of flowers.

Lend me five dollars, will you?

He awarded himself a bar of chocolate.

Did You Know?

Di- means 'two': ditransitive verbs have *two* objects.

3 Complex transitive verbs have a **direct object** and a **complement** (a word or phrase that says something about the direct object):

They've painted [verb] their house [direct object] purple [complement]!

At the first meeting of the committee, they elected Joe chairman.

We find your allegations absolutely ludicrous.

I think she is calling you a liar.

He calls himself the king of rock-and-roll.

Grammar Help

Remember that a complement that follows a linking verb says something about the subject of the verb:

George Bush [subject] is [linking verb] the President of the United States [complement].

You are wrong.

The table was clean.

A complement that follows a complex transitive verb says something about the direct object of the verb:

They elected [complex transitive verb] George Bush [direct object] President of the United States [complement].

I will prove you wrong.

They had washed the table clean.

Did You Know?

'Reflexive' comes from the Latin word *reflectere*, meaning 'to bend back'. The action of the verb 'bends back' to the subject of the verb; that is to say, it is something that the subject of the verb does to himself or herself.

When the object of a transitive verb is a **reflexive pronoun**, such as **himself**, **myself** or **ourselves**, the verb is sometimes called a **reflexive verb**.

He warmed himself at the fire.

I cut myself while shaving this morning.

Have you ever asked yourself that question?

You two should consider yourselves lucky. You might have hurt yourselves.

We ate so much of the cake that we made ourselves ill.

Intransitive Verbs

A lexical verb that has *neither* a complement *nor* a direct object is an **intransitive verb**.

We all laughed.

She speaks with a strong American accent.

Are you going with them or are you staying here?

Our guests should be arriving at any moment.

The little girl was crying in the corner of the room.

She blushed furiously.

The tortoises live in the garage.

Have you talked to your husband about your worries?

The hounds were howling in the kennels.

All intransitive verbs are **action verbs** (see Unit 1).

Grammar Help

Verbs can, of course, belong to more than one category. For example, some verbs are *both* transitive *and* intransitive, depending on whether or not there is a direct object in the sentence:

He opened the door. (transitive)

The door opened. (intransitive)

He parked his car outside the shop. (transitive)

He parked outside the shop. (intransitive)

My brother smokes a pipe. (transitive)

My brother never smokes in the house. (intransitive)

You wash the dishes and I'll dry them. (transitive)

Let's do the dishes. You wash and I'll dry. (intransitive)

I think I can do it. (transitive)

Think before you speak. (intransitive)

Similarly, some verbs can be transitive, intransitive *and* linking verbs:

She could smell the smoke when she went into the room. (transitive verb – 'the smoke' is the direct object of 'smell')

That stew smells good. (linking verb – 'good' is a complement, describing the stew)

Your feet smell! (intransitive verb – there is no object or complement)

She was turning the pages of the book without really looking at them. (transitive verb)

Leaves turn brown in autumn. (linking verb)

She suddenly turned and ran out of the room. (intransitive verb)

Do It Yourself

Handy Hint

Remember that the object of a transitive verb may be a clause, and that the clause itself may also contain a transitive verb with a direct object and possibly also an indirect object or a complement.

A Find the transitive verbs in the following sentences and underline the direct objects, circle the indirect objects and put an X through the complements.

1. We need some more nails.
2. Can you give me any more nails?
3. I'll tell you what I want.
4. That makes me very angry
5. What more do you need?
6. I say that we should give him a medal.
7. Take her a box of chocolates.
8. Always allow yourself enough time to check your answers at the end of the exam.
9. I'll lend you the book once I've finished it.
10. Call yourself a doctor? You don't know anything about medicine!
11. He made himself a cup of tea.
12. He made himself useful around the house.

B Look at the lexical verbs in **bold** in the following passage, and say whether they are transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, or linking verbs.

Dear Mike,

I **hope** yesterday **was** a good day for you, even though you were **working** on your birthday. It would have **been** nice if you could have **had** a holiday. I **suppose** you **got** wet on your way to and from the office, though I was **hoping** the rain might have **stopped** at the times when you would be **standing** at the bus-stop.

I **thought** the weather was **getting** better these days and that spring was **coming**, but after the rain yesterday we even **had** some snow this morning. Some of the showers **were** quite heavy.

Billy Reid the joiner **came** with the new window for the garden hut this afternoon. Luckily the snow had **stopped** by then, though it **was** still very cold. I **gave** him a cup of tea to **keep**

him warm while he was **working**. The job didn't **seem** very difficult – he **finished** it in less than ten minutes. He'll **come** again when the weather **is** not so windy and **cover** the bare bit on the hut roof with roofing felt.

I **forgot** to **tell** you when we **spoke** last Sunday on the phone that your Uncle Tony **fell** and **broke** his leg on Saturday. Of course, they had to **call** an ambulance for him. He **had** an operation on Sunday morning. He **is** **getting** better, though, and can already **walk** with the help of a nurse. I **think** that in spite of the pain he **is** really **enjoying** his stay in hospital. When I **visited** him last night, he **gave** one of the nurses an enormous smile as she **passed** his bed. I **think** he **likes** **getting** all the attention.

I'll **phone** when I **have** more news.

Love,

Mum.

- C** Make the intransitive verbs in the following sentences transitive, using the words given in brackets. You may have to add other words for the sentences to be grammatical. And there may be more than one possible correct answer.

Example

Question: The boys were playing in the garden. (football)

Answer: The boys were playing football in the garden.

1. I've spent all evening writing. (letters)
2. She parked outside the library. (car)
3. He nodded in agreement. (head)
4. They sang as they marched along. (happy song)
5. My pen has leaked all over my jacket. (ink)
6. I don't understand. (meaning of this sentence)
7. Don't drink so quickly. (lemonade)
8. She is saving to buy a new guitar. (pocket money)
9. John left early. (meeting)
10. We had to leave because the rebels were attacking. (the city)

5 Phrasal Verbs

A **phrasal verb** is an expression that consists of a lexical verb plus an adverb or a preposition or both an adverb and a preposition.

Some phrasal verbs are formed with **adverbs** (i.e. words such as **away, back, by, down, off, on** or **out**).

Please sit down.

I wish these dogs would go away.

Come back and see us sometime.

He broke off a piece of the chocolate and gave it to her.

She blew out the candles on her birthday cake.

After the storm passed, the wind gradually died down.

Grammar Help

The adverbs and prepositions that are used to form phrasal verbs are sometimes called **particles**.

Some phrasal verbs are formed with **prepositions** (i.e. words such as **at, by, for, into, of, on, to** or **with**).

The horse suddenly broke into a gallop.

I came across a friend of yours the other day.

The robbers were making for the frontier.

I just asked her how she was feeling and she flew into a rage.

She's at least seventy but she could pass for a woman in her fifties.

That's a problem we're going to have to deal with sometime.

Some phrasal verbs are formed with **adverbs** and **prepositions**.

I don't know how you put up [adverb] with [preposition] her complaining all the time.

We wanted to stay longer but we were running out of money.

Her son has decided to go in for dentistry.

One should always try to get along with one's colleagues.

He says he's going to complain but he probably won't go through with it.

She says that if he won't marry her, she'll do away with herself.

Notice that in phrasal verbs formed with both adverbs and prepositions, the adverbs (e.g. **up**, **out**, **in**, **along**, **through**, **away**) always precede the prepositions (such as **with**, **of**, **for**).

Grammar Help

Some phrasal verb constructions have more than one object. In such phrases, *both* the transitive verb *and* the preposition are followed by an object:

It's the smell that puts people off durians.

One little mistake put the police on to the murderer.

You're the one who got me into this mess, so you could at least try to get me out of it.

They passed the photos around the group.

Many phrasal verbs have meanings that can be completely understood from the meanings of the verbs and particles that form them.

Please come in.

Quick! Run away and hide!

How long would it take to drive to London and then drive back?

She went out, waited for a moment, then came in again.

However, many phrasal verbs have quite unpredictable meanings:

When she was late for work for the third day in a row, her boss just blew up. (= became very angry)

I'm off to Japan for my holidays this year, so I must brush up on my Japanese. (= refresh my knowledge of Japanese)

John and I get on very well. (= are friendly)

I had to fork out for two new tyres this week. (= spend money, pay for the tyres)

You can always rely on me to stick up for you. (= support you)

Did You Know?

Some jokes are based on phrasal verbs that have more than one meaning. This is one:

A large hole has suddenly appeared in the middle of the High Street. The police are looking into it.

Grammar Help

Not all grammar books mean the same thing when they talk about **phrasal verbs**.

In some books, only the 'verb + adverb' constructions are called phrasal verbs. The 'verb + preposition' constructions are called **prepositional verbs**, and the 'verb + adverb + preposition' constructions are called **phrasal-prepositional verbs**.

On the other hand, for some grammarians only the expressions with unpredictable meanings, such as **put up with** and **stick up for**, are considered true phrasal verbs.

Grammar Help

- ◆ Phrasal verbs formed with prepositions (with or without an adverb) are always transitive verbs; that is, they always have a direct object. Whether it is a noun, a noun phrase, or a pronoun, the direct object *always follows the preposition:*

Her mother looks after the children [direct object] *while she is at work.*
I don't think I could do without coffee.

He takes after his father. They both love golf.
You can rely on me to stand up for you.
- ◆ Phrasal verbs formed with adverbs alone may be *either* intransitive *or* transitive:

Fortunately, the rain held off till after the match. (intransitive)
The soldiers held off the enemy until reinforcements arrived. (transitive)

The handle of the jug just broke off. (intransitive)
I didn't break it off deliberately. (transitive)

We'll need to set off first thing tomorrow morning. (intransitive)
Something must have set off the alarm. (transitive)
- ◆ The rules governing the position of the object of a transitive 'verb + adverb' phrasal verb are slightly complicated.
 - 1 If the direct object is a noun or noun phrase, it may stand either behind or in front of the adverb:

You deal out the cards. OR *You deal the cards out.*
Hand over the money! OR *Hand the money over!*
Somebody turn the light on, please. OR *Somebody turn on the light, please.*
You shouldn't bottle up your emotions. *It's bad for you to bottle things up.*
 - 2 If the direct object is a *pronoun*, the pronoun *must* come *between* the verb and the adverb:

Of course we'll come and see you off at the station.
The smell of the cheese puts me off.
Put that down at once!
I'll pick you up at school and drop you off at the cinema.
 - 3 An indirect object *always* comes *between* the verb and the adverb:

Give me back my pencil.
Give your sister back her book at once!
 - 4 If there is both an indirect and a direct object, the indirect object precedes the direct object:

Please give me [indirect object] *it* [direct object] *back.*

Do It Yourself

- A** For each of the following pairs of sentences, choose the correct word from the list in brackets to complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first sentence.

Example

Question: I will not tolerate his rudeness.
 I will not put up ____ his rudeness. (for, with, to)
 Answer: I will not put up **with** his rudeness.

1. I don't appreciate opera.
 I don't care ____ opera. (for, with, to)
2. We all have to obey the rules.
 We all have to abide ____ the rules. (to, by, in)
3. I think I am catching a cold.
 I think I am coming ____ with a cold. (out, down, up)
4. Can you suggest a better plan?
 Can you come ____ with a better plan? (through, down, up)
5. He received a lot of criticism.
 He came in ____ a lot of criticism. (for, with, at)
6. I'm sure she would never break a promise.
 I'm sure she would never go ____ on a promise. (off, out, back)
7. She would never even consider doing such a thing.
 She would never even think ____ doing such a thing. (of, at, in)
8. This situation requires a lot of tact.
 This situation calls ____ a lot of tact. (for, to, with)
9. My brother has fallen in love with the girl next door.
 My brother has fallen ____ the girl next door. (at, with, for)
10. Put the meat in the cupboard so that the cat can't reach it.
 Put the meat in the cupboard so that the cat can't get ____ it. (of, for, at)
11. If Tom can't be the goalie, we'll need someone to replace him.
 If Tom can't be the goalie, we'll need someone to stand ____ for him. (out, in, back)

12. Their new baby definitely resembles her grandmother.
Their new baby definitely takes ____ her grandmother. (to, after, from)
13. What do these little circles on the map represent?
What do these little circles on the map stand ____? (as, in, for)
14. We met an old friend of ours in the supermarket the other day.
We ran ____ an old friend of ours in the supermarket the other day. (in, into, at)
15. 'I'll visit you again tomorrow,' said the doctor.
'I'll look in ____ you again tomorrow,' said the doctor. (for, at, on)

Warning!

Don't forget that when you fill in the blanks, you must use the *correct form* of the verbs you choose.

The verbs in the box are all given in their base forms (see page 10). In some sentences, however, you may need to use some other form of the verb (such as a past tense).

Make sure that, when you fill in the blanks, the verbs you write down correctly match the form of the phrasal verbs they are replacing.

B For each of the following pairs of sentences, complete the second sentence by choosing one of the verbs in the box below that has the same meaning as the phrasal verb in the first sentence.

Example

Question: I **bumped into** Tom when I was in town this afternoon.
I ____ Tom when I was in town this afternoon.

Answer: I **met** Tom when I was in town this afternoon.

appear, deceive, die, discuss, find, happen,
improve, investigate, leave, meet, resemble,
scold, start

1. The police are **looking into** the recent spate of burglaries.
The police are ____ the recent spate of burglaries.
2. His grandmother **passed away** last night.
His grandmother ____ last night.
3. I was frequently **told off** by my teacher for day-dreaming in class.
I was frequently ____ by my teacher for day-dreaming in class.

4. Can we **talk over** your suggestions sometime?
Can we ____ your suggestions sometime?
5. The youngsters **cleared off** when they saw the police car approaching.
The youngsters ____ when they saw the police car approaching.
6. How did the accident **come about**?
How did the accident ____ ?
7. She **takes after** her mother.
She ____ her mother.
8. We were completely **taken in** by his apparent honesty.
We were completely ____ by his apparent honesty.
9. It's been raining all morning but the weather may **clear up** this afternoon.
It's been raining all morning but the weather may ____ this afternoon.
10. If we **set to** now, we may get the job finished by lunchtime.
If we ____ now, we may get the job finished by lunchtime.
11. You just never know where John will **pop up** next.
You just never know where John will ____ next.
12. We weren't actually looking for the key. We just **came across** it by chance.
We weren't actually looking for the key. We just ____ it by chance.

Beware!

Remember that the pronoun objects may not go in exactly the same place in their sentences as the nouns and noun phrases they replace. Check the Grammar Help panel again if you are not sure about this.

C Replace the object nouns and noun phrases in **bold** in the following passage with pronouns.

I still remember when I first ran into **Tim**. He was down at the harbour on his boat. He was bailing **the boat** out. I could see that he was using an old jug. I looked at **the jug** in amazement, and I told Tim he had better look after **the jug**. 'Don't you know that it's a valuable antique?' I said. 'The handle might come off, and if you break off **the handle**, the jug won't be worth much. I own an antique shop. That jug interests me. If you care about **that jug** and about how much it might be worth to you, bring it to the shop some day soon.'

Tim brought round **the jug** the very next day. 'OK. Hand over **the jug**,' I said.

'Is this a trick?' he said. 'If it is, I won't fall for **the trick**.'

'Look. This is a valuable jug,' I told him. 'Let me try to sell it for you. That is my suggestion. If you fall in with **my suggestion**, you will be a rich man, even though you will not have the jug any longer. But if you hang on to **the jug**, you may break it and then you will have neither the jug nor the money. You will have to do without **both the jug and the money**.'

Tim liked my proposal. In fact, he jumped at **my proposal**. 'I can do without that jug,' he said. 'I can certainly do without **the jug**. I thought it was just a cheap old jug. My grandparents handed **the jug** down to me. I can't get over my luck,' he said. 'I just can't get over **my luck**.'

I have got on very well with **Tim** ever since then.

6 Finite and Non-finite Verbs

Finite Verbs

Some verbs change their form, or may change their form, depending on what their subject is or on whether they are referring to the past, the present or the future.

Any verb that changes, or that may change, in form to match its subject or to indicate present, past or future is a **finite verb**.

Grammar Help

A finite verb is said to **agree with** its subject. This is known as **agreement** or **concord**.

- If there is only a *main verb* in a sentence, then it will be a finite verb:

Coffee gives me migraines.
That gives me an idea.

My brother teaches chemistry.
My parents teach English.

He leaves tomorrow morning.
He leaves tomorrow morning.

I am very proud of you.
I am very proud of you.

I have a question to ask.
I have a question to ask.

Coffee and chocolate give me migraines.
That gave me an idea.

My parents teach English.
My parents taught English.

We leave tomorrow morning.
He left last night.

We are very proud of you.
I was very proud of you.

John has a question to ask.
I had a question to ask.

There is more about agreement between subjects and verbs in Units 7 and 8, and about the verb forms and endings used to indicate past, present and future in Units 9 to 11.

- In verb phrases, it is the *auxiliary verb* that is the finite verb, the verb that agrees with its subject or that indicates past, present and future:

He is going to school.
He is going to school.

They are going to school.
He was going to school.

Have you lost your key?**Have you lost your key?****I don't like goats' cheese.****They can go tomorrow.****Has she lost her key?****Had you lost her key?****My sister doesn't like it either.****They couldn't go last week.**

Where there is more than one auxiliary verb in a verb phrase, it is the *first* auxiliary that is a finite verb, agreeing with its subject or indicating past, present or future:

I have been looking for you for ages. **He has been looking for you for ages.**
They may have been here. **They might have been here.**

Grammar Help

Notice that although modal auxiliary verbs are finite verbs and change to indicate reference to the past, the present or the future, they do not, unlike other finite verbs, change in form to agree with their subject:

I sing **she sings**
I can sing **she can sing**

he goes **they go**
he may go **they may go**

Modal auxiliaries have no *-s* ending when the subject of the verb is **he**, **she** or **it**.

- Verbs that express *wishes* or *commands* are also considered finite verbs, even though they do not change in form to agree with their subject, and in fact usually do not have a subject expressed in the sentence at all:

Give me that knife.

Tell him what I said.

Don't talk so loudly.

Pick that up, please.

Grammar Help

In any sentence with a finite verb, there is usually a word or phrase that represents the subject of that verb. However, finite verbs expressing wishes or commands are generally found *without* subjects:

Please help me.

Don't touch that!

Sign your name there.

The unexpressed subject of commands and requests is always **you**, as can be seen from sentences in which the **you** is expressed, for example, when making a contrast or distinction:

You hold onto that rope, John, and Fiona, you hold onto this one.

Non-finite Verbs

Any verb that is not a finite verb is a **non-finite verb**.

Non-finite verbs do not change in form to agree with a subject or to indicate past, present and future.

Present participles, past participles and infinitives are the non-finite verbs of English.

1 Non-finite verbs remaining unchanged with a change of subject:

He is working very hard.

They are working very hard.

I am looking for a new handbag.

She is looking for a new handbag.

Have you got a map?

Has she got a map?

I have bought the tickets.

My brother has bought the tickets.

We can go to the cinema tomorrow.

You can go to the cinema tomorrow.

2 Non-finite verbs remaining unchanged with a change from present to past time:

I am [finite verb]
looking [non-finite verb] **for a new handbag**.

I was looking for a new handbag.

He is working very hard.

He was working very hard.

I have got the tickets with me.

I had got the tickets with me.

He is working very hard.

They are working very hard.

I have bought the tickets.

I had bought the tickets.

Note from the examples above that a non-finite verb usually occurs in a sentence alongside a finite verb that *does* agree with its subject and indicate past, present and future.

- There are two ways of looking at the structure of a verb phrase. As you saw in Unit 2, a verb phrase consists of one or more auxiliary verbs plus a lexical verb:

she is [auxiliary verb] **singing** [lexical verb]

she can [auxiliary verb] **sing** [lexical verb]

she has [auxiliary verb] **been** [auxiliary verb] **singing** [lexical verb]

A verb phrase can also be analysed in terms of finite and non-finite verbs. A verb phrase consists of a finite verb plus one or more non-finite verbs:

she is [finite verb] **singing** [non-finite verb]

she can [finite verb] **sing** [non-finite verb]

she has [finite verb] **been** [non-finite verb] **singing** [non-finite verb]

Grammar Help

- ◆ An **infinitive** need not always follow an auxiliary verb; it may also follow a lexical verb. But note that whilst an auxiliary verb is followed by a **bare infinitive** (an infinitive without **to**), a lexical verb is usually followed by a **to-infinitive** (an infinitive with **to**):

I can help them.

I try to help them.

He will come with us.

He wants to come with us.

We will arrive at 12 o'clock.

We expect to arrive at 12 o'clock.

Both bare infinitives and **to**-infinitives are non-finite verbs.

Adjectives and nouns are also sometimes followed by **to**-infinitives:

We were very glad to see him.

I was afraid to ask for more money.

I have no desire to harm him in any way.

It's time to leave, I think.

A **to**-infinitive may also be the subject of a sentence:

To behave like that in public is quite unacceptable.

There is more about the uses of infinitives in Unit 23.

- ◆ A **participle** need not always follow an auxiliary verb. Sometimes it can stand on its own without an auxiliary:

The dog just stood there, looking at me with its tongue hanging out, wagging its tail enthusiastically.

The wizard was standing with his arms stretched out, chanting a magic spell.

A present participle may also follow an adjective:

The boys were happy playing football while their father was busy working in the garden.

There is more about the uses of present participles and past participles in Units 21 and 22.

Do It Yourself

Underline the finite verbs in the following passage and circle the non-finite verbs.

The last time I met Sally was when I was living in Paris. She was outside a café, sitting in the sunshine and watching the people who were walking past. At the same time, she seemed to be sketching the old church across the street from where she was sitting.

I watched her for a little while, not wanting to disturb her while she was busy drawing. A waiter came out of the café carrying a tray with a glass of red wine on it. Just as he passed Sally's table, he tripped on her handbag, which she had left on the ground beside her chair, and tipped the wine all over her sketch pad. I waited to see what would happen. I thought Sally would be furious. But she just laughed, and held up her pad of paper while the wine dripped off it.

Then she caught sight of me, and waved to me to come over and join her. She showed me her sketch and said, 'Don't you think the red wine adds something to this picture? Red trees, red sky, red church, red people – it's perfect in a strange way. I would never have thought of it myself.'

Quick Summary

This unit summarizes the main points of what has been said so far about verbs.

- 1 Verbs can be divided into two major categories: **lexical verbs** (or **main verbs**) and **auxiliary verbs** (or **helping verbs**). [Unit 2]

Lexical verbs describe actions, events, feelings, etc.

Auxiliary verbs are used to form tenses and to convey the ideas of possibility, necessity, etc.

Most verbs are *either* lexical verbs *or* auxiliary verbs, but **be**, **have** and **do** can be both. [Unit 2]

A **verb phrase** consists of a lexical verb and one or more auxiliary verbs. [Unit 2]

- 2 There are two types of auxiliary verb: the **primary auxiliaries** ***be*, *have*** and ***do***; and the **modal auxiliaries** ***can*, *could*, *will*, *would*, *must***, etc. ***Dare*, *need*, *ought to*** and ***used to*** are also considered to be auxiliary verbs. [Unit 2]
- Be*** is followed by a present participle, ***have*** by a past participle, and ***do*** or a **modal auxiliary** by a bare infinitive. A lexical verb is followed by a **to-infinitive**. [Unit 2]
- 3 There are two types of lexical verb: **action verbs** and **linking verbs** (or **intensive verbs**). [Unit 1]
- Action verbs describe actions, activities, events, thoughts, feelings, etc.
- Linking verbs are used to provide a link between the **subject** of the verb and a **complement** which says something about the subject. [Unit 1]
- 4 There are two types of action verb: **transitive verbs** and **intransitive verbs**. [Unit 4]
- Transitive verbs have a **direct object**; intransitive verbs have no direct object. [Unit 4]
- Transitive verbs may also have an **indirect object** or a **complement**.
- Transitive verbs that have only a direct object are **monotransitive verbs**. [Unit 4]
- Transitive verbs that have a direct object and an indirect object are **ditransitive verbs**.
- Transitive verbs that have a direct object and a complement are **complex transitive verbs**.
- 5 A **phrasal verb** is an expression consisting of a lexical verb in combination with an adverb, a preposition, or both an adverb and a preposition. [Unit 5]
 - 6 A verb that agrees with its subject or that changes its form in order to indicate past, present or future time is a **finite verb**. [Unit 6]
- Any verb that is not a finite verb is a **non-finite verb**. **Participles** and **infinitives** are non-finite verbs.

Verb Forms

Verbs may have different forms depending on whether their subjects are in the first person, the second person, or the third person, and whether they are singular or plural.

<i>I am</i>	<i>you are</i>	<i>he is</i>
<i>it is</i>	<i>they are</i>	<i>we are</i>

Verbs may also change their form depending on whether they are referring to the past, the present, or the future.

<i>he eats</i>	<i>he ate</i>	<i>he will eat</i>
<i>it rains</i>	<i>it rained</i>	<i>it will rain</i>

There is a regular pattern of verb forms that most verbs follow:

<i>cry</i>	<i>cries</i>	<i>crying</i>	<i>cried</i>
<i>open</i>	<i>opens</i>	<i>opening</i>	<i>opened</i>
<i>pour</i>	<i>pours</i>	<i>pouring</i>	<i>poured</i>
<i>walk</i>	<i>walks</i>	<i>walking</i>	<i>walked</i>

Some verbs, however, are irregular:

<i>come</i>	<i>comes</i>	<i>coming</i>	<i>came</i>	<i>come</i>
<i>go</i>	<i>goes</i>	<i>going</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>gone</i>
<i>run</i>	<i>runs</i>	<i>running</i>	<i>ran</i>	<i>run</i>
<i>sing</i>	<i>sings</i>	<i>singing</i>	<i>sang</i>	<i>sung</i>

Verbs come in three **moods**. The **indicative** mood is used for statements and questions, the **imperative** mood is used for commands and requests, and the **subjunctive** mood is used to express wishes, commands, suggestions, doubts and possibilities.

Unit

- 7 First, Second and Third Person; Singular and Plural
- 8 Some Problems of Subject-Verb Agreement
- 9 Tenses
- 10 The Simple Tenses and Participles of Regular Verbs
- 11 The Simple Tenses and Participles of Irregular Verbs
- 12 Commands, Requests and Suggestions
- 13 Indicative and Subjunctive

7 First, Second and Third Person; Singular and Plural

I and **we** are **first-person pronouns**. A verb whose subject is **I** or **we** is likewise said to be in the **first person**.

You is a **second-person pronoun**. A verb whose subject is **you** is similarly said to be in the **second person**.

He, she, it and **they** are **third-person pronouns**. A verb whose subject is **he, she, it** or **they** is said to be in the **third person**.

I followed them along the street. (first person)

We wondered what had happened to her. (first person)

You must come at once! (second person)

You paint amazing pictures. (second person)

She paints excellent pictures too. (third person)

They saw the man they were looking for. (third person)

A verb whose subject is a **noun** or a **name** is also in the **third person**:

The builders completed the job remarkably quickly.

The girls were watching television in their bedroom.

True happiness is hard to find.

Tom joined us for tea later on.

Paris is the capital of France.

Alaska became the 49th state of the United States in 1959.

However, if there is a pronoun in the subject as well as a noun or name, the **pronoun** dictates what person the verb is:

Many staff dislike the new management. (third person)

We staff dislike the new management. (first person)

You staff dislike the new management. (second person)

A noun or pronoun that refers to one person or thing is a **singular** noun or pronoun. A verb whose subject is a singular noun or pronoun is likewise said to be **singular**.

A noun or pronoun that refers to more than one person or thing is a **plural** noun or pronoun. A verb whose subject is a plural noun or pronoun is similarly said to be **plural**.

Coffee disagrees with me. (singular)

Coffee and tea disagree with me. (plural)

Jerry was here a moment ago. (singular)

Jerry and Harry were here a moment ago. (plural)

The cat followed me home. (singular)

The cats all followed me home. (plural)

Grammar Help

In grammar, the concepts of 'singular' and 'plural' are together known as **number**.

Grammar Help

- 1 For almost all verbs, the first and second person singular and the first, second and third person plural of the present tense are represented by a verb that is identical to the *base form* of the verb, while the third person singular verb ends in **-s**:

I come	you come	we come	they come	he comes
I walk	you walk	we walk	they walk	she walks
I teach	you teach	we teach	they teach	he teaches

The verb **be** has three different forms for the present tense:

I am	you/we/they are	he/she/it is
-------------	------------------------	---------------------

The verb **have** is irregular in the third person singular: **he/she/it has**.

- 2 In the past tense, there is usually only one form of the verb:

I walked	you walked	we walked	he walked
I had	you had	they had	she had
I went	we went	they went	he went

The verb **be**, however, has two different forms in the past tense:

I/he/she/it was	you/we/they were
------------------------	-------------------------

- 3 Unlike other verbs, modal auxiliaries (that is, verbs such as **can** and **will**) only have **one** verb form for first, second and third person, singular and plural:

I can sing	they can sing	BUT ALSO	he can sing
you must go	we must go	BUT ALSO	she must go
I will fall	they will fall	BUT ALSO	he will fall

There is more information about verb forms in Units 10, 11 and 14.

Handy Hint

Always check in your own writing that the verb in a sentence agrees with its true subject.

If the subject of the verb is in the first person (that is, it is *I* or *we*), the verb must also be in the first person:

I am lost.

I have no money.

X I is lost.

X We has no money.

We are lost.

We have no money.

Similarly, if the subject of the verb is in the second person (i.e. *you*), the verb must be in the second person, and if the subject of the verb is in the third person (e.g. *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, *Harry*, *honesty*, *a man*, *the boys*, etc), the verb must be in the third person:

You are quite right.

The boys are quite right.

X You is quite right.

X Harry are quite right.

She is quite right.

Again, if the subject of the verb is singular, the verb must be singular, and if the subject of the verb is plural, then the verb must be plural:

I was in France.

Harry is at school.

X I were in France.

X The boys is at school.

We were in France.

The boys are at school.

Do It Yourself

- A In the following passage, some of the verbs (shown in **bold**) do not agree with their subjects. Find the subject of each verb, decide which of the verbs show incorrect agreement with their subjects, and correct them.

A serious problem **have** occurred at the school. The principal **is** looking very worried and so **is** some of the teachers. The maths exam and physics exam **is** being held tomorrow, but one of the teachers **have** found out that some exam papers **have** gone missing from the cupboard where they **was** being stored. No-one **know** whether they **has** been lost or stolen, but if the papers **are** not found, then the exam **will** have to be cancelled.

A thorough search of the classrooms **is** carried out, but no papers **are** found. The question **is** then asked, 'Who **have** got into the cupboard where the papers **were** being kept?' Both the room and the cupboard **was** locked and only one of the teachers **has** the keys. No student **could** have got in, and no-one else **would** have wanted to.

'The staff and I **are** completely baffled,' **say** the principal. 'But I **has** no choice. Since the papers **is** missing, the exams **has** to be cancelled.'

B Complete the following passage by using the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.

My family and I (be) off on holiday next week. We (be) going to the north of France again. My son and daughter (like) France, and we always (go) back to the same village every year. The people who (live) in the village (seem) to like us too.

My wife and I (have) been very fond of France since we (be) students at university many years ago and (spend) a year studying in Paris. I (speak) French very well, and so (do) my wife, and she and I (have) many French friends. Our children also (speak) the language now since they (have) had many holidays in France with us, and the two of them also now (have) good friends in the village.

Close to the village, there (be) an old ruined castle which (stand) at the top of a wooded hill. It (be) built by some knights in the 13th century. The villagers (say) that there (be) ghosts in it, but we (do)n't believe it. This year we (be) planning to spend a night in the castle to see what (happen). Perhaps we (will) see a ghost, perhaps not.

8 Some Problems of Subject-Verb Agreement

When making a verb agree with its subject, what is important is whether the subject is *grammatically* singular or plural, not how many people or things the subject refers to.

All our friends have arrived early. ('All our friends' is plural.)

Everyone has arrived early. ('Everyone' is a singular pronoun even though it refers to more than one person.)

My many fans know how talented I am. ('My many fans' is plural.)

Everybody knows how talented I am. ('Everybody' is a singular pronoun even though it refers to more than one person.)

All our students spend an hour a day in the library. (plural subject)

Every student spends an hour a day in the library. (singular subject)

Sometimes it is not the immediate subject, or what seems to be the subject, of the verb that determines whether the verb must be singular or plural, but some other word or phrase in the sentence.

Grammar Help

The **antecedent** of a relative pronoun is the word that the relative pronoun 'stands for' or 'replaces'. For example:

The girl who was here yesterday is my sister.
 'The girl' is the **antecedent** of the relative pronoun 'who'.

- For a verb in a relative clause, it is the *antecedent* that makes the verb singular or plural:

The boy who *was* playing outside is my son.



The boys who *were* playing outside are my sons.



Where is the book that *was* here on the table?



Where are the books that *were* here on the table?



- When a verb follows ***there*** or ***here***, it is the word or phrase following the verb that determines whether the verb is singular or plural:

There is a man at the door asking to speak to you.



There are two men at the door asking to speak to you.



Here is the answer to your question.



Here are the answers to your questions.



Grammar Help

In informal English, ***there's*** (= ***there is***) and ***here's*** (= ***here is***) may be followed by a plural noun or phrase:

There's hundreds of ants crawling over our picnic basket.

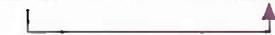
Here's three good reasons why you shouldn't smoke.

- In noun clauses beginning with ***what***, it is again what follows the verb that determines whether the verb is singular or plural:

What was once a thriving village is now a cluster of ruins.



What were once houses and shops are now just heaps of



stones and wood.

Grammar Help

Care must be taken with phrases consisting of two or more nouns linked by ***and***. If the nouns are considered as separate things, then the phrase is plural:

Tea and coffee are popular drinks.

Carrots and potatoes are vegetables.

But if the nouns linked by ***and*** are considered to be one single thing, then the phrase is **singular** and the verb must be singular:

Gin and tonic is a popular drink.

Mince and potatoes is my favourite meal.

Sometimes both singular and plural verbs are considered correct:

Two and two make (or makes) four.

When the subject of a sentence refers to a **quantity** of something, it should be followed by a **singular** verb.

When the subject refers to a number of **separate items**, it should be followed by a **plural** verb.

The bread is mouldy. And the apples are mouldy too.

Some money has been stolen. And some ornaments have been stolen as well.

Fortunately no damage has been done and no losses have been incurred.

- Plural nouns denoting quantities or amounts are, however, usually treated as singular.

Three pounds of potatoes is far too much for one person.

Sixty thousand dollars seems an awful lot of money to pay for a painting.

Two inches is about the same as five centimetres.

Twenty-five miles is more than I could walk in one day.

Ten weeks is a long time to wait for a reply.

Five days seems a very long time to wait when you are only four years old.

Grammar Help

Although it looks as if it ought to be singular, **a number of** is in fact treated as plural and should be followed by a plural verb:

A number of prisoners have already escaped.

A large number of passengers were injured when the two trains collided.

Similarly, when **a lot of** and **the rest of** are followed by a plural noun or pronoun, they are also followed by a plural verb:

A lot of strange things have happened around here lately.

A lot of them are not quite sure why they're here.

The rest of us have to stay here.

The rest of the passengers were rescued by the fire brigade.

But when **a lot of** and **the rest of** are followed by a singular noun or pronoun, the verb is in the singular:

A lot of the work has already been done.

The rest of it has to be finished by tomorrow.

Again, with **lots**, **heaps**, **tons**, etc, it is the following noun that determines whether the verb must be singular or plural:

Lots of rubbish was left behind by the workmen.

Lots of people were queuing outside the shop.

Heaps of food has been wasted.

Heaps of people have read her books.

Majority and **minority**, when followed by plural nouns, are also followed by plural verbs:

The majority of people with this surname are Scottish.

Only a small minority of disputes are resolved without arbitration.

Care must be taken with nouns that are plural in form but which are usually treated as singular.

*I think **maths** is really boring.*

***Billiards** is very similar to snooker.*

***Measles** was a common childhood disease when I was young.*

Words in this category are nouns referring to

- 1 **subjects of study**, such as *economics, electronics, ethics, linguistics, mechanics, phonetics, physics, politics and semantics*;
- 2 **activities**, such as *aerobics, athletics and gymnastics*;
- 3 **games**, such as *charades, darts, dominoes, musical chairs, noughts and crosses, quoits, rounders and snakes and ladders*;
- 4 **diseases**, such as *mumps, rabies, rickets and shingles*.

Some of the words in group 1 can also be used in the plural when they are not referring to a subject of study:

***Politics** is a fascinating subject.* (= subject of study)

*Her **politics** are quite beyond me.* (= political beliefs)

***Mechanics** is one of the subjects I studied at university.*
 (= subject of study)

*The **mechanics** of this process are quite complex.*
 (= mechanical operations)

***Mathematics** is her favourite subject.* (= subject of study)

*The **mathematics** are clear: the cost of a refill can be as low as a tenth of the cost of a new cartridge.* (= mathematical facts)

*I think your **mathematics** is/are wrong.* (= mathematical calculations)

There are some nouns in English that appear to be singular but which are in fact plural and must be followed by a plural verb. Common examples are *cattle*, *clergy*, *folk*, *people*, *police* and *youth*.

The cattle were in the barn.

The clergy are not respected today like they once were.

Folk do silly things like that, don't they?

People are silly, aren't they?

The police have been informed of the break-in.

The youth of today are less interested in playing sport than we were at their age.

Collective nouns are nouns that denote groups of people or animals, such as *aristocracy*, *army*, *audience*, *class*, *club*, *committee*, *family*, *flock*, *government*, *group*, *herd*, *jury*, *public*, *staff*, *team*, etc.

Nouns like these can be thought of as referring *either* to one single body *or* to a number of individuals. When such nouns are felt to be referring to single entities rather than numbers of separate individuals, they are usually treated as singular nouns and followed by singular verbs:

The audience was larger than I had expected.

The committee has decided not to accept your resignation.

Our class has been chosen to represent the school.

The public is all too easily fooled.

The jury finds the defendant not guilty.

The government has no right to act without consulting parliament.

However, when they are thought of as referring to a number of individuals, they are, in British English, treated as plural nouns and followed by a plural verb:

The audience were obviously enjoying the performance.

The committee have decided not to accept your resignation.

Our class have all had flu.

The general public know very little about the causes of inflation.

He could see that the flock were getting restless.

In American English, it is more usual to treat collective nouns as singular nouns than as plural nouns.

Grammar Help

Once a choice has been made as to whether to treat a collective noun as singular or plural, it may be necessary to make the same choice with regard to other words in the sentence:

The committee has [singular] decided that it does not want to accept your resignation.

The committee have [plural] decided that they do not want to accept your resignation.

Do It Yourself

A Choose the correct verb from the brackets to complete the following sentences.

1. Everybody (knows, know) everybody else in this village.
2. A flock of crows (is, are) sometimes called a 'murder' of crows.
3. A lot of people (believes, believe) that there are aliens from outer space living here on Earth.
4. Noughts and crosses (is, are) a very simple game which is thought to have originated in England.
5. The pamphlet includes safety tips to help combat a number of common accidents that (happens, happen) in the home each year.
6. Five dollars (is, are) all one earns for an hour's work in a burger bar.
7. No-one (believes, believe) the Government's reassurances any more.
8. A lot of money (has, have) been spent on this ridiculous celebration that could have been better spent feeding the poor.
9. The group (was, were) allowed to hold their rehearsals in the town hall.
10. The rest of the biscuits (is, are) in that tin.
11. Two litres of petrol (is, are) enough to get us home.

12. Vodka and orange (was, were) what everyone drank when I was young. It was a very popular drink in those days.
13. The jury (was, were) composed of five men and seven women.
14. A large number of children in the world (goes, go) to bed hungry every night.
15. There (was, were) strange noises coming from the next room.
16. There (was, were) a lot of people at the concert.

B Complete the following quotations using the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. Mathematics (possess, possesses) not only truth, but supreme beauty – a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture. [Bertrand Russell]
2. Politics (is, are) perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary. [Robert Louis Stevenson]
3. The cattle (rises, rise) and (listens, listen) in valleys far and near. [Hugh Kingsmill]
4. If the British public (falls, fall) for this, I say it will be stark, staring bonkers. [Lord Hailsham]
5. The conventional army (loses, lose) if it does not win. The guerrilla wins if he does not lose. [Henry Kissinger]
6. Europe has a press that (stresses, stress) opinions; America, a press, radio, and television that (emphasizes, emphasize) news. [James Reston]
7. The best government (is, are) that which governs least. [John O'Sullivan]
8. In male culture, police (is, are) heroic and so are outlaws; males who enforce standards are heroic and so are those who violate them. [Andrea Dworkin]
9. Aesthetics (is, are) the mother of ethics. ... Were we to choose our leaders on the basis of their reading experience and not their political programs, there would be much less grief on earth. [Joseph Brodsky]
10. Nine-tenths of wisdom (consists, consist) in being wise in time. [Theodore Roosevelt]

9 Tenses

The **tense** of a verb shows whether the action of the verb happens in the past, the present or the future, whether it is a single action or a repeated action, whether the action is completed or unfinished, and so on.

Did You Know?

'Tense' comes from the Old French word *tens*, meaning 'time'.

I am here.
She came with us.
The police caught the burglar.
My canary sings beautifully.

I was here.
She will come with us.
The police had caught the burglar.
My canary is singing beautifully.

The Simple Tenses

A **simple tense** is a tense indicated by a single word, such as *runs*, *came*, *brings*, *taught*, *are* or *were*.

The 'simple present tense' and the 'simple past tense' are the only two simple tenses in English.

1 The Simple Present Tense

Cows eat grass.
I like pop music.
Martha is a reporter for the television news.
Tom speaks French and Spanish.
The train leaves at 5.57.

There is more about the uses of the simple present tense in Unit 30.

2 The Simple Past Tense

We all went back into the house.
Suddenly she stood up and walked out of the room.
Who gave you that camera?
At first I thought it was a ghost.

Grammar Help

In questions and negative sentences with **not** or **-n't**, the simple past tense is in fact formed with two words, the auxiliary verb **do** and the base form of a lexical verb. Compare the following sentences:

<i>I saw her.</i>	<i>Did you see her?</i>	<i>I didn't see her.</i>
<i>They all laughed.</i>	<i>Did they laugh?</i>	<i>They did not laugh.</i>

There is more about the uses of the simple past tense in Unit 31.

Grammar Help

In some grammar books, only the two simple tenses are considered to be true tenses. The complex tenses are simply treated as verb phrases.

All other tenses in English are **complex tenses**, that is, tenses that are formed using two or more words.

A complex tense is formed with one or more auxiliary verbs and a lexical verb, such as *will go*, *has come*, *is running*, *will be teaching*, *has been helping*.

There are fourteen complex tenses in English.

The Future and Conditional Tenses

1 The Future Tense

The future tense of a verb is formed by using the auxiliary verb **will**, less commonly **shall**, along with the base form of a lexical verb:

They will all be here in a minute.

I expect John will get the maths prize again this year.

You will find a huge selection of gifts in our catalogue.

We shall overcome all obstacles in our path.

I will be more careful in future.

There is more about the base forms of lexical verbs in Unit 10, and more about the uses of the future tense in Unit 32.

2 The Conditional Tense (or the Future in the Past)

The conditional tense of a verb is formed by using the auxiliary verb **would** along with the base form of a lexical verb:

I would help you if I could.

She would come if you asked her to.

There is more about the uses of the conditional tense in Unit 33.

When used in reported speech (see Unit 34), this tense is called the **future in the past**:

*He said he **would come** as soon as possible.*

The Perfect Tenses

Perfect tenses are formed with the auxiliary verb **have** and a past participle of a lexical verb. There are four perfect tenses, each corresponding to one of the four tenses already described in this unit.

1 The Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense is formed with the present tense of **have** and the past participle of a lexical verb:

*I **have always eaten** egg sandwiches for my lunch.*

*Have you **finished** your homework yet?*

*You **have already seen** that film twice. Why do you want to see it again?*

*She says she **has lost** her purse somewhere.*

*The weather **has been** very warm lately.*

There is more about the formation of past participles in Units 10 and 11, and about the uses of past participles in Unit 22. And there is more information on the uses of the present perfect tense in Unit 31.

2 The Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect tense is formed with the past tense of **have** and the past participle of a lexical verb:

*The noise **had continued** all night, and they **had been** unable to sleep.*

*I pretended that I **hadn't heard** her.*

*I **had already seen** that film twice and I didn't want to see it again.*

*She **had lost** her purse and didn't have enough money for the train fare home.*

Grammar Help

The past perfect tense is sometimes called the **pluperfect** /'plu:p:s:fikt/ tense.

There is information about the uses of the past perfect tense in Unit 31.

3 The Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense is formed with ***will*** or ***shall***, the auxiliary verb ***have***, and the past participle of a lexical verb:

*We ***will have finished*** this job by the end of the week.*

*They ***will surely have left*** by now.*

*By the time this letter reaches you, I ***will have been*** here nearly a month.*

There is information about the uses of the future perfect tense in Unit 32.

4 The Perfect Conditional Tense

The perfect conditional tense is formed with ***would***, the auxiliary verb ***have***, and the past participle of a lexical verb:

*I ***would have told*** her if I ***had seen*** her.*

*We ***wouldn't have come*** if we ***had known*** she ***would be*** there too.*

*Would he ever ***have dared*** to tell her the truth?*

There is information about the uses of the perfect conditional tense in Unit 33.

The Continuous Tenses

Continuous tenses are formed with the auxiliary verb ***be*** and the present participle of a lexical verb. There are eight continuous tenses, each corresponding to one of the eight tenses already described in this unit.

Grammar Help

Continuous tenses are also known as **progressive tenses**.

1 The Present Continuous Tense

The present continuous tense is formed with the present tense of ***be*** and the present participle of a lexical verb:

*You ***are looking*** very tired.*

*We ***are leaving*** first thing tomorrow morning.*

*Why ***are the dogs barking*** so much?*

*She ***is arriving*** tomorrow and I ***am going*** to the airport to meet her.*

There is more about the formation of present participles in Units 10 and 11, and about the uses of present participles in

Unit 21. And there is more information on the uses of the present continuous tense in Unit 30.

2 The Past Continuous Tense

The past continuous tense is formed with the past tense of the auxiliary verb **be** and the present participle of a lexical verb:

*All the students **were laughing**.*

*My father **was working** in the garden when I arrived.*

*Why **were** you **hiding** from your brother?*

*The dogs **were running** around on the beach.*

*I **was wondering** what to say to her.*

There is more information about the past continuous tense in Unit 31.

3 The Future Continuous Tense

The future continuous tense is formed with the auxiliary verbs **will** and **shall**, the auxiliary verb **be** and the present participle of a lexical verb:

*It **will be getting** dark soon.*

*Will you **be staying** here long?*

*Just imagine what you **will be doing** this time next week.*

*We **shall** no doubt **be seeing** you again soon.*

There is more information about the uses of the future continuous tense in Unit 32.

4 The Conditional Continuous Tense (or the Future Continuous in the Past)

The conditional continuous tense is formed with the auxiliary verb **would**, the auxiliary verb **be**, and the present participle of a lexical verb:

*He said he **would be coming**.*

*Just imagine what you **would be doing** now if you weren't here.*

There is more information about the uses of the conditional continuous tense in Unit 33.

5 The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

The present perfect continuous tense is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb **have**, the past participle of the auxiliary verb **be**, and the present participle of a lexical verb:

It has been raining for days now. Will it never stop?

The police have been searching for clues to the murderer's identity.

I have been wanting to talk to you all morning.

You have been working on that model yacht for ages. Isn't it finished yet?

Who has been eating my porridge?

There is more about the uses of the present perfect continuous tense in Unit 31.

6 The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The past perfect continuous tense is formed with the past tense of the auxiliary verb **have**, the past participle of the auxiliary verb **be**, and the present participle of a lexical verb:

We had been working on the project for more than a year and were getting a bit bored with it.

I had just been putting the finishing touches to the painting when he arrived.

I had been wondering whether you would come or not.

The wind had been blowing all night.

There is more about the past perfect continuous tense in Unit 31.

7 The Future Perfect Continuous Tense

The future perfect continuous tense is formed with the auxiliary verbs **will** and **shall**, the auxiliary verb **have**, the past participle of the auxiliary verb **be**, and the present participle of a lexical verb:

By the end of this month, I will have been working here for six years.

By this evening, the miners will have been trying to free their trapped colleagues for more than six days and hope is running out.

*By the time the sale starts tomorrow morning, some of these people **will have been waiting** outside the shop for more than a week.*

There is more about the uses of the future perfect continuous tense in Unit 32.

8 The Perfect Conditional Continuous Tense

The perfect conditional continuous tense is formed with the auxiliary verb **would**, the auxiliary verb **have**, the past participle of the auxiliary verb **be**, and the present participle of a lexical verb:

*If I hadn't given you a lift, you **would have been waiting** in the rain for a bus for hours.*

*I wonder what we **would have been doing** now if we hadn't decided to sell the house and move to Spain.*

There is more about the uses of the perfect conditional continuous tense in Unit 33.

Do It Yourself

- A Give the grammatical name of the tenses of the verbs in **bold** in the following sentences.

Example

Question: She **fell** over.

Answer: simple past tense

1. The woman **was smiling** at us.
2. Tom **was** eager to be there.
3. Sadly they **failed** in their attempt to reach the North Pole.
4. I **have** never **been** to Japan.
5. We **will discuss** this in more detail tomorrow.
6. Bill **teaches** Chinese at Edinburgh University.
7. I **had** never **seen** such a strange-looking bird before.
8. We **have been having** some trouble with our car recently.
9. Is a young swan a gosling or a cygnet?
10. Is it still **snowing**?
11. I **had hoped** to meet her in the restaurant.

12. I **had thought** they **would have been hoping** to meet her in the restaurant.
13. **Did you realize** what you **would be missing** if you **didn't come** with us?
14. Nothing that bad **has ever happened** to me before.
15. You **will be hearing** from my solicitor soon.

B Write out the named tenses of the following verbs.
(Assume that the subject of the verb is 'he' in all cases.)

Example

Question: present perfect continuous tense of *play*

Answer: He **has been playing**

1. future tense of *take*
2. simple past tense of *walk*
3. present continuous tense of *go*
4. present perfect tense of *frighten*; present perfect continuous tense of *frighten*
5. past perfect tense of *follow*
6. present perfect tense of *have*
7. future continuous tense of *talk*
8. simple present tense of *laugh*
9. simple past tense of *turn*; past perfect tense of *turn*; past perfect continuous tense of *turn*
10. past continuous tense of *break*
11. conditional continuous tense of *need*
12. future continuous tense of *brush*
13. future tense of *read*; future continuous tense of *read*; future perfect continuous tense of *read*
14. perfect conditional tense of *pack*

10 The Simple Tenses and Participles of Regular Verbs

Verbs in English use certain word *endings*, or the absence of endings, to indicate *person*, *number* and *tense*.

Most verbs in English follow one particular general pattern of endings. Any verb that follows this general pattern for forming the simple tenses and the present and past participles is a **regular verb**.

This is the pattern for regular verbs:

<i>I walk</i>	<i>he walks</i>	<i>she walked</i>	<i>he is walking</i>	<i>she has walked</i>
<i>you want</i>	<i>she wants</i>	<i>he wanted</i>	<i>we are wanting</i>	<i>he had wanted</i>
<i>you look</i>	<i>he looks</i>	<i>we looked</i>	<i>you were looking</i>	<i>we had looked</i>
<i>we kick</i>	<i>he kicks</i>	<i>they kicked</i>	<i>they were kicking</i>	<i>I have kicked</i>
<i>they melt</i>	<i>it melts</i>	<i>it melted</i>	<i>it was melting</i>	<i>it has melted</i>

The Simple Present Tense

The form of a verb that is used for the *first and second person singular* and the *first, second and third person plural* of the *simple present tense* is the **base form** of the verb, the simplest form of the verb with nothing added on to it.

<i>I talk</i>	<i>you talk</i>	<i>we talk</i>	<i>they talk</i>
<i>I rest</i>	<i>you rest</i>	<i>we rest</i>	<i>they rest</i>
<i>I blink</i>	<i>you blink</i>	<i>we blink</i>	<i>they blink</i>
<i>I mend</i>	<i>you mend</i>	<i>we mend</i>	<i>they mend</i>

The 'base form' of a verb is the verb's most basic form. It is, for example, the form in which a verb is listed in a dictionary. It is the form of the verb that has no extra endings added to it to indicate person, number or tense.

Grammar Help

The base form of a verb is also the **bare infinitive** of the verb, the form of the verb that is used after a modal auxiliary:
we can talk
she must rest
he might blink

There is more about infinitives in Unit 23.

Verbs in the *third person singular* of the simple present tense end in **-s**. The **-s** is usually, but not always, added to the base form of the verb.

Did You Know?

In older forms of English, there was a **-th** ending that was used in the third person singular of the present tense, where **-s** is used today:

he cometh
she speaketh
he saith (= he says)

In older forms of English, there was also a special pronoun **thou** for the second person singular, and verbs agreeing with this pronoun had a special ending, usually **-st**:

thou doest or *dost* (= you do)
thou hast (= you have)
thou comest (= you come)
thou art (= you are)
thou wilt (= you will)

The old verb-forms and the old second-person pronoun are still sometimes used in poetry and religious language.

talk → *he talks*
blink → *he blinks*
bump → *he bumps*
save → *she saves*
stay → *it stays*

rest → *she rests*
mend → *it mends*
boast → *she boasts*
like → *he likes*
ski → *he skis*

Spelling Help

The part of the word that an **ending** or **inflection** such as **-s** or **-ing** or **-ed** is added to is called the **stem**. The stem is usually just the base form of the verb, but in some cases slight changes have to be made to the spelling of the base form to make the stem to which the inflection is added, such as doubling final consonants or deleting final **e's**.

- ◆ If the base form of the verb ends in **s**, **z**, **x**, **sh** or **ch**, then the ending is **-es** rather than just **-s**:

<i>kiss</i> → <i>she kisses</i>	<i>press</i> → <i>he presses</i>
<i>buzz</i> → <i>it buzzes</i>	<i>fizz</i> → <i>it fizzes</i>
<i>box</i> → <i>he boxes</i>	<i>relax</i> → <i>she relaxes</i>
<i>wish</i> → <i>he wishes</i>	<i>push</i> → <i>she pushes</i>
<i>catch</i> → <i>it catches</i>	<i>teach</i> → <i>she teaches</i>

- ◆ If the base form ends in a **y** which is preceded by a **consonant**, the **y** changes to **i** before the ending is added, and the ending is **-es**:

<i>cry</i> → <i>he cries</i>	<i>try</i> → <i>she tries</i>
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But if the **y** is preceded by a **vowel**, the **y** does not change, and the ending is **-s**:

<i>buy</i> → <i>she buys</i>	<i>stay</i> → <i>he stays</i>
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- ◆ If the base form ends in **o**, the spelling rules are a little more complicated:

- (a) If the base form ends in **oo**, just add **-s**:

<i>boo</i> → <i>he boos</i>	<i>moo</i> → <i>a cow moos</i>
<i>coo</i> → <i>a pigeon coos</i>	

- (b) If there is any other vowel before the final **o**, add **-s**:

<i>video</i> → <i>He videos a lot of films.</i>	
<i>radio</i> → <i>He quickly radios headquarters for reinforcements.</i>	

- (c) Almost all verbs whose base form ends in **o** following a **consonant** add **-es** in the third person singular:

<i>go</i> → <i>she goes</i>	<i>echo</i> → <i>it echoes</i>
<i>tango</i> → <i>she tangoes</i>	<i>veto</i> → <i>he vetoes</i>

Exceptions to rule (c) are rare:

disco → *She discos every Saturday night.*

Spelling Note

The third person singular of the verb ***bus*** is either ***buses*** or ***busses***. The third person singular of ***gas*** is ***gases*** and the third person singular of ***quiz*** is ***quizzes***.

The Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense of a regular verb is generally formed by adding **-ed** to the stem.

walk → ***I walked***
fetch → ***they fetched***
faint → ***he fainted***
sigh → ***she sighed***
ski → ***we skied***

melt → ***it melted***
look → ***we looked***
shampoo → ***she shampooed***
echo → ***it echoed***
taxis → ***it taxied***

Spelling Note

The past tense of ***ski*** is sometimes spelt ***ski'd***.

Spelling Help

♦ If the base form of the verb ends in **e**, just add **-d** to form the simple past tense:

argue → ***argued***
die → ***died***
agree → ***agreed***

change → ***changed***
tie → ***ties***
free → ***freed***

♦ If the base form ends in **y** and the **y** is preceded by a consonant (not a vowel), the **y** changes to **i** before the ending **-ed** is added:

cry → ***cried***
deny → ***denied***

supply → ***supplied***
try → ***tried***

BUT

stay → ***stayed***

journey → ***journeyed***

Three verbs are slightly irregular: the simple past tenses of ***lay***, ***pay*** and ***say*** are ***laid***, ***paid*** and ***said*** /sed/.

♦ If the base form is a word of one syllable which ends in a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant (e.g. ***drip***, ***pin***) or else is stressed on its last syllable and ends in a single vowel letter followed by a single consonant (e.g. ***prefer***, ***remit***, ***embed***), the consonant is doubled before the **-ed** ending is added:

clap → ***clapped***
stir → ***stirred***
slam → ***slammed***
spot → ***spotted***
grin → ***grinned***

drop → ***dropped***
refer → ***referred***
dim → ***dimmed***
admit → ***admitted***
scan → ***scanned***

If the vowel is not stressed, or if there is more than one vowel letter in the syllable, then the consonant is not doubled:

gossip → ***'gossiped***
offer → ***'offered***

stoop → ***stooped***
rear → ***reared***

Spelling Note

The past tense of ***bus*** is ***bused*** OR ***bussed***.

Spelling Note

The following exceptions in British and American English, in which the final vowel is not stressed but the final consonant is nevertheless doubled, should be noted:

handicap → ***'handicapped***
kidnap → ***'kidnapped***
(Br. Eng.) OR (Am. Eng.)
'kidnaped

worship → ***'worshipped***
(Br. Eng.) OR (Am. Eng.)
'worshiped

program → ***'programmed*** (Br. Eng.)
OR ***'programed*** → (Am. Eng.)

Spelling Note

Note the spelling of **paralleled**, which is the one exception to the rule.

ransom → 'ransomed
edit → 'edited
pardon → 'pardoned

steam → steamed
greet → greeted
clean → cleaned

In British English, a final **I** following a single vowel *always* doubles, regardless of the position of the stress:

control → con'trolled
repel → re'pelled
equal → 'equalled
signal → 'signalled

rebel → re'belled
travel → 'travelled
dial → 'dialled

In American English, on the other hand, **I** obeys the general rule and is doubled *only* if the preceding single vowel is stressed:

control → con'trolled
repel → re'pelled

BUT

equal → 'equaled
signal → 'signaled

travel → 'traveled
dial → 'dialed

- ◆ If the base form ends in a single vowel followed by **c**, the **c** becomes **ck** before the ending is added:

panic → pan'icked *picnic* → picnick'ed

The verb **arc** is an exception: its past tense is **arced**.

- A number of regular verbs have slightly irregular past tense forms in addition to regular ones, and there are differences in usage between British and American English. (Fuller information about some of these verbs is given in the Appendix):

burn: *burned* OR *burnt* (see the note on page 246)

dream: *dreamed* /drɪ:mɪd, drɛmt/ OR *dreamt* /drɛmt/ (see the note on page 247)

dwell: *dwelled* OR (more commonly) *dwelt*

kneel: *kneeded* OR *knelt* (see the note on page 249)

knit: *knitted* OR *knit* (see the note on page 249)

lean: *leaned* /lɪ:nd, lənt/ OR *leant* (see also page 250)

leap: *leaped* OR *leapt* (see the note on page 250)

learn: *learned* /lɜ:nd, lɜ:nt/ OR (Br. Eng.) *learnt*

smell: *smelled* OR *smelt* (see the note on page 254)

spell: *spelled* OR *spelt* (see the note on page 254)

spill: *spilled* OR *spilt* (see the note on page 254)

spoil: *spoiled* OR *spoilt* (see the note on page 255)

sweat: *sweated* OR (Am. Eng.) *sweat*

The Present Participle

The present participles of regular verbs are usually formed by adding **-ing** to the base form.

walk → **walking**

watch → **watching**

cry → **crying**

break → **breaking**

fill → **filling**

say → **saying**

Spelling Help

If the base form of the verb ends in **e**, the **e** is dropped before **-ing** is added:

make → **making**

bite → **biting**

come → **coming**

stare → **staring**

shine → **shining**

argue → **arguing**

But if the stem ends in **oe** or **ee**, the final **e** is not dropped before the ending:

canoe → **canoeing**

agree → **agreeing**

hoe → **hoeing**

free → **freeing**

And if the stem ends in **ie**, the **ie** becomes **y** before the **-ing**:

tie → **tying**

die → **dying**

lie → **lying**

As with the simple past tense, a final consonant must sometimes be doubled before the ending is added. The rules for this are exactly the same as for the formation of the past tenses:

tap → **tapped, tapping**

grin → **grinned, grinning**

stir → **stirred, stirring**

ad'mit → **ad'mitted, ad'mitting**

and similarly:

swim → **swimming**

sit → **sitting**

run → **running**

for'get → **for'getting**

Where the final consonant is not doubled in the past tense, it is not doubled in the present participle either:

'offer → **'offered, 'offering**

stoop → **stooped, stooping**

'travel → (Br. Eng.) **'travelled, 'travelling**

→ (Am. Eng.) **'traveled, 'traveling**

'gossip → **'gossiped, 'gossiping**

clean → **cleaned, cleaning**

Note also:

panic → **panicked, panicking**

mimic → **mimicked, mimicking**

but on the other hand, the exception:

arc → **arced, arcing**

Spelling Note

Note the following verbs that do not, or may not, drop the final *e* before adding *-ing*:

age → ***ageing*** OR ***aging***
binge → ***bingeing*** OR (Am. Eng.) ***binging***
eye → ***eyeing*** OR (much less commonly) ***eying***
singe → ***singeing***
whinge → ***whingeing***

Note also the adjective ***swingeing***, which is derived from an old verb *swinge*, meaning 'to hit hard'.

The Past Participle

The past participles of regular verbs are *always* the same as the simple past tense forms.

she walked* → *she has walked
they argued* → *they have argued
we panicked* → *we had panicked
he died* → *he had died
she stayed* → *she had stayed

There are a few verbs that have both regular past participles and also past participles that are not regular. There is some variation in usage between British and American English.

Base Form	Past Tense	Past Participle
<i>mow</i>	<i>mowed</i>	<i>mowed</i> or <i>mown</i>
<i>prove</i>	<i>proved</i>	<i>proved</i> or <i>proven</i>
<i>saw</i>	<i>sawed</i>	<i>sawed</i> (American English) <i>sawn</i> (British English)
<i>sew</i>	<i>sewed</i>	<i>sewed</i> or <i>sewn</i> (more commonly)
<i>shear</i>	<i>sheared</i>	<i>sheared</i> or <i>shorn</i>
<i>show</i>	<i>showed</i>	<i>shown</i> (more commonly) <i>showed</i>
<i>sow</i>	<i>sowed</i>	<i>sowed</i> <i>sown</i> (more commonly)
<i>swell</i>	<i>swelled</i>	<i>swelled</i> or <i>swollen</i>
<i>thrive</i>	<i>thrived</i> or (less commonly) <i>throve</i>	<i>thrived</i> or (much less commonly) <i>thriven</i>

Do It Yourself

- A** The five 'principal parts' of an English verb are the base form, the third person singular of the present tense, the simple past tense, the present participle and the past participle. You can correctly form any part of any tense of any verb if you know these five 'principal parts' and the rules for forming them.

Give the principal parts of the following verbs:

jump, fix, fry, obey, coach,
hate, permit, sweat, tiptoe, shoo,
lie, lay, guarantee, singe, frolic,
roam, ram, kidnap, parallel, ski

Grammar Help

The simple past tense and the past participle are identical in regular verbs, but this is not the case with irregular verbs: see Unit 11. That is why we need to think of five principal parts of a verb rather than just four.

- B** The following passage has a number of incorrect verb forms. Edit the text and correct the errors.

In one case, the spelling is correct in American English, but not in British English. When correcting the passage, make all the spellings correct for *British* English.

Leting Helen get away with makeing so many spelling errors when she was young turnd out to be a serious mistake. Her parents admited as much. They agreed that they ought to have corrected her work more often and insisted that she spellt all her words correctly. But Helen had been a rather spoillt child, and she had usually been allowd to do as she pleased.

By the time she had grown up, her bad spelling had become a serious problem for her. She was emploied as a secretary, and her boss frequently penciled angry comments on work she had typeed for him. He had already sayed to her more than once that if her spelling did not improve, she would have to look for a new job.

This made Helen very sad, because she enjoied her job and didn't want to leave. But there was no point in panicing. She knew she would have to do something about her spelling, so she enrolld in a night class.

Helen studied hard for weeks at the class, and her efforts payed dividends. She was soon able to spell well and with confidence.

11 The Simple Tenses and Participles of Irregular Verbs

Grammar Help

There are only two verbs that are irregular in the present tense: ***be*** and ***have***.

be:

I am

he/she/it is

we/you/they are

have:

I/we/they have

BUT

he/she/it has

Note also the pronunciation of the third person singular of ***do***:

he/she/it does /dʌz/

Verbs that do not follow the normal, regular pattern of verb formation are called **irregular verbs**.

Almost all irregular verbs follow the regular rules for the formation of the simple present tense and the present participle. They are irregular *only* in the past tense and the past participle.

I swim he swims she was swimming

BUT *they swam they had swum (NOT swimed)*

I write she writes she is writing

BUT *he wrote I have written (NOT writed)*

I sing he sings she is singing

BUT *she sang he has sung (NOT singed)*

I put she puts he is putting

BUT *he put they have put (NOT putted)*

I hold she holds she is holding

BUT *he held I have held (NOT holded)*

Grammar Help

One important feature of irregular verbs is that the stems of the simple past tense and the past participle are often quite different from the base form (e.g. *he teaches, he taught; he buys, he bought; he sells, he sold; he writes, he has written; he flies, he has flown*).

Patterns in Irregular Verb Formation

Although irregular verbs do not follow the regular rules for forming past tenses and past participles, they do follow certain patterns of construction and can be gathered into groups according to how their past tenses and past participles are formed.

(There is a complete alphabetical list of irregular verbs in the Appendix, beginning on page 245.)

Group 1

The past tense and the past participle add **-t** to the stem:

- The stem changes in pronunciation from /i:/ to /e/, usually with some change in spelling as well:

Grammar Help

mean: I **meant** /ment/ to tell you the truth.

I had **meant** to tell you before now.

deal: He **dealt** /delt/ out the cards to all the players.

Fate had **dealt** her a cruel blow.

Among the other verbs in this group are **creep** (past tense **crept** and past participle **crept**), **feel** (**felt**, **felt**), **keep** (**kept**, **kept**), **leave** (**left**, **left**), **sleep** (**slept**, **slept**), **sweep** (**swept**, **swept**) and **weep** (**wept**, **wept**).

- (b) There is a much greater and more unpredictable difference between the base form and the stem of the past tense and past participle; the past tense and past participle both end in either **-ought** or **-aught**:

buy: They **bought** /bɔ:t/ a new house.

They have **bought** a new car as well.

catch: The boys **caught** /kɔ:t/ three fish.

The boys had **caught** three fish.

Verbs in this group are similar to **lean** and **leap** (see page 58), but have no regular past tense and past participle forms, only irregular ones.

Other verbs in this group are **bring** (**brought**, **brought**), **seek** (**sought**, **sought**), **teach** (**taught**, **taught**) and **think** (**thought**, **thought**).

Group 2

The past tense and the past participle change the final **d** of the base form to **t**:

send: She **sent** the parcel to her daughter.

He has **sent** a letter of complaint to the shop's manager.

build: They **built** those houses in the 40s.

They have not **built** any more houses here since then.

Other verbs in this group are **bend**, **lend** and **spend**, and the old and literary verb **rend**, meaning 'to tear'.

Group 3

The past tense and the past participle add **-d** to the stem, with changes from the base form in pronunciation and usually also in spelling:

sell: She **sold** her car last week.

How many copies of the book have you **sold**?

hear: I **heard** /hɜ:d/ what happened.

Haven't you **heard** the news?

Other verbs in this group are **flee** (**fled**, **fled**) and **tell** (**told**, **told**).

Grammar Help

Note that there are two different verbs whose base form is ***bid***. Only one of them, meaning 'to offer money for something', belongs to this group. The other is in group 8 below.

In the sense of 'to calculate the cost of something', ***cost*** is a regular verb:

This project was badly costed.

Bet, ***quit*** and ***wet*** also have less common regular past tenses and past participles ***bettied***, ***quitted*** and ***wetted***. See the notes at ***bet*** on page 246 and on ***wet*** on page 257.

Broadcast and ***forecast*** also have regular past tenses and past participles ***broadcasted*** and ***forecasted***.

Group 4

The past tense and past participle end in ***-t*** or ***-d***, and are identical to the base form.

cut: *I cut the cake into five pieces.*
I have cut my finger.

hurt: *She hurt her knee when she fell.*
Somebody has hurt her feelings, it seems.

rid: *The Pied Piper rid the town of rats.*
The first Ming emperor had rid China of Mongol rule.

Other verbs in this group are ***bet***, ***bid***, ***burst***, ***cast*** (and also ***broadcast*** and ***forecast***), ***cost***, ***hit***, ***let***, ***put***, ***quit***, ***set*** (and also ***upset***), ***shed***, ***shut***, ***slit***, ***split***, ***spread***, ***thrust*** and ***wet***.

In American English, ***fit*** and ***sweat*** may be treated either as regular verbs or as belonging to this group. In British English, they are always regular verbs.

Group 5

Like the verbs of Group 4, the verbs in this group do not add a past tense and past participle ending, but unlike the Group 4 verbs, verbs in Group 5 change the vowel of the past tense and past participle from that of the base form.

(a) The base form has the vowel-sound /aɪ/ which changes to /aʊ/ in the past tense and past participle:

find: *We found some keys on the pavement.*
We have found the answer to our problem.

Similarly ***bind***, ***grind*** and ***wind***.

(b) The base form has the vowel-sound /i:/ which changes to /e/ in the past tense and past participle:

feed: *I fed the goldfish.*
Have you fed the dog yet?

Similarly ***bleed*** (***bled, bled***), ***lead*** (***led, led***), ***meet*** (***met, met***), ***read*** (***read /red/, read /red/***) and ***speed*** (***sped, sped***, but also ***speeded*** – see the note on page 254).

(c) The base form is written with a letter ***i***, which is pronounced /ɪ/ and the past tense and past participle both have the vowel sound /ʌ/:

sting: A bee **stung** her.

No, it's a wasp that has **stung** her.

Similarly **cling**, **dig**, **fling**, **sling**, **slink**, **spin**, **stick**, **sting**, **string**, **swing**, **win** (**won**, **won**), and **wring**.

Also belonging to this group are **hang** (**hung**, **hung**), and **strike** (**struck**, **struck** or, much more rarely, **stricken** – see the note on page 255). Note also that in American English the past tense and past participle of **sneak** may be either the regular form **sneaked** or the irregular form **snuck**. (In British English, the regular form **sneaked** is normally used, but a few speakers of British English do say **snuck**.)

- (d) Other verbs in Group 5 show a variety of changes from the base form to the past tense and past participle.

Among these verbs are **fight** (**fought**, **fought**), **hold** (**held**, **held**; similarly for **behold**, **uphold** and **withhold**), **light** (**lit**, **lit**, but also **lighted** – see the note on page 251), **shine** (**shone**, **shone**, but also **shined** – see the note on page 253), **shoot** (**shot**, **shot**), **sit** (**sat**, **sat**), **slide** (**slid**, **slid**), **spit** (**spat**, **spat**), and **stand** (**stood**, **stood**; similarly for **understand** and **withstand**).

Group 6

The verbs in this group are very similar to those of group 5c, but the past tense and the past participle have *different* vowels; the past tense has /ə/ and the past participle has /ʌ/:

sing: He **sang** a song.

He **has sung** that song before.

sink: The ship **sank** without trace.

Many ships **have sunk** near here.

Other verbs in this group are **begin**, **drink**, **ring**, **shrink**, **spring**, **stink** and **swim**. (The verb **stink** also has a past tense form **stunk**.)

Group 7

The past participle ends in **-n** or **-en**.

- (a) The vowel of the base form is *i*, pronounced /ai/; the vowel of the past tense is /ou/ and the vowel of the past participle is /ɪ/; the middle consonant sometimes doubles in the past participle:

Grammar Help

Note that in the sense of 'to execute someone by hanging them', **hang** is regular in the past tense and past participle:

The picture was hung on the wall.

BUT

He was hanged for murder.

Grammar Help

In American English, the past tense and past participle of **spit** are usually **spit** rather than **spat**.

Grammar Help

In the sense of 'to put a ring on or round something', **ring** is a regular verb:

*He **ringed** all the places on the map that he wanted to visit.*

BUT

*The bells all **rang** out.*

Did You Know?

Verbs that form their past tenses and past participles by changing the vowel of the stem or by adding **-n** are called **strong verbs**.

Verbs that form past tenses and past participles by adding **-ed**, **-d** and **-t** are known as **weak verbs**.

- drive:** *The thieves drove away in a white van.*
The loud music had almost driven him crazy.
- write:** *I wrote the letter.*
I have written to her many times.

Similarly **arise**, **ride** (past participle **ridden**), **rise**, **stride** (past participle **stridden**) and **strive**. (**Strive** also has a regular past tense form **strived**.) Another verb in this group is the old and literary verb **smite**, meaning ‘to hit’ (**smote**, **smitten**).

- (b) The vowel of the past tense is /u:/ and the vowel of the past participle is /ou/:

blow: *The wind blew down the tree.*
The storm had soon blown over.

fly: *The birds flew away when I shouted at them.*
The swallows have flown north for the winter.

Other verbs in this group are **grow**, **know** and **throw** (but NOT **flow**, which is a regular verb.) The verbs **draw** and **withdraw** have a similar pattern:

She drew a picture of the house.
She has drawn on the wall.

She withdrew \$50 from her bank account.
He has withdrawn his application.

- (c) The vowel of the base form is /eɪ/; the vowel of the past tense is /u:/ and the vowel of the past participle is /eɪ/:

shake: *The earthquake shook the buildings.*
The news has shaken her parents badly.

Other verbs in this group are **forsake** and **take** (and also **mistake**, **overtake**, **partake** and **undertake**).

- (d) The vowel of both the past tense and the past participle is /ou/:

break: *The rope broke under the strain.*
The handle has broken off the jug.

freeze: *The water froze.*
The pond has frozen over.

Other verbs in this group are ***awake, choose, speak, steal, wake*** and ***weave***.

- (e) The base form ends in **-ear**; the past tense ends in **-ore** and the past participle ends in **-orm**:

swear: *She swore that she had never seen him before.*

They had sworn an oath never to be captured alive.

Other verbs in this group are ***bear*** (and also ***forbear***), ***tear*** and ***wear***. But note that the past participle of ***bear*** is ***borne***, not ***born***:

It was a burden she had borne for many years.

- (f) The vowel of the base form is /aɪ/; the vowel in the past tense and past participle is /ɪ/:

The dog bit the little girl.

The dog had bitten the little girl.

The only other verb in this group is ***hide (hid, hidden)***.

Grammar Help

Weave in the sense of 'to make cloth' is irregular, but with the meaning 'to make a zigzag movement', it is regular:

He weaved his way through the crowd.

Group 8

The rest of the irregular verbs do not fit easily into any pattern.

Grammar Help

Note that there are two different verbs whose base form is ***bid***; only one of them, with the meaning 'to ask' or 'to say' belongs to this group. The other is in Group 4 above.

Base Form	Past Tense	Past Participle
<i>be</i>	/i/he/she/it was he/you/they were	<i>been</i>
<i>beat</i>	<i>beat</i>	<i>beaten</i>
<i>bid</i>	<i>bade /bad, berd/</i> (less commonly, <i>bid</i>)	<i>bidden</i> (less commonly, <i>bid</i>)
<i>come</i>	<i>came</i>	<i>come</i>
<i>dive</i>	<i>dove /douv/</i> or <i>dived</i> (American English); <i>dived</i> (British English)	<i>dived</i> or, rarely, <i>dove</i> (American English); <i>dived</i> (British English)
<i>do</i>	<i>did</i>	<i>done /dən/</i>
<i>eat</i>	<i>ate /ert, et/</i>	<i>eaten</i>
<i>fall</i>	<i>fell</i>	<i>fallen</i>
<i>forbid</i>	<i>forbade /fə'bad,</i> <i>fə'beid/</i> (OR <i>forbad</i>)	<i>forbidden</i>
<i>forget</i>	<i>forgot</i>	<i>forgotten</i>
<i>get</i>	<i>got</i>	got (In American English, there is also a past participle <i>gotten</i> .)

<i>give</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>given</i>
<i>go</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>gone</i>
<i>have</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>had</i>
<i>lie</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lain</i> (In the sense of 'to tell lies', <i>lie</i> is regular.)
<i>lose</i>	<i>lost</i>	<i>lost</i>
<i>make</i>	<i>made</i>	<i>made</i>
<i>run</i>	<i>ran</i>	<i>run</i>
<i>see</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>seen</i>
<i>shoe</i>	<i>shod</i>	<i>shod</i> (OR <i>shoed</i> – see page 253)
<i>slay</i>	<i>slew</i>	<i>slain</i>
<i>tread</i>	<i>trod</i>	<i>trodden</i> (OR <i>trod</i>)

Grammar Help

Modal Auxiliaries

The past tenses of all the modal verbs are Irregular:

She will go if she can.

She would go if she could.

They say that they may go.

They said that they might go.

Modal verbs do not have present participles or past participles. However, it is sometimes possible to use other expressions as replacements for the participles of modal verbs:

I can go to the meeting, and so, being able to go, I will go.

I must finish this job today, although, having to finish it quickly, I may make some mistakes.

Do It Yourself

A Give the five principal parts of the following verbs:

go, tell, lend, give, stand,
swing, sing, hit, flee, fight,
rise, take, speak, read, shoot,
fall, run, draw, beat, burst

B Replace the verbs in brackets with their correct simple past tense forms.

There (be) once a lonely man who (think) that life would be more fun if he (have) a pet. So he (drive) to the nearest pet shop and (tell) the owner that he (hanker) after something

unusual. After some discussion, he finally (buy) a centipede, which (come) in a little white box with a door at the front, to use for its house.

The man (take) the centipede back home and (find) a good place to keep the box. He (put) it on a shelf in his living-room beside some plants.

Later that day, the man (make) up his mind to take his new pet to his favourite bar for a drink. He (tap) on the centipede's door.

'Would you like to go for a drink?' he (say).

'Certainly,' (reply) the centipede. 'I'll just get ready.'

The man (wait). Five minutes (go) by, then ten minutes, then fifteen minutes. The man (wonder) if the centipede still (intend) to go to the bar with him. He (rap) on the door again. Nothing (happen). He (let) another ten minutes go by, then (clap) his hands loudly.

'Well, are you going with me or aren't you?' (shout) the man.

'Of course I am,' (answer) the centipede, 'but I'm still putting on my shoes!'

12 Commands, Requests and Suggestions

Grammar Help

Modal auxiliary verbs do not have imperatives.

A verb that expresses a command or request is said to be an **imperative**, or to be in the **imperative mood**.

Stop that right now!
Give me a kiss.
Answer the phone for me, please.
Come in.
Tell me all about your trip.
Behave yourself!
Please help me.
Be sensible!
Stay alert!
Look happy!

Grammar Help

Moods in grammar are different forms of a verb that express, for example, whether the action of the verb is a statement or a command, or a fact, a wish or a possibility.

Only finite verbs have different moods. That is another feature that distinguishes finite verbs from non-finite verbs.

The two other moods of English verbs are the **indicative mood** and **subjunctive mood**, described in Unit 13.

- Polite, persuasive or slightly annoyed requests use the auxiliary verb **do** along with a lexical verb:

Do sit down.
Do come in.
Do have another cake.
Do be quiet. I'm tired of listening to you.

Negative commands and requests formed with ***not*** and ***-n't*** require the use of the auxiliary verb ***do*** along with a lexical verb.

Not and ***-n't*** follow the auxiliary verb and precede the lexical verb.

Please do not ask me for more money. You know I will say no.

Do not be afraid.

Don't be silly!

Don't sit there. Come and sit over here.

Please don't worry about it. I can manage OK without you.

(There is more about making commands with ***not*** and ***-n't*** in Unit 16.)

With ***never***, there is no need for the auxiliary verb ***do***:

Never say that again!

Never tell lies.

Grammar Help

In old-fashioned or literary English, ***not*** is sometimes found following a lexical verb:

Fear not! I am here to help you.

Ask not what your country can do for you.
[John F Kennedy]

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
[William Shakespeare]

This is not correct usage in normal everyday English.

Grammar Help

Normally, commands have no expressed subject (although the implied subject is always ***you***). However, the subject pronoun ***you*** is sometimes used, especially for emphasis or when distinguishing between two or more people:

You two boys come with me to the principal immediately.

Don't you ever do that again!

You make the sandwiches, Mary, and Tim, you make the coffee.

One way of making suggestions in English is with ***let's*** or, less commonly and in more formal language, ***let us***, followed by the base form of a lexical verb.

Let's go to the pictures this evening.

Let's look in the paper and see what's on TV tonight.

Let's talk about computers.

Let us pray that it will not rain tomorrow.

If you want to be slightly more persuasive, you can say ***do let's*** or ***do let us***:

Oh, do let's buy that sweet little puppy.

Do let's have a party for all our friends.

Negative sentences with ***let's*** and ***let us*** are formed with ***not***, never with ***-n't***:

Let's not go to their party.

Let's not tell him what we're going to do.

Let's not fight about it.

Let us not worry about that until next week.

In informal British English, you can also say ***don't let's***:

Don't let's argue about money.

Well, don't let's forget who's paying for all this, then.

Don't let's talk about computers for the whole evening.

Do It Yourself

A Make the following commands, requests and suggestions negative, using the words given in brackets.

1. Let's stop here. (not)
2. Stop what you are doing. (-n't)
3. Listen to what she is telling you. (not)
4. Let's eat our sandwiches here. (-n't)
5. Leave your shoes in the corridor. (not)
6. Come back next week. (-n't)
7. Let's go to Spain again. (never)
8. Do that again. (never)
9. Do that again. (-n't)
10. Watch your fingers while you're typing. (not)

- B** The following brief conversations show a number of ways of making and replying to suggestions. Complete the replies by inserting a suitable word.

Example

Question: Shall we open the window?

Reply: No, ____ leave it closed.

Answer: No, **let's** leave it closed.

1. Shall I just leave this on the floor?
No, please ____ leave it on the floor. Put it on the table.
2. Shall we put this book on the shelf with the other ones?
No, ____ leave it where it is.
3. Shall we go and see the match this afternoon?
No, let's ____ go out. Let's just stay in and watch it on TV.
4. Shall I wait for you to arrive?
Oh, yes, ____ start before I come.
5. Would you like me to make us a cup of coffee?
No, let's ____ have coffee. ____ have tea instead.
6. Would you like to see the garden?
Oh, yes. ____ let's go outside. It's a lovely evening.
7. Do we need a new washing-machine?
Maybe not. ____ see if we can get this one mended.
8. I think we're lost. I can't follow this map at all.
Oh, ____ me have a look. I'll show you where we are.
9. I don't know if I'll be able to come to your party.
Oh, ____ try to come.
10. How about asking Tim to the party?
Oh, no. Let's ____ invite him. No-one likes him.

13 Indicative and Subjunctive

Verbs that are used to make statements and ask questions are said to be in the **indicative mood**.

She arrived late.

No-one noticed what happened next.

Why were they here at all?

The **subjunctive mood** is used in English to express wishes, commands, suggestions and possibilities.

God saves sinners. (indicative, expressing a fact or belief)

God save the Queen! (subjunctive, expressing a wish)

She comes every day. (indicative, expressing a fact)

I suggest that she come back again tomorrow. (subjunctive, expressing a suggestion)

I was stuck on the train for four hours. (indicative, expressing a fact)

I wish I were somewhere else! (subjunctive, expressing a wish)

Grammar Help

There is very little difference in form between the subjunctive mood and the indicative mood in English, so little in fact that many English-speakers are not even aware that there *is* such a thing as a subjunctive in English.

◆ Simple present tense

In the simple present tense, the subjunctive mood is expressed by the *base form* of the verb. This means that the main difference between the indicative and the subjunctive is that in the third person singular there is no *-s* ending in the subjunctive, as can be seen from the examples above:

God saves (indicative)

she comes (indicative)

God save (subjunctive)

she come (subjunctive)

The present subjunctive of the verb *be* is *be*, and the present subjunctive of *have* is *have*:

If that be the case, we shall have to change our plans.

*I suggest that they **be** sacked immediately.*

*The doctor recommends she **have** at least another month off work.*

◆ Simple past tense

The only difference between the indicative and the subjunctive in the simple past tense is the use of **were** instead of **was**:

*If I **were** you, I wouldn't go.*

*He behaves as if he **were** the king.*

In all other cases, the simple past indicative and the past subjunctive are identical, and most grammarians now simply treat all such verbs as indicatives:

*If I **had** your looks, I'd become a model.*

*If you **tried** harder, you might succeed.*

*If this **should** ever happen, I would not want to survive.*

◆ Negatives

To make a verb in the subjunctive present tense negative, put **not** in front of it:

*I strongly suggest that you **not be** late again this week.*

*It's very important that they **not be** here when she arrives.*

*It is vital that the horse **not get** excited before the race.*

To make the subjunctive past tense **were** negative, put **not** or **-n't** after it, just the same as for the indicative:

*If I **weren't** here to help them, they'd never manage on their own.*

Other past subjunctives behave in the same way as past indicatives with **not** and **-n't**: see Unit 16.

Uses of the Subjunctive Mood

The subjunctive mood is used in a number of ways to express wishes, commands, suggestions and possibilities.

■ The subjunctive is used in a number of set phrases and expressions, many of which express wishes or hopes:

God save the Queen!

Long live the President!

Peace be upon him.

Heaven forbid that I should ever disobey a command.

Far be it from me to suggest that she was wrong. (= It is not for me to suggest ...; I do not want to suggest ...)

Come what may, I will be back next year. (= No matter what happens, ...)

Suffice it to say that she was rather upset. (= All I need to say is that ...)

Be that as it may, we still have to finish the job by next week.
 (= Even if that is so, ...)

We're going on a sort of holiday, as it were. (= in a way, but not exactly)

- The subjunctive may be used in subordinate clauses following verbs or expressions meaning 'ask', 'insist', 'suggest', 'recommend', 'be important', etc:

*I am simply **asking** that you **be** a little more polite to her.*

*It has been **suggested** that the coffee machine **be** replaced.*

*It's **vital** that some progress **be** made soon.*

*It was **imperative** that everyone **arrive** at the same time.*

*He **insisted** that she **leave** immediately.*

*I **begged** that she **be** allowed to stay.*

Other verbs that may be followed by the subjunctive are **advise**, **arrange**, **decree**, **demand**, **desire**, **direct**, **instruct**, **intend**, **order**, **plead**, **pray**, **prefer**, **propose**, **recommend**, **request**, **require** and **urge**.

Adjectives that may be followed by the subjunctive are **advisable**, **appropriate**, **better**, **crucial**, **desirable**, **essential**, **fitting**, **important**, **necessary**, **preferable**, **reasonable**, **right**, **urgent** and **vital**:

*It's **vital** that this job **be** finished by next Friday.*

*Is it really so **important** that the job **be** finished by then?*

Noun expressions with similar meanings can also be followed by subjunctives:

*Someone has made the **suggestion** that she **be** given an award for bravery.*

*Your **proposal** that we **fund** the award is worth considering.*

*She left clear **instructions** that all her money **be** given to charity when she died.*

*Her **pleas** that her son **be** released from prison went unheeded.*

Other nouns in this category are **advice**, **arrangement**, **demand**, **desire**, **insistence**, **intention**, **order**, **prayer**, **preference**, **recommendation**, **request** and **requirement**.

- This use of the subjunctive is rather formal, and is less common in British English than in American English. In less formal speech and writing, it is often better to use other constructions, such as '**should** + verb' or, especially after an adjective, '**for** + **to** + verb':

*He insisted that she **should leave** immediately.*

*It was imperative that everyone **should arrive** at the same time.*

*It is only right that she **should be** with her husband.*

*It was imperative **for** everyone **to arrive** at the same time.*

*She left instructions **for** all her money **to be given** to charity when she died.*

*I think it would be advisable **for** you all **to leave** now.*

Sometimes, an indicative verb is used rather than a subjunctive:

*He **is insisting** that she **leaves** immediately.*

However, it is not possible to do this in all cases. Therefore, if you want to avoid using the subjunctive, it is safer to do so with **should** or **for ... to**.

Grammar Help

Notice that regardless of the tense of the verb in the main clause, the subjunctive verb in the subordinate clause is always in the present tense:

*I **suggest** that she **go** at once.*

*I **suggested** that she **go** at once.*

*I **would have suggested** that she **go** at once.*

*It **is** crucial that someone **be** at the meeting.*

*It **was** crucial that someone **be** at the meeting.*

There is more about this aspect of tenses in Unit 34.

- The past tense subjunctive **were** may be used after **if**, **as if**, **as though**, **even though**, **unless**, **suppose** and **imagine**:

*If I **were** you, I **wouldn't go**.*

*If the truth **were** ever to be told, it **would cause** an incredible scandal.*

*I **wouldn't speak** to him again even though he **were** to offer me a million dollars.*

*I **felt as though** I **were** the only person left on Earth.*

Grammar Help

For a discussion of structures such as '**Were the truth ever to be told, ...**', in which the verb precedes the subject, see Unit 20.

*We have never ever been in a pub unless that hotel bar **be** counted as one.*

*Imagine he **were** to walk into the room right now, what would you say to him?*

*Don't speak to me as if I **were** a child.*

*Supposing I **weren't** here, how would you cope?*

Grammar Help

Subjunctive **were** is not normally replaced by indicative **was** in *If I were you*, even in informal speech.

Were is also used after the verb **wish**:

*I wish I **were** her!*

These uses of the subjunctive are rather formal, and the indicative mood is often used in less formal contexts:

*I felt as though I **was** the only person left on Earth.*

*I wish I **was** her!*

- The subjunctive is used to express doubt or the possibility of not being correct:

*If that **be** the case, we shall have to elect a new chairman.*

*If that **were** the case, they would have elected a new chairman.*

*Whatever **be** her reasons for leaving, it is sad that she has gone.*

This again is a rather formal usage, and less formally the subjunctive may be replaced by the indicative or a construction that uses a modal auxiliary verb:

*If that **is** the case, we shall have to elect a new chairman.*

*Whatever her reasons **are** for leaving, it is sad that she has gone.* OR

*Whatever her reasons **may be** for leaving, ...* OR

*Whatever **may be** her reasons for leaving, ...*

Grammar Help

Since the indicative mood is used to state facts and the subjunctive mood is used to express doubts and possibilities, the use of the indicative, as in '*If that **is** the case ...*', may also imply greater certainty than the use of the subjunctive, as in '*If that **be** the case ...*':

*If that **is** true, we shall have to tell the police.* (= I know it is true)

*If that **be** true, we shall have to tell the police.* (= I am not sure whether it is true)

However, since the subjunctive is rarely used in everyday colloquial English, this distinction is rarely made nowadays, and the indicative is used to express doubt as well as certainty. (The subjunctive can, of course, only be used to express doubt.)

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with suitable verbs, using the subjunctive mood.

1. Having insisted that his tea b____ ready by six o'clock, he didn't arrive home till eight.
2. The doctor recommended that she d____ less coffee.
3. I suggest that he s____ sorry to her for what he did.
4. They have specifically asked that my client not d____ the matter with anyone.
5. It is important that they not g____ the boys anything alcoholic to drink.
6. I wouldn't worry about the result if I w____ you.
7. C____ what may, you can always rely on me.
8. The doctors wouldn't be looking so worried if my illness w____n't serious, would they?
9. I really don't want to talk about what happened to her. S____ it to say that she has had a terrifying experience.
10. I'd leave right away if I w____ allowed to.
11. All I want is that you l____ me alone from now on.
12. Well, far b____ it from me to criticize, but I really don't know what she was thinking of, leaving her children alone like that.

B Make the following pairs of sentences into single sentences, making the verbs in the subordinate clauses subjunctive.

Example

Question: She is always so rude. Is it really necessary?

Reply: Is it really necessary that ...

Answer: Is it really necessary that **she always be so rude?**

1. Many changes need to be made to the company's security procedures. That is what the report recommends.
The report recommends that ...
2. The new procedures should be brought in as soon as possible. That is what committee has proposed.
The committee has proposed that ...
3. We must come to some agreement soon. That's very important.
It's very important that ...

4. The war must be brought to an end as soon as possible. That is absolutely crucial.
It is absolutely crucial that ...
5. Drivers must wear seat-belts. That is what the law requires.
The law requires that....
6. I would like to suggest something. We ought to paint the doors before the walls.
I would suggest that ...
7. I would like to suggest something. The doors should be painted before the walls.
I would suggest that ...
8. They should meet us here. That might be better.
It might be better that ...
9. We really ought to invite her to the funeral. It's only right.
It's only right that ...
10. The work must be completed by next week. That's the essential thing.
What is essential is that ...

Handy Hint

Take care to use the correct forms of the pronouns in your answers to questions 3 and 4.

C Rewrite the following sentences using *for* and *to*:**Example**

Question: Is it absolutely vital that we leave today?

Answer: Is it absolutely vital **for us to leave** today?

1. It is important that the new procedures be brought in right away.
2. Why have my orders that the machinery be switched off not been carried out?
3. It is essential that we be seen to be co-operating.
4. It would be better that he come here than that we go there.
5. My preference would be that you meet me at the station.
6. Her instructions were that her money be left to charity.
7. It might be preferable that you leave before then.
8. It is just not appropriate that young children attend a funeral.

Quick Summary

- 1** A verb whose subject is *I* or *we* is in the **first person**. A verb whose subject is *you* is in the **second person**. A verb whose subject is *he, she, it, they* or a noun or noun phrase is in the **third person**. [Unit 7]

A verb whose subject is one person or thing is a **singular** verb. A verb whose subject is more than one person or thing is a **plural** verb. Singular and plural are together known as **number**. [Unit 7]

- 2** The **tense** of a verb shows whether the action of the verb happens in the past, the present or the future, whether it is a single action or a repeated action, whether the action is completed or unfinished, and so on. [Unit 9]

A **simple tense** is a tense that is formed by a single word. The two simple tenses in English are the 'simple present tense' and the 'simple past tense'. All other tenses in English are **complex tenses**, formed with one or more auxiliary verbs plus a lexical verb.

- 3** Verbs in English use certain word **endings** (such as *-ed*, *-ing* or *-s*), or the absence of endings, to indicate person, number and tense. [Unit 10]

Most verbs in English follow one particular general pattern of endings, and any verb that follows this general pattern is called a **regular verb**. [Unit 10] When endings are added to the **base forms** of the verbs, there are sometimes slight changes to the spelling of the base forms.

Verbs that do not follow the normal pattern of endings are called **irregular verbs**. [Unit 11] Most irregular verbs are irregular only in the past tense and the past participle.

- 4** The form of a verb that is used to give a command or express a request is the same as the base form of the verb. A verb that expresses a command or request is said to be in the **imperative mood**. [Unit 12]

Suggestions may be expressed by means of **let's** or **let us** followed by the base form of a lexical verb. [Unit 12]

- 5** Verbs that are used to make statements and ask questions are in the **indicative mood**. [Unit 13]

The **subjunctive mood** is sometimes used to express wishes, commands, suggestions and possibilities. [Unit 13]

Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs, also known as **helping verbs**, are used along with main or lexical verbs to form complex tenses and to indicate possibility, necessity and permission. They are usually divided into **primary auxiliaries** (**be, have** and **do**) and **modal auxiliaries**, (such as **shall, will, can, may**, etc):

I am [auxiliary verb] *coming* [main verb].

I have [auxiliary verb] *told* [main verb] *him*.

She may [auxiliary verb] *not come* [main verb].

You must [auxiliary verb] *not do* [main verb] *that*.

Some auxiliary verbs have special short forms:

Unit

14 Short Forms of Auxiliary Verbs

I am → *I'm*

15 Auxiliary Verbs and Lexical Verbs in Questions

we will → *we'll*

16 Sentences with Not and -n't

they have → *they've*

17 Auxiliary Verbs in Tag Questions

she will not → *she won't*

18 Further Uses of Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs are used in the formation of tenses, questions and negative sentences, and have a number of other important uses in English grammar.

19 *Dare, Need, Ought to* and *Used to*

20 Inversion of Subjects and Verbs

14 Short Forms of Auxiliary Verbs

Some auxiliary verbs have shortened forms, used both in speech and writing.

I'm coming back

I'll be back tomorrow.

She's thinking of joining the club.

We've been here before.

They'd surely have told us if they'd known about it.

Short forms are always attached to the preceding word.

The short forms are as follows:

am becomes '**m**'. *I'm coming.*

are becomes '**r'e**'. *You're going to fall!*

We're coming!

is becomes '**s**'. *He's looking for you.*

She's only trying to help.

have becomes '**'ve**'. *We've done it!*

They've arrived.

has becomes '**s**'. *He's already left.*

It's been very warm recently.

had becomes '**'d**'. *We'd never seen anything like it.*

He'd done it.

will and **shall** become '**'ll**. *We'll help you, and they'll help you too.*

would becomes '**'d**'. *We'd have helped you. They'd have come.*

Beware!

Notice that '**s**' is a contraction of both **is** and **has**, and '**'d**' is a contraction of both **had** and **would**.

Be and **have** also have the same short forms when used as lexical verbs:

I'm sure that's not right.

He's not here at the moment.

We're very sorry.

We've no way of knowing what she will do.

I'd no idea how serious the situation was.

Style Note

Short forms of verbs are rather informal, and should not be used in formal writing.

Note, however, that '**s**' is not used as a short form of the **lexical verb has**, but only as a short form of the **auxiliary verb**.

Grammar Help

The short form '**s**' is not used after nouns that end in /s/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʒ/.

Short forms of verbs are mostly used after personal pronouns, such as **I**, **you**, **he**, **they**, etc. But they can be used, especially '**s**', after other pronouns, after nouns, and after certain adverbs:

What's the time?

'Who's that man she is talking to?'

'The man who's talking to her is her uncle.'

That's the one I want.

The horse I want is the one that's there in the field.

Someone's coming.

Somebody's been here before us.

The man's a complete fool!

Bob's the man you need to talk to.

Where's Tom going now?

There's no time to be lost.

Here's Mary now.

Now's the right time to leave.

Why's John not here?

How's your mother these days?

Who'll come with us?

That'll be enough, I think.

Where'll we go?

There'll be trouble over this, I'm telling you.

There're several things I'd like to know.

There'd be no time for questions.

Where'd you get that bike?

Why'd he do it?

People who've read the book say there is nothing offensive in it.

Other combinations of the short forms of verbs with these or other words are possible and not incorrect, but are either much less common or much more informal; for example:

The boys'll do it for you.

My girls'd help out for nothing.

How've you been?

Where've you been since we last met?

What've I got in my hand?

Who're they trying to kid?

People who're not in the Internet are missing out.

In informal writing, a short form of an auxiliary verb may follow another auxiliary verb, sometimes (very informally) even the short form of another auxiliary:

I should've been there with them.

I would've liked to go with them.

I'd've liked to go with them.

They could've been more helpful.

You might've missed something out in your calculations.

Grammar Help

A sentence cannot begin or end with a short form of a verb:

We'll help out at the jumble sale.

Will you?
NOT *'ll you?*

She's not here yet, is she?
Yes, *she is.*

NOT Yes, *she's.*

-**n't**, the shortened form of **not**, is always attached to the preceding verb.

The preceding verb must be an auxiliary verb or else either of the lexical verbs **be** and **have**. -**n't** cannot be attached to any other lexical verb.

She isn't coming after all.

I haven't seen Lucy for a while.

They didn't tell me you were here.

That wasn't what I had expected to happen.

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

They realized they hadn't enough money with them.

Grammar Help

Although it does exist, **mayn't** is rarely used nowadays.

■ Note the special forms that some of the modal auxiliaries have when -**n't** is added to them:

can + -n't → can't: *That can't be true.*

will + -n't → won't: *She says she won't be coming.*

shall + -n't → shan't: *We shan't be needing any help, thank you.*

Grammar Help

Note also the special form **cannot** that is used when **not** follows **can**:

That cannot be true.

Shan't is now not very common in British English, and extremely rare in American English.

Note also the pronunciation of **don't** /dənt/ and **mustn't** /'mʌstənt/.

There is no word **amn't** in Standard English. Instead of **I amn't**, you must say **I'm not**, as in, for example:

I'm not coming.

I'm not your slave.

Style Note

-**n't** is more informal than **not**, and should not be used in formal writing.

Grammar Help

In very informal spoken English, ***don't*** is often used instead of ***doesn't***. This is frequently heard in pop songs, for example:

It don't matter to me.
He don't love you.
She don't need me any more.

Note that this is not correct standard English.

And in questions, you use ***aren't*** instead of ***amn't***:

Aren't I coming with you?
I am coming with you, aren't I?

Ain't is used in very informal spoken English as a short form equivalent to ***am not***, ***is not***, ***are not***, ***have not*** and ***has not***:

I ain't coming with you.
He ain't here. And his friends ain't here either.
I ain't done nothing wrong.
He ain't been here for weeks.

Ain't is more frequent and slightly more acceptable in American English than in British English.

Grammar Help

The short form ***-n't*** cannot follow a short form of a verb. Either the short form of a verb must be followed by ***not*** (e.g. ***It's not***) or else ***-n't*** must be attached to the full form of a verb (e.g. ***It Isn't*** or ***It hasn't***):

<i>I'm not</i>	(<i>I amn't</i> is not possible, as explained above)
<i>you're not</i>	<i>you aren't</i>
<i>he's not</i>	<i>he Isn't OR he hasn't</i>
<i>she'd not</i>	<i>she hadn't OR she wouldn't</i>
<i>they've not</i>	<i>they haven't</i>
<i>he'll not</i>	<i>he won't</i>

Do It Yourself

A Replace the full forms of the auxiliary verbs, and the negative word ***not***, in the following sentences with short forms.

If the full forms may be replaced by short forms in more than one way (see the Grammar Help box above), give both shortened forms.

1. They will talk to me about their problems.
2. 'I shall be back,' said Arnie.
3. We had enough food to last us for a week or more.
4. They will not tell me what they are thinking.
5. The president is not responsible for the increase in crime.
6. I cannot tell you how sorry I am.
7. We have been through a lot together.
8. You have not seen the last of me!
9. She had not forgotten her promise.

10. There will not be enough time tomorrow for us to go swimming.
11. If you have not read the paper today, you will not know the news.
12. I have not had an opportunity to thank you for what you did.

B Answer the following questions, using **not** or **-n't**.

Example

Question: Do the boys always behave badly? (-n't)
No, they ____ always behave badly.

Answer: No, they **don't** always behave badly.

1. Is she the girl you were telling me about? (-n't)
No, she ____ the girl I was telling you about.
2. Will you be here next week? (-n't)
No, I ____ be here next week.
3. Can you describe the man who attacked you? (not)
No, I'm afraid I ____ describe the man who attacked me.
4. Does he know your name? (-n't)
No, he ____ know my name.
5. Are you the boy who broke my window? (not)
No, I ____ the boy who broke your window.
6. Will there be enough cake to give everybody a slice? (not)
No, there ____ be enough cake to give everyone a slice.
7. Would they tell the police, do you think? (-n't)
No, they ____ tell the police.
8. Have you had time to write your speech yet? (not)
No, I ____ had time to write my speech yet.
9. Would they be offended if we said 'no'? (not)
No, they ____ be offended if we said 'no'.
10. Had they finished their dinner? (-n't)
No, they ____ quite finished.
11. Have you thought about what you want to do when you leave school? (not)
No, I ____ thought about what I want to do when I leave school.
12. Has she already made up her mind about applying for the job? (-n't)
No, she ____ made up her mind about applying for the job.

15 Auxiliary Verbs and Lexical Verbs in Questions

Did You Know?

A sentence that asks a question is called an **interrogative** sentence.

To make a question out of a statement that has a verb phrase in it, put the auxiliary verb of the verb phrase in front of the subject of the verb.

They can see us. → **Can they see us?**

Maria is coming too. → **Is Maria coming too?**

Her husband has left her. → **Has her husband left her?**

We should ask her to come. → **Should we ask her to come?**

We must go and visit Granny today. → **Must we go and visit Granny today?**

They are intending to leave tomorrow. → **Are they intending to leave tomorrow?**

Grammar Help

Note that if the **wh-** word or phrase is the **subject** of the interrogative sentence, the auxiliary verb does *not* move in front of the subject:

Which boys are going into town?

Who has broken the window?

What sort of animal can climb trees?

Similarly, in questions formed with **who?**, **what?**, **where?**, **why?**, **how?**, etc:

The boys are going into town. → **Where are the boys** going?

The girls are going too. → **Why are the girls** going too?

He is painting a picture. → **What is he** painting a picture of?

She can have one biscuit. → **Which biscuit can she** have?

Mice could get in through that hole. → **How could mice** get in through that hole?

If there is more than one auxiliary verb in the verb phrase, move the first one to in front of the subject to form a question.

Josie will be coming with us. → **Will Josie be** coming with us?

The joiners will have finished by then. → **Will the joiners have** finished by then?

She has been thinking about getting a new job. → **Has she been thinking about** getting a new job?

They might have forgotten about it. → **Might they have** forgotten about it?

She could have prevented the accident. → **Could she have** prevented the accident?

Grammar Help

In very old-fashioned English and in poetry, lexical verbs sometimes do form questions without operators:

*Come you from France, my lord?
I love him, but loves he another?
Walked she on this very path?*

This is never done in everyday modern English.

Lexical verbs cannot form questions on their own. There must always be an auxiliary verb (an *operator*) in a question. When there is no other auxiliary verb in the sentence, the verb **do** is brought in to be the operator, followed by the **base form** of the lexical verb.

They saw us. → **Did they see us?**

Her mother likes flowers. → **Does her mother like flowers?**

The girls went to the cinema. → **Did the girls go to the cinema?**

Their dogs bark a lot. → **Do their dogs bark a lot?**

She sings and dances. → **Does she sing and dance?**

The principal scolded the girls. → **Did the principal scold the girls?**

Similarly in questions formed with **who?**, **what?**, **where?**, **why?**, **how?**, etc:

The boys bought some videos. → **Where did the boys buy the videos?**

→ **What videos did the boys buy?**

My aunt arrived yesterday. → **When exactly did your aunt arrive?**

She broke the window deliberately. → **But why did she break it?**

My baby sister wants a biscuit. → **Which biscuit does your baby sister want?**

Grammar Help

Note that, here again, if the **wh-** word or phrase is the **subject** of the sentence, the subject of the sentence remains in front of the lexical verb and there is therefore no need for an operator in the question:

Which dog bit you?

Who broke the window?

What sort of animal goes 'miaow'?

Be and Have

■ The lexical verbs **be** and **have** are exceptions to the above rule.

1 **Be** **never** uses an operator to make a question. To make a question with **be**, simply put the verb in front of the subject of the sentence:

I am a complete fool. → **Am I a complete fool?**

Her mother is that famous artist. → **Is her mother that famous artist?**

John and Susan were a bit worried. → **Were John and Susan a bit worried?**

The same applies in sentences beginning with **there**:

There is more than one way of doing this. → **Is there more than one way of doing this?**

There was a fox in the garden today. → **Was there a fox in the garden today?**

2 **Have** can make questions with or without an operator:

Have you any money? OR **Do you have any money?**

Had he anyone to help him? OR **Did he have anyone to help him?**

Grammar Help

Usage with **have** is slightly complicated.

- ◆ In the sense of possessing or carrying something, there are three possibilities:

'**Have ...?**', '**Do ... have ...?**' or '**Have ... got ...?**'

Have you enough food with you?

Has he enough food with him? OR

Do you have enough food with you?

Does he have enough food with him? OR

Have you got enough food with you?

Has he got enough food with him?

All three are possible in British English. American English prefers the construction with **do**.

In the past tense, the usual form is '**Did ... have ...?**'

Did you have enough food with you?

Did he have enough food with him?

- ◆ In the sense of experiencing something or doing something, especially doing it habitually, the forms to use are '**Do ... have ...?**' / '**Did ... have ...?**'

Did you have any trouble finding us?

Did they have any trouble finding us?

Do you have coffee or tea for breakfast?

Does he have coffee for breakfast?

Notice the difference between '**Do ... have ...?**' and '**Have ... got ...?**'

'**Do you have milk on your cornflakes?**' means 'Do you usually put milk on your cornflakes?'

'**Have you got milk on your cornflakes?**' means 'Is there milk on your cornflakes at the moment?'

Do It Yourself

A Convert the following sentences into questions.

1. We are staying here tonight.
2. James can come with us if he wants to.
3. The workmen have been here all day.
4. We should have locked the garage door when we left.
5. They would have had enough time to get out when the fire started.
6. They were perhaps pretending to be aliens from outer space.
7. They might have been men from Mars.
8. They come here quite often.
9. His parents lived in that house over there.
10. He intends to sell his field to a builder for housing.
11. His wife helped them move into their new house.
12. They got out safely when the fire started.
13. The girls enjoy gardening.
14. She always enjoyed gardening.

B The following sentences are answers to questions. Make up the probable questions using the words in brackets.**Example**

Question: The man was painting his fence. (what?)

Answer: What was the man painting?

1. Our neighbour was walking along the street. (who?)
2. The man was walking along the street. (where?)
3. She will be here by three o'clock at the latest. (when?)
4. She will be coming by train. (how?)
5. The shopkeeper was talking to the detective. (who?)
6. I think she would prefer that one. (which one?)
7. I can't think of any reason she could have for leaving so suddenly. (what reason?)
8. He was drawing a picture of Buckingham Palace. (what?)
9. I don't know why she left like that. (why?)
10. He had given the money to the girl at the cash desk. (who?)

Handy Hint

There are two possible solutions to numbers 5, 8 and 10.

C The following lines are taken (with slight alterations) from English poetry. The question forms (in **bold**) are not what you would expect in normal modern English. Rewrite the lines, changing the verbs and subjects into correct modern English.

Example

Poetic English: **O saw you** pretty Lesley?

Standard English: **O did you see** pretty Lesley?

1. **O came you** by the water-side?
Pulled you the rose or the lily?
Or came you by the meadow green,
And **saw you** my sweet Willie?

2. **Why weep you** by the tide, lady? (tide = river)
Why weep you by the tide?
I'll wed you to my youngest son,
And you shall be his bride.

3. **Heard you** the noise of battle loud,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?

4. You stars that measure life to man,
Why seem your motions quicker?

5. Why, as we reach the Waterfall of Death
Feel we its pull more rapid?

6. **O where live you**, my pretty lass?
And tell me what they call you.

7. And as she gave to me a kiss,
She said, 'Dear heart, how **like you** this?'

8. And if she be not kind to me,
What **care I** how kind she be? (be = is; see Unit 13)

16 Sentences with **Not** and **-n't**

Not and **-n't** almost always follow an *auxiliary verb*, though they may also follow the lexical verbs **be** and **have**.

If there is more than one auxiliary verb in a verb phrase, **not** and **-n't** follow the *first* one (that is, the *operator* – see page 88).

We will answer that question. → *We will not answer that question.*

You must call to him. → *You must not call to him.*

I have seen that man before. → *I have not seen that man before.*

They are just being silly. → *They are not just being silly.*

The little boy over there is crying. → *The little boy over there is not crying.*

The little boy had been crying. → *The little boy had not been crying.*

She has been playing on the computer for hours. → *She has not been playing on the computer for hours.*

The police could have come sooner. → *The police could not have come sooner.*

She may be coming to the party. → *She may not be coming to the party.*

Grammar Help

Mayn't is very rare in both British and American English. Use **may not** instead.

Notice that **-n't** is always attached to the verb it follows:

You wouldn't recognize him if you saw him.

You mustn't eat sweets in the classroom.

It couldn't have been George who broke the window.

She says she isn't coming to the party.

In negative questions, **-n't** precedes the subject of the verb, whereas **not** follows it:

Why didn't she come with you? BUT **Why did she not come with you?**

Couldn't he have said that before? BUT **Could he not have said that before?**

Haven't you seen her today? BUT **Have you not seen her today?**

Why isn't she coming to the party? BUT **Why is she not coming to the party?**

Grammar Help

Other negative words do not require the use of an auxiliary:

I never said that.

No-one came.

She said nothing about it.

- As with questions, if there is no other auxiliary verb available, the verb **do** is brought in to act as the operator in a negative sentence.

I like dogs. → **I don't like dogs.**

He said he was coming. → **He did not say he was coming.**

They got lost on the way home. → **They didn't get lost on the way home.**

She drinks coffee. → **She doesn't drink coffee.**

They clearly want a fight. → **They clearly do not want a fight.**

Grammar Help

In older forms of English and in poetry, lexical verbs sometimes form negative sentences without operators, as in these quotations from William Shakespeare:

Our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not. (= ... did not whip them)

Things that love night love not such nights as these. (= ... do not love such nights as these)

This is never done in everyday modern English.

Grammar Help

Note that for both lexical and auxiliary **be**, the question form based on **am + -n't** is **aren't**:

Am I not being sensible? BUT

Aren't I being sensible?

Am I not coming with you? BUT

Aren't I coming with you?

Be and Have

- Just as with questions, the lexical verbs **be** and **have** do not require auxiliary verbs to form negative sentences.

1 **Be** never takes an auxiliary:

She is his sister. → **She isn't his sister.**

These are John's shoes. → *These are not John's shoes.*

I was very angry. → *I wasn't very angry.*

- 2** **Have** is more complicated. It can form negative sentences with or without **do**, and there is also the possibility of using '**have not got**' or '**haven't got**':

We haven't any milk. OR

We don't have any milk. OR

We haven't got any milk.

Grammar Help

- 1** In the sense of possessing or carrying something, the three possibilities are '**do not have**'/'**don't have**' and '**have not got**'/'**haven't got**' and '**have not**' (more usually '**haven't**'):

I don't have any money.

He doesn't have any money. OR

I haven't got any money.

He hasn't got any money. OR

I haven't any money.

He hasn't any money

All three are possible in British English, but the third form is less usual than the other two. American English prefers the construction with **do**.

In the past tense, it is normal to use the auxiliary verb **do**:

I didn't have any money.

He didn't have any money.

- 2** In the sense of experiencing or undergoing something, or doing something, especially doing it habitually, the construction to use is '**do not have**' (or, usually, '**don't have**'):

I didn't have any trouble finding you.

He didn't have any trouble finding you

I don't have coffee for breakfast.

He doesn't have coffee for breakfast.

Notice the difference between '**do not have**' and '**have not got**':

'*I haven't got milk on my cornflakes*' means 'There is no milk on my cornflakes at the moment'.

'*I don't have milk on my cornflakes*' generally means 'I do not usually put milk on my cornflakes', though it *may* also mean 'There is no milk on my cornflakes at the moment'.

Grammar Help

in recent years, a new way of making a sentence negative has come into use:

That's a good idea – not! (= 'That's definitely not a good idea')

This is a *colloquial and humorous* way of making an emphatic negative statement. It should therefore only be used in contexts where it is appropriate to be colloquial and humorous.

As seen in Unit 12, negative commands and requests formed with **not** and **-n't** require the auxiliary verb **do** along with the base form of a lexical verb.

Don't shout like that!

Do not use a mobile phone whilst driving.

As described in Unit 13, to make a verb in the present subjunctive negative, simply put **not** in front of it.

***We strongly recommend that children not try this on their own.
It's very important that they not arrive before us.***

Do It Yourself

A Make the following sentences negative using the word given in brackets.

1. We have been here before. (-n't)
2. I knew what to do. (-n't)
3. You must listen to what she says to you. (-n't)
4. We were sitting next to her in the theatre. (-n't)
5. Was she sitting next to us in the theatre? (not)
6. Were they sitting next to us in the theatre? (-n't)
7. Could we borrow some money from your father? (not)
8. I would have known what to do. (-n't)
9. She needs to be reminded how lucky she is. (-n't)
10. We might want her to be there with us. (not)
11. Should they have gone home? (not)
12. They will be getting married very soon. (-n't)
13. She wants to help them. (-n't)
14. Does it matter where he put the spade? (not)
15. Does it matter where he put the spade? (-n't)

B Some of the following sentences (NB: *not all of them*) could have '**have ... got ...**' rather than '**have ...**' or '**do ... have ...**'. Decide which sentences could have the '**have ... got ...**' construction, and rewrite them using '**have ... got ...**'.

Example

She **doesn't have** many friends. → She **hasn't got** many friends.

1. Do you have anything that removes greasy stains from tablecloths?
2. Does he usually have toast and eggs for breakfast?
3. He hasn't a snowball's chance in an oven of winning the art prize.
4. She has a bit of a cold at the moment.
5. Do you have snow in winter in Italy?
6. Do you have snow at the moment?
7. If the union doesn't have a new contract by Friday, we're going on strike.
8. I believe she has friends in high places.
9. Do you have any idea how much that would cost?
10. I can't talk to you now. I have a meeting with the boss in ten minutes.

Handy Hint

If you are not sure about the use of '**do ... have**' and '**have ... got**', check the Grammar Help boxes again in this unit and Unit 15.

17 Auxiliary Verbs in Tag Questions

A **tag question** (or **question tag**) is a short question used, usually at the end of a sentence, to ask the listener to show that he or she agrees with what has been said or confirm that what has been said is true.

Tag questions are generally formed with auxiliary verbs, but they may also be formed with the lexical verbs **be** and **have**.

We can go to the cinema tomorrow, can't we?

She is coming with us, isn't she?

You have finished your homework, haven't you?

You will be careful, won't you?

You won't do anything silly, will you?

She wouldn't go on her own, would she?

We are agreed, aren't we, about what needs to be done.

If the verb phrase in the main part of the sentence has one auxiliary verb in it, then that auxiliary verb is used to form the tag question.

She is coming with us, isn't she?

You have finished your homework, haven't you?

He will help us, won't he?

You can whistle, can't you?

You did tell her, didn't you?

If the verb phrase in the main part of the sentence has more than one auxiliary verb in it, then the tag question is formed with the *first* one.

We should have visited your aunt, shouldn't we?

She wouldn't have gone there alone, would she?

You couldn't have looked more ridiculous if you'd tried, could you?

If the main part of the sentence has only a lexical verb and no auxiliary verb, then here again the auxiliary verb ***do*** is brought in as the operator.

Grammar Help

In Standard English, it is not correct to use ***Is it?*** and ***Isn't it?*** as general question tags, as in ***She likes music, isn't it?*** or ***They're coming for dinner tonight, isn't it?***

She likes music, doesn't she?

Your dad enjoys gardening, doesn't he?

You know a lot about fish, don't you?

She came in with you, didn't she?

You saw him, didn't you?

Regardless of whether the subject of the verb in the first part of the sentence is a noun, a noun phrase or a pronoun, the subject of a question tag is always a pronoun.

In Standard English, a question tag must always match the verb in the main part of the sentence, as in all the examples given above.

John plays the piano, doesn't he?

Her mother is French, isn't she?

Most dogs chase cats, don't they?

- When the subject of the verb in the main part of the sentence is a pronoun such as ***someone, somebody, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, no-one, nobody*** or ***neither***, the subject of the question tag is ***they***:

Everyone knows that, don't they?

Neither of them said anything, did they?

- With ***none***, the subject of the question tag depends on whether the noun or pronoun that follows ***none*** is singular or plural:

None of her classmates like her very much, do they?

None of the jewellery was stolen, was it?

Again, the lexical verbs ***be*** and ***have*** are exceptions to the rule.

■ ***Be*** never takes the auxiliary verb ***do***:

Your sister is fond of Beethoven, isn't she?
The books were here, weren't they?
That is not really true, is it?
There is no 'f' in 'cough', is there?
That was a great party, wasn't it?

■ The tag question following ***have*** may be formed with ***have*** or ***do***. As with questions (Unit 15) and negatives (Unit 16), the usage depends on the meaning of the verb ***have***. In the sense of possessing something, the question tags can be formed either with ***have*** or with ***do***:

You have two sisters, haven't you? OR
You have two sisters, don't you?
They haven't a hope of winning, have they? OR
They haven't a hope of winning, do they?

Also with ***have got***:

You've got two sisters, haven't you? OR
You've got two sisters, don't you?

In the past tense, ***do*** is commoner than ***have*** in the question tag:

She had two sisters, didn't she?

In other senses of ***have***, the tag question is usually formed with ***do***:

She had a long talk with him, didn't she?

Grammar Help

- ◆ After a *positive* statement, the question tag is usually *negative*:

You are coming with us, aren't you?

You can speak English, can't you?

We should visit your aunt, shouldn't we?

Notice that negative tag questions are normally formed with *-n't* rather than with *not*, though in more formal English *not* is also possible:

I am the lord of all these lands, am I not?

She is the best chess-player in the club, is she not?

- ◆ After a *negative* statement, the question tag is *positive*:

You aren't coming with us, are you?

You can't speak Japanese, can you?

We shouldn't be here, should we?

Other negative words also cause the following question tag to be positive:

I'll never win, will I?

Nothing went wrong, did it?

None of the jewellery was stolen, was it?

Certain other words that have a slightly negative meaning, such as **hardly**, **scarcely** and **seldom**, are also followed by *positive* question tags even though the main verb is positive:

She seldom smiles, does she?

That hardly counts as an answer, does it?

She scarcely ever smiles, does she?

- ◆ A negative question tag often expects the answer 'yes', and a positive tag often expects the answer 'no'. Such question tags are said with a falling intonation. But question tags with a rising intonation are also used to express surprise, disapproval, doubt, shock, etc:

They aren't coming with us, are ↓ they? (= I am pretty sure that they are not coming with us and I want you to confirm that they aren't.)

They aren't coming with us, are ↑ they? (= I realize they are coming with us but I am surprised that they are.)

You can't speak Chinese, can ↓ you? (= I am pretty sure that you are not able to speak Chinese, and I want you to confirm this.)

You can't speak Chinese, can ↑ you? (= I realize that you can speak Chinese but I am surprised that you can.)

- ◆ It is, however, possible to have a *positive* statement followed by a *positive* question tag. A positive statement followed by a positive question tag usually implies surprise at something or the discovery of some fact:

And that is why you came here, is ↑ it?

So you are the boy who broke my window, are ↑ you?

So Graeme is your computer expert, is ↑ he?

Grammar Help

A **negative** statement or question is one in which there is a negative word such as **not** or **never**.

A **positive** statement or question is one in which there is no negative word.

Question Tags after Commands and Requests

After commands and requests, the usual question tag is ***will you?***

Give me a hand with this, will you?

Stop shouting at me, will you?

Do be quiet, will you?

Don't shout at him, will you?

After more persuasive or hopeful ***positive*** requests (that is, ones without ***not*** or ***-n't***), the question tag is often ***won't you?***:

Do be quiet, won't you, when we're in the hospital.

In colloquial speech, ***can you?*** and ***can't you?*** are also sometimes used as question tags after commands and requests:

Tell them to get a move on, can you?

Give it a rest, can't you? (= stop doing that)

Let's

The tag question after ***let's*** and ***let's not*** is ***shall we?***

Let's go to the pictures this evening, shall we?

Let's have a game of tennis, shall we?

Let's not mention this to him, shall we?

Let's not take this too seriously, shall we?

Shall we? is also found after other constructions that are used to make suggestions:

We'll all be very quiet, shall we, and then we'll see if the bunnies come out of their burrows.

Do It Yourself

A Add appropriate question tags to the following statements.
 (In all cases, assume that you are *not* expressing surprise or the discovery of some fact.)

1. You don't like him very much.
2. We are leaving tomorrow.
3. She had planned this from the very beginning.
4. She planned this from the very beginning.
5. I should have checked the route before I started.
6. There must be some explanation for these strange phenomena.
7. They had a bit of an argument this morning.
8. We can be at the seaside in less than an hour.
9. Jack is teaching the boys to play baseball.
10. Jack teaches French.
11. The little girl was wearing a red velvet dress.
12. She wore a red velvet dress.

B Complete the following passage by filling in the blank spaces with appropriate question tags.

'You could be mistaken, ____ ?' she said to her friend.
 'You could be quite wrong. You could keep on and on searching for proof of John's guilt, but if in fact he isn't guilty of any wrongdoing, you would be wasting your time, ____ ? What you need to do is look again at all the evidence you have, and consider who might have the most to gain from what has happened here. It might well be John, but it might be someone else entirely, ____ ?'

'Okay,' he replied. 'Let's begin by checking through all the computer files for the past month, ____ ? That wouldn't be a waste of time, ____ ? If someone has been tampering with the data, it should be easy to spot. And after all, there are only a few people who have access to those files, ____ ? John is certainly one of them, but there's

Jim as well, _____, and also Tracy and Ellis. If the files have been tampered with, it must surely have been by one of them, _____? And none of them can be ruled out, _____?

'But again,' she said, 'the question is, who has anything to gain from it? Perhaps we need to look not at our own staff but at our rivals. If we were to go bankrupt, who would get our business?'

'That isn't hard to work out, _____?' he said. 'Brown Associates would pick up all the business round here if we ceased trading, _____?'

'And we know who has a connection with Brown Associates, _____?'

'An easy one again,' he replied. 'Tracy's cousin Bill works for Brown Associates, _____?'

'Well then,' she said in triumph, 'we should be considering Tracy's possible role in this, _____?'

18 Further Uses of Auxiliary Verbs

The auxiliary verb ***do*** is used along with a main verb to give emphasis to positive statements.

I do like carrots!

You do know the man I'm talking about!

He does want to come with us!

I said I would give him the money and I did give him the money!

Note, however, that you cannot use ***do*** in this way to emphasize the lexical verb ***be***, nor any auxiliary verb.

When parts of a sentence are omitted because they can be understood from what has already been said, this is known as **ellipsis** /ɪ'lɪpsɪs/. Ellipsis avoids unnecessary repetition of information.

When some parts of a sentence are left unsaid in this way, an auxiliary verb may be all that remains of a verb phrase and the words that might have followed it.

'Is she coming with us?'

'Yes, she is.' (= Yes, she is coming with us)

'Can I come too?'

'Yes, of course you can.' (= Yes, of course you can come too)

'Mary can speak Arabic.'

'I think her brother can too.' (= I think her brother can speak Arabic too)

'Could I be of help?'

'Yes, you probably could.' (= Yes, you probably could be of help)

'Have you broken my Walkman?'

'No, I haven't.' (= No, I haven't broken your Walkman)

'Did you see John when you were in town?'

'Yes, I did.' (= Yes, I did see John)

Grammar Help

In British English, the verb ***do*** is sometimes added to modal verbs and auxiliary ***have*** in this construction:

'Can I come too?'

'You can if you like.' OR

'You can do if you like.'

'Will you wash the dishes for me?'

'I already have.' OR

'I already have done.'

*'If you two **will** wash the dishes tonight, I **will** tomorrow night.'*
 (= I will wash the dishes tomorrow night)

Where there is more than one auxiliary verb available in the context, it is equally correct in ellipsis to keep either only the first one or else two or more of them:

*'Could he **have** escaped?'*
 'Yes, he **could**.' OR 'Yes, he **could have**.'

*'Should he **have been** taking all those tablets?'*
 'No, he **shouldn't**.' OR
 'No, he **shouldn't have**.' OR
 'No, he **shouldn't have been**.'

Ellipsis of this sort requires the presence of an auxiliary verb. When there is no other auxiliary verb available in the context, the auxiliary verb **do** is again brought in to fill the gap:

*'You **forgot** it was my birthday!'*
 'Yes, I know I **did**.' (= I know I forgot)

*'He probably **thought** we were on holiday.'*
 'Yes, I expect he **did**.'

*'The cat possibly **thinks** its reflection in the mirror is another cat.'*
 'Yes, perhaps it **does**.'

As might be expected, the lexical verbs **be** and **have** are again exceptions to the general rule, and do not need an auxiliary verb in an ellipsis. **Be** never takes an auxiliary, **have** may or may not do, depending on its sense (see the Grammar Help boxes in Units 15 and 16):

'Are you my son's maths teacher?' 'Yes, I **am**.'

'Were the boys at school yesterday?' 'Well, I think they **were**.'

'Have you enough money with you for your bus fare?'
 'I think I **have**.' OR 'I think I **do**.'

Grammar Help

In this construction, you can use an auxiliary verb (again using **do** if there is no other auxiliary verb available) or else **be** or **have**.

Simple ellipsis is one way of avoiding unnecessary repetition of information. Another way is by using the word **so**, either with an auxiliary verb or with **be**, **have** or **do**.

- When you say *so do I, so can she, so did they*, etc, you are saying that what is true of one person is equally true of another person:

'I can ride a bike.'

'Well, **so can I.**' (= I can ride a bike too)

'Lynn will be at the party tomorrow.'

So will Donald.'

'Mary speaks Arabic.'

'So does her brother.' (= Her brother speaks Arabic too)

'I went to the Philippines for my holiday this year.'

'Isn't that amazing! **So did I.**'

'Jane's mother is a teacher.'

'So is her father.'

Grammar Help

The lexical verb **have** can be followed by either **have** or **do**:

'Stan has a dreadful cold.'

'**So has June.**' OR '**So does June.**'

'I haven't any friends.'

'**Neither have I.**' OR

'**Neither do I.**'

Both forms are used in British English.

The **do** form is

preferred in American English.

The negative form of this construction uses **neither**.

'I can't ride a bike.'

'Neither can I.' (= I can't ride a bike either)

'Mary doesn't speak Arabic.'

'Neither does her brother.'

■ When you say **so I am, so she did**, etc, you are agreeing that what has just been said is true:

'Timmy can ride a bike.'

'So he can.' (= I agree that Timmy can ride a bike)

'Look! They're all running away!'

'So they are.' (= You are right. They are running away)

'Mary speaks Arabic.'

'So she does.' (= I agree that Mary speaks Arabic)

'You put salt in the pudding instead of sugar!'

'So I did. Silly me!"

'You are a fool!'

'Yes, so I am.'

Again the negative form of this construction uses **neither**.

'Mary doesn't speak Arabic.'

'Neither she does.' (= I agree that Mary does not speak Arabic)

'You're not being very sensible, you know.'

'Neither I am.' (= I agree that I am not being very sensible)

■ You can also use **do so, does so** or **did so** to avoid repeating words that have just been said:

You asked me to tell them and I did so. (= I told them)

Grammar Help

This expression uses the *lexical verb* **do**. There may, therefore, also be an auxiliary verb in the construction as well as **do** (as in the third and fourth examples):

I have always done so.
Could I do so now?

Handy Hint

Remember that not all verbs can be emphasized in this way. If you are not sure about the rule, check again at the beginning of this unit.

The doctor said I should drink two litres of water a day, and I always try to do so. (= I always try to drink two litres of water a day)

Since my mother made me promise to read the Bible every day, I have always done so.

I had meant to talk to you about this before the meeting. Could I do so now?

Do It Yourself

- A** When you told this story to your friends, they didn't believe you. Tell them the story again, using **do** to emphasize the things you say.

I went into town shopping this morning. And when I was in town, I saw Elvis Presley. I know it was him. I am absolutely sure it was. He looked at me and smiled, and then he came over to me and sang 'Are you lonesome tonight?', just for me. A crowd started to form round us, and at the end of the song they clapped and cheered. Then suddenly Elvis was gone. I realize that this sounds very unlikely, but I know that it wasn't a dream. I really met Elvis today, and I will never forget it.

Handy Hint

There are two possible answers to examples 10 and 12.

- B** Complete the following sentences.

1. My parents have been invited to the wedding, and so ____ I.
2. I'm not going and neither ____ you.
3. She won't talk about their problems, and neither ____ he.
4. She is incredibly stubborn, and so ____ her sisters.
5. I ran away, and so ____ all the others.
6. Unfortunately my wife ____ go to the funeral, and neither could I.
7. My sister went to the funeral, and so ____ her husband.
8. She ____ apologize, and neither will he.
9. He would stay till the weekend if you asked him, and probably so ____ she.
10. The girls said they were sorry and so ____ their brother.
11. I don't know the answer to that question, and neither ____ he.
12. She replied that she would be happy to help and so ____ her friends.

19 *Dare, Need, Ought to and Used to*

The verbs **dare** (= be willing to risk), **need** (= have to, must), **ought to** and **used to** are often treated by grammarians as modal auxiliaries.

I daren't tell her that I've forgotten to buy her a birthday present.

You needn't leave yet. There's plenty of time.

I think we ought to leave now.

He used to live in that house over there.

There are a number of things to be noted about the grammar of these verbs.

Dare and Need

Dare and **need** may behave either as auxiliary verbs or as lexical verbs.

■ In positive statements (that is, statements without a negative word such as **not** or **-n't**), **need** and **dare** are treated as lexical verbs and are therefore followed by **to**-infinitives:

I need to check our travel arrangements.

I cannot think how she dared to tell him he was wrong.

As lexical verbs, **need** and **dare** have the **-s** ending when the subject of the verb is **he**, **she** or **it**:

He needs to check his travel arrangements.

She dares to suggest that I'm in the wrong? She's got a nerve!

However, contrary to the general rule for infinitives following lexical verbs, the lexical verb **dare** is very often followed by a **bare** infinitive:

I cannot think how she dares tell him he is wrong.

Grammar Help

Remember the two main differences between a lexical verb and an auxiliary verb:

- ◆ A lexical verb is followed by a **to**-infinitive (*I want to go*), whereas an auxiliary verb is followed by a bare infinitive (*I can go*).
- ◆ A lexical verb ends in **-s** in the third person singular of the present tense (*he goes*), whereas there is no **-s** ending in the third person singular of the present tense of an auxiliary verb (*he can go*).

- With a negative word such as **not** or **-n't**, **need** and **dare** can be treated *either* as lexical verbs *or* as auxiliary verbs.

As lexical verbs they must be used with the auxiliary verb **do**, whereas as auxiliary verbs they are used without **do**.

He doesn't need to check the details. OR

He needn't check the details.

He does not dare (to) suggest that to her. OR

He dare not suggest that to her.

Grammar Help

English grammar does not allow there to be more than one modal auxiliary in a verb phrase (see page 12). Therefore, if there is any other modal auxiliary in the sentence, **need** and **dare** must be treated as lexical verbs:

He will not need to check the details again.

I wouldn't dare (to) suggest that to her.

Notice that, as auxiliary verbs, **need** and **dare** do not have the **-s** ending when the subject of the verb is *he*, *she* or *it*: *he needn't*; *he need not*; *he daren't*; *he dare not*.

Not and **-n't** are not the only negative words that allow **need** and **dare** to be treated as auxiliary verbs. Other negative words, such as **no** or **no-one**, or words with a slightly negative meaning, such as **scarcely** and **hardly**, do this too:

No-one need fear the consequences of being absolutely honest.
It is said that no-one dare disobey him.

No friend of mine need ever be afraid of facing the world alone.
He need scarcely fear that he will end up penniless.
John need know nothing about our arrangement.

A negative word attached to a preceding verb is even enough to allow **need** and **dare** to be treated as auxiliary verbs:

I don't think he need worry about that.

- In questions, **need** and **dare** can again be treated *either* as lexical verbs *or* as auxiliary verbs. As with negatives, **dare** and **need** as lexical verbs must be used with the auxiliary verb **do**, whereas as auxiliary verbs they are used without **do**:

Do you need to leave so soon? OR

Need you leave so soon?

Do I dare (to) say that to her? OR

Dare I say that?

And in negative questions:

Don't I need to leave after all? OR

Needn't I leave after all?

Doesn't he *dare* (to) say that to her? OR

Daren't he say that to her?

With **not** rather than **-n't**, the verbs are best used as lexical verbs:

Do I not *need* to leave after all?

Does he not *dare* (to) say that to her?

Grammar Help

- ◆ The idiom **how dare you/he/they**, etc, that expresses anger at something someone has done, is always followed by a bare infinitive:
How dare she behave like that in public?
How dare you tell the directors I was lying?
- ◆ When the verb **dare** is used with the meaning 'to challenge someone to do something dangerous', it is *always* treated as a lexical verb and followed by a **to**-infinitive:
He dared me to do it.
Anyone who dares a little boy to run across a busy motorway must be really stupid.
- ◆ Similarly, when **need** is followed by an object, it is always treated as a lexical verb:
John says he needs a new pair of shoes.
He needs me to help him with his homework.

Ought to

- Like an auxiliary verb, **ought** has no **-s** ending for the third person singular of the present tense, but on the other hand it is always followed by a **to**-infinitive like a lexical verb:

He ought to apologize.

The correct negative forms of **ought to** in standard English are **ought not to** or **oughtn't to**:

You ought not to do that. OR

You oughtn't to do that.

The question forms are **ought I/you, etc?**, and, in the negative, **oughtn't I/you, etc?**, etc or **ought I/you, etc not?**:

Ought we to be leaving soon?

Ought we not to tell him now?

Grammar Help

Didn't ought to is not considered correct in Standard English, though it is used in some other English dialects, so you may come across it in colloquial English.

- **Ought to** is a past tense when used in a subordinate clause in reported speech preceded by a verb in the past tense:

She knew she ought to tell him the truth.

I told her that she ought to speak to a doctor about her problem.

(There is more about tenses in reported speech in Unit 34.)

However, when referring to something which should have happened in the past but which did not happen, use **ought to have**:

I ought to have been more careful.

We ought to have said that we were coming.

To refer to something which should not have happened but which did happen, use **ought not to have**:

You oughtn't to have told him.

Grammar Help

In Standard English, **used to** is always used to refer to the *past*. There is no present tense form. It is therefore *not correct* in Standard English to use **use to** to denote an ongoing activity, as in *He use to live here* (= he lives here).

Used to

■ **Used to** /'ju:stə/ is used to talk about something that happened frequently in the past but which no longer happens or about something that was true in the past but which is no longer true:

I used to smoke but I stopped a couple of years ago.

We used to go for walks in the hills every weekend but we don't seem to have time to nowadays.

■ The negative forms of **used to** are **used not to** and **usedn't** /ju:snt/ **to**:

He used not to smoke as much as he does now.

He usedn't to smoke at all.

In more informal English, **didn't use to** is also acceptable:

He didn't use to come here very often, but nowadays we see him here at least three times a week.

■ The interrogative forms of **used to** are **did he/she, etc use to?** and, in the negative, **did he/she, etc not use to?** or **didn't he/she, etc use to?**

Did your brother use to live near here?

Did your brother not use to live near here? OR

Didn't your brother use to live near here?

Used he to do it?, **used he not to do it?**, and **usedn't he to do it?** are all also possible but are much less common.

Grammar Help

Do not confuse the modal verb **used to** (/ju:stə/) with the adjective + preposition phrase **used to**, pronounced /ju:zd tə/, which means 'accustomed to'. Notice the difference between

I used to live here. (= I once lived here but I do not live here any longer)
and

I am used to living here. (= I have grown accustomed to living here)

Question Tags with **Dare**, **Need**, **Ought to** and **Used to**

- With any of the constructions that have **do**, **does** or **did** in the main clause, form the tag question with **do**, **does** or **did**:

I didn't need to tell you, did I?

She doesn't need to go yet, does she?

You didn't use to like Kylie Minogue, did you?

- With **dare** and **need** as lexical verbs, form the tag questions with **do**, **does** or **did**:

She needs to tell him the truth, doesn't she?

I don't think she dares tell him anything, does she?

Used to also forms tag questions with **did**:

He used to live near by, didn't he?

With **dare** and **need** as auxiliaries, form the tag questions with the auxiliaries:

We needn't tell him anything about it, need we?

She daren't say anything to him, dare she?

- Ought to** forms tag questions with **ought**:

She ought to be here by now, oughtn't she?

We ought not to be here at all, ought we?

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct word or phrase from the pairs given in brackets.

1. We need to ask for more help, (needn't, don't) we?
2. (Needs, Need) she always talk so loudly?
3. I doubt if she ever (dares, dare) to argue with him.
4. I don't suppose he (needs, need) to know that.
5. Well, we (need, need to) tell them something about what we've been doing.
6. He used to be a famous actor, (didn't, usedn't) he?
7. We were used to being poor, (weren't, usedn't) we?
8. How dare they (suggest, to suggest) that I was lying?
9. The boy admitted that he had dared his friend (to run, run) in front of the train.
10. We ought to have offered to pay for the meal, (oughtn't, didn't) we?

B Complete the following passage (i) by adding **-s** where appropriate to the third person singular of the verbs in the present tense, (ii) by inserting the word **to** where necessary, and (iii) by giving the correct form of the question tags.

'Tim need someone help him. He say he can't move that big stone on his own.'

'I suppose we ought give him a hand, ____ we?'

'Dare we refuse? I wouldn't want him hurt himself.'

'He wouldn't hurt himself, ____ he? After all, he used to be a boxer, ____ he? And you need be pretty strong for that, ____ you?'

'Nonetheless, I think he might need help. Let's go and see, ____ we?'

'OK, then. I won't argue with you. I never do, ____ I?'

20 Inversion of Subjects and Verbs

The subject of a verb normally precedes the verb in statements in English. However, in a number of constructions, the subject *follows* the verb (or the *first* verb if there is more than one).

Notice that in some of the constructions described below, you not only have to invert the subject and the verb, but you also have to bring in an *auxiliary verb* to precede the subject. This is yet another use of auxiliary verbs.

As in other cases, if there is no other auxiliary verb to use, then *do* is brought in as the auxiliary.

Inversion with Verbs of Saying and Thinking

When you are reporting direct speech (that is, the exact words that someone is saying or thinking), the subject of the verb of saying or thinking may follow the verb if it is a *noun or noun phrase*:

'What are you doing here?' asked the woman.

'That's all the money I have,' said Tom.

'Stop that noise at once,' shouted the teacher.

'We never dressed like that when I was a girl,' snapped Granny.

'Please help me,' pleaded the girl.

'I rather liked him,' murmured Winston.

It is equally correct not to invert the subject and the verb:

'But that's not true!' the girl protested.

'Murder is more difficult in real life than in books,' Geoffrey said with a smile.

'There's another problem to consider,' the man continued.

If the verb has an object, do not invert the subject and verb:

'Don't talk to strangers,' their mother warned them.

Grammar Help

Remember, of course, that the subject normally follows the verb in a question:

Can I help you?

Is that dress expensive?

Would you like some tea?

Do you often go to concerts?

What do you want?

The formation of questions has been covered in detail in Unit 15.

Grammar Help

In very informal English, when a person is telling a story, a pronoun subject may follow a verb:

'Well, that's very odd,' says I to myself. 'I wonder what's going on.'

Other peculiar features of this very informal story-telling style are the use of the simple present tense when referring to something that has happened in the past (see Unit 30), and the use of the -s ending with the first person pronoun.

If the subject is a *pronoun*, there is no inversion of the subject and the verb:

'I don't understand what you mean,' I said.

'Give me that back,' she hissed at him.

'What are you doing in there?' she asked.

'And for my next trick,' he continued, 'I need someone's watch.'

'Don't worry,' he added. 'Nothing will happen to it.'

Inversion with *here is ...*, *there are ...*, etc

After *here* ... and *there* ..., if the subject is a *noun* or *noun phrase*, then it follows the verb:

Here are the correct answers.

Here's a dollar for your trouble.

There will be a meeting to discuss this matter early next week.

Here comes your dad now.

There is no excuse for such bad behaviour.

There goes your bus now. You've missed it.

There are your gloves on the table.

But if the subject of the verb is a *pronoun*, there is no inversion:

Here he comes now.

There they are on the table.

Inversion after *so*, *neither*, etc

The subject follows the verb in expressions such as *so do I*, *so does John*, *so did we*, etc:

'We went swimming this afternoon.'

'So did we.'

'I don't like tomatoes.'

'Neither do I.'

Constructions like these have been discussed in Unit 18. The verb *do* in these constructions is the auxiliary verb *do*, not the lexical verb.

Another word that triggers inversion and the insertion of an auxiliary verb is ***nor***:

I don't know what happened to the money.

Nor does anyone else in this office.

I've never been to China, nor has my wife.

We saw nothing of the accident, nor did we hear anything about it till much later.

She wasn't born in Singapore, nor was her husband.

Inversion in Conditional Clauses without *if*

Conditional clauses usually begin with the word ***if***:

If you do that, Mother will be very angry.

If I had known then what I know now, I would never have helped her.

If she were my daughter, I wouldn't tolerate her behaviour for a moment.

However, if a conditional clause includes the verbs ***had, should*** or subjunctive ***were***, it may be formed without ***if*** and with the subject following the first verb:

Had I known then what I know now, I wouldn't have helped her.

Were she my daughter, I wouldn't tolerate her behaviour for a moment.

Had we seen the menu, we might have decided to eat in some other restaurant.

There are other things we could have done during our visit, had we planned the trip more carefully.

Should she ask you where I am, tell her you haven't seen me.

Should you ever need any help, just give me a call.

Were she to ask me for advice, I would certainly tell her what I thought.

Were I to die tomorrow, I would be happy to have known you even for just one day.

The constructions with subject-verb inversion are a little more formal than those with ***if***, but are used in everyday language nevertheless.

There is more about conditional clauses in Unit 33.

Inversion after Negative Words in Initial Position in the Sentence

Inversion of the subject and the verb is required when certain negative adverbs, such as ***never*** and ***nowhere***, and adverbs that have a broadly negative meaning, such as ***hardly***, ***little***, ***only***, ***rarely***, ***scarcely*** and ***seldom***, come before the subject in the sentence. For example, instead of

I have never seen such a thing before.

Crime rarely pays.

We had hardly started our meal before the phone rang.

Grammar Help

Notice that when the subject and verb are inverted in expressions like these, you must use an auxiliary verb along with the lexical verb, except (as usual) for the lexical verbs ***be*** and ***have***.

you could say:

Never have I seen such a thing before.

Rarely does crime pay nowadays.

Hardly had we started our meal than the phone rang.

And similarly, you could say:

Little did I know what she was intending to do.

Never have I heard such a load of rubbish.

Nowhere is an honest man to be found these days.

Seldom do I get a good night's sleep these days.

Scarcely had she finished speaking when there came a furious knocking at the front door.

The above examples are rather literary, but there are others that are quite normal in everyday language:

No way is she a friend of mine.

Under no circumstances are you to touch that paint until it's dry.

Not only at the beginning of a sentence also causes inversion of the following subject and verb:

Not only is travelling by train cheaper than air travel, it also lets you see more of the country.

Inversion after Adverbs of Place and Direction

When an adverb of place or direction (such as ***down***, ***in***, ***off***, ***out***) or an adverbial phrase describing place or direction comes before the verb in a sentence, then if the subject of the verb is a *noun* or *noun phrase* it follows the verb:

Off went the girls to find their grandmother.

The car stopped and out jumped four policemen.

Along came Mrs Brown, carrying a heavy bag of shopping.

Down came the rain in torrents.

In the house next door lived a very strange woman.

At the top of the hill stood a ruined castle.

But here again, if the subject is a *pronoun*, there is no inversion – the subject comes *before* the verb:

Off they went, singing and laughing.

You're covered in mud! Into the bath you go at once.

On and on they walked.

Inversion after a Word or Phrase that is being Emphasized

When an adjective or adverb or an adjectival or adverbial phrase is emphasized by being put in front of the verb at the beginning of the sentence, the subject of the verb follows the verb:

So unlikely was her story that it had to be true.

Great was their suffering in those days.

So strange did he look that we thought he was quite mad.
And ***equally odd was his behaviour.***

Often did I wander over these very hills in my childhood.

Grammar Help

Notice that here again you must use an auxiliary verb along with the lexical verb, except with ***be*** and ***have***.

This construction is used mostly in formal and literary English. It is not normally used in everyday spoken language.

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following story by inserting the phrases listed below at appropriate places in order to fill the gaps.

called Kay	called Mrs Brown	gasped Kim
had he been	had I thought	had she said
I am	I had thought	I must do
I must go	I were	it went
Kim asked	rushed the two girls	Mrs Brown asked
nor do I	said Kay	she said
so am I	so I am	so must I
the girls leapt	their mother warned	there was
there was	there were	they arrived
went the taxi		

'Hurry up, you two,' ____ to her two daughters. '____ that you were going to take as long as this to get ready, I would have told you to pack last night.'

Five minutes later, ____ still no sign of the girls.

'The taxi will be here in a minute. Aren't you ready yet?' ____ .

'I'm nearly ready,' ____ . 'And ____ ', said Kim, 'but ____ no clean hankies in my drawer and I had to iron some. ____ lots more to do this morning than ____ .'

'I must clean my teeth, though,' said Kay. 'And ____ , ' said Kim.

'There's no time for that now,' ____ them.

'But ____ , ' said Kim. Scarcely ____ this when the doorbell rang. The taxi had arrived. Down the stairs ____ , dragging their suitcases behind them.

'You're wearing two different shoes!' laughed Kay.

'Oh, ____ , ' said Kim. '____ and change.'

'Do hurry up,' said Mrs Brown. 'I don't want you to keep the taxi waiting any longer.'

'____ , ____ to her mother.

At last, a few minutes later, Kim came back downstairs.

'Here ____ , ' ____ .

'Come on,' said Kay, 'the driver has been kept waiting long enough.'

____ into the taxi and off ____ . Soon ____ at the station. The girls got out and paid the driver, and off ____ again.

'Should we have given the driver a tip?' ____ her sister.

'____ a little more helpful, I might have,' said Kay, 'but he didn't even help us with our cases.'

'Oh, no! My case!' ____ . 'It's still in the taxi! What'll I do?'

'If ____ you, I'd telephone the taxi company and find out where the taxi is,' said her sister. 'Perhaps the driver will be coming back to the station soon.'

B Rewrite the following sentences with subject-verb inversions in forms without inversions.

Example

Question: **Never before have I heard** such an unlikely hypothesis.

Answer: **I have never before heard** such an unlikely hypothesis.

1. Rarely does one receive such courtesy and consideration in a shop nowadays.
2. Hardly had she got off the ship in New York when her problems began.
3. Seldom does a vet see any cases of foot-and-mouth disease.
4. So hungry were we, we even ate grass and bark.
5. Never for a moment did I imagine that I would win the prize.
6. Little did we suspect that we had an uninvited guest, a very large cobra.
7. Had the female bird actually begun to sit on the eggs immediately, they might eventually have hatched.
8. Little did we think at the time that that would be our last holiday together.
9. Barely did Robin and his men avoid being caught by the Sheriff of Nottingham's soldiers.
10. Only too frequently do these phone-calls turn out to be hoaxes.

Quick Summary

1 Auxiliary verbs are the verbs that are used along with main verbs to make different tenses and to express ideas such as possibility, necessity and permission. [Unit 2]

2 Many auxiliary verbs have special **short forms.** [Unit 14]

3 The first or only auxiliary verb in a verb phrase is often known as the **operator.** [Unit 15]

In **questions**, the operator precedes the subject of the verb. [Unit 15]

Apart from **be** and **have**, lexical verbs cannot form questions without an auxiliary verb as the operator. If there is no other auxiliary verb available, the verb **do** is used as the operator.

4 In negative sentences, **not and -**n't** almost always follow an auxiliary verb, the **operator.**** [Unit 16]

Apart from **be** and **have**, lexical verbs cannot form negative sentences without an auxiliary verb to act as the operator. If there is no other auxiliary verb available, the verb **do** is used as the operator.

5 Tag questions are formed with auxiliary verbs. [Unit 17]

Apart from **be** and **have**, lexical verbs cannot form tag questions. If there is no other auxiliary verb in the sentence, tag questions are formed with the auxiliary verb **do**.

Positive statements are normally followed by negative question tags, and negative statements by positive question tags.

A *positive statement followed by a positive question tag implies surprise, etc.*

6 The auxiliary verb **do can be used to emphasize lexical verbs, except the verb **be.**** [Unit 18]

In cases of **ellipsis**, the auxiliary verb may be all that remains when other words that can be understood from the context are left unsaid. [Unit 18]

Similar constructions are possible using **so** and **neither**.

7 *Dare, need, ought to* and **need to are often considered to be auxiliary verbs, but they have certain grammatical features that make them different from other auxiliary verbs.** [Unit 19]

8 The verb usually precedes the subject in statements. In certain cases, however, the subject *follows* the verb, for example after certain **negative adverbs, adverbs of place or direction**, and **direct speech.** [Unit 20]

Chapter 4

Participles, Verbal Nouns and Infinitives

The **present participle**, the **past participle** and the **infinitive** are the three non-finite verb forms in English.

Present participles are used to form **continuous tenses**:

I am coming *she is singing*

Verbal nouns or **gerunds** have the same form as present participles, but behave as nouns rather than verbs. For example, a verbal noun can act as the **subject** or **object** in a sentence:

Playing football is good for you. [subject]
I hate telling lies. [object]

Past participles are used in the formation of **perfect tenses** and **passive constructions**:

I have gone *we had finished*
he was caught *they were beaten*

Infinitives are often used after other verbs. A modal verb is followed by a **bare infinitive** [infinitive without **to**]:

we can go *they will come*

A lexical verb is followed by a **to-infinitive**:

we want to go *they like to sing*

Some verbs must be followed by a verbal noun, others by an infinitive. Some verbs can be followed by either verbal nouns or infinitives:

I like singing *I like to sing*

Participles and verbal nouns can be used as **adjectives**:

an interesting book
a frightened child
a washing machine
a dining room

Unit

21 Present Participles and Verbal Nouns

22 Past Participles

23 Infinitives

24 Past Participles in Passive Constructions

25 Further Uses of Infinitives, Participles and Verbal Nouns

21 Present Participles and Verbal Nouns

Present Participles

When a verb phrase consists of the auxiliary verb **be** and a lexical verb, the lexical verb has the form of a **present participle**.

I am coming.

The girls were swimming in the lake.

Who was that you were talking to?

I was only trying to help.

What are you asking me to do?

The girl was staring out of the window.

I have been wanting to speak to you for ages.

Grammar Help

Modal verbs do not have present participles.

Present participles always end in **-ing**. Usually the **-ing** is simply added to the base form of the verb:

<i>feel → feeling</i>	<i>hang → hanging</i>	<i>shoot → shooting</i>
<i>walk → walking</i>	<i>break → breaking</i>	<i>watch → watching</i>
<i>fill → filling</i>	<i>cry → crying</i>	<i>say → saying</i>
<i>drink → drinking</i>	<i>comb → combing</i>	<i>turn → turning</i>

Sometimes there is a slight change to be made to the base form before the **-ing** is added, such as the dropping of a final **-e** or the doubling of a final consonant:

<i>make → making</i>	<i>stare → staring</i>	<i>bite → biting</i>
<i>shine → shining</i>	<i>come → coming</i>	<i>chase → chasing</i>
<i>tie → tying</i>	<i>die → dying</i>	<i>lie → lying</i>
<i>tap → tapping</i>	<i>swim → swimming</i>	<i>run → running</i>
<i>stir → stirring</i>	<i>sit → sitting</i>	<i>sob → sobbing</i>

(There is more information about the formation of present participles in Unit 10.)

The auxiliary verb **be** and the present participles of lexical verbs form what are known as **continuous tenses** or **progressive tenses**. Continuous tenses describe an activity or state that continues for a period of time, as opposed to an action that happens just at one moment.

I was having a bath when the phone rang.

Mother was waiting for me in the garden when I arrived.

I'm waiting for a friend. **I've been waiting** for her for over half an hour.

The boys were playing football in the street, but a policeman told them to stop.

Why are you looking so sad these days?

Our son has been having nightmares ever since he watched that horror movie.

It was raining heavily when we got back home.

She was laughing loudly as she ran out of the room.

Sometimes a verb in a continuous tense refers to something that is *going to happen* in the future or to something that *might have happened* but didn't:

I am leaving tomorrow morning.

We are going to France for our holidays this year.

We were going to France but we changed our minds and went to Spain instead.

(There is more information about the meanings and uses of the continuous tenses in Units 30 to 33.)

Present participles can be used *without* auxiliary verbs.

Laughing loudly, she ran out of the room.

I got absolutely soaked while **waiting** for my friend.

Crying with joy, she hugged and kissed him.

The children stood at the window, **watching** the cars go by.

While **painting** the ceiling, I fell and broke my arm.

The man **talking** to Nancy is the head teacher.

Present participles can be used as *adjectives*.

a **smiling** baby

a **hunting** lion

boiling water

an **interesting** theory

The car was crushed by **falling** rocks.

Our visit to the TV studio was a **fascinating** experience.

Verbal Nouns

Did You Know?

Verbal nouns are sometimes called **gerunds** /'dʒerəndz/, from Latin *gerere* 'to do'.

Verbal nouns also end in **-ing**. In fact, all verbal nouns have exactly the same spellings as the corresponding present participles.

Like present participles, verbal nouns describe actions and activities:

Fighting about something so trivial is just silly.

Smoking is bad for you, but **jogging** is good for you.

I really enjoy **swimming** and **diving**.

Fox-hunting has been banned in Scotland.

Her **laughing** like that frightened the baby.

Thank you for **helping** me.

By **wearing** this badge, you show your support for the world's poorest people.

Grammar Help

Since both **present participles** and **verbal nouns** describe actions and activities, the meanings of present participles and verbal nouns are very similar. But since the former are *verbs* and the latter are *nouns*, the ways they are used in sentences are slightly different.

- ◆ A present participle may follow an auxiliary verb as part of a verb phrase:

She was singing loudly as she walked along the street.

Whenever a present participle appears without an accompanying auxiliary verb, it will always be possible to make an equivalent sentence which includes a subject and an auxiliary:

*While painting the ceiling, I fell and broke my arm. → OR
While I was painting the ceiling, I fell and broke my arm.*

*The man talking to Nancy is the headmaster. → OR
The man who is talking to Nancy is the headmaster.*

- ◆ On the other hand, verbal nouns behave grammatically like other nouns. For example, a verbal noun may be the *subject* or *object* of a verb:

Singing is fun. [subject]
I like singing. [object]

A verbal noun may follow a *preposition* or a *determiner*:

There is no point in staying here any longer.

By refusing to help them, you have caused them a great deal of inconvenience.

Her singing at the top of her voice first thing in the morning really annoyed me.

Their agreeing to help us at all was quite a surprise.

The preposition may be part of a phrasal verb:

She kept on saying that she wanted to go home.

The newsreader carried on talking in spite of the disruption behind him.

Both present participles and verbal nouns may be followed by *adverbs* and *direct and indirect objects*:

Singing tunelessly [adverb], she wandered through the office.

Refusing them [indirect object] *any assistance* [direct object], she simply walked out of the meeting.

Her singing tunelessly annoyed her colleagues.

Her refusing them assistance caused them a great deal of inconvenience.

Verbal nouns, but not present participles, may be preceded by *adjectives*:

Her tuneless [adjective] *singing* annoyed her colleagues.

And verbal nouns, but not present participles, may be followed by the preposition *of*:

Some bending of the rules may be necessary.

We waited outside Buckingham Palace for the changing of the guard.

Grammar Help

A verbal noun may be preceded by either the possessive or the non-possessive form of a name or a pronoun:

I don't object to you discussing (OR your discussing) the matter with him.

John leaving early (OR John's leaving early) doesn't bother me at all.

In informal English the non-possessive form is normal, but in formal English the possessive form is preferred. However, with longer phrases, the non-possessive form is correct in both formal and informal English:

I don't object to some of you discussing the matter in advance.

John and his sister leaving early doesn't bother me at all.

Present Participles and Verbal Nouns used as Adjectives

Both present participles and verbal nouns can be used as adjectives, but there is an important difference in their meanings.

A **present participle** used as an adjective describes what someone or something *is doing* at the moment.

- a smiling baby* (= a baby who is smiling)
- a hunting lion* (= a lion that is hunting)
- boiling water* (= water that is boiling)
- singing birds* (= birds that are singing)

A **verbal noun** used as an adjective, on the other hand, describes what someone *does in general* or what something *is used for*:

- a dancing teacher* (= a person who teaches dancing)
- a washing machine* (= a machine for washing clothes)
- cooking pots* (= pots used for cooking)
- a racing car* (= a car used in motor-races)

Note that when the adjective is a present participle, the main stress is placed on the following noun:

a smiling 'baby *a hunting 'lion*

When the adjective is a verbal noun, the stress is on the adjective:

a 'washing machine *a 'hunting dog* (= a dog used in hunting)

Notice also that when the adjective is a verbal noun, the adjective and the following noun may sometimes be hyphenated and treated as a single compound noun:

a 'washing-machine *a 'racing-car*

Grammar Help

Verbal nouns, being descriptions of actions or activities, are not normally used in the **plural**, though it is sometimes possible to make them plural:
i can't keep track of all his comings and goings.

But many verbal nouns have developed into full **nouns** that describe the *results* of someone's actions or activity or something that is used for some purpose:

- I can't read your writing.*
- This is a reproduction of a painting by Picasso.*
- There was a narrow opening in the wall.*
- We need more padding in those cushions.*
- The wind blew all our fencing down.*

As full nouns, they are often used in the plural:

I like Picasso's paintings.

There were several narrow openings in the wall.

The book is a collection of the sayings of Dr Samuel Johnson.

They are not taking any bookings for the concert till next week.

They stared at us as if we were strange beings from outer space.

Do It Yourself

- A** Circle the present participles in the following passage and underline the verbal nouns. Include present participles or verbal nouns that are used as adjectives.

When the police arrived, I was sitting in my garden looking at my flowers and listening to the birds singing and the bees buzzing.

The buzzing of the bees made me feel very relaxed and the birds' singing, though at times piercing, was hardly deafening.

I was beginning to feel rather sleepy, although sleeping is not something I normally do in the middle of the afternoon.

Suddenly there was a screeching of brakes and an opening and closing of car doors outside my house, followed by a loud banging on my front door. I got up from my seat, wondering who it could be that was making so much noise. When I opened the front door, I found three policemen standing there.

'Can I help you?' I said, smiling at them uncertainly.

None of the policemen were smiling. 'Are you Andrew Wang?' said one of them, almost snarling at me.

'No,' I replied, beginning to feel just a little nervous.

'There is no point in lying to us,' said the policeman. 'We know you are Andrew Wang, and you have been seen stealing shopping trolleys from the local supermarket.'

'How dare you accuse me of lying,' I said, looking him straight in the eye. 'I am not the man you are looking for. There is no-one by the name of Andrew Wang living in this house. I'm not a trolley thief, I'm a singing teacher, and what's more, I am more interested in racing cars than shopping trolleys!'

B The following passage is the beginning of a fairy tale called 'The Brave Little Tailor'. Replace the base forms of the verbs in the story with the appropriate present participles or verbal nouns.

Example

He was (**call**) her name. → He was **calling** her name.

Once upon a time there was a tailor. One day this tailor was (**sit**) inside his shop, (**sew**) a pair of trousers, when he saw an old woman (**come**) up the street, (**carry**) a basket full of pots of jam. (**poke**) his head out of the window, the tailor called to her, (**say**), 'Please bring your pots of jam in here.'

The tailor spent a long time (**examine**) the jams, (**smell**) and (**taste**) each one and (**hold**) them up to the light, until finally, (**have**) made up his mind, he said to the woman, 'I would like a little of this blackcurrant jam.'

The old woman had been (**hope**) to sell the tailor several pots of jam, since he had seemed so interested in them all, and after (**accept**) his money she went off up the street (**grumble**) to herself.

Meanwhile the tailor, (**take**) a loaf of bread from his cupboard, (**cut**) a large slice from it, and (**spread**) it thickly with the jam, said to himself, 'Before (**eat**) any of this, I must finish (**stitch**) the trousers I was (**make**).' But while he was (**beaver**) away, a swarm of flies, (**be**) attracted by the (**please**) smell, flew in through the window and down onto the jam.

The tailor rushed towards them, (**wave**) his hands and (**shout**), (**try**) to chase them away. But not (**understand**) what was (**annoy**) the tailor, the flies refused to leave the jam. So, (**tie**) some heavy cloth to a stick, the tailor began (**hit**) out at the flies.

22 Past Participles

When a verb phrase consists of the auxiliary verb **have** and a lexical verb, the lexical verb takes the form of a **past participle**.

*I have **finished** my homework now.*

*Why have the directors **rejected** my proposals?*

*He has **told** that story many times before.*

*I had already **written** sixteen letters that evening.*

*Have you **seen** the Harry Potter film yet?*

*The washing machine has **broken** down.*

Grammar Help

Modal auxiliaries
have no past
participles.

Most past participles are formed by adding **-ed** to the base form of the verb (or simply **-d** if the verb ends in **e**):

*We must have **walked** for miles before we found the path again.*

*Why haven't you **asked** Tim to help you?*

*He has **offered** to lend us a hand.*

*The horse had **jumped** over the fence and **galloped** away.*

*You should have **seized** the opportunity when you had it.*

However, there are past participles that take a wide variety of different forms:

sell → **sold**

find → **found**

sleep → **slept**

leave → **left**

dig → **dug**

strike → **struck**

catch → **caught**

fly → **flown**

sing → **sung**

stand → **stood**

write → **written**

hit → **hit**

go → **gone**

cut → **cut**

(There is more about the rules for forming past participles in Units 10 and 11.)

Uses of the Past Participle

- The auxiliary verb **have** and the past participles of lexical verbs are used to form what are known as **perfect tenses**. Perfect tenses may be used to describe actions or states that begin in the past and continue through to the present or the future:

I have been here since last January. (and I am still here now)

France has produced many famous artists. (and may do so again in the future)

Perfect tenses may describe something that has happened, perhaps more than once, at some time or another in the past:

I have been to China a few times.

I have often wondered what she is doing now.

It has rained every day for the past fortnight.

Someone has stolen my coat!

With the *past tense* of **have**, the past participle of a lexical verb describes something that happened before something else that is described by a past tense:

When he had finished cleaning the cupboards, he started sweeping the floors.

I had just got into the house when the phone rang.

There is more about the use of the **perfect tenses** in Unit 31.

- Like present participles, past participles may be used in sentences *without* an accompanying auxiliary verb:

Blown over by the wind, the lorry was lying upside down in a ditch.

Frightened by the loud noise, the baby began to cry.

Bought for only a few dollars, the painting turned out to be priceless.

The company, alerted to the problems in the petrol tank, immediately withdrew the car from showrooms.

■ Again like present participles, many past participles can be used as adjectives:

a broken promise

hidden treasure

a written report

a raised flower-bed

a closed door

a torn shirt

Grammar Help

Some old past participles, such as **drunken** (= drunk) and **molten** (= melted), have dropped out of use as verbs in modern English but remain in use as adjectives.

Similarly, **sunken** and **shrunken** are now generally used only as adjectives, the normal past participle forms being **sunk** and **shrunk**.

Grammar Help

Notice that some past participle adjectives describe what someone or something has done, while others describe what has been done *to* someone or something. For example:

A **fallen tree** is a tree which **has fallen** down.

A **swollen ankle** is an ankle which **has swollen**.

BUT

A **stolen car** is a car which **has been stolen**.

A **broken vase** is a vase that **has been broken** by someone.

Where a verb has two forms of the past participle (see page 58), it is generally the form that does *not* end in **-ed** that is used as an adjective:

burnt toast

sawn timber

spilt milk

a spoilt child

Do It Yourself

A The following passage continues the story of 'The Brave Little Tailor'. Replace the base forms of the verbs in the story with the appropriate past participles (some of which are functioning as adjectives).

The tailor had (**try**) in vain to drive away the flies with his hands, so he had (**make**) a fly-swatter and had (**hit**) as many flies as he could with it. When he had (**see**) that he had (**bring**) it down on seven flies in a single stroke, he had (**become**) very (**please**) with himself, and had (**decide**) to make himself a belt, on which he had (**write**) 'Seven with one blow'.

Having (**tie**) the belt round his waist, the tailor had then (**set**) out to tell the whole world what he had (**do**). Before leaving the house, he had (**put**) a small piece of cheese into one of his pockets so that he would not get hungry on his journey. Outside his house, he had (**see**) a small bird, which he had (**catch**) and (**put**) into his other pocket.

On his way to the next town, the tailor had (**meet**) a huge giant. The giant had (**see**) the tailor's belt and had of course (**think**) that the tailor had (**slay**) seven men with one blow, not seven flies. The giant had (**be**) very (**impress**) by this, and had (**challenge**) the tailor to a contest.

First of all, the giant had (**take**) a stone and (**squeeze**) it so hard that water had (**come**) out of it. 'Can you do that?' the giant had (**ask**) the tailor. 'I can do better than that,' the tailor had (**reply**), and taking the cheese out of his pocket, had (**press**) it so hard that sour milk had (**pour**) out of it.

This feat had (**amaze**) the giant, who had then (**pick**) up another stone and (**fling**) it so high into the sky that it had (**be**) fully five minutes before it had (**drop**) back to earth again. 'Can you do that?' the giant had (**demand**). 'I can do even better than that,' the tailor had again (**reply**), and, taking the bird out of his pocket (pretending that it was a stone), he had (**throw**) it up into the sky. The bird had of course (**fly**) away at once and so had not (**return**) to earth. This too had (**stun**) the giant, who had then (**invite**) the tailor to spend the night at his house.

B Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with appropriate past participles.

Example

Question: If you write a report, it is a ____ report.

Answer: If you write a report, it is a **written** report.

1. If someone breaks a window, it is a ____ window.
2. If someone hides some treasure, it is ____ treasure.

3. If your grandmother knits a pair of socks for you, they are ____ socks.
4. If the police know that someone is a thief, that person is a ____ thief.
5. When the leaves fall from the trees in autumn, the ground is covered in ____ leaves.
6. If someone pays you to work for them, you are in ____ employment.
7. When a wasp stings your ear, it swells up. You have a ____ ear.
8. If a thief steals a car, it is a ____ car.
9. If you grind ginger into a mash, it is ____ ginger.
10. If you burn your toast at breakfast-time, you have to eat ____ toast.
11. When a person grows up and is considered an adult, they can be called a ____-up.
12. If people think very highly of someone, that person is said to be well ____ of.
13. If a person speaks very clearly and politely, they can be said to be well ____ .
14. If a person reads a lot of books, they can be said to be well ____ .
15. If, by doing something for someone, you mean to be kind and helpful, then your action is well ____ .

23 Infinitives

Grammar Help

The **infinitive** can be thought of as the 'basic' form of a verb. It is, for example, the form of a verb that you find listed in a dictionary. The Infinitive is the **base form** of the verb to which endings are added to indicate person, number and tense (see Unit 10).

Modal verbs do not have infinitives.

When a verb phrase consists of the auxiliary verb **do** or any of the modal auxiliaries and a lexical verb, the lexical verb takes the form of an **infinitive**.

I did tell her.

Unfortunately she couldn't be here tonight.

Shall I pour the coffee?

Could you help us?

They might not come after all.

You shouldn't gobble your food like that.

Infinitives of lexical verbs can also be found following other lexical verbs.

She wants to go to the zoo as her birthday treat.

Did you remember to buy some new shoes?

I will try to come to your wedding but I can't promise to be there.

I did intend to tell you the whole story one day.

I was asked to tell her to be ready at twelve o'clock.

Grammar Help

Notice that when an infinitive follows a *lexical* verb, it must be preceded by the word **to**, whereas when it follows an *auxiliary* verb, there is no **to**: lexical verbs are followed by **to-infinitives**; auxiliary verbs are followed by **bare infinitives** (that is, infinitives without **to**).

Bare infinitives are generally found after the primary auxiliary verb **do** and the modal auxiliaries, but the lexical verb **let** is also always followed by a bare infinitive:

Let me help you.

Let John go instead of you.

Let's have a cup of tea.

The verb **help** can be followed by either a **to-Infinitive** or a **bare Infinitive**:

Could you help us **to put up** the tent? OR
Could you help us **put up** the tent?

Will someone help us **to carry** our luggage? OR
Will someone help us **carry** our luggage?

Grammar Help

The idiomatic expression **can't help** (= 'be unable to prevent something or stop oneself doing something') is followed by a **verbal noun**:

I **can't help laughing** at what happened.
I **can't help you falling** in love with the wrong person.

The expression **can't help but** (= 'be unable not to do something') is followed by a **bare infinitive**:

You **can't help but admire** her courage.
(= you have to admire her courage)

To-infinitives can be found not only after lexical verbs but also after adjectives, nouns and **wh**-words such as **who** and **where**.

Be ready to leave first thing tomorrow morning. (after adjective)

I am very pleased to meet you at long last. (after adjective)

We were sorry to hear of her sudden death. (after adjective)

I have no desire to live in France. (after noun)

We hadn't the courage to tell her the truth. (after noun)

He hasn't got the intelligence to invent a story like that. (after noun)

I haven't a clue where to find him. (after wh-word)

I don't know how to get there from here, nor who to ask for directions. (after wh-word)

Grammar Help

When two or more infinitives follow a lexical verb, an adjective or a noun, then only the first one has to be preceded by **to**:

We had no time to stay and watch.

Be ready to pack up and leave in the morning.

To-infinitives can also be used in other constructions.

■ As the subject or complement of a verb:

To break the vase was bad enough; to lie about it was worse.

My greatest wish is to find true happiness.

To know her is to love her.

■ After **for** + a noun or pronoun:

For me to meet her would be a great honour.

It won't be easy for us to get in.

It wasn't a very good idea for her to tell him what she thought.

■ To express purpose:

We'll need some paper to wrap the books in.

I've brought a bag to carry the shopping in.

Grammar Help

A **comment clause** is a clause that makes some sort of comment about the rest of the sentence, for example, explaining the attitude of the person speaking or acting as an introduction to what follows:

Speaking for myself, I don't think he's the right man for the job.

As you know, I used to live in Japan.

To be frank, I don't think that's a very good idea.

Grammar Help

◆ Present infinitives and past infinitives

Present infinitives are the simple infinitives of lexical verbs:

She must go.

She wants to go.

We should leave at once.

It is time for us to leave.

Past infinitives or perfect infinitives are formed from the infinitive of the auxiliary verb **have** plus the past participles of lexical verbs:

She must have gone by now.

She hopes to have left before then.

We should have left earlier.

◆ When some parts of a sentence are left unsaid because they can be understood from what has been said before, the word **to** may be all that represents a **to**-Infinitive and anything that might have followed it:

Come here when I tell you to. (= ... when I tell you to come here)

'Why are you painting that?'

'Because I want to'. (= ... because I want to paint it)

'Do your parents live here?'

'No, but they would like to.'

I don't want to argue with her but I may be forced to.

The Split Infinitive

When the two parts of a **to**-infinitive are separated by one or more words, such as an adverb or adverbial phrase, this is known as a **split infinitive**:

It may be difficult to properly clean the oil off the car.

I would like to completely and utterly deny that I had any part in their evil scheme.

Their mission was to boldly go where no-one had ever gone before.

Although there have been split infinitives in English since at least the 14th century, and although they are to be found in the works of some of the best writers in the English language, the split infinitive has often been condemned as 'ungrammatical', especially by school-teachers, and is still felt by many people today to be incorrect (probably because that is what they were taught in school!).

Split infinitives are *not* ungrammatical. However, since there are many people who think that they *are* ungrammatical, or at least that they are something to avoid in careful writing, it may be better, in order to avoid criticism, not to use them if it is possible not to. The following brief rules could be taken as a guide to good practice:

- 1 If the verb is intransitive (that is, it has no object), put the adverb after it:

We will need to plan carefully for our holidays.

- 2 If the verb is transitive, it is generally better to put the adverb after the object if the object is quite short:

We will need to plan our holiday carefully.

However, adverbs such as *really*, *strongly*, *fully*, *thoroughly* that emphasize the action of the verb are often better placed splitting the infinitive:

You don't need to drink alcohol to really enjoy yourself.

To fully understand what has happened here, we need to look at the recent history of the country.

- 3** If the object of a transitive verb is a fairly long phrase or a clause, it is often better to put the adverb either immediately after or else in front of the verb. If instead of an adverb there is an adverbial phrase, it may be best placed after the object phrase or clause. It is difficult to give an absolute rule for this – often it is simply a matter of what sounds best:

*We will need to plan **carefully** what we are going to do next.*

*We will need to **carefully plan** what we are going to do next.*

*We will need to **plan** what we are going to do next **very carefully**.*

While putting the adverb between **to** and the verb was once considered incorrect, it is nowadays generally acceptable.

- 4** Only in very formal English should you put the adverb in front of **to**:

*I was not perceptive enough **fully to appreciate** his massive achievement.*

To many people nowadays, this sounds very stilted and unnatural, and it would not be normal in informal English. It is, however, better to put the negative adverb **not** before **to**: '**not to go**' is definitely better than '**to not go**':

*To be or **not to be**, that is the question.* [William Shakespeare]

*This is a good example of how **not to do** the job.*

***Not to turn up** at her party would be a bit insulting, don't you think?*

The same is true for **never**:

*'Tis (= It is) **better to have loved and lost**,*

*Than **never to have loved** at all.* [Alfred, Lord Tennyson]

- 5** There are some constructions in English that absolutely require a split infinitive, for example, **more than**:

*He has worked hard enough to **more than make up** for the time he was off school through illness.*

- 6** Sometimes it is better to use a split infinitive in order to make the meaning of a sentence absolutely clear. Look at this sentence:

*My job is **really to understand** the needs of the staff.*

It is not clear exactly what the sentence means. It could mean that my job is 'really understanding' the needs of the staff, but it could also mean that what my job 'really is' involves understanding the needs of the staff. Because of the position of the adverb, it is not clear which of the two verbs it is modifying, *is* or *understand*. However, with a split infinitive, as in

My job is to really understand the needs of the staff.

the adverb **really** must refer to the verb **understand**. Splitting the infinitive makes the meaning of the sentence clearer.

Do It Yourself

A More about the brave little tailor.

All the infinitives (in **bold**) in the following sentences are bare infinitives, but some of them should be **to**-infinitives. Insert **to** wherever appropriate.

At first the tailor didn't **know** what **say**, but he could not **think** of any reason not **go** with the giant, so in the end he agreed **go** with him. The giant said he was very pleased **take** the tailor home **stay** with him for a night or two.

In fact, the giant was planning **kill** the tailor at the first opportunity, but the tailor did not **know** that at the time. 'Let's **go**,' said the giant. 'It's getting late, and it is time **start** on our way.'

The giant walked so quickly that the little tailor found it hard **keep up** with him. He had **take** five steps for every one that the giant took. But eventually they arrived at the giant's cottage and went inside. The giant showed the tailor a room where there was a large box in which he could **lie down** and **sleep** and a cupboard **put** his clothes in. 'What would you like **eat**?' said the giant. (The giant was, of course, intending **munch** and **crunch** the tailor.) 'I don't want **eat** anything,' said the tailor, beginning **be** suspicious of what the giant was planning. 'I will just **go** to bed now, I think.'

However, the tailor found that the box was too small for him **lie down** in, so he lay down in a dark corner of the room instead and fell asleep. At midnight, the giant came into the room and hit the box several times with a large iron bar. He was expecting the tailor **be** in the box. He meant **kill** him so that he could **cook** him for his breakfast.

The next morning, the tailor got up and came out of the room, still very much alive. The giant was so shocked by this that he began **scream** and ran out of the cottage into the forest. This let the tailor **make** his escape.

- B** Complete the following sentences by inserting into the blank in the second sentence of each pair the base form of the verb in the first sentence.

Example

Question: We **went** to the cinema. Did you ____ too?

Answer: We **went** to the cinema. Did you **go** too?

1. Our car was broken into last night. Did someone ____ into yours too?
2. A tile blew off our roof in the wind yesterday. Did any ____ off your roof?
3. The dog bit me but it didn't ____ my friend.
4. I bought a new hat. What did you ____?
5. She took three books out of the library. And how many did her brother ____?
6. I'm afraid I have torn my trousers. I didn't mean to ____ them.
7. He only caught three fish although he had hoped to ____ at least ten.
8. I know some people have swum across the English Channel but I don't think I could ____ that far.
9. The wasps stung me but they didn't ____ anyone else.
10. I saw them but they didn't ____ me.
11. She spoke to all the other guests but for some reason she didn't ____ to me.
12. The opposing armies fought until they could ____ no longer.
13. She hurt her arm when she fell but she didn't ____ her leg.
14. They held on to the raft as long as they could, but eventually they just couldn't ____ on any longer.

24 Past Participles in Passive Constructions

Past participles are used along with the modal verb ***be*** to form **passive constructions**, that is, constructions which describe what *happens or happened to someone or something.*

He was hit by a falling rock.

This letter was written by someone with a very good knowledge of English.

I have been asked to speak to you about your complaint.

The key was lost somewhere round about here.

In grammar, passive constructions are normally contrasted with **active constructions**.

Active and Passive

When the subject of a verb *performs* the action described by the verb, then the verb is said to be in the **active voice**.

Simon saw you.

I wrote the letter.

My sister's little boy broke my favourite vase.

Pat has chosen the music for the concert.

J K Rowling wrote the Harry Potter books.

The squirrels have eaten my crocuses.

Professor Dobson gave the main speech at the conference.

Her enthusiasm has really encouraged me.

Grammar Help

Voice is simply the technical word for that part of grammar that involves the notions of 'active' and 'passive'.

The **active** voice is used to describe the *actions, activities, etc* of the subject of the verb.

A verb in the active voice may have an object:

Sue and Jane sang a beautiful French folksong.

James was reading a book.

Equally, there may be no object:

Sue and Jane sang beautifully.

James was reading.

Did You Know?

Passive comes from the Latin verb *pati*, meaning 'to suffer'. The subject of a passive verb 'uffers' or undergoes the action described by the verb rather than performing the action.

When the subject of a verb is the person or thing that *undergoes* or *experiences* the action described by the verb, or is the person or thing *to whom* or *to which* the action is done, then the verb is in the **passive voice**.

You were seen by Simon.

The letter was written by me.

My favourite vase was broken by my sister's little boy.

The music for the concert was chosen by Pat.

The Harry Potter books were written by J K Rowling.

My crocuses were eaten by the squirrels.

The main speech at the conference was given by Professor Dobson.

I was really encouraged by her enthusiasm.

Grammar Help

The transitive verb **have**, in the sense of 'to own' or 'to possess', cannot be made passive:

John had a new car.

BUT NOT

A new car was had by John.

We only have five dollars.

BUT NOT

Only five dollars are had by us.

- A passive verb is formed with the auxiliary verb **be** and the *past participle* of a lexical verb:

*They planted the tree in the garden. →
The tree was planted in the garden.*

*A fox killed my chickens. →
My chickens were killed by a fox.*

*Rangers beat Celtic 6–0. →
Celtic were beaten by Rangers 6–0.*

A dog bit her. → She was bitten by a dog.

- If there is another auxiliary verb in the verb phrase, it always precedes the passive auxiliary **be**:

*My chickens **have been killed** by a fox.*

*She **has been bitten** by a dog.*

*This job **must be completed** by the end of next week.*

*I'm sorry, it just **can't be done** by then.*

*The coat **must have been left** in the restaurant.*

- If there is an adverb in the sentence, it will often stand between the auxiliary verb **be** and the past participle:

*I **was greatly encouraged** by her enthusiasm.*

*It **is often said** that Chinese is difficult to learn.*

- The verb and particle of a phrasal verb stand together in a passive construction, even if they are separated in the corresponding active construction:

*The police are **looking into** the fraud. →
The fraud is being **looked into** by the police.*

*The team's recent successes have **made up** for their poor performance earlier in the season. →
The team's poor performance earlier in the season has been **made up for** by their recent successes.*

*The robbers **beat him up** badly →
He was badly **beaten up** by the robbers.*

*The scandal **brought the government down**. →
The government was **brought down** by the scandal.*

Grammar Help

Remember the forms that personal pronouns take when functioning as subjects and objects:

subject	object
I	me
you	you
we	us
he	him
she	her
it	it
they	them

Subjects and Objects with Active and Passive Verbs

The **object** of a verb in the active voice becomes the **subject** of a corresponding verb in the passive voice.

*The wind blew down **my apple tree**. →
My apple tree was blown down by the wind.*

*Her friends met **her** at the airport. →
She was met at the airport by her friends.*

Note that **you** and **it** have only one form.

Handy Hint

A **by** phrase is of course not obligatory in a passive sentence:
My apple tree was blown down.
She was met at the airport.

Passive verbs without **by** phrases can be used to make the description of events more formal and objective, and for this reason they are often used in reports. For example, a policeman could say '*A man was seen running away from the crash'* rather than '*I saw a man running away from the crash*', and a scientist could say '*Acid was added to the mixture*' rather than '*I added acid to the mixture*'.

The subject of a verb in the active voice becomes the complement of the preposition **by** in the passive voice.

The wind blew down my apple tree. →
My apple tree was blown down by the wind.

Her friends met her at the airport. →
She was met at the airport by her friends.

If a sentence with an active verb has both a direct object and an indirect object, it may be the *indirect object* that becomes the subject of the corresponding passive verb.

Her grandmother taught her French. [indirect object] →
She was taught French by her grandmother.

My mother gave me a camera. →
I was given a camera by my mother.

His parents promised him a new bike. →
He was promised a new bike by his parents.

Otherwise in passive sentences, the indirect object is replaced by a phrase beginning with the preposition **to**:

John was given a medal. →
A medal was given to John. It was given to him by the Queen.

Grammar Help

The noun or pronoun following the preposition **by** is known as the **agent**. The agent denotes the person or thing that *performs* the action of the verb:

John was killed by his brother. [agent].

John was killed by a falling rock.

The picture was painted by me.

The picture was badly damaged by the fire.

The **by**-phrase describing the agent should not be confused with a phrase beginning with **with** which describes what *is used* to carry out the action of the verb:

John was killed with a hammer.

The picture had been slashed with a knife.

The noun following the preposition **with** is known as the **Instrument**.

Do It Yourself

A Make the following active sentences passive.

Example

The government should ban political protests. → Political protests **should be banned** by the government.

1. A snake bit her.
2. A bee had stung him.
3. The whole village opposed the council's proposals.
4. Your protests have achieved nothing.
5. The nurses had decorated the Christmas tree and had put it up in the ward.
6. Her boss had accused her of theft.
7. Bruce's soldiers took the castle from the invaders.
8. Thieves had broken into our car.
9. Our district's ladies' group is collecting second-hand clothes for the poor.
10. His lawyer advised him to tell the police.
11. The judges awarded Tom the prize.
12. The police have caught the man responsible for the hoax.

B The following passage describes the steps to take in a chemical experiment involving an acid and an alkali. Write a report on the experiment, replacing the imperative verbs by passive verbs in the past tense.

Measure out 10 cm³ of sodium hydroxide into a small beaker.

Then measure out 10 cm³ of hydrochloric acid into a second small beaker.

Carefully add the hydrochloric acid to the sodium hydroxide.

Pour the solution into an evaporating basin.

Set the basin on top of a tripod.

Heat the solution until the liquid boils.

Continue this process until nearly all the water has boiled off.

Remove the basin from the source of heat when the residue in the basin starts to spit.

Allow the basin to cool.

Carefully taste a small sample of the solid left on the side of the basin to see what has been formed.

Handy Hint

There may be more than one correct answer to some of the questions.

Handy Hint

Treat '10 cm³' as a *singular noun phrase*: see page 42.

Note also that since the report is written in the past tense, the tenses of some of the other verbs in this passage will also have to be changed.

25 Further Uses of Infinitives, Participles and Verbal Nouns

Grammar Help

Passives formed with **get** are more informal than those formed with **be**.

Like **be**, the verb **get** may be used as an auxiliary verb to form passives.

Celtic got beaten by Rangers 6–0.

She got bitten by a dog.

Be careful or you'll get hurt.

The thieves will get caught one of these days.

- A similar construction to the one above, involving **get** along with an object and a past participle, means 'to cause something to be done':

When my watch broke, I got it repaired at the jeweller's in the High Street.

We got double glazing fitted to all the windows in the house.

I'll have to get that hedge cut down a bit – it's far too high.

The verb **have** can be used instead of **get**:

There have been so many break-ins round here recently, we've had a burglar alarm fitted to the garage as well as the house.

The painters made such a bad job of hanging the wallpaper, we had to have it done again.

I'm not sure these figures are correct. We'd better have them checked.

Get and a **to**-infinitive can be used to mean 'to make or cause someone to do something' or 'to arrange for someone to do something'.

I wasn't sure about the figures so I got John to check them again.

The painters made such a bad job of hanging the wallpaper, we got them to do it again.

Since the electrician was fitting a light in the garage, I just got him to fit one in the garden hut as well.

I'm too busy to talk to him right now. Get him to call back later.

Again **have** can be used instead of **get**, but note that **have** is followed by a *bare infinitive* rather than a **to-infinitive**:

I wasn't sure about the figures so I had John check them.

Her homework was full of spelling errors and corrections, so her father had her write it out again.

- The verb **make** can also be used in this sense, also followed by a *bare infinitive*. To **make someone do something** may mean 'to force them to do it':

Her homework was full of spelling errors and corrections, so her father made her write it out again.

The police have ways of **making criminals confess**.

To **make someone do something** may mean 'to do something that causes someone to do it':

I like talking to Mary. She **makes me laugh**. (= she says things that I find amusing)

How can I **make him understand** that I love him?

- To **have something happen** to you means you experience it or that it happens to you.

He **had his car stolen** at the weekend. (= His car was stolen at the weekend)

She **had her arm broken** in three places when a drunk driver knocked her off her bike.

We **had our roof blown off** last night in the storm.

This construction most often refers to something unexpected or unpleasant, and beyond the control of the person the action happens to.

Another construction consisting of **get** and a participle has the meaning 'to succeed in doing something' or 'to manage to do it'.

In this sense, **get** may be followed by either a past or a present participle.

*If everyone lends a hand, we'll soon **get the job done**.*

*Sometimes I think I'll never **get this book finished**.*

*The clock had stopped but I managed to **get it working** again.*

*I don't know how to **get this lawnmower started**. Do you know how to **get it going**?*

In sentences such as these, the **past participle** is used when the action being described is going to stop or to be completed (that is, *the job will be done*, *the book will be finished* and *the lawnmower will have started*), whereas the **present participle** is used to describe an action that is about to begin and which will continue after it has begun (that is, *the clock will start to work and will continue to work* and *the lawnmower will start to go and will continue to go*).

To **get something done** can also mean simply 'to finish doing it':

*We'll need to **get this job finished** before we start on the next one.*

Grammar Help

You **persuade** someone **to do** something. You **dissuade** them **from doing** something.

You **stop** or **prevent** someone **doing** or **from doing** something:

I've stopped him drinking coffee. It's not good for him.

Nothing will prevent me from being at the show tonight.

When a lexical verb is followed by a direct object that names the person or thing who is to perform the action of the following verb, then the following verb is usually an infinitive.

*She **begged them to set her son free**.*

*He **asked her not to tell** anyone what she had seen.*

*They don't **allow people to smoke** in theatres now.*

*She **persuaded her captors to let her go**.*

*He **forced the dog to let go** of the stick.*

*They've **invited us to spend** the weekend at their cottage in the country.*

*Remind me **to send off** that cheque tonight.*

*I expect you **to have finished** that report by tomorrow.*

When a lexical verb does *not* have a direct object that names the person or thing performing the action of the following verb, then the action of the second verb is being performed by the subject of the first verb.

The second verb may be either a verbal noun or an infinitive.

I've stopped eating chocolate.

My mother likes gardening.

My daughter wants to be a doctor.

Don't try to do everything yourself.

She's started biting (OR started to bite) her nails.

1 Some verbs can only be followed by a verbal noun:

Do you really enjoy being a dentist?

I don't mind coming with you.

Practise throwing the ball to one another.

Have you finished reading that paper?

They don't allow smoking in theatres.

The job involves counting the money and taking it to the bank.

Other verbs in this group are: *acknowledge, admit, advise, anticipate, avoid, consider, contemplate, delay, deny, detest, discuss, dislike, encourage, entail, fancy, give up, imagine, imply, involve, miss, permit, postpone, put off, quit, recommend, risk, skip, stand and suggest.*

Come and go are also followed by verbal nouns:

We're going shopping. Do you want to come shopping with us?

Certain other verbal expressions are also followed by a verbal noun, for example, *can't help* (see page 137) and *feel like*:

I can't help thinking we've done the wrong thing.

I often feel like screaming out loud.

Grammar Help

Remember that present participles and verbal nouns are identical in form: they both end in **-ing**.

Some of the rules in this unit involve present participles and others involve verbal nouns, but it is not really important to remember which is which, so long as you do remember to use an **-ing** form of a verb when it is required, and not an infinitive.

Grammar Help

Note, of course, that there is a quite different use of *go*, followed by a *to-*infinitive, as a sort of future tense:

I'm going to buy some shoes.

Grammar Help

Notice how to make constructions like these negative. The word **not** goes in front of the **-ing** word:

*I don't mind **not** coming with you.*

*I wouldn't dream of **not** giving him a present.*

Grammar Help

Notice how to make constructions like these negative. The word **not** goes in front of **to**:

*Somehow I managed **not to fall**.*

*She pretended **not to hear him**.*

Prepositions are also generally followed by verbal nouns:

*She was accused of **stealing** money from her employer.*

*He can't cope with **being** under pressure all the time at work.*

*I'll keep on **writing** books till the day I die.*

*I often dream about **living** on a desert island.*

*I reckon he's chickened out of **coming** with us.*

*To what extent was he justified in **seeing** me as a threat?*

*I intend to abstain from **voting**.*

2 Some verbs can only be followed by an infinitive:

He had agreed to meet us but he failed to turn up.

But you promised to help us! Why are you refusing to help us now?

She seems to know what she is doing.

I don't want to go to the cinema.

He threatened to kill her if she ever gave away their secret.

Other verbs in this group are: **afford, aim, appear, arrange, ask, aspire, attempt, beg, claim, come, consent, decide, decline, desire, expect, help** (but see the Grammar Help note on page 137), **hesitate, hope, learn, long, manage, offer, prepare, pretend, profess, seek, strive, struggle, undertake, venture** and **wish**.

3 A few verbs can be followed by either a verbal noun or an infinitive:

The little boy started crying (OR started to cry).

She loves dancing (OR loves to dance).

I hate telling lies (OR hate to tell lies).

Grammar Help

To '**like to do** something' may be used in the sense of doing something because you think it is a good or sensible thing to do, whether or not you enjoy it:

I like to visit my mother at least once a week. (= I visit her at least once a week because I think I should)

I like to weigh myself every morning, even though I hate seeing how fat I am.
(= I weigh myself every morning because I think it is a sensible thing to do, even though I don't enjoy doing it)

To '**like doing**' something cannot be used in this sense: to **like doing** something always means to enjoy doing it.

Other verbs in this category are: **begin, cease, continue, intend, loathe** and **prefer**; also the phrase **can't bear**.

Note that in combination with the modal verb **would**, the verbs **hate, like, loathe, love** and **prefer** must be followed by a **to-infinitive**:

Would you like to go to the zoo this afternoon, or would you prefer to go to the pictures?

I'd love to see the animals in the zoo.

After **begin** and **start**, verbs that denote being aware or becoming aware of something, such as **realize, see** and **understand**, are only used in the **to-infinitive** form:

I was starting to see that they were not being entirely honest with me.

She began to realize what a fool she had been.

Grammar Help

Note the correct constructions to use with the verb **prefer** when making comparisons with **to** and **rather than**. **To** is used with verbal nouns:

I prefer sailing to swimming.

My mother prefers working in her garden to sitting watching television.

Rather than is preceded by a **to-infinitive** and usually followed by a bare infinitive:

For those who prefer to play rather than sunbathe, there are some excellent sports facilities in the hotel.

A true sportsman would prefer to lose rather than win unfairly.

Most of the older residents preferred to stay rather than move out.

Many employees may prefer to leave rather than complain.

Less commonly, **rather than** may be followed by a **to-infinitive** or a verbal noun:

The children may prefer to sit rather than to stand or to walk.

I have no patience with dreamers who prefer to theorize rather than to live life to the full.

I prefer to leave my video-recorder running for hours unattended rather than spending the time to set it for the programmes I want to see.

Some employees prefer to take the time off as unpaid leave rather than using it up as part of their annual holidays.

- 4 Some verbs can be followed by either a verbal noun or an infinitive, but unlike the verbs in group 3 above, *the two constructions have different meanings:*

He stopped to drink some coffee. (= he stopped in order to drink some coffee)

He stopped drinking coffee months ago. (= he no longer drinks coffee)

The Prime Minister first explained what was wrong with the education system, then went on to say what the government was going to do about it. (= after explaining what was wrong, he then said what the government was going to do)

The government may go on telling us that the economy is OK but no-one will believe them. (= they may continue to tell us ...; they may tell us again and again ...)

When she throws the ball to you, try to hit it as hard as you can. (= ... make an effort to hit it as hard as you can)

If your computer doesn't work, try hitting it. (= hit the computer and see what happens, see whether hitting it makes the computer work)

He remembered to post the letter this morning. (= he remembered this morning that he had to post the letter, and he did post it)

He remembers posting the letter this morning. (= he posted the letter this morning and he knows that he did because he can remember that he posted it)

He forgot to post the letter this morning. (= he didn't post the letter)

Surely he hasn't forgotten posting the letter last night?
 (= does he not remember that he posted the letter last night?)

I mean to come back next week. (= I intend to come back next week)

Going to the early showing of the film would mean leaving the house by five o'clock at the latest. (= it would require us to leave the house by five o'clock)

I regret to inform you that the king is dead. (= I am sorry that I now have to tell you that the king is dead.) (This is a rather formal expression, used especially when giving someone bad news.)

I regret informing him of our plan. (= I am sorry that I told him about our plan.) (The verbal noun is used when what is regretted is something that the speaker has done in the past.)

With verbs of hearing, seeing and feeling, the second verb may be an infinitive or a present participle.

I heard him laugh (OR *I heard him laughing*).

We watched the birds fly (OR *flying*) over our house.

Other common verbs in this group are ***feel, hear, listen to, notice and observe***.

There is a slight difference in meaning between the infinitive and the present participle. The *infinitive* is used to describe *a completed action*, something you have watched, listened to, etc until it is over:

I heard the band play a well-known Irish lament.

I felt something crawl over my hand and then up my sleeve.

I saw the painter fall off the ladder.

A *present participle*, on the other hand, is used when you are referring to seeing, hearing, etc only *part of an action or activity* rather than the whole of it or right to the end of it:

I heard a band playing a well-known Irish lament, but I didn't have time to stop and listen to it.

I felt something crawling over my hand and brushed it off onto the floor.

I saw the painter falling off the ladder.

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences with the appropriate forms of the verbs given in brackets.

1. No matter what I say, I just can't get her (**realize**) that she must get her homework (**do**) before she goes out with her friends.
2. Many shops had their windows (**break**) in the riots.
3. How can I make him (**see**) how foolish he's been?
4. Is there any way of (**persuade**) them not (**come**)?
5. I don't think the wiring in the kitchen is safe. We'd better have someone (**take**) a look at it.

6. That's a difficult question (**answer**).
7. Unfortunately the dog got (**sweep**) overboard when the wave struck the boat.
8. When I glanced out of the window, I saw the man across the road (**wash**) his car.
9. My daughter is very keen on (**learn**) languages.
10. It's not for me (**tell**) you what (**do**).
11. Don't forget (**bring**) the music with you when you come.
12. We've managed (**dissuade**) her from (**sing**) at the concert.

B Complete the following sentences by replacing the verbs in brackets with a **to**-infinitive or a verbal noun or present participle.

1. I've given up (**smoke**).
2. I dislike (**have**) to pretend (**like**) this job when really I hate it.
3. Can we persuade her (**put off**) (**announce**) the job losses until after the meeting?
4. We aim (**leave**) first thing in the morning.
5. They have offered (**go**) with us.
6. That would involve (**miss**) the first half of the concert.
7. I wouldn't contemplate (**say**) that to him.
8. Eventually the kittens learnt (**hunt**) for themselves.
9. Do you fancy (**go**) to France this year?
10. I can't help (**laugh**) when I think about the trick we played on him.
11. This map will help you (**find**) your way to our new office.
12. Her parents couldn't bear (**listen**) to her (**play**) her violin.

Quick Summary

- 1 Present participles, past participles and infinitives are **non-finite verbs**.
- 2 **Modal verbs** do not have participles and infinitives. [Units 21, 22, 23]
- 3 **Present participles** end in **-ing**. [Unit 21]
Present participles are used with the auxiliary verb **be** to form **continuous** or **progressive tenses**. They may also be used without **be**, for example, as adjectives.

4 **Verbal nouns or gerunds** have the same form as present participles. [Unit 21] They also may be used as adjectives, but their meaning is slightly different from that of present participle adjectives.

5 **Past participles** mostly end in **-d**, but may have other endings, such as **-t** and **-en**. [Unit 22] They may also be formed by changing the vowel of the base form of the verb.

Past participles are used with the auxiliary verb **have** to form **perfect tenses**. They may also be used without **have**, for example, as adjectives.

6 **Infinitives** are the base forms of verbs. [Unit 23] An infinitive on its own is a **bare infinitive**. An infinitive preceded by the word **to** is a **to-infinitive**.

Modal verbs are followed by bare infinitives; many lexical verbs are followed by **to**-infinitives.

A **present infinitive** is the simple base form of the verb, with or without **to**. [Unit 23]

A **past infinitive or perfect infinitive** is formed with **have** and a past participle.

A **split infinitive** is a **to**-infinitive with an adverb between the **to** and the following verb.

7 When the subject of a verb performs the action described by the verb, then the verb is in the **active voice**. [Unit 24]
When the subject undergoes or experiences the action described by the verb, the verb is in the **passive voice**.
The passive voice is formed with the auxiliary verb **be** and a past participle.

A prepositional phrase formed with **by** describes who or what performs the action of a passive verb; a phrase formed with **with** describes what is used to perform the action of the verb. [Unit 24]

8 Some verbs are followed by a present participle or a verbal noun whereas others are followed by an infinitive. [Unit 25] Some verbs can be followed by either, but in some cases there is a difference in meaning.

Chapter 5

The Meanings and Uses of the Modal Verbs

Modal verbs, also known as **modal auxiliaries** or **modals**, are mainly used to add to the lexical verb a feeling of the action being, for example, possible, likely, necessary, certain, compulsory, allowed or advisable.

The modal verb **can** is used to express the idea that something is *possible* or that someone is *able* to do something or *allowed* to do something. **Could** is the past tense of **can**, but is also used in a number of other ways.

The modal verb **may** is used to express the idea that something is *possible* or *permitted*. It is also used to express *opinions* and *wishes*. **Might** is the past tense of **may**, but has a number of other meanings and uses as well.

The main use of the modal verb **will** is to form the *future tense* of lexical verbs, but it has other uses as well, such as *asking* someone to do something or saying that you are *willing* to do something. **Shall** is sometimes used to form future tenses with **I** and **we**, but has other uses, such as asking for *advice* or expressing *intentions*.

Would and **should** are the past tenses of **will** and **shall**, but they too have a number of other uses.

The modal verb **must** is used to express the idea that something is *necessary* or *obligatory* or that something is *certain* or *probable*. **Need to** and **have to** also express the idea of being *necessary* or *obligatory*.

Unit

26 The Meanings and Uses of *Can* and *Could*

27 The Meanings and Uses of *May* and *Might*

28 The Meanings and Uses of *Will*, *Shall*, *Would* and *Should*

29 The Meanings and Uses of *Must*, *Need to* and *Have to*

26 The Meanings and Uses of *Can* and *Could*

The modal verb ***can*** is used with a bare infinitive to express the idea that something *is possible* or that someone *is able* to do something or *allowed* to do something.

Could is the past tense of ***can***, but is also used in a number of other ways.

Grammar Help

Sentences such as '*He said he could help us*' and '*He asked if he could have another biscuit*' are examples of **reported speech**.

Present Tense

I know I can help them.

They say they can't come.

'I can help you,' he said.

'We can come back tomorrow,' I told them.

'Can I have another biscuit?' he asked.

Past Tense

I knew I could help them.

They said they couldn't come.

He said he could help us.

I told them we could come back the next day.

He asked if he could have another biscuit.

Could is always used as the past tense of ***can*** in reported speech.

For more about reported speech, see Unit 34.

Describing Possibilities

Can is used to talk about what *is possible* or what someone or something *is able* to do.

You can see for miles from the top of that hill.

Nowadays you can use online search facilities to find the best bargains.

Elephants can run surprisingly quickly.

You can no doubt understand how upset I was when I heard the news.

Can a python really swallow a whole antelope?

I simply cannot answer all these questions in the time we have left.

Ostriches are birds but they can't fly.

Spelling Note

Remember that the negative of ***can*** is ***cannot***, and that the short form of ***cannot*** is ***can't***.

*We'd like a new car but we **can't** afford one.*

*I **can't** reach the packets of soup on the top shelf. **Can** you reach them?*

In this sense of **can**, the past tense is **could**:

*From the top of the hill, we **could** see for miles.*

*Could mammoths run as fast as elephants **can** now?*

*Like ostriches, the moas that once lived in New Zealand **couldn't** fly.*

*When I was young, we **couldn't** afford a car.*

*It's a pity they **couldn't** come with us yesterday.*

■ **Can** and **could** are often used with verbs that describe the use of the mind or the senses (sight, hearing, touch, etc), but without much idea of 'possibility' or 'ability' at all:

*I **can** see you. (= I see you)*

*We know that the lions **can** hear us from the way they are looking in this direction. (= ... the lions are hearing us ...)*

*I **can't** remember where I put the money. (= I don't remember where I put it)*

*I **could** feel something crawling up my leg. (= I felt something crawling up my leg)*

*We **could** see he wasn't happy. (= We saw that he wasn't happy)*

*When I got to the shop, I **couldn't** remember what I had wanted to buy. (= I didn't remember what I had wanted to buy)*

*I **couldn't** understand a thing she said. (= I didn't understand her)*

■ **Couldn't** is used when politely refusing an offer of something to eat or drink:

*'Would you like another piece of cake?'
'Oh, I **couldn't** eat another thing.'*

■ **Couldn't** and **couldn't have** are used as a way of simply emphasizing what you are saying:

*I **couldn't** agree with you more. (= I agree with you completely)*

*They **couldn't have** been more surprised to find they had won the prize.*

Grammar Help

When you are talking about *one single event or action* in the past, you can only use **could** along with a negative word or with one of the verbs of hearing, seeing, etc just mentioned in the paragraph above:

I couldn't get the cork out of the bottle.

When he threw the ball to me, I couldn't catch it.

No-one could solve the puzzle.

She was so upset, she could hardly speak.

I could see she was upset.

Otherwise, when talking of a single event in the past, you have to use **be able to** or a verb such as **manage** or, in more formal English, **succeed**:

Were you able to speak to Jack last night?

I managed to get the cork out of the bottle.

He succeeded in catching the ball when she threw it to him.

Could without a negative word describes a *general situation or condition* in the past:

When we were young, we could play in the woods all day long.

We didn't have a phone in our house but we could use the telephone box at the end of the street.

Grammar Help

Remember that words like **hardly** and **scarcely** often behave as negative words. See page 101.

Could is used to refer to less certain or more doubtful possibilities in the present or the future.

Could a python really swallow a whole antelope? (= would it be possible for a python to eat an antelope?)

You'd better take your umbrella with you. It **could** rain later on.
(= it might rain)

The parcel **could** arrive tomorrow.

That **could** be the explanation for his strange behaviour.

When referring in this way to more doubtful possibilities, you use **could have** when referring to the past:

Could a python really **have** swallowed a whole antelope?

I suppose a bird **could have** stolen the ring but I rather doubt it.

The police are not sure what was used to kill her. It **could have** been a pipe or an axe handle.

■ **Could** is also used to refer to something that *is possible in theory but which does not actually happen or is not actually done*:

The police could do more to prevent riots. (but they don't)

A lot of crime could be prevented if people took more care.

When referring to the past, you again use **could have**:

I suppose I could have gone with them, but I didn't really want to. (so I didn't go)

We could have stayed another day, but we decided not to.

Could this tragic accident have been prevented? (it wasn't prevented)

Can and **could** may both be used when you are *wondering about something*.

Who can that be knocking on our door so late at night?

I wonder who that could be, knocking on our door so late at night.

What on earth can have happened to him?

Where on earth could he be at this time of night?

In this sense, there is little difference between **can** and **could**. The past tense is **could have**:

Who could have been knocking on my door so late in the night?

Could is used to describe something a person wants to do, but which they may or may not do; **could have** is used to describe what a person wanted to do or felt like doing, but didn't do.

I feel so angry, I could just stamp my feet and scream.

I felt so angry, I could have hit him.

Sometimes **cannot**, **can't** and **couldn't** are used to express the *opinion or hope* that something is not possible or not true.

That story in the papers can't be true, surely.

What she told you **couldn't** be true.

The conflict in the Middle East **can't** last forever.

The town council surely **can't** be expecting us to pay for the repairs to the pavement.

They **can't** be out. I can hear a radio playing in the front room.

Couldn't have is used to refer to the past:

They **couldn't have** been out. I could hear a radio playing in the front room.

■ **Can't, couldn't, can't have**, etc may express surprise or disbelief or disapproval:

But we **can't have** spent all our money yet! We should have at least another \$200.

How **could we have** spent all that money in just two days?

That **can't** be your parents here already! They're not due to arrive until this evening.

She **couldn't have** been one of the terrorists!

The same is true of question forms:

How **could you have** been so stupid? OR
How **could you be** so stupid?

Grammar Help

Since it is not possible to have two modal verbs together in a sentence (see page 12), you cannot use **can** along with **will** or **shall** to refer to the future. Instead, use **will/shall be able to**:

I **can't come** today but I **will be able to** come tomorrow.

His broken toe **will soon heal** and he'll **be able to** play football again.

Similarly, since modal verbs do not have infinitives or participles, **be able to** must be used instead of **can** wherever an infinitive or participle is needed:

To **be able to speak twelve languages fluently** is quite amazing.

Being **able to speak Spanish and Portuguese, he had no trouble trekking round South America.**

Describing Knowledge or Skills

Can is used to say that someone **knows how to do something**.

Her brother **can** speak German.

My little daughter is only three but she **can** already write her name.

Help! I **can't** swim!

Some children still **cannot** read by the time they leave school.

In this sense, the past tense is **could**:

I **could** speak French when I left school but I **can't** any more.

I never **could** speak French.

He **could** compose music by the age of four.

Grammar Help

Can and **may** are both used to express permission:

*Can I come in? OR
May I come in?*

*You can go now. OR
You may go now.*

Some people insist that only **may** should be used to express permission, but except in formal English, **can** is used much more than **may** in this sense.

It is, however, sometimes better to use **may** when you want to make it clear that what you are talking about is permission rather than ability:

*The boys aren't quite sure about what they may and may not do on the campsite.
(=what they are allowed, or not allowed, to do)*

Referring to What Is Permitted

Can is used to ask for or give permission or to say that something is allowed.

'Can I borrow your bike?' 'No, you can't.'

Can we ask questions at the meeting?

We can take books with us into the exam room.

European Union regulations now tell us what fish we can and cannot catch.

Grammar Help

When describing a general situation in the past, the past tense is **could**:

We could take dictionaries with us into language exams if we wanted to.

But when describing a single event or occasion in the past, you have to use some other word or phrase, such as **be allowed to** or **be permitted to**:

As a special concession, she was allowed to take her dog with her.

In the negative, the past tense is **could not** or **couldn't**:

We couldn't take books with us into the exam room when I was your age.

Unfortunately she could not take her dog onto the plane with her.

■ **Could** is also used to ask permission. It is slightly more polite than **can**:

Could I possibly borrow your car?

If I could just interrupt you for a moment, there is something I would like to say.

Note that although you can use **could** to ask for permission, you use **can** when giving permission:

'Could I possibly borrow your car?' 'Yes, of course you can.'

Making Requests and Suggestions

Can is used to make a request or to invite someone to do something.

Can you tell me what time it is?

Can you help me, please? I'm afraid I'm lost.

Now, if you **can** just wait here a moment, I'll see whether the manager is free to speak to you.

Requests formed with **could** are slightly more polite:

Could you move along a bit? I don't have much room.

You **couldn't** move along a bit, could you?

Excuse me. **Could** you give me a hand to push my car? It's broken down.

Could I open a window, please? It's very hot in here.

Requests formed with **can** and **could** may also show some annoyance or impatience:

Can you make a little less noise, please!

Could you hurry up there!

In negative questions, **can't** also expresses impatient or angry requests or complaints:

Can't you be a little quieter when you're playing? I'm trying to get some sleep.

Why **can't** men be as sensible as women?

■ Could is used to make suggestions:

If the car won't start, you **could** try pushing it along the road.

You **could** always ask your father to lend us the money.

Sometimes **could** and **could have** are used to make suggestions that show that the speaker is annoyed:

You **could** be more of a help to me, you know!

Well, you **could have** told me you weren't coming!

Vocabulary Note

Note this idiomatic use of **always**, which can be used with **can** and **could** when making suggestions or talking about possibilities:

If we don't have enough money, we **can always** borrow some from my dad.

Other Uses of **Can** and **Could**

■ Can may be used to describe something that sometimes or frequently happens:

She **can** be a little rude at times but she doesn't mean it.

It **can** get very cold here in winter.

Schools in London **can** have pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds.

In this sense, the past tense is **could**:

She could be very rude at times but then at other times she could be very kind.

■ **Cannot** and **can't** are used to suggest that something should not happen:

We can't leave yet. We've only been here five minutes.

We can't just walk out in the middle of the meal, can we? We'll have to stay till the end.

Both **couldn't** and **couldn't have** are used to refer to the past:

We couldn't leave after only five minutes.

We couldn't have left after only five minutes.

■ **Can** and **could** are used to express willingness:

Yes, I can come back again tomorrow if you want me to.

I could come back tomorrow if that is more convenient.

The management cannot accept any responsibility for damage to customers' cars left in the car park.

It's kind of you to offer to pay for my trip, but I'm afraid I can't accept your help.

It's very kind of him but I just couldn't accept his offer.

■ **Could** and **could have** are used to say that something is like something else or has the appearance of something else:

The sea is so smooth, it could be glass. (= it looks like glass)

From the top of the hill, the cars looked so small that they could have been little insects.

■ **Can** is sometimes used to express an order:

You can stop that nonsense right now!

Since you can't behave yourself, you can just go home.

Grammar Help

Note the tenses used in conditional sentences:

If the old clubhouse falls down, we can build a new one.

If the old clubhouse fell down, we could build a new one.

If the old clubhouse had fallen down, we could have built a new one.

There is more about tenses in conditional sentences in Unit 33.

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences using ***can*, *could* or *could have***.

1. I want to get some sleep this afternoon so that I ____ stay awake all night tonight.
2. If animals ____ talk, what would they tell us?
3. We weren't very busy yesterday, so we ____ come if you'd asked us.
4. Do you have anything in this shop that ____ take ink off fingers?
5. I was so pleased when the girl told me she had the shoes I wanted in my size that I ____ kissed her.
6. Let's make a list of the things we ____ do this weekend.
7. Try to think of all the places where you ____ left your umbrella.
8. When I was young I ____ run a marathon.
9. All of this bother ____ been avoided if you had asked my advice in the first place.
10. ____ I have a clean knife, please?

Handy Hint

In some cases, both ***can*** and ***could*** are correct.

B Complete the answers to the questions below, using ***can't*, *couldn't* or *couldn't have***.

1. 'Why didn't you phone me?'
'Because I ____ remember your telephone number.'
2. 'Why are the police so sure that those boys didn't kill the old man?'
'Because they ____ been in the area at the time he died.'
3. 'Why don't you switch the light on?'
'Because I ____ find the light switch.'
4. 'Why didn't you take the money he was offering you?'
'Because I felt I ____ be in his debt.'
5. 'How do you know the key is still here?'
'Because it ____ disappeared into thin air.'
6. 'Why didn't you introduce me to that woman you were talking to?'
'Because I ____ think what her name was.'
7. 'Why don't you come with us to the concert?'
'Because I ____ stand modern jazz. You know I don't like jazz.'

8. "Why don't you come with us to the concert?"
'Because the orchestra would be too loud. I ____ stand the noise.'
9. "Why did you leave the room when Mary was practising on her violin?"
'Because I ____ stand the noise.'
10. "Why did you leave the room when Mary brought out her violin?"
'Because I knew she was going to start playing and I ____ stood the noise.'

C Read the following sentences and say whether the subject of each sentence containing the word **can't** is *unable* to do what is described in the sentence, *is unwilling* to do it, *is not allowed* to do it or *doesn't know how* to do it.

1. We can't smoke here. There's a 'No Smoking' sign over there on the wall.
2. She sings beautifully but she can't read music.
3. Could you switch the light on, please. I can't read my music when the room is as dark as this.
4. You can't go any faster than seventy miles an hour on a motorway.
5. You can't go any faster than seventy miles an hour in this old car anyway. Its engine isn't powerful enough.
6. I can't come with you to the cinema this evening. My mum says I've got to do my homework first.
7. I can't come with you to the cinema this evening because I don't have any money.
8. She can't drive a car on her own because she hasn't passed her driving test yet.
9. Surprisingly she still can't drive. She's never wanted to and she's never taken any lessons.
10. I really can't accept this award. I just don't deserve it.

27 The Meanings and Uses of **May** and **Might**

The modal verb **may** is used with a bare infinitive to express the idea that something is *possible* or *permitted*. It is also used to express *opinions* and *wishes*.

Might is the past tense of **may**, but has a number of other meanings.

Present Tense

*He says he **may** come.*

*I know there **may** be no-one there.*

*'The story **may** be true,' he said.*

'May I have another biscuit?' he asked.

Past Tense

*He said he **might** come.*

*I knew there **might** be no-one there.*

*He said the story **might** be true.*

*He asked if he **might** have another biscuit.*

Grammar Help

Sentences such as '*He said he **might** come*' and '*He asked if he **might** have another biscuit*' are examples of **reported speech**.

Might is used as the past tense of **may** in reported speech.

For more about reported speech, see Unit 34.

Asking for or Giving Permission

May is used to ask for, give or refuse permission.

*'Please **may** I open a window?'*
*'Yes, of course you **may**.'*

*Users of this software **may** modify their copy of this program or any part of it.*

*No part of this publication **may** be reproduced without the prior permission of the publisher.*

May I make a suggestion?

If you want to be a little more polite or formal in making a request, use **might**:

*I wonder if I **might** open a window?*

Might I have a quick word with you?

Grammar Help

Both **may** and **can** are used to ask for and give permission: see page 164. **May** is more formal than **can**, and is therefore less used than **can** in informal everyday speech, but more often than **can** in formal English.

Beware!

The use of the more formal **might** instead of the less formal **may** can also give a slightly aggressive tone to a question or request:
Might I inquire who owns that dog?

In reported speech, **might** is rather formal and a little old-fashioned:

*He asked if he **might** have another biscuit.*

Could would be more likely in everyday speech:

*He asked if he **could** have another biscuit.*

Note that although you can use **might** in this way to *ask* for permission, you can only use **may** to *give* permission:

*'I wonder if I **might** open a window?'
'Certainly you **may**.'*

May not is used to withhold permission or to state what is not allowed. It is mostly used when telling someone what they are not allowed to do, or in formal English, when stating rules and regulations:

*'Please **may I** leave the room?'
'No, you **may not**.'*

*Children under the age of sixteen **may not** use this equipment.*

*Users **may not** copy or modify this software except by permission of the distributor.*

In everyday informal English, especially with the pronoun *I*, it is more natural to use **can't**, **not be allowed to**, etc:

*I **can't** come to the pictures with you tonight.*

*I'm **not allowed to** go into town on my own.*

■ **May** and **might** are sometimes used when expressing a *polite or tentative opinion* in a way that suggests you are asking permission to do so:

*That was a pretty stupid thing to do, **if I may say so**.*

*And, lastly, **may I say** how much I appreciate all the hard work that has been done in this campaign.*

*I consider this book to be the most informative and, **might I add**, the simplest to use of all the instruction manuals I have read.*

Similarly, **may** is used when making a *polite offer*, especially an offer of help:

May I help you?

May we be of assistance?

Expressing Possibilities

May is used to suggest that something *is possible*, now or in the future.

We **may all be out of work by this time next week.**

She **may find a way of persuading him to come.**

Be careful what you say. Some of these people **may be journalists.**

We **may go back to France again next year, but my wife may not want to.**

A new economic treaty **may be signed soon.**

Don't worry. We **may not have to wait long.**

Your doctor **may get the results of these blood tests by tomorrow afternoon.**

When referring to the past, use **may have**:

She **may have left by now.**

A meteor **may have caused dinosaurs to become extinct.**

The measles outbreak **may have been started by someone bringing in the virus from abroad.**

That is a possibility you **may have overlooked.**

You **may have heard of her. She's a famous poet.**

May have is also used when you want to say that it is possible that something *will have happened by some time in the future*:

She **may have left by the time we arrive.**

We **may have found the information we need before the meeting starts.**

I **may have finished this by tonight.**

By this time next year, we **may all have been out of work for months.**

Might and **might have** are used to suggest possibilities that are less likely or less certain than those expressed by **may** and **may have**.

We **might all be out of work** by this time next week.

Take an umbrella with you. It **might rain**.

That is a possibility they **might have overlooked**.

Grammar Help

In talking about possibilities, **may** and **might** are sometimes followed by **well**:

We **may well meet her at the concert**.

They **might well have left by now**.

Do not confuse this use of **well** with the phrases **may as well** and **might as well**. **May as well** and **might as well** are used to say that it would be sensible to do something or that there is no point in not doing it:

Since I'm here, I **may as well help you pack**.

If you're going to be here till Friday, you **might as well stay till Monday**.

Might as well is also used to say that something would make no difference to some situation:

He never notices me. I **might as well be invisible**.

You **might as well leave now**. There's nothing more you can do to help.

Grammar Help

Although **might have** is correctly used to refer to things that could have happened in the past but in fact didn't happen, increasingly many people nowadays use **may have**:

If the police had successfully hunted down the terrorists after the embassy bombings, the recent atrocities **may never have happened**.

Mr Mitchell said that if it had not been for Britain's resistance to Nazism the course of history **may have been very different**.

Be aware of this use of **may have**, but continue to use **might have**.

■ **Might** is used to talk about something that **could happen in the future**:

If you asked him, he **might lend you the money**.

If we set off right away, we **might get there by lunch-time**.

I am hoping that we **might visit my aunt while we are in Japan**.

Might have is used to talk about something that **could have happened in the past, but in fact didn't happen**:

What on earth did you do that for?

You **might have been hurt!** (but you weren't)

If you hadn't interrupted me earlier on, I **might have got this job finished by now**. (but you did interrupt me, so I haven't got it finished)

■ **Might** can be used in a slightly humorous or pompous way with virtually no meaning at all when you are asking for information:

'And who **might** you be?' asked the man with a sneer. (= who are you?)

'And what **might** be the point of all these protests?' (= what is the point of them?)

Making Admissions

May can be used to say that *although one thing is true, something else is nevertheless also true.*

*There **may** be other books on the subject, but this is still the best.* (= although there are other books, this is still the best)

*He **may** be the boss, but his wife makes all the important decisions.* (= although he is the boss, it's his wife who makes all the important decisions)

*Calm as she **may** seem, I'm sure she is really a bundle of nerves.* (= although she seems calm, I'm sure she is really very nervous)

Might can be used to say that although one thing is *perhaps* true, something else is nevertheless also true:

*You **might** think that was a clever thing to do, but I don't.*

Expressing Wishes

In rather formal English, **may** is used to express a wish or hope.

May God forgive you for what you have done!

May the Force be with you. [Star Wars]

*Isn't the weather marvellous these days! Well, long **may** it last.*
(= I hope it lasts a long time)

*'Tis (= It is) the star-spangled banner! O long **may** it wave
O'er (= Over) the land of the free and the home of the brave.
[from 'The Star-Spangled Banner',
the national anthem of the United States]*

Expressing Purpose

In formal English, **may** is used when you are giving *the reason for doing something.*

*My parents are moving back to England so that they **may** see more of their grandchildren.*

Please fill out the form below so that we **may** better understand your needs.

We have also provided a search engine so that you **may** find and retrieve the documents you need online.

In this sense, the past tense is **might**:

*My parents moved back to England so that they **might** see more of their grandchildren.*

Other Uses of Might and Might Have

■ **Might** is used to make suggestions:

*We don't sell stamps, but you **might** try at the shop next door.*

*If you want advice on buying a new computer, you **might** ask my cousin. She knows about these things.*

Sometimes **might** and **might have** are used to make suggestions about what someone ought to do or ought to have done, in a way that shows that the speaker is rather annoyed:

*You **might** at least try to be polite to my mother!*

*Well, you **might have** told me you were coming!*

■ **Might** and **might have** are used to say that something *is like* something else:

*It's so cold these days, it **might** be January rather than July.*

*From the top of the hill, the cars looked so small that they **might have** been little insects.*

■ When you say that you **might have known** or **might have guessed** something, you mean that it is something that could be expected to happen:

*You **might have known** she'd be late. She usually is.*

*I **might have guessed** that you'd be here.*

Grammar Help

Note the tenses used in conditional sentences:

*If you **ask** her, she **may** help you*

*If you **asked** her, she **might** help you.*

*If you'd **asked** her, she **might have** helped you.*

There is more about tenses in conditional sentences in Unit 33.

Do It Yourself

A Rephrase the following sentences using **may** or **might**.

Example

Question: Perhaps they will come back again later. (may)

Answer: They **may** come back again later.

1. Perhaps his greatest achievement is having climbed Mount Everest at the age of 56. (may)
2. Perhaps she has forgotten all about us. (may)
3. Maybe he won't tell anyone what you said. (might)
4. Possibly he hasn't seen the advertisement for the job. (may)
5. This is perhaps an indication that your plants are not getting enough water. (might)
6. Perhaps this plant would grow better in a different part of the garden. (might)
7. Perhaps I didn't read the instructions carefully enough. (may)
8. This is possibly a clue to the murder. (might)
9. Maybe they will let us use the tickets tomorrow instead of today. (may)
10. It's possible that they were at the concert but I didn't see them. (may)

B Complete the following sentences by choosing suitable phrases from those given in the box below. Some may be used more than once.

Handy Hint

There is more than one correct answer to question 2.

may I say

may well

might as well

may it continue

might as well

might add

may I ask

may say so

might have known

1. What, ____ I ____ , is all that rubbish doing in the kitchen?
2. I've nearly finished the job so I ____ work on until it's done.
3. That really wasn't a very good idea, if I ____ .
4. If you are going to buy a new computer, you ____ buy a new screen.
5. This ____ be the greatest danger facing the world today.
6. We ____ that she wouldn't come.
7. Since I was going to Malaysia for my holiday, I thought I ____ visit Singapore too.
8. Thank you for your support. Long ____ !
9. This is the first poem she ever wrote, and, I ____ , it's pretty good for a first effort.
10. I'm very much a fan of Kylie's and also, ____ I ____ , her friend.

28 The Meanings and Uses of *Will*, *Shall*, *Would* and *Should*

Grammar Help

Sentences such as '*He said he would come*' and '*He asked her if she would ever forgive him*' are examples of **reported speech**.

Would and **should** are used as the past tenses of **will** and **shall** in reported speech, forming tenses that are called **future in the past**.

For more about reported speech, see Unit 34.

The main use of the modal verb **will** is to form the **future tense** of lexical verbs, but it has other uses as well, such as asking someone to do something or saying that you are **willing** to do something.

Shall is sometimes used to form future tenses with **I** and **we**, but has other uses, such as asking for **advice** or expressing **intentions**.

Would and **should** are the past tenses of **will** and **shall**, but they have a number of other uses.

Present Tense

He says he will come.

I don't expect there will be anyone interesting there.

I hope she won't forget to come.

'Will you ever forgive me?' he asked.

'Shall we ever meet again?' I wondered.

Past Tense

He said he would come.

I didn't expect there would be anyone interesting there.

I was hoping she wouldn't forget to come.

He asked her if she would ever forgive him.

I wondered if we should ever meet again.

Grammar Help

The short form of **will** is '**ll**', and the short form of **will not** is '**won't**'.

The Future Tense

Will is used with a bare infinitive to form the **future tense** in English.

The problem will no doubt soon be resolved.

Will I ever see you again?

*If you ask him, I'm sure he **will** lend you the money you need.*

*In these classes we **will** study the basic beliefs of Judaism,
Christianity and Islam.*

*I think you should go to bed now so that you **will** feel fresh for
your exam tomorrow.*

Just think where we'll be this time next week.

*You'll easily recognize me. I'll be wearing a red rose on my
jacket.*

*You **won't** need your umbrella. I don't think it's going to rain.*

Grammar Help

Will is often used to speak of something that you are *predicting* will happen in the future:

*Mum and Dad **will** be so proud of you.*

*His grandparents **will** be so pleased to see his new wife.*

When talking about *plans* for the future, the present continuous tense and the simple present tense are often used:

*We're **leaving** tomorrow morning.*

*We **leave** at five o'clock.*

(There is more about the meanings and uses of the present tenses in Unit 30.)

Again, while **will** is used when *making a decision or stating an intention* about some future action (e.g. *I'll **buy** the theatre tickets and you book a table at the restaurant*), once the decision has been made it is normally referred to by a present continuous tense (*I'm **buying** the tickets and Jean is **booking** a table at the restaurant*).

Will have is used to refer to something that you *expect to have happened by some time in the future*:

*I **will have** finished this job by Friday.*

*By the end of their second year, students **will have** chosen the subjects they wish to study in more depth.*

Will they have been able to get all the information they need before the meeting?

Grammar Help

The short form of ***shall*** is '*'ll*', and the short form of ***shall*** not is ***shan't***.

Grammar Help

Will* and ***shall in the future tense**

Formerly, there was a rule in English grammar that ***will*** should only be used in the second and third person to form the future tense, and that for the first person, you should use ***shall***. For example:

They will probably be back next week. BUT
We shall probably be back next week.

Will he ever see us again? BUT
Shall I ever see him again?

By tomorrow night, he will have reached Paris. BUT
By tomorrow night, we shall have reached Paris.

This rule, which never applied in American English in any case but only in standard British English, is not adhered to as much now as it once was. ***Will*** is nowadays much commoner than ***shall*** for straightforward future and future perfect tenses, though ***shall*** is not incorrect.

Grammar Help

Note that ***would*** should not be used to talk about the future unless it is in reported speech; always use ***will***.

Would* and ***should in reported speech after a verb in the past tense**

After a verb of saying, etc in the past tense, ***will*** is replaced by ***would***:

He says he will come. → *He said he would come.*

Similarly, ***shall*** may be replaced by ***should***:

I wonder if we shall ever meet again. → *I wondered if we should ever meet again.*

However, this use of ***should*** is now considered rather formal, literary or old-fashioned, and ***would*** would be more normal now:

I wondered if we would ever meet again.

(There is more about the use of tenses in reported speech in Unit 34.)

Would is also sometimes used to refer to something that has happened in the past but which, looking from some earlier time in the past, is going to happen in the future. This usage is particularly common in descriptions of people's lives and achievements:

Hemingway spent some time as a war correspondent in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Later he would write a bestseller on this very theme.

Willingness

Will is used to say what someone or something is ***willing*** to do.

We will never give in to blackmail.

Some children just will not eat vegetables.

I will not be laughed at like this.

Mum, Julie keeps annoying me. She won't leave me alone.

For some reason the car won't start.

I will not tolerate such rudeness.

Any of our sales executives will be happy to advise you.

*The manager **will** see you now, Mrs Brown.*

Will you marry me?

The past tense of **will** in this sense is **would**:

*When I was a child, I **would** never eat cheese.*

*The car **wouldn't** start this morning.*

In conditional sentences, use **would have** to talk about something you were theoretically willing to do in the past (that is, you were willing to do it *if* the situation arose, but it didn't):

*If they had asked me, I **would have** told them what you told me.*

*Had I known you needed help, I **would have** come earlier.*

■ **Would** is also used to express a more *tentative or theoretical* willingness to do something in the *present or the future*:

'Would you marry him?'

'No, I'd never marry a man like that.'

*They **would** never give in to blackmail.*

She'd do anything for her children.

*I **wouldn't** dream of hurting them.*

*I **would** come if I could, but unfortunately I have another engagement that evening.*

Grammar Help

The short form of **would** is '**d**'.

■ **Shall** is used in formal or old-fashioned English, especially in the second and third person, to give a more forceful or determined expression of *intentions*, to say that something will *definitely* happen in the future:

*Everything **shall** be done according to your commands, master.*

*You **shall** go to the ball, Cinderella!*

*If you marry me, you **shall** have everything your heart desires.*

Wishes, Requests and Instructions

Will is used to *ask or tell* someone to do something.

Grammar Help

Will and **would** are both used in question question tags following a command:
*Let go of the rope, **will** you!*
*Shut that door, **would** you?*

Will you open the window, please?

*You **will** put that knife down right now!*

*For goodness sake, **will** you just be quiet for a minute!*

*Be quiet, **will** you!*

*You **won't** tell her what I said, **will** you?*

Would can also be used to ask or tell someone to do something. It is slightly more polite than **will**:

*Would you close that window for me? It's a bit draughty.
Would you please stop shouting. I'm not deaf.*

To *ask* someone if they *want you* to do something or if they think you *ought* to do it, or to *ask for advice* about what to do, use **shall**:

*Shall I open a window?
Shall I switch the television on?
Shall we tell her or not?
I'll just close this window, shall I?
Someone has stolen all my money. What on earth shall I do?*

Grammar Help

Shall is always used in a question tag following **let's**:

Let's invite them to the wedding, shall we?

Grammar Help

Notice that **should** is sometimes used ironically with the opposite meaning:

*He **should** worry about affording a new car, with all the money he earns! (= he has no need to worry; he shouldn't worry)*

To invite someone to do something *with you*, use **shall we**:

*Shall we go to the concert tomorrow night?
Let's go to the concert, shall we?*

Shall is also used when you are *wondering* about doing something (that is, when you are *asking yourself* whether you should do it):

*Shall I lend her the money or **shan't** I?*

- When you are wondering in a rather more uncertain way about whether or not you *ought* to do something, use **should**:

*Should I lend her the money or **shouldn't** I?
Should we tell Mum where we're going?*

When referring to the past, use **should have**:

*Should I **have** lent her the money when she asked for it?
I wonder whether we **should have** told Mum where we're going.*

Should is used when making recommendations or suggestions, or when talking about what someone *ought* to do or what *ought* to happen.

*You **should** discuss it with your husband before making up your mind.*

*You **shouldn't** go there alone, you know.*

*She **shouldn't** go climbing when she's pregnant.*

You really **should** try this new brand of coffee.

What **should** I do with these old shoes?

If your money has been stolen, you **should** go to the police.

There **should** be a full stop at the end of that sentence.

You **should** hear what she says about you when you're not here.
(= I think it would be a good thing if you knew what she says;
you would be surprised at what she says)

When referring to the past, use **should have**:

I didn't know what to do when my money was stolen. What
should I **have** done?

What **should** I **have** said when she accused me of lying?

You **should** **have** heard her when she found out that she hadn't
got the job. (= it's a pity that you didn't hear what she said)

■ **Should** is also used in giving *instructions* about what *ought* to be done:

Luggage **should** be placed securely in the lockers before take-off.

Passengers **should** not attempt to get off before the train has stopped in the station.

Applications **should** be sent to the address below.

Will, on the other hand, gives *orders* about what *must be* done or *is going to be* done:

All of you boys **will** report to the principal first thing tomorrow.

You **will** stay in and finish your homework.

Shall is used in formal English to express a *formal order* or a *regulation*:

There **shall** be an end to all hostilities between the opposing forces.

Users of the library **shall** not bring food or drink into the library.

Grammar Help

In this sense, do not use **would** in reported speech. Use **were to** instead:

He told the boys they **were to** report to the principal first thing the next day.

■ **Would** and **should** are used with **I** and **we** to give *advice* and *make suggestions*:

I **wouldn't** go there alone if I **were** you.

You **should** discuss it with your husband before making up your mind.

We **would** suggest that you discuss it with your husband first.

I **would** say that black shoes **would** go better with that dress.

- **Should** can be used instead of a verb in the subjunctive mood (see Unit 13) after verbs and nouns expressing requests, suggestions and orders. Compare the examples below with those on page 77 where the corresponding verbs are in the subjunctive:

*It has been suggested that the coffee machine **should be** replaced.*

*It was imperative that everyone **should arrive** at the same time.*

*He insisted that she **should leave** immediately.*

*Someone has made the suggestion that she **should be given** an award for bravery.*

*She left clear instructions that all her money **should be given** to charity when she died.*

- **Will** is used to *invite* someone to do or to have something, often with the lexical verb **have**:

*Will you **have** another piece of cake?*

*Will you **have** dinner with me tonight?*

Would is similarly used in making polite *offers* or *proposals*:

*Would you **like** another piece of cake?*

*Would your little boy **like** to stand in front of me so that he can see the parade?*

*Would you **care** to have dinner with me this evening?*

- **Would** can be used to express a *wish*, a *request* or a *preference*:

*I do wish you **would** hurry up!*

*We all wish they **would** stop the fighting in the Middle East.*

*If only she **would** tell me what's wrong.*

*I wonder if you **would** be so kind as to open the door for me.*

*I **would prefer** to leave now, if you don't mind.*

*I **would be glad** to receive your gardening catalogue at your earliest convenience.*

With **I** and **we**, **should** is also correct, though it is now only found in more formal or rather old-fashioned language:

*I **should just like** to say how proud I am to have won this award.*

*We **should prefer** to stay here.*

Grammar Help

Would rather is also used to express a preference:

*I **would rather** marry Tim than John.*

*He **would rather** tell a lie than hurt someone's feelings.*

*I'd **rather** have a cup of tea, thank you.*

Would have and, in formal or old-fashioned language, **should have** are used when referring to something that happened in the past:

*He gave me a cup of tea, but I **would have** preferred coffee.*

*I **would rather have** had a cup of coffee.*

*I **should have** preferred a glass of milk, actually.*

Stating Probabilities and Expectations

Will is used to say that you think something is *probable*.

*'There's someone at the door.' 'Oh, that **will** be John.'*

*All the other guests **will** be there by now, and we're going to be late.*

I'm sure he'll already know that the money is missing.

*You **won't** remember me. We haven't seen each other for years.*

You can also use **should** to refer to something that you *expect* to be the case, but with less certainty than when you use **will**:

*That **should** be John now.*

*All the other guests **should** be there by now.*

*If nothing has gone wrong, they **should** be in Italy now.*

*According to this map, we **should** be somewhere near the cathedral.*

Will have is used to describe something that you think has probably already happened:

*They **will** probably all **have** arrived by now.*

*No doubt he **will** already **have** noticed that the money is missing.*

*You **will have** realized by now that I don't know much about football.*

To refer to something that probably happened in the past, use **would have**:

*He **would have** realized even before he left the house that he was going to be late.*

*Because of the mist, she **would probably not have** known she was so close to the edge of the cliff.*

Should have is used to describe something that you *expect* to have happened, but with less certainty:

*They **should have** reached Italy this morning.*

- **Would** is used to express a more *theoretical probability* than **will**, that is, to talk about something that you expect to be true *if* a particular situation arises:

*You **would** recognize his wife if you met her. She's been on television.*

*It **wouldn't** be safe for you to come home on your own at that time of night.*

*He **wouldn't** remember her. He was just a little boy when he last met her.*

Would have with verbs like **think** or **expect** describes something you expected but which did not happen:

*I **would have** expected her to spend more than half an hour with us. (but she didn't)*

*You **would have** thought he had enough money to buy himself some decent clothes. (but he doesn't seem to have)*

Would with stress on it is used to say that something that has happened was to be *expected*.

*That is just the sort of silly thing she '**would** say. (= she has said something silly, and that is the sort of thing she often does)*

*'She just burst into tears when they awarded her the prize.' 'She '**would**, **wouldn't** she. She's a very emotional person.'*

Sometimes, this use of **would** is an expression of annoyance or criticism:

*'She burst into tears when they awarded her the prize.' 'She '**would**, **wouldn't** she. I hate all that false emotion at the Oscar ceremonies.' (= that's just the sort of thing I expect her to do, and it annoys me that she did it)*

*You '**would** say that, **wouldn't** you. You never agree with me.*

- **Would have** also expresses *surprise* at something that has happened:

*Who **would ever have** thought our little girl **would** one day be a famous pop star?*

*Our son a doctor! Who **would have** thought it?*

Describing General Facts

Will is used to describe *general facts*.

*This car **will** seat six people comfortably. (= there is enough room in it for six people)*

*Accidents **will** happen. (= accidents do happen; it is inevitable that accidents happen)*

*Boys **will** be boys. (= Boys always behave in a boyish way)*

*A good teacher **will** encourage students to report instances of bullying.*

*The school **will** always report to the police any student found in possession of drugs.*

The past tense of **will** in this sense is **would**. **Would** is used to refer to habitual behaviour in the past:

*My mother **would** always phone me on a Sunday evening.*

*Their father **would** beat them regularly.*

Sometimes such a statement of what generally happens is intended as a criticism or a sign of irritation. In these cases, the word **will** or **would** is stressed:

*She '**will**' leave her bike out in the street. Well, some day it'll get stolen, and then she'll be sorry.*

*He '**would**' keep on banging that drum, even though I asked him not to.*

■ Sometimes a stressed **would** expresses irritation or frustration about a *single* event rather than a repeated event or a general fact:

*I told you it was foolish to go skiing with a sore leg, but you '**would**' insist on going, and now you say your leg is aching.
(= I am annoyed because you refused to take my advice)*

*Oh, it '**would**' start to rain just when I wanted to go for a walk! (= I am annoyed because it has started to rain)*

*The television '**would**' break down just when the Arsenal-Manchester United match is coming on.*

Expressing Reactions

Should is used in expressing reactions or making comments, ments, especially after adjectives or certain nouns + **that**.

*I wasn't surprised that she **should** feel so angry about it.*

*It's odd that you **should** say that. That's just what I was thinking.*

Use **should have** when referring to the past:

*It's rather a pity that she **should have** missed the party.*

*It's sad that he **should have** behaved like that.*

Should and **should have** are also used when you want to say that something that has been suggested or that has happened is unreasonable or unjust:

*I don't know why it **should** always be me who washes the car.*

*I can't understand why she **should have** said that.*

*Why **should** it be her who gets all the easy jobs?*

*How **should** I know where your socks are?*

Expressing Purpose

Should is used when describing the *purpose* of an action.

*In order that everyone **should** get an equal chance of winning the prize, everyone's name will be put into this hat.*

After **so that**, both **would** and **should** are used:

*He came late at night **so that** no-one **would** (OR **should**) see him.*

Should may also be used after **in case**:

*I'll leave my telephone number with you **in case** Moira **should** want to phone me.*

The lexical verb can also be used without **should**:

*I'll leave my telephone number with you **in case** Moira **wants** to phone me.*

Grammar Help

Note the tenses used in conditional sentences:

If you **ask** her, she **will** help you.

If you **asked** her, she **would** help you.

If you'd **asked** her, she **would have** helped you.

Shall and **should** can, of course, be used instead of **will** and **would** with **I** and **we**:

There is more about tenses in conditional sentences in Unit 33.

Should may also be used in a conditional clause:

If Moira **should** phone, tell her I'll call her back. (= if Moira phones, ...)

Should Moira phone, tell her I'll call her back.

Do It Yourself

A Rewrite the following sentences, using **would** or **will** to express the notion of repeated actions or habitual behaviour.

Example

Question: She **always phoned** at six o'clock.

Answer: She **would always phone** at six o'clock.

1. She often wrote me long letters from abroad.
2. My mother always sang me a lullaby when she tucked me into bed at night.
3. We always bought chips on the way home from the seaside.
4. She invariably stood at the door and waved until the car turned the corner.
5. She often goes to meet her children as they come home from school.
6. Whenever I saw her, I always asked her how she was feeling and she usually laughed and said that she was as fit as a fiddle.
7. My grandmother usually drinks tea rather than coffee.
8. When I was a reporter, I never went anywhere without a notebook and pencil in my pocket.
9. Criminals often go back to the scene of their crime.
10. Whenever she saw me, my grandmother always told me how pretty I looked.

B Complete the following sentences, describing to the person you are talking to what would have happened if they had been with you.

Example

Question: I saw Madonna when I was in town. If you had been there, you ____ her too.

Answer: If you had been there, you **would have seen** her too.

1. When I saw how sorry she was, I forgave her. I'm sure you ____ her too.
2. I was amazed when the Queen spoke to me. If you had been beside me, she ____ to you as well.
3. I don't know why you're criticizing me for what I did. If you had been there, you ____ exactly the same as me.
4. I was so tired this morning, I slept in till 10 o'clock. If you had been up till 3 a.m. like me, you ____ in too.
5. They offered me a durian to eat but it smelt so bad I didn't eat it. I'm sure you ____ it either.
6. When I saw the shifty look on his face, I thought he was lying. Anyone who saw him ____ so too.
7. When I found out that some of the other competitors had been taking drugs, I withdrew from the competition. I expect you ____ as well.
8. I smelt the smoke as soon as I opened the front door. If you hadn't had a cold, you ____ it too.

C Complete the following sentences by filling in the blanks with **will**, **shall**, **would** or **should**.

1. She ____ rather give her money to charity than spend it on herself.
2. Drat it! The phone ____ ring just when I'm having a shower.
3. They ____ have got here by now. I wonder where they can be.
4. Hurry up! The film ____ have started by the time we get there.
5. It's quite ridiculous that someone ____ accuse him of spying.
6. Dogs ____ be dogs, and dogs ____ always chase cats.
7. ____ you like to sit here beside me?
8. ____ anyone ask where I am, tell them I'm at a meeting.
9. It's very important that everyone ____ attend the meeting.
10. Let's go to the zoo, ____ we?
11. ____ you open that door for me, please.
12. Why ____ I always have to walk the dog?

29 The Meanings and Uses of *Must*, *Need to* and *Have to*

The modal verb **must** is used with a bare infinitive to express the idea that something is *necessary* or *obligatory* or that something is *certain* or *probable*.

Need to and **have to** also express the idea of being *necessary* or *obligatory*.

The past tense of **must** is **must**, but it is used only in reported speech or in certain senses of the word. **Had to** is often used as the past tense of **must**. There are more details in the sections below.

Describing What Is Necessary

Must is used to say that something is *required* or *necessary*.

These computer files must be given a name before they can be opened.

In order to survive, an animal must have food and water.

If you want to make a phone call from this phone, you must press that button.

For the reaction to take place, the liquid in the test-tube must be heated to its boiling point.

Have to and, in slightly more informal English, **need to** can also be used in this sense:

These computer files have to be given a name before they can be opened.

The liquid in the test-tube has to be heated to its boiling point.

These computer files need to be given a name before they can be opened.

The liquid in the test-tube needs to be heated to its boiling point.

■ **Have to** can refer either to general facts or to *single events*:

I have to catch the bus at 6.30 every morning.

I have to catch the bus at 6.30 tomorrow morning.

Do you really have to catch the bus at 6.30 every morning?

I had to walk home last night since I had missed the last bus.

In informal British English, you can say **have got to** instead of **have to**. It can only refer to *single events*, and cannot be used to refer to the past:

I've got to catch the bus at 6.30 tomorrow morning.

Have you really got to catch the bus at 6.30 tomorrow?

BUT

Did you really have to catch the bus at 6.30 yesterday morning?

Grammar Help

Remember that **need** can sometimes behave as a modal verb, followed by a bare infinitive (*You needn't tell her*), and sometimes as a lexical verb, followed by a **to-**infinitive (*You don't need to tell her*). See Unit 19.

Grammar Help

Must, have to and need to + not

There are important differences in meaning between **must not**, **do not have to** and **do not need to**. For example,

You mustn't press that button if you want to make a phone call from this phone means that it is *necessary* for you *not* to press the button. Do not press the button, because if you do press it you will not be able to make the phone call. On the other hand,

You don't have to press that button if you want to make a phone call from this phone

means that it is *not necessary* for you to press the button in order to make a phone call. There is no reason to press the button because you can make a phone call without pressing it. **Do not need to** and **needn't** have this same meaning:

You don't need to press that button to make a phone call. OR

You needn't press that button to make a phone call.

Similarly, if someone says

Your gift must not be expensive

they mean that it is *absolutely necessary* that your gift *not* be expensive (that is, you must give something that is not expensive), whereas if they say

Your gift need not be expensive

they mean that it is *not necessary* for the gift to be expensive (though it can be expensive if you want it to be).

Must can only refer to the present or the future. When referring to the past, you use **had to** or, more informally, **needed to** (remember that you cannot use the 'have got to' construction in the past tense either):

The files had to be given a name before they could be opened.

The liquid needed to be heated to its boiling point before the reaction could take place.

■ **Must** can refer to something that is necessary to get a result you want in the future:

We must hurry if we are to catch the six o'clock train.

You can also use **will have to** (or, less commonly, **shall have to** – see page 178):

We will have to hurry if we are to catch the six o'clock train.

If something is not necessary for a particular result, you can use **do not need to**:

We don't need to hurry. The train doesn't leave for another hour.

Grammar Help

Didn't need to and needn't have

When you say that you **didn't need to** or **didn't have to** do something, you mean that you knew that it was not necessary to do it (and it often implies that you didn't do it):

*We didn't need to hurry. We knew that the train wasn't leaving for another hour.
I didn't have to buy milk. There is an unopened bottle in the fridge.*

On the other hand, if you say that you **needn't have** done something, you mean that you *did* do it but then found that it had been unnecessary:

*We needn't have hurried after all. The train was late.
I needn't have bought any more milk. We still have a litre in the fridge.*

■ **Must** is used when saying that something *cannot be avoided*, that it is *going to happen*, or that there is *no other possible option*:

We must all die some day.

A line must be either straight or curved. It can't be anything else.

In this sense, you can also use **have to** but not **need to**:

We all have to die some day.

- **Must** and **have to** may also express irritation at what someone has done:

Why must you be so stupid?

Of course, Susan has to go and tell her mother we were at a club last night, when I'd told my mother that we were staying in to study.

After **why?**, the question form is usually **must ...?** Questions can also be formed with **do ... have to?**:

Do you have to be so stubborn?

The past tense is **had to**. The question form is **did ... have to?**:

Did you have to be so stubborn?

- In a question, **must** and **have to** may be understood as making requests. For example:

Must you go so soon?

Do you really have to go?

These are really requests for the person being spoken to to stay.

Expressing what is Likely or Certain

Vocabulary Note

Note the phrase: *You must be joking!* = 'that cannot be a serious suggestion' or 'I think that is a foolish suggestion'. For example:

*Pay \$100 for that bike?
You must be joking!*

Must is used to express what you think is likely or certain, often as a result of a process of thought or inference.

There's someone at the front door. That must be John now.

You must be Shona's mother. She looks just like you.

If these are your boots, then those ones must be mine.

It must be nearly lunch-time.

You know what American tourists say: if today's Thursday, this must be London, and if it's Friday, we **must** be in Paris.

The negative equivalent to **must** in this sense is **can't** or **cannot**:

*That **can't** be John yet. It's far too early.*

*This **can't** be London. That's the Eiffel Tower, so we **must** be in Paris.*

When referring to the past, use **must have**:

*We're lost. We **must have** taken the wrong road.*

*The first humans **must have** crossed into Australia some 25,000 years ago.*

When referring to the past with a negative, you use **can't have** or **couldn't have**:

*'It **is** surprising that John **hasn't** come to my party.'*
*'He **can't have** got your invitation.'* (that is, he isn't at the party, so I assume he has not received the invitation)

*'It **was** surprising that John **didn't** come to my party.'*
*'He **couldn't have** got your invitation.'* (that is, he wasn't at the party, so I assume he had not received the invitation)

In reported speech, use **couldn't have**:

*We knew that he **couldn't have** received the invitation.*

(There is more about reported speech in Unit 34.)

Giving Commands or Instructions, and Expressing Intentions and Invitations

Must is used to tell someone what to do or what not to do, that is, in formally stating *rules and regulations* or in giving *orders* and expressing strong *wishes*.

*Children **must** be accompanied by an adult.*

*Guests **must** vacate their rooms by 10 o'clock on the day of departure.*

Grammar Help

The verb **be** can also be used with a **to-infinitive** to give commands or state instructions:

*You **are to** go to London immediately.*
*They **were not to** tell anyone about what they had seen.*

*You **must** stop hitting your little sister.*

*The police **must** do something to stop street crime.*

In less formal English, rules and regulations may be stated with **have to**:

'What does that notice say?'

*'It says that children **have to** be accompanied by an adult.'*

In the negative, use **must not/have not to** or **do not have to/do not need to**. The distinction is the same as the one described on page 191 – **must not** and **have not to** mean that it is *essential not to do* something while **do not have to** and **do not need to** mean that it is *not essential to do* something:

*Passengers **must not** talk to the driver while the bus is moving.
(= do not talk to the driver)*

*You **don't have to** talk to the driver at all if you don't want to.
(= you can talk to the driver, but you are not obliged to)*

*You **mustn't tell** anyone what you've seen. (= do not tell anyone what you have seen)*

*We've **not to tell** anyone what we've seen. (= we are not allowed to tell anyone)*

*You **don't have to tell** your mother where you are. (= you are not obliged to tell your mother where you are)*

In the past tense, you use **had to**:

*Children **had to** be accompanied by an adult.*

In the negative, say **wasn't to**, not **hadn't to**:

*I **wasn't to tell** anyone what I had seen.*

In reported speech, you can use **must** or **had to**:

*My doctor said I **must** (OR **had to**) lose some weight.*

*His mother told him that he **must** (OR **had to**) stop hitting his little sister.*

Grammar Help

Must and **needn't** generally imply that it is the person speaking who has the authority to give the commands, while **have to** and **don't have to** imply that someone or something else is making the rules:

You **must** wear a tie when you eat in a restaurant. (= I am telling you to wear a tie)

You **have to** wear a tie when you eat in that restaurant. (= that is the restaurant's rule)

You **needn't** wear a tie when you eat in a restaurant. (= I am telling you that I don't think it is necessary to wear a tie)

You **don't have to** wear a tie when you eat in that restaurant. (= the restaurant does not insist that you wear a tie)

■ **Must** is used when you are describing something you know you *ought* to do and that you *intend* to do:

I really **must** stop eating so many biscuits.

I **must** pay all these bills today.

We **must** book our holiday this weekend.

■ **Must** is used when you are describing something you think *ought* to happen and to make suggestions:

The government's priority **must** be to lower the crime rate.

You **must** come round for dinner one evening.

It's a great book. One of his best. You really **must** read it.

You **mustn't** give up hope.

■ **Must** and **have to** are also used to express doubt or enthusiasm:

John washing the car? That I **must** (OR **have to**) see!

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences with **can**, **can't**, **must**, **have to**, etc as appropriate. There may be more than one correct answer.

1. That ____ be true! I just don't believe that John would ever steal money from the company.
'Well, it ____ be true. He's been arrested.'
2. I can smell Jean's perfume; so she ____ be in the office somewhere. She ____ be far away.

3. I wasn't able to be at the meeting last night because I ____ work late at the office.
4. We ____ tell Sheila what Tom said about her. She ____ never know.
5. 'I can hear a car outside.'
'That ____ be Simon.'
'No, it ____ be Simon. It's only five o'clock. He should still be at work.'
'But it ____ be well after five now. The boys came in from school ages ago.'
'Well, according to the clock, it's only five o'clock.'
'The clock ____ be slow, then.'
6. 'We haven't seen Tom and Alice for ages. We ____ ask them round to dinner on Saturday.'
'We ____ ask them round on Saturday. We ____ go to Nancy's concert, remember?'
7. Sorry, I can't stop and talk to you now. I ____ get to the library before it closes.
8. Why ____ men always talk about football, football, football?
9. 'You ____ come with us if you don't want to.'
'I want to, but I ____ . I ____ stay in and finish this essay for school tomorrow.'
10. I haven't read *The Hobbit* since I was a child. I ____ read it some day.

B The following sentences all refer to something that is happening in the present or that will happen in the future. Alter the modal verbs to make the sentences refer to the past, making any other changes that are necessary to the words that are printed in **bold** to make them refer to the past as well. There may be more than one correct answer to some of the questions.

Example

Question: I **must** get up early **tomorrow**.

Answer: I **had to** get up early **yesterday**.

1. The electricity **has to** be switched on before you **can** take a shower.
2. It **must** be your turn to wash the dishes. I did them this morning.
3. **Must** you be so rude to her?
4. I've **got to** fly to New York **next week**.
5. We **needn't** tell her about the changes to our plans.

6. The bell **must** ring every day at twelve o'clock.
7. The police **are** sure that the victim **can't** have been dead for more than a couple of hours.
8. The books **must** be here somewhere.
9. John washing the car? That I **must** see!
10. Food supplies to the refugee camps **have to** be brought in by plane.

Quick Summary

Since the modal verbs have many different meanings and uses, the following summary can only pick out some of the main ones.

- 1 The modal verb **can** is used especially to express the general idea that something is *possible*. **Can** may express the idea that someone is *able* to do something or *knows how* to do it, or that they are *allowed* to do it. [Unit 26]

Could is the past tense of **can**, but is also used in a number of other ways, for example, to express *doubt* or *uncertainty* about whether something is true or possible.

Can and **could** may also express *requests* and *suggestions*.

- 2 The modal verb **may** is mainly used to express the idea that something is *possible* or *permitted*. It is also used to express *opinions*, *admissions*, *suggestions* and *wishes*. [Unit 27]

Might is the past tense of **may**, but has a number of other meanings.

May and **might** also express the idea of *purpose*.

- 3 The modal auxiliary verb **will** is used to form the future tense. [Unit 28] **Shall** can also be used to form a future tense with the first-person pronouns **I** and **we**.

Will is also used to *ask* someone to do something or to say that you are *willing* to do something. **Will** also expresses *probabilities*, *expectations* and *general facts*.

Will is used in tag questions following commands, whereas **shall** is used in tag questions following **let's**.

Shall is used to ask for *advice* or express *intentions*.

Would and **should** are the past tenses of **will** and **shall**, but they too have a number of other uses. For example, **should** can be used to express *requests*, *suggestions* and *orders*, and also to express *probabilities* and *expectations*.

- 4 The modal verb **must** is used to express the idea that something is *necessary* or *obligatory* or that something is *certain* or *probable*. [Unit 29] **Need to** and **have to** also express the idea of being *necessary* or *obligatory*.

Must may also be used in expressing an *intention*, *irritation* about something that has been done, or a *request* not to do something.

Must not means that it is *necessary* that something *not* be done, whereas **need not** means that it is *not necessary* that it be done.

Needn't have is used to express the idea that something was *found to have been unnecessary* after it was done, while **did not need to** is used to say that something was *known in advance to be unnecessary* (and may or may not have been done).

Chapter 6

The Tenses: Their Meanings and Uses

The **tense** of a verb shows whether the action of the verb happens in the past, the present or the future, whether it is a single action or a repeated action, whether the action is completed or unfinished, and so on.

There are sixteen tenses in English. They will be separated into four groups, and studied in four units:

Present Tenses

- 1 the **simple present tense**: *Cows eat grass.*
- 2 the **present continuous tense**: *You are looking very tired.*

Past Tenses (including some of the Perfect Tenses)

- 3 the **simple past tense**: *We all went back into the house.*
- 4 the **past continuous tense**: *All the students were laughing.*
- 5 the **present perfect tense**: *I have always eaten egg sandwiches for my lunch.*
- 6 the **past perfect tense**: *The noise had continued all night.*
- 7 the **present perfect continuous tense**: *It has been raining for days now.*
- 8 the **past perfect continuous tense**: *The wind had been blowing all night.*

Unit

30 The Meanings and Uses of the Present Tenses

31 The Meanings and Uses of the Past Tenses

32 The Meanings and Uses of the Future Tenses

33 The Meanings and Uses of the Conditional Tenses

34 Tenses in Direct and Indirect Speech

Future Tenses (including the **Future Perfect Tenses**)

- 9 the **future tense**: *They will all be here in a minute.*
- 10 the **future continuous tense**: *It will be getting dark soon.*
- 11 the **future perfect tense**: *We will have finished this job by the end of the week.*
- 12 the **future perfect continuous tense**: *By the end of this month, I will have been working here for six years.*

Conditional Tenses (including the **Perfect Conditional Tenses**)

- 13 the **conditional tense**: *I would like to help you.*
- 14 the **conditional continuous tense**: *He said he would be coming.*
- 15 the **perfect conditional tense**: *I would have told her if I had seen her.*
- 16 the **perfect conditional continuous tense**:
If I hadn't given you a lift, you would have been waiting in the rain for a bus for hours.

30 The Meanings and Uses of the Present Tenses

The **simple present tense** is used to talk about *facts or things that are generally true*.

*Mr Jones **owns** a chemist's shop.*

*Cows and horses **eat** grass.*

*John **works** in a bank.*

*Two and two **is** four.*

*Pandas **live** in China.*

*Mary **plays** the piano.*

*This car **runs** on diesel oil, not petrol.*

*That sign **says** 'Private property'.*

*The Smiths **don't live** here any more.*

*Nancy **likes** avocados but George **doesn't**. He **hates** them.*

The **simple present tense** is also used to talk about *repeated actions*.

*Mary **practises** on the piano for an hour every evening.*

*Bob **plays** football on Saturdays.*

*We always **go** to Penang for our holidays.*

*Swallows **nest** under our roof every year.*

*Buses **leave** here every ten minutes.*

*I **get up** at seven o'clock every morning and **have** a shower before breakfast.*

The **present continuous tense** is used to talk about *something that is happening at or round about the time of speaking or about situations that will only last for a limited period of time*.

Mary plays the piano. (= a general fact; Mary knows how to play the piano, or she often plays the piano)

Mary is playing the piano. (= a description of what is happening now)

Richard tells lies. (= a general fact; that is the sort of thing Richard does)

Richard is lying to you. (= that is what Richard is doing now)

It never rains in the desert. (= a general fact)

It's raining at the moment, but I'm sure it will be sunny later on. (= a temporary situation)

James lives with his mother. (= a permanent situation; that is where James's home is)

James is living with his mother until his new flat is ready for him to move into. (= a temporary situation)

Emma is a very stubborn girl. (= a permanent state)

Emma is just being stubborn, but she'll give in eventually. (= a temporary state)

We spend a lot of time on our boat on Loch Lomond. (= a general fact)

We're spending a lot of time on our boat these days. (= something that is happening at present)

Children very quickly learn to copy their parents. (= a general fact)

I'm learning French at school. (= something that is happening at present)

Grammar Help

It is important to note the difference in meaning when the two present tenses are used with the adverb **always**.

The **simple present tense** with **always** denotes something that happens every time:

She always washes her hair on Friday evenings. (= she washes her hair every Friday evening)

The **present continuous tense** is used with **always** to refer to something that happens very often, but not necessarily every time, and generally suggests that the speaker is annoyed about it or thinks it is unnecessary or unreasonable:

She's always washing her hair. (= she washes her hair very frequently, and it annoys or surprises me)

In this second sense, you can use **forever** or **continually** instead of **always**:

You're forever asking me for money.

He's continually questioning what I tell him to do.

The **present continuous tense** with **always** and **forever** often also implies that the action described is accidental rather than deliberate:

I'm forever leaving my umbrella on the bus.

The dog is always knocking over that chair.

In certain special cases, the **simple present tense** is used rather than the present continuous tense to describe *actions that are happening at the time*.

- When a *series of actions* is being described at the time that they happen, as, for example, in a football commentary, the **simple present tense** is used:

Campbell passes to Beckham, Beckham runs with the ball and passes it to Cole, who dribbles past three defenders and shoots, but the keeper punches the ball over the net.

- The **simple present tense** is used in *captions* for photographs, *instructions* to actors in plays, etc:

Tony Blair addresses a meeting of the Trades Union Congress.

Mr Smith turns to face Madeleine while Mrs Smith exits stage right.

- In formal English, the **simple present tense** may also be used, for example, in business letters, when you are describing *what you are doing or thinking*:

I enclose a cheque for \$25.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

We note your concerns about the delay.

- The **simple present tense** is used with **performative verbs**. **Performative verbs** are verbs that describe *actions that are actually performed by using the verb itself* in a sentence. (For example, when you say 'I promise to come', you are actually promising to come: by saying 'I promise', you are making a promise. **Promise** is a performative verb.)

I promise I will be there.

I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

I apologize for the delay.

We thank you for your recent letter.

I confess I had forgotten all about our arrangement to meet up with them.

Some verbs are not normally used in the continuous form.

- ◆ Verbs describing *mental activity*: *appreciate, believe, doubt, expect, feel* (= think), *forget, guess, imagine, intend, know, mean, perceive, realize, recall, recognize, recollect, regard, remember, see* (= understand), *suppose, think* (= be of the opinion), *trust, understand*:

I know what you mean.

I think we're lost.

I feel that would be a foolish thing to do.

I believe her.

I don't understand what you are saying.

Note that when ***think*** means to be 'trying to form thoughts' rather than 'having an opinion', it can be used in the continuous tense:

'What'll we do now?' 'Be quiet a minute. *I'm thinking.*'

- ◆ Verbs that express *feelings and emotions or effects*: *abhor, adore, appreciate, astonish, care, desire, detest, dislike, fear, forgive, hate, impress, like,loathe, love, mind, prefer, satisfy, value, want, wish*:

I like cheese but I prefer ice-cream.

They hate being late.

I value your opinions.

- ◆ Verbs that describe *something that affects the senses*: *hear, see, smell, taste*:

I hear music.

That soup smells good.

Note that when any of these verbs describes an action, it can be used in a continuous tense:

I am just smelling the flowers; I won't damage them.

- ◆ Various other verbs, including many that describe *states or relationships* between things, etc: *appear, apply to, belong to, concern, consist of, contain, cost, depend on, deserve, equal, fit, have, hold, include, involve, keep, lack, matter, need, owe, own, possess, presuppose, remain* (= stay in the state of), *require, resemble, seem, signify, sound, weigh*:

The same rules apply to everyone.

Those boots belong to me.

Two and two equals four.

That dress fits you perfectly.

This jar holds two litres of liquid.

That seems OK.

The parcel weighs five kilos.

Note that many of these verbs can be used in the continuous form when they describe *actions* rather than *states*:

I'm having a bath at the moment.

The man is weighing the parcel to see how heavy it is.

What is he holding in his hand?

Both the **simple present tense** and the **present continuous tense** can be used to refer to *future* events or actions.

- The **simple present tense** is used to refer to events that are part of a fixed or agreed schedule, for example, in timetables and programmes:

The train leaves in ten minutes.

The concert begins at 7.30.

We arrive in Singapore at half past four.

The **present continuous tense** is used to refer to events that are part of what someone plans to do:

I'm washing my hair tonight.

Mary is playing the piano at the dance next Saturday.

We're going to Holland for a reunion next month.

'Are you doing anything tomorrow?'

'Yes, I'm meeting a friend for lunch.'

- The **simple present tense** is used to refer to future actions in adverbial clauses of time and in conditional clauses:

I'll tell him when I see him. (NOT '... when I will see him')

We'll give you a call when we get back from our trip.

We'll phone you as soon as we arrive.

If you put your fingers through the bars of the parrot's cage, it will bite them.

If the rain stops, we might go to the park later on.

If the future activity is continuous rather than a single action, then the **present continuous tense** may be used:

When we arrive we'll go straight to our hotel. Then while you unpack (OR while you are unpacking), I'll go and hire a car.

Grammar Help

Another difference between the **simple present tense** and the **present continuous tense** is that the simple present tense is rather more formal than the present continuous tense. For example, an official announcement might use the simple present tense (*This store reopens for business on 6 June*) whilst in general conversation it would be more normal to use the present continuous tense (*I hear the shop is reopening next week*).

In informal English, the present tenses can be used instead of past tenses to refer to the past when you are telling a story or describing something that has happened. The **simple present tense** describes past events and actions and the **present continuous tense** describes what was happening before (and often after) these events or actions.

What do you think happened to me today? I'm standing on the path beside the river, watching the ducks, when someone taps me on the shoulder. I look round and there's my old school-friend Martin. I haven't seen him for years. We start to chat, and lo and behold, a few minutes later, while we are talking, along comes another old friend of ours. So the three of us decide to go for a cup of coffee. When we go into the café, who do we see but yet another fellow who was at school with us. Talk about coincidence!

- In very informal English, when the verb **say** is used in the simple present tense to refer to the past, it may have an -s ending even with a first person pronoun subject:

'So,' says I to myself, 'that's their little game, is it?'

Grammar Help

Active and Passive

The description of the tenses in this unit has concentrated on the tenses in the *active* voice. The *passive* present-tense equivalents of the active verbs are as follows:

Simple Present Tense: **Active** *I enclose* a cheque for \$25. →
Passive *A cheque for \$25 is enclosed.*

Present Continuous Tense: **Active** *Soldiers are guarding* the airports. →
Passive *The airports are being guarded by soldiers.*

Handy Hint

Be careful about the word order in your answers to questions 6 and 7.

Do It Yourself

- A** Complete the following sentences with either the simple present tense or the present continuous tense of the verbs in brackets, whichever is appropriate.
1. Sally (**come**) for dinner tomorrow evening.
 2. Sally (**come**) for dinner every Saturday.

3. According to the timetable, the train (**leave**) at five past seven.
4. If I (**catch**) you smoking again, I'll tell your parents.
5. Cats and dogs always (**fight**).
6. Her dogs forever (**chase**) my cats.
7. I (**leave**) you and I never (**come**) back.
8. When I (**get**) a better job, I'll have enough money to buy a new car.
9. What ____ you (**do**) this evening?
10. What ____ you (**do**) on Monday evenings?
11. John (**behave**) very strangely these days.
12. It always (**snow**) here in winter.

B Complete the following sentences with either the simple present tense or the present continuous tense of the verbs in brackets, whichever is appropriate.

1. I (**expect**) you'll be tired after your long journey.
2. He (**dislike**) having to stand in the rain waiting for a bus.
3. This hall (**seat**) at least five hundred people.
4. This wine (**taste**) of strawberries.
5. I can't talk to you long. I (**expect**) visitors at any moment.
6. I (**taste**) the soup to see if it needs more seasoning.
7. Look out! He (**hold**) a gun!
8. How much ____ this plant (**cost**)?
9. I (**suppose**) there is no other way of doing the job.
10. The price of the room (**include**) breakfast and an evening meal.
11. That (**seem**) like a good idea to me.
12. This barrel (**hold**) five gallons.

31 The Meanings and Uses of the Past Tenses

The Simple Past Tense and the Past Continuous Tense

The **simple past tense** is used to describe *things that happened in the past or things that were true in the past*.

The things that happened in the past may be single, repeated or habitual actions.

Grammar Help

Note that in questions and with **not**, the simple past tense of lexical verbs (except **be** and **have** – see page 89) is replaced by a verb phrase formed with **did** and the base form of the verb:

Did she open the letter?

When **did you arrive**?
I **didn't tell** him anything.

I saw John yesterday.

She opened the envelope and read the letter carefully.

He put down his book and switched on the television.

We climbed to the top of the hill and stood looking at the beautiful sunset.

The goalkeeper bounced the ball several times and then kicked it down the pitch.

We usually went by train.

He always let us play with his dog.

The earth was once a big ball of gas.

My parents lived in that house over there.

Millions of buffalo once roamed the prairies of North America.

The simple past tense always describes events that have been *carried out or completed* in the past:

My parents lived in that house over there. (= they don't live there any longer)

He always let us play with his dog, but sadly the dog died last week.

I taught French in a grammar school before I became a journalist.

The **past continuous tense** is used to describe *actions in the past that continue for some time and do not have a stated or known beginning or end*. For example, it is used in descriptions of the *background situation*, of *what was going on*, when some other action or event took place.

It was raining heavily (= situation) *when we got to the bus-stop* (= action/event).

While John was phoning the police (= situation), *the burglar climbed through the window* (= action) *and ran away* (= action).

We were waiting for the bus by the side of the road (= situation) *when a car drove past* (= action) *and splashed us* (= what happened).

'Why has she got ink all over her clothes?'

'She was drawing a picture' (= situation) *and the pen leaked* (= what happened).'

Differences between the Simple Past Tense and the Past Continuous Tense

- The **past continuous tense** can be used to describe a gradual process or development in the past:

The rain was getting heavier and heavier.

The weather was worsening by the hour.

I was becoming less and less certain about what he wanted us to do.

The **simple past tense**, on the other hand, describes a situation looked on as something that has come to an end:

The rain got heavier and heavier.

I became less and less certain about what he wanted us to do.

- When it is used with an adverbial phrase of time, the **past continuous tense** describes something that started before the stated time and continued after it:

'What **were** you **doing** last night at about nine o'clock?'

'At nine o'clock, I **was watching** TV.' (that is, I started watching TV at some time before nine o'clock and I continued to watch after nine o'clock)

On the other hand, when the **simple past tense** is used with an adverbial phrase of time, it means that the action described happened, or perhaps began, at the stated time:

I switched on the television at nine o'clock.

I went for a walk at ten o'clock. (= I started my walk at ten o'clock)

- The **past continuous tense** may indicate that a past action was casual and unplanned, whereas the simple past tense implies that the action was deliberate:

I was telling James yesterday about our problem. (= it just happens that I told him)

I told James yesterday about our problem. (= I deliberately told him)

Just as the present continuous tense can refer to actions in the future (for example *We're flying to New York next week*), the **past continuous tense** can refer to something that, at some time in the past, was going to happen in the future.

I didn't talk to Rosemary on the phone for long last Sunday because I knew she was flying to New York in the morning.

When I saw James last week, he was studying hard because he was sitting his history exam the next day.

- **Be going to** is often used in the past tense to refer to something that has not happened and perhaps will not happen at all:

You were going to tell me what she said at the meeting this morning. (but you haven't told me yet)

I was going to go to the pictures this evening but I'm too tired. (so it isn't going to happen)

Grammar Help

This simple past tense may be considered as either an indicative or a subjunctive – see page 75.

Note, however, the use of the past subjunctive **were** after the pronouns **I**, **he**, etc, though **was** is also correct – again see page 75.

The **simple past tense** may be used with **if only** or **I wish** to express wishes.

If only we knew where she was.

If only she were here with us now.

I wish we had enough money to buy a new car.

I wish I were you.

The Present Perfect Tense and the Simple Past Tense

The main uses of the **present perfect tense** are:

- 1 to refer to *actions which started in the past and which are still going on at the time of speaking or which could go on after the time of speaking* (while, on the other hand, the simple past tense refers to actions that have stopped before the present time);
- 2 to refer to *actions which happened in the past but which still affect the situation in the present* (while the simple past tense refers to actions that have happened in the past but have no close connection with the present); and
- 3 to refer to *actions which took place at some unspecified time in the past* (while the simple past tense refers to actions which took place at a *definite time in the past*).

I have lived in Edinburgh for more than twenty years. (= I still live there)

I lived in Edinburgh for more than twenty years. (= I no longer live there)

She has been a member of the choir for a long time. (= she still is a member)

She was a member of the choir for a long time. (= she is no longer a member)

Julia Roberts has starred in a number of films. (Julia Roberts is still alive and still acting and therefore may well star in more films in the future)

Brigitte Bardot starred in a number of films. (Brigitte Bardot is still alive but is no longer an actress and therefore will probably not star in any more films)

Greta Garbo starred in a number of films. (Greta Garbo is dead and therefore will definitely not star in any more films)

I have lost my pen. (and the pen is still lost now)

I lost my pen yesterday. (this does not make clear whether the pen is still lost or whether it has been found)

Somebody has dented our car. (and the car is still dented now)

Somebody dented our car last week. (this does not make clear whether the car is still dented or if it has been repaired)

Grammar Help

The present perfect tense is sometimes used in explanations:

Can somebody help me? I've lost my purse.
 (= I need help because I've lost my purse)

Grammar Help

Been and Gone

Both **been** and **gone** are used as past participles of the verb **go**, but with different meanings.

Gone is used when the idea is simply of going to a place, whereas **been** is used when the idea is of going to a place and coming back again:

'I'm sorry, Mr Jones is not in the office this week. He has **gone** to London.'

'Have you ever **been** to London?' 'Yes, I was there last year.'

I have been to France three times. (this does not say when I was in France)

I was in France last year. (this specifies when I was in France – 'last year')

Our cat has caught lots of mice. (this does not say when the cat caught the mice)

Our cat caught a mouse last night. (this specifies when the cat caught the mice – 'last night')

Grammar Help

- ◆ Notice that a question in the present perfect tense may require an answer in the **simple past tense** if the answer is 'yes' and specifies a time at which the event or action took place:

'Have you ever **seen** the Queen?'

'No, I **have never seen** her.'

'Yes, I **have seen** her.'

'Yes, I **saw** her when I was a little boy.'

'Has he ever **been** to America?'

'No, he **has never been** to America.'

'Yes, he **has been** a couple of times.'

'Yes, he **went** there last year.'

- ◆ In British English, the adverbs **already**, **just** and **yet** are used with the **present perfect tense**:

I've **already told** her.

She's **just left**.

Have you **done** your homework **yet**?

In American English, these adverbs are normally accompanied by the **simple past tense**:

I **already told** her.

She **just left**.

Did you **do** your homework **yet**?

- The **present perfect tense** can be used instead of the simple present tense after conjunctions such as **if**, **when**, **as soon as**, **before** and **until** to refer to the future:

In many cases, there is little difference in meaning between the two tenses, though the perfect tense emphasizes that one thing will happen, or has to happen, before the next one does:

If I manage to talk to John at the meeting, I'll call you and tell you what he says.

If I've managed to talk to John at the meeting, I'll call you and tell you what he said.

As soon as she arrives, you can present the bouquet of flowers.

As soon as she's arrived, you can present the bouquet of flowers.

You can do the crossword **when I finish** reading the paper.

You can do the crossword **when I've finished** reading the paper.

You'll sit there **until** you apologize.

You'll sit there **until** you've apologized.

- The **present perfect tense** (usually with the adverb **ever**) is often used along with **superlative adjectives** (such as **best, worst, biggest, smallest**, etc) and also with **first, second, third**, etc:

That is the nicest thing that anyone has ever said to me.

That's the biggest potato I've ever seen!

She is the most intelligent person I've met.

You must be the worst teacher this school has ever employed.

This is the first time that South Korea have reached the semifinals of the World Cup.

You're the sixth person who has asked me that this week.

The Past Perfect Tense

The past perfect tense is used:

- 1 to refer to **actions or events in the past that happened before other actions in the past**; or
- 2 to refer to **actions or events that happened before a stated time in the past**.

When he had finished speaking, the audience clapped loudly.

After the teacher had left the room, the students stopped working.

As soon as the policeman had gone by, the thieves started to break into the house.

He didn't understand what had happened, and he didn't know why the others had left him behind.

Did You Know?

The **past perfect tense** is also known as the **pluperfect /plu:pə'fikt/ tense**.

*The goblins knew their way through the mountains because they **had built** the paths themselves.*

*When he found out that the girl **had escaped**, he was absolutely furious.*

Often there is little or no difference between the past perfect tense and the simple past tense:

*When he **had finished** speaking, the audience clapped loudly.
When he **finished** speaking, the audience clapped loudly.*

*After the teacher **had left** the room, the students stopped working.*

*After the teacher **left** the room, the students stopped working.*

However, if it is necessary to emphasize that one event in the past happened or was completed before another rather than the two of them happening at the same time, the past perfect should be used:

*When he **laid** his cards on the table, he **smiled**. (= EITHER he laid the cards down while smiling, OR ELSE he first laid his cards down and then smiled)*

*When he **had laid** his cards on the table, he **smiled**. (= he first laid his cards down and then he smiled)*

■ The past perfect tense may be used with **if only** to express wishes about the past:

*If only I **had been** with them, I might have saved them.*

*If only you **had asked** me to help you, the job would have been done in half the time.*

■ The past perfect tense is used in indirect speech instead of the present perfect tense when the main verb is in the past tense:

*He **has lived** in Hong Kong for twenty years.*

*He **said** he **had lived** in Hong Kong for twenty years.*

*His mother **has known** Madonna since she was a little girl.*

*His mother **told** the reporters that she **had known** Madonna since she was a little girl.*

(There is more about indirect speech in Unit 34.)

The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

The **present perfect continuous tense** is mainly used:

- 1 to emphasize that *some action that started in the past is not over yet; or*
- 2 to describe *an action in the past that has been going on for some time or that has just finished.*

They have been playing football for hours. (and they are still playing OR they have just stopped playing)

Where can James be? I have been waiting for him for ages. (and I am still waiting)

What kept you? I have been waiting for you for ages. (but you are here now, so the waiting has just finished)

With many verbs, there is little or no difference in meaning between the continuous tense and the non-continuous tense:

I have lived here for twenty years.

I have been living here for twenty years.

How long have you taught in this school?

How long have you been teaching in this school?

My sister has long hoped to meet Elton John.

My sister has long been hoping to meet Elton John.

It has rained all week.

It has been raining all week.

I have wanted to speak to you for ages.

I have been wanting to speak to you for ages.

In other cases, however, the present perfect tense indicates that the action is completed while the continuous tense stresses that the action is continuing:

I have read your book. (= I have read the whole book)

I have been reading your book. (= I have read part of the book but not yet all of it)

When describing repeated actions, the present perfect tense is used when there is some word or phrase describing the number of times the action is repeated, whereas the continuous tense is used when there is a phrase saying how long the actions have gone on:

I have asked her several times to keep her dogs under control.

I have been asking her for ages to keep her dogs under control.

He has voted Green in the last three elections.

He has been voting Green ever since he stopped supporting the Liberal Democrats.

The present perfect tense is used when there is some word or phrase describing the result of the action or the object of the action rather than how long it has gone on:

I have read ten books this week.

I have been reading books all week.

We must have walked twenty miles today.

We seem to have been walking for hours, but it's only eleven o'clock.

The Past Perfect Continuous Tense

The past perfect continuous tense has much the same relation to the past perfect tense as the present perfect continuous tense has to the present perfect tense, and needs no further explanation.

Compare the following examples with the similar ones in the sections above:

They had been playing football for hours. (and they were still playing OR they had just stopped playing)

It had rained all week. = It had been raining all week.

I told the police that I had asked her several times to keep her dogs under control.

I told the police that I had been asking her for ages to keep her dogs under control.

Grammar Help

Active and Passive

The description of the tenses in this unit has concentrated on the tenses in the *active* voice. The *passive* equivalents of the active past-tense verbs are as follows:

Simple Past Tense: Active *I sent the letter last week.* →

Passive *The letter was sent last week.*

Past Continuous Tense: Active *The man was watching the police.* →

Passive *The man was being watched by the police.*

Present Perfect Tense: Active *Someone has eaten all the cakes.* →

Passive *All the cakes have been eaten.*

Past Perfect Tense: Active *She had posted the letter the previous day.* →

Passive *The letter had been posted the previous day.*

The present and past perfect continuous tenses are NOT normally used in the passive at all.

Do It Yourself

A Answer the following questions, using the correct tenses of the words in brackets.

1. 'How did the crash happen?'

'I (**drive**) along the road when a dog suddenly (**run**) out in front of the car.'

2. 'How did you know that Simon supported England in the World Cup?'

'When I (**see**) him, he (**wear**) a tee-shirt like an English flag and he (**paint**) his face red and white.'

3. 'Was Tom still there?'

'No, he (**leave**) before I (**get**) there.'

4. 'What was the weather like while you were in France?'

'It (**rain**) when we (**arrive**). In fact it (**rain**) for several days before that. But the sun soon (**come**) out, and for the rest of the week the weather was great.'

5. 'Can I have a look at the paper?'

'Wait till I (**finish**) reading it.'

6. 'What did you see at the zoo today?'

'In one cage we (**see**) a little monkey with a baby. The mother (**feed**) the baby but she (**stop**) when she (**notice**) us watching her.'

Handy Hint

There may be more than one correct answer to some of the questions.

7. 'How did you know John was out?'
'I (**knock**) on the door several times, and I also (**ring**) the bell, but no-one (**come**) to the door.'
8. 'How do you know John is out?'
'I (**knock**) on the door several times, and I also (**ring**) the bell, but no-one (**come**) to the door.'
9. 'Why are you so tired? It's only lunch-time.'
'Because I (**clean**) the house all morning.'
10. 'What did you do last night?'
'After I (**wash**) the dishes and (**do**) the ironing, I (**go**) out for a walk, and then, while I (**listen**) to the radio, I (**write**) some letters.'
11. 'What made John so angry?'
'Someone (**tell**) him that the directors (**decide**) not to promote him even before they (**interview**) him for the job.'
12. 'Have you only just come to live in the village?'
'No. I (**be**) here for nearly eight years now.'

B Complete the following story by supplying the correct past tenses of the verbs in brackets, choosing the active or passive voice as appropriate. In some cases, there may be more than one correct choice of tense.

Example

A full-scale investigation (**launch**) yesterday by Glasgow Police.
→ A full-scale investigation **was launched** yesterday by Glasgow Police.

A full-scale investigation (**launch**) yesterday by Glasgow Police after important government files (**find**) on a second-hand computer. Details of possible changes to the tax system that the government (**not make**) public (**discover**) on the hard disc of a PC that (**sell**) to a local shopkeeper by an Edinburgh computer firm.

The Sunday Post (**obtain**) a copy of the disc from the new owner of the computer, who claims that he (**buy**) the computer at a computer fair three weeks ago.

A police spokesman (**say**) this morning that he could not confirm that the police (**receive**) a complaint from the Scottish Parliament regarding obsolete computer equipment that (**give**) to an outside agency for safe disposal, but in a later announcement the police (**admit**) that enquiries (**make**) at that time to determine whether actions of a criminal nature (**perpetrate**).

- C** The present tense is often used in informal English to refer to something that has happened in the past. It is, however, quite normal to use the past tense rather than the present tense, and in more formal English it is necessary to do so.

Rewrite the following story, replacing the present tenses in **bold** with the equivalent past tenses.

What do you think happened to me today? I'm out for a breath of fresh air at lunch-time, as it gets very stuffy in the office, and I'm standing on the path beside the river, watching the ducks, when someone taps me on the shoulder. I look round and there's my old school-friend Martin. We start to chat, and lo and behold, a few minutes later, while we are talking, along comes another old friend of ours. So the three of us decide to go for a cup of coffee. But when we go into the café, who do we see but yet another fellow who was at school with us. Talk about coincidence! So the three of us sit down at his table and begin to catch up on all our news. We tell each other about our lives since we left school and gossip about other people we know.

There is so much to say that we don't notice the time passing. Suddenly I realize that it is well past two o'clock and I should be back in the office for an important meeting. We all hastily exchange addresses and telephone numbers and agree that we should meet again soon some evening. Then I say goodbye to the others and run back to the office as fast as I can. Fortunately I'm not late for the meeting.

Handy Hint

There is one example of a present infinitive that has to be changed into a past infinitive (see page 138).

32 The Meanings and Uses of the Future Tenses

Grammar Help

The **simple present tense** and the **present continuous tense** can also be used to refer to the future:
He arrives at six thirty tomorrow morning.
We're leaving next week.

For more about the use of the simple present tense and the present continuous tense to refer to the future, and about the differences in meaning between the simple present tense and the present continuous tense, see page 205.

Grammar Help

This construction cannot be used with the lexical verb **be**. You say *I'll be in Tahiti next week*, NOT *I'll be being in Tahiti next week*.

The Future Tense

The future tense in English is formed with **will** or, less commonly, **shall**, plus a bare infinitive.

I will see you tomorrow.

He'll be back again next week.

We shall finish this off next week.

For more about the use of **will** and **shall** to form the future tense, see Unit 28.

The Future Continuous Tense

The **future continuous tense** is often used to describe *something that will happen in the future over a period of time* rather than as a single action or event.

It is also used to describe *things that have been planned or things that can be expected to happen because they normally do*, in which case it may refer either to continuous actions or to single actions.

By this time next week you'll be lying in the sunshine in Tahiti.

Don't phone me this evening. I'll be watching football on TV.

Will you be using the car this evening or can I have it?

The train will be arriving in a few minutes.

Tim will be leaving the office about now. He usually leaves about five o'clock.

Grammar Help

There are important differences in meaning between the **future tense** and the **future continuous tense**.

- ◆ The **future tense** may express *intentions*:

I will see Jean tomorrow and ask her what she thinks we should do. (= I have decided that I will go to Jean and ask her opinion)

The **future continuous tense**, on the other hand, simply *states a fact* that something will happen:

I will be seeing Jean tomorrow so I will ask her what she thinks we should do.

Similarly, with a negative, *Michael won't come to the party* means that Michael is refusing to come or that you think he will refuse to come, whereas *Michael won't be coming to the party* simply means that he will not be there, without suggesting that he doesn't want to be there.

- ◆ The **future tense** often expresses a *command* while the **future continuous tense** expresses a *fact*:

You will come with us. (= I am telling you to come with us)

You will be coming with us. (= It is a fact that you will come with us)

- ◆ In a question form, the **future tense** often expresses a *request for action*, while the **future continuous tense** simply expresses a *request for information*:

Will you come with me? (= please come with me)

Will you be coming with me? (= is it the case that you will be with me?)

Be going to

Be going to is used to express what someone *intends* to do in the future, something that is being or has been planned.

I'm going to tell him what I think of his stupid idea.

She has told her boss she is going to look for a new job.

They're trying to cheat us, but we're not going to let them get away with it, are we?

Will and **shall** can also be used to express a future intention. The difference between **be going to** and **will/shall** is that **be going to** expresses something that has been planned whereas **will/shall** express a sudden decision:

I'm going to wash the car this morning. (= something I have been planning to do)

OK, OK. Don't nag me. I'll wash the car this morning.
(= something I am agreeing to do at the time when I am speaking)

I'm going to polish the table to get those marks off.

Don't worry about those marks. I'll polish the table to get rid of them.

With **not** or **-n't**, **be going to** may be used to describe something that will not happen or equally it may state a decision not to do something or even a refusal to do something:

I'm sure your father is not going to wash the car today. (= a statement about what will not happen)

I'm not going to wash the car today. I'm too tired. (= a decision not to do it)

I'm not going to wash the car today. I did it last week. (= a refusal to do it)

The same is true of **will/shall/I'll**:

I'm sure your father won't wash the car today. (= a statement about what will not happen)

I won't wash the car today. It's not very dirty. (= a decision not to do it)

I won't wash the car for you. You never let me drive it. (= a refusal to do it)

■ **Be going to** is used to express *what someone thinks will happen* in the future, especially if it is going to happen soon and if it is the result of something that is happening at present.

England are going to win the World Cup.

I think the Republicans are going to lose the election.

Look at those clouds. It's going to rain soon.

The boat was full of water. We knew it was going to sink.

Be going to is often used in warnings, for example, in the main clauses of conditional sentences:

If you get caught stealing from the school, you're going to get expelled.

If you jump about like that, you're going to fall and hurt yourself.

Will and **shall** are also used in the main clauses of conditional sentences:

If you jump about like that, you'll fall and hurt yourself.

If we make a nuisance of ourselves, we'll be asked to leave the restaurant.

Will and **shall** can also be used to talk about what is expected to happen in the future, but in this case the events being described are not expected to be in the near future and have no direct connection with what is happening at present. Compare, for example,

Our dog's pregnant. She's going to have puppies.

and

One day our dog will probably have puppies too.

Grammar Help

Note the difference between the **present continuous tense**, the **future continuous tense** and **be going to** when referring to events in the future. The **present continuous tense** expresses a definite arrangement:

I am seeing Jean tomorrow. (=Jean and I have arranged to meet; I know that we will be meeting and Jean knows it too)

The **future continuous tense** and **be going to**, on the other hand, may describe something that is going to happen, or they may merely describe something that you expect to happen but without any definite arrangement for it to happen:

I will be seeing Jean tomorrow. OR I am going to see Jean tomorrow. (=I know or expect that we will be meeting, but Jean may or may not know; there may be a plan to meet, or there may not be)

Be about to

Be about to is used to express *what is going to happen in the very near future.*

You are about to witness a truly amazing feat.

The Queen is just about to arrive at Westminster Abbey.

You're lucky you caught me. I'm just about to leave.

In informal English, **not be about to** is used to express what someone *intends* not to do or what they will not allow to happen.

I'm not about to let him tell me how to do my job.

England are not about to let Argentina take away their one-goal lead.

The Future Perfect Tense

The **future perfect tense** is used to refer to an action that you expect to have happened or state that you expect to be the case by some time in the future.

*By this time next week you **will have sat** all your exams.*

*The next time you visit us, I expect we **will have completed** the patio.*

*I **will have learned** some Japanese before I go there in the summer.*

*Mum hopes that she **will have passed** her driving test before she and Dad go off on their caravan holiday.*

The Future Perfect Continuous Tense

The **future perfect continuous tense** is used to refer to an *uncompleted or ongoing* action or state that you expect to have happened or to be the case by some time in the future.

*By the end of the month, I **will have been working** here for six years. (and I will continue to work here)*

*As of February 2002, I **will have been playing** this game for 10 years.*

The **future perfect continuous tense** is also used to refer to a *repeated action* that you expect to have been happening in the past and up to the present time:

*It is time to answer the questions many of you **will have been asking** yourselves.*

*Many people **will have been saying** to themselves: 'If the Americans cannot conduct their own affairs sensibly, efficiently and democratically, how can they be trusted to administer ours?'*

Grammar Help

Active and Passive

The description of the tenses in this unit has concentrated on the tenses in the *active* voice. The *passive* equivalents of the active future-tense verbs are as follows:

Future Tense: **Active** I **will find** the culprits! →
Passive The culprits **will be found!**

Future Perfect Tense: **Active** They **will have eaten** all the food before we get there. →
Passive All the food **will have been eaten** before we get there.

The future continuous and future perfect continuous tenses are NOT normally used in the passive.

Do It Yourself

A Using one of the ways shown in this unit to talk about the future, write a sentence ...

1. ... saying that you have arranged to play golf with Peter on Saturday.
2. ... saying that you are planning to buy a new car.
3. ... saying that you refuse to lend Judy any more money.
4. ... saying that you have decided not to go for a walk.
5. ... asking to be taken to the zoo next week.
6. ... asking someone whether you and they are going to the zoo next week.
7. ... saying that you do not intend to let anyone bully your brother.
8. ... warning someone they are about to fall off a ladder.
9. ... saying that you expect to be in New York by this time next week.
10. ... ordering someone to go and apologize for their behaviour.

Handy Hint

There may be more than one correct answer.

B Using the words in brackets, describe what you expect to be doing tomorrow morning.

At six o'clock I (**lie**) in bed. At seven o'clock I (**have**) breakfast. At eight o'clock I (**leave**) the house and (**head**) for school. By eight thirty, I probably (**play**) football in the playground as usual. By nine o'clock, I (**sit**) in the maths class, but I still (**think**) about football. I (**wish**) that I was at home watching football on television.

Beware!

You may have to change the order of words in some of the sentences to make correct grammatical English. Pay particular attention to the position of the adverbs.

33 The Meanings and Uses of the Conditional Tenses

The Conditional Tense

The **conditional tense** is used to describe what *would* happen in the future *if* something else happened first, or what *would* be possible or true *if* something else existed or was true.

The conditional tense also describes what *would not* happen *unless* something else was true or happened first.

What would happen if I pressed that button?

Of course I would lend you the money if you asked me.

They would probably promote you if you worked harder.

If you came with us, you would learn something to your advantage.

I wouldn't go with her to the doctor's unless she asked me to.

She wouldn't buy a dog unless she was sure she could look after it.

Grammar Help

When used to refer to a future event in reported speech after a verb in the past tense **would** plus a bare infinitive is often called the **future in the past** tense:

He said he would come.

You promised you would help me.

She told me she would always be there for me if I needed her.

For other uses of **would**, see Unit 28.

The Conditional Continuous Tense

The **conditional continuous tense** is used instead of the conditional tense in order to emphasize that what is being described is a continuing state or action.

*If you worked harder, you **would be earning** as much money as John.*

*If we had won the lottery, we **would be lying** on a beach in Tahiti by now.*

*If you hadn't wakened him, he **would still be sleeping**.*

*If I was being chased by a dog, I **would be running** even faster.*

Grammar Help

When used to refer to a future event in reported speech after a verb in the past tense, the continuous tense is often called the **future continuous in the past**:

*He said he **would still be sleeping** when I left.*

*She knew she **would be leaving** early the next day.*

The Perfect Conditional Tense

The **perfect conditional tense** is used to say what *would have* happened in the past if something else had happened first or what *would have been* true if something else had been true.

The perfect conditional tense also describes what *would not have* happened *unless* something else had happened first.

*We **would have won** if we had played better.*

*We **would have escaped** if only we had had a ladder.*

*I **would have come** if she had invited me.*

*We **would never have believed** it if we hadn't seen it with our own eyes.*

*He **would not have said** that unless he was intending to buy the house.*

The Perfect Conditional Continuous Tense

Like the conditional continuous tense, the **perfect conditional continuous tense** is used to emphasize that what is being described is a continuing state or action.

*The dogs **wouldn't have been fighting** in the street if you had kept them under control in the first place.*

Had I not realized how much my stay in hospital was going to cost me, I would have been laughing heartily at what had happened.

The police would not have been chasing you unless they had thought you were the thief.

Grammar Help

Active and Passive

The description of the tenses in this unit has concentrated on the tenses in the *active voice*. The *passive* equivalents are as follows:

Conditional Tense:

Active They **would probably promote** him. →
Passive He **would probably be promoted**.

Conditional Continuous Tense:

Active If I was at home, I **would be washing** the car right now. →
Passive If I was at home, the car **would be being washed** right now.

Perfect Conditional Tense:

Active I **would have sent** the cheque by now if I had got your bill. →
Passive The cheque **would have been sent** by now if I had got your bill.

The perfect conditional continuous tense is NOT normally used in the passive.

The Sequence of Tenses in Conditional Sentences

A **conditional sentence** is a sentence in which there is a subordinate clause (a **conditional clause** or **adverbial clause of condition**) that states the conditions or circumstances that are necessary, or would be necessary, or would have been necessary, for whatever is talked about in the principal clause.

Conditional clauses usually begin with **if**, but may begin with other words such as **unless** and **providing**.

We will arrive tomorrow night if we're lucky.

If you love her, then tell her.

I wouldn't come unless she invited me.

So long as you don't forget your lines, you'll be fine.

You could have stayed providing you lent a hand with the cooking and cleaning.

There are three main types of conditional sentence, known as **first conditionals**, **second conditionals** and **third conditionals**.

Some, but not all, conditional sentences use conditional tenses in their **principal clauses** (*not* in their conditional clauses).

1 First Conditionals

First conditionals state what *will* or *may* happen in the future *if* something else happens or *unless* something else happens.

Did You Know?

First conditionals are sometimes called **real conditionals**.

If I go into town this afternoon, I'll buy that book you want.

Those plants will die if you don't water them regularly.

- The verb in the *conditional clause* may be in the **simple present tense**, the **present continuous tense**, or the **present perfect tense**:

If I go into town this afternoon, I'll buy that book you want.

Unless he works a lot harder, he won't pass his exams.

If you don't water these plants regularly, they'll die.

If he's sleeping, don't waken him.

If you are still working in the garden when I arrive, I'll give you a hand.

If he has finished the crossword, I'll be able to read the rest of the paper at last.

The verb in the conditional clause may also be formed with **should** and an infinitive:

If she should happen to ask you where I am, tell her you don't know anything.

If I should see Jean, I'll tell her what you said.

The conditional clause with **should** can also be formed without a conjunction such as *if* and with the **should** at the

Grammar Help

Conditional clauses with **should** suggest that the person speaking is less certain that what is being spoken about will actually happen:

If I see Jean, I'll tell her what you said.

If I should see Jean, I'll tell her what you said.

Seeing Jean is considered less certain in the second sentence than in the first one.

beginning of the clause, especially if the conditional clause precedes the main clause:

Should she happen to ask you where I am, tell her you don't know anything.

- The verb in the *main clause* is usually in the **future tense**, but may also be formed with a modal verb other than **will** or **shall**. It can also be in the form of a command:

If I go into town this afternoon, I'll buy that book you want.

Unless he works a lot harder, he won't pass his exams.

If James isn't home yet, I can phone again later on.

If the rain doesn't stop soon, the match may be cancelled.

If he's still sleeping, could you waken him for me?

If she asks you where I am, tell her you don't know.

If he's still sleeping, don't waken him.

Did You Know?

Second conditionals are sometimes called **unreal conditionals**.

2 Second Conditionals

Second conditionals are used to describe what *would* happen in the future *if* something else happened first.

Second conditionals express greater uncertainty than first conditionals about whether or not what is being spoken about will ever actually happen: they are sometimes said to express *unreal* or *hypothetical* situations.

Second conditionals are also used to describe something that would be possible or true *if only* something else existed or was true (whilst in fact it does not exist or is not true). Second conditionals may therefore express *imagined* situations.

If she invited me, I would come. (but she might not invite me)

If you worked a little harder, you would pass all your exams. (but I know you may not work harder)

If we were asked to help, of course we would help. (but we might not be asked)

If only we had wings, we could fly out of here. (but we don't have wings, so we can't)

If only we had enough money, we could go to Europe for our holiday. (but we don't have enough money, so we can't go)

- For the second conditional, the verb in the *conditional clause* is in the **simple past tense**:

If I wrote the letter tonight, I could post it tomorrow morning.

Of course I would lend you the money if you asked me.

I wouldn't go with her to the doctor's unless she wanted me to.

They would probably promote you if you worked harder.

If only we had more time, we could visit Nancy and George while we're in Edinburgh.

The subjunctive **were** (see page 75) is often used instead of **was** in second conditionals, especially in more formal English:

If Tom was OR were here, he would know what to do.

If that was OR were the case, we would surely have been warned about it.

If matter was OR were evenly spread throughout infinite space, it could never gather into a single mass.

When the verb is **were**, then the conditional clause can be formed without **if**, etc, with the verb **were** at the beginning of the clause, especially if the conditional clause precedes the main clause:

Were that the case, we would surely have been warned about it.

Were he to be found guilty, it would be an appalling injustice.

Grammar Help

Note in particular the set phrase **if I were you**:

If I were you, I wouldn't agree to what they are suggesting.

If I were you, I'd jump at the chance of going to America with him.

You cannot say **if I was you**.

- With second conditionals, the verb in the *main clause* is usually in the **conditional tense** or the **conditional continuous tense**, though modal verbs other than **would** may also be used:

Of course I would lend you the money if you asked me.

I wouldn't go with her to the doctor's unless she wanted me to.

They would probably promote you if you worked harder.

If you worked harder, you would be earning as much money as John.

If you worked harder, you might pass your exams after all.

If I wrote the letter tonight, I could post it tomorrow morning.

Did You Know?

Third conditionals are sometimes called **contradictory conditionals** (because they describe something that did not in fact happen).

3 Third Conditionals

Third conditionals refer to the past and say what *would have* or *might have* happened if something else had happened first or what *would have* or *might have* been true if something else had been true. Third conditionals therefore refer to something that has *not* happened or was *not* the case.

We would have won if we had played better. (but we didn't play better, so we didn't win)

We could have escaped if only we had had a ladder. (but we didn't have a ladder, so we couldn't escape)

- The verb in the *conditional clause* is usually in the **past perfect tense** but a **past perfect continuous tense** is also possible:

I would have come if she had invited me.

We might have stayed longer if we had had more time.

If I had known that, I would never have come.

What would have happened if they hadn't found you in time?

If you had been wearing more sensible shoes, you wouldn't have fallen.

The conditional clause can also be formed without *if* with the verb **had** at the beginning of the clause, especially if the conditional clause precedes the main clause:

Had I known that, I would never have come.

Had she invited me, I would have come.

- The verb in the **main clause** is usually in a **perfect conditional** or **perfect conditional continuous tense**, though modal auxiliaries other than **would** are also possible:

I would have come if she had invited me.

What would have happened if they hadn't found you in time?

If I hadn't come to pick you up, you would have been waiting in the rain for a bus for hours.

If I had known that, I might never have come.

We could have stayed longer if we had had more time.

Grammar Help

Although **might have** is correctly used in third conditional sentences, many people nowadays use **may have**:

*If the police had successfully hunted down the terrorists after the embassy bombings, the recent atrocities **may** never **have** happened.*

*Mr Mitchell said that if it had not been for Britain's resistance to Nazism, the course of history **may have** been very different.*

Although increasingly common, this usage is not yet fully acceptable. Be aware of this use of **may have**, but continue to use **might have**.

Two other Types of Conditional Sentence

Implicational conditionals say that *if something is or was true, then something else must also be or have been true.*

If it is slightly windy here, it must be blowing a gale up in the hills.

If there was no reply, John must have been out.

- The verb in the **conditional clause** is in the **present continuous tense** or the **simple present tense**, or the **past continuous tense** or the **simple past tense**:

If it is raining here, it is no doubt raining in London as well.

If it snows in winter in England, then it probably snows in Scotland as well.

'All these European cities look the same to me,' said Hank wearily, 'but if today is Thursday, then we must be in Rome.'

Grammar Help

Note that **will** in this case does not refer to some future event, as is the case with the first conditional, but states what must be happening at the time of talking. For more about this use of **will**, see page 183.

If James was being silly, he must have had too much to drink.

If the window was broken, someone must have broken it.

- The verb in the *main clause* will usually be in the same tense as the verb in the conditional clause, or else it may be formed with **must** or **will**:

If it is raining here, it is no doubt raining in London as well.

If it is raining in London, it will be snowing in Scotland.

'If today is Thursday, then we must be in Rome,' said Hank.

If the window was broken, someone must have broken it.

General conditionals describe what generally happens or happened if something else happens or happened.

If I drink more than two glasses of wine, I start to giggle.

If anyone ever accused him of being lazy, he would always claim that he had a sore back.

- The verb in the *conditional clause* is in the **simple present** or **simple past tense**:

If you ask him a difficult question, he always stares at his fingers and then says 'It all depends'.

If anyone shouted at her, she always burst into tears.

- The verb in the *main clause* is generally in the **simple present** or **simple past tense**, but in the past tense **would** is also possible:

If you ask him a difficult question, he always stares at his fingers and then says 'It all depends'.

If anyone shouted at her, she always burst into tears. OR ... she would always burst into tears.

Do It Yourself

A Complete the following sentences, putting the verbs into the correct tenses.

1. The dog always barks if it (**hear**) someone coming up the path.
2. If I ever (**win**) the Lottery, I'll buy a villa in Spain.
3. If she (**know**) the fate that was awaiting her that night, she would never have set out on her own.
4. What would you do if you (**see**) someone stealing a car?
5. If you (**ask**) me, I would have explained the plan again.
6. If he really was ill, he (**be**) at home in bed instead of playing golf.
7. If Mary (**be**) not in the office, leave a message for her.
8. If this is a genuine Roman vase, it must (**be**) very valuable.
9. If he hadn't been wearing a seat-belt, he might (**kill**).
10. If I had the inclination, I'm sure I could (**write**) a best-seller.
11. If I (**had**) the inclination, I'm sure I could have written a best-seller.
12. If you hadn't woken up, the burglars might (**get**) away with the jewellery.
13. If I should (**die**), do not weep for me.
14. Unless you (**keep**) quiet, the rabbits won't come out of their burrows.
15. If you (**behave**) yourself, I might have bought you an ice-cream.

Handy Hint

The answer to question 9 requires a passive verb.

B Expand on the following sentences by adding conditional sentences beginning with *if*.

Example

Question: I didn't come to the party because I was too tired.

Answer: **If I hadn't been too tired, I would have come to the party.**

1. You have a headache this morning because you drank too much coffee last night.
2. The flowers are dying because you haven't watered them enough.

3. Your father has a sore back today because he was lifting heavy boxes yesterday.
4. You won't succeed unless you work harder.
5. I didn't buy you a present because I didn't have enough money.
6. Your bike has been stolen because you didn't put the chain on it when you went into the shop.
7. They rode quickly through the forest so that the wolves would not be able to catch them.
8. I don't go to the cinema every week because I can't afford it.
9. We missed the beginning of the film because we missed the bus.
10. I won't go to see the doctor unless you are willing to go with me.

34 Tenses in Direct and Indirect Speech

Direct speech consists of the *exact words* a person says or thinks.

She said to Tom, 'James is coming too.'

'I'll be there,' he promised.

'Who is that man?' she wondered.

'Are you singing with us?' she asked me.

Indirect speech reports what someone has said or thought.

She said to Tom that James was coming too.

He promised that he would be there.

She wondered who the man was.

She asked me if I was singing with them.

Did You Know?

Indirect speech is also known as **reported speech**.

In indirect speech, the tense of the verb depends on both the tense of the verb in the main clause (the verb of saying, thinking, promising, etc) and the tense of the verb in the words actually used by the person doing the speaking, thinking, promising, etc.

- If the verb of saying, thinking, etc is in the *present tense*, the tense of the verb in indirect speech is the same as in direct speech.

'James is coming too.' → She **says** that James *is coming* too.

'I can play the piano.' → He **claims** he *can play* the piano.

'I will come to your wedding.' → I **promise** I *will come* to your wedding.

'I have finished reading the paper.' → He **says** that he *has finished* reading the paper.

■ If the verb of saying, thinking, etc is in the *past tense*, the verb in the indirect speech clause must normally be in a past tense even if the actual words spoken (the 'direct speech') were in the present tense or the future tense.

1 A verb in the *present tense* in direct speech becomes a *past tense* in indirect speech; a *future tense* becomes a *future in the past*; and a *present perfect tense* becomes a *past perfect tense*:

'James is coming too.' → She **said** that James **was coming** too.

'She is down at the village hall.' → Your husband **told** me you **were** down at the village hall.

'Am I going mad?' → He **wondered** if he **was** going mad.

'I can play the piano.' → He **claimed** he **could play** the piano.

'I will come to your wedding.' → I **promised** I **would come** to your wedding.

'I have finished reading the paper.' → He **said** that he **had finished** reading the paper.

There is no change of tense in reported speech when the verb of saying, etc is in the *present perfect tense*:

'Am I coming with you?' → John **has asked** whether he **is coming** with us.

'I will come to your wedding.' → I **have promised** I **will come** to your wedding.

Grammar Help

Notice that when a question in direct speech is reported in indirect speech, there is no question mark at the end of the sentence, just a full stop:

'Why are you crying?' → She asked him why he was crying.

'Are you coming?' → He asked if I was coming.

Notice also that when **wh**-words such as **who**, **what**, **whose**, etc occur in a question in direct speech, there is a change of word order in indirect speech, with the verb moving to the end of the clause:

'Who is that man?' → She is asking who that man is.

'What is that noise?' → He asked what the noise was.

'Whose umbrella is that?' → I wondered whose umbrella it was.

'Where is the money?' → He asked where the money was.

With **which** there may be a change in word order but there need not be:

'Which car is yours?' → She asked which car was mine.

Grammar Help

A present tense *usually* changes to a past tense in reported speech when the verb of speaking, etc is in the past tense, but this is *not always* the case.

If what was said was true at the original time of speaking and is still true at the time when it is being reported, the tense of the verb in the reported speech *may change to a past tense but it may stay in the present tense:*

'John **teaches** English in Singapore.' →
She **told** me that John **taught** English in Singapore. OR
She **told** me that John **teaches** English in Singapore.

'The universe **is** 20 million years old.' →
He **said** the universe **was** 20 million years old. OR
He **said** the universe **is** 20 million years old.

2 When the verb of saying, etc is in the past tense, a verb in the simple past tense in direct speech either remains a simple past tense, or else becomes a past perfect tense:

'I **saw** him steal that bike.' →
My mother **swore** she **saw** him steal that bike. OR
My mother **swore** she **had seen** him steal that bike.

'She **kissed** me.' →
He **told** me that she **kissed** him. OR
He **told** me that she **had kissed** him.

Modal auxiliaries in the past tense, however, remain in the same form:

'I **might** do it.' → She **said** she **might** do it.

'I **could** meet you next week.' → He **said** he **could** meet us next week.

'You **must** come and see us soon.' → She **said** we **must** come and see her soon.

3 A verb in the past perfect tense in direct speech remains as a past perfect tense:

'I **had never been** to a Christian funeral before.' →
She **told** them that she **had never been** to a Christian funeral before.

'I **had never seen** such a beautiful dress in my life.' →
I **said** to the woman in the shop that I **had never seen** anything so beautiful.

Grammar Help

- The rules regarding tenses in indirect speech could sometimes lead to ambiguous sentences. Whenever that would be the case, it is necessary, when there is a choice of tense, to choose a tense that makes what you are saying unambiguous.

For example, when the verb of speaking, etc is in the past tense, a verb in the present tense in direct speech usually changes to a past tense in reported speech, as described in paragraph 1:

'I hate you,' she said. → *She said she hated him.*

However, as described in paragraph 2, a verb in the simple past tense in direct speech may also be a simple past tense in indirect speech:

'She kissed me,' he said. → *He told me she kissed him.*

When what is being described is an action, there is usually no problem, but when *feelings* are being described, there might be uncertainty about whether or not the feeling had stopped by the time of speaking:

'I hate you,' she said. → *She said that she hated him. (Rule 1 above)*

'I hated you,' she said. → *She said that she hated him. (Rule 2 above)*

Wherever there would be ambiguity of this sort, a past tense in direct speech *must* become a past perfect tense in order to show that the situation being described had finished when the words of the direct speech were first spoken:

'I hated you,' she said. → *She said that she had hated him.*

Similarly:

'I love my job,' he told her. → *He told her that he loved his job.*

'I loved my job,' he told her. → *He told her that he had loved his job.*

- Even when the verb of saying, etc is in the past tense, a present-tense verb in the *subjunctive* mood remains in the present tense in reported speech:

It has been suggested that the coffee machine be replaced.

He insisted that she leave immediately.

I begged that she be allowed to stay.

Do It Yourself

Handy Hint

There are two possible correct answers to one of the questions.

- A** Complete the sentences that are written as indirect speech.

Example

Question: *'I may be late.'* → *She said she _____ late.*

Answer: *She said she might be late.*

- 'The weather has been very bad recently.'* → *He remarked that the weather _____ very bad recently.*
- 'I've got to go now.'* → *She told me she'_____ to go.*

3. 'I'll do it.' → I've said I _____ it.
4. 'We can manage on our own.' → We thought we _____ on our own.
5. 'Where is the money kept?' → The detective asked us where the money _____.
6. 'The money must have been stolen?' → He said that the money _____.
7. 'The only American flag we see around here is the one on the American embassy.' → She added that the only American flag they _____ around there _____ the one on the American embassy.
8. 'How are you going to get home?' → Anna asked how we _____ to get home.
9. 'How are you going to get home?' → Anna has asked how we _____ to get home.
10. 'I saw him take the money with my own eyes.' → She told the detective that she _____ him take the money with her own eyes.
11. 'We have solved the mystery.' → She announced that they _____ the mystery.
12. 'What's the problem?' → He asked what the problem _____.

B The following passage is a report by a detective describing what a witness saw. Rewrite the following passage as direct speech, that is, in the words that the witness might have used.

The witness said that she had seen a young man walking up and down outside the shop across the road. She thought he might have been in his mid twenties. She had been washing her windows and she had noticed that the man had been there all the time it had taken her to clean them. He had been wearing a dark jacket and faded blue jeans. He had seemed a little nervous. Suddenly he had gone into the shop, and a few moments later he had come running out again and had run round the corner. A moment later the owner of the shop had also come out, obviously chasing the man. That was when the witness had called the police.

Quick Summary

Since the tenses have many different meanings and uses, the following summary can only pick out some of the main ones.

- 1 The **simple present tense** is used to talk about what is generally true. It can also express repeated actions or to describe a series of actions. [Unit 30]

The **present continuous tense** is used to talk about something that is happening at the time of speaking, but the **simple present tense** is used with **performative verbs** such as *promise*.

Some verbs, such as *know* and *remember*, are not normally used in the form of a continuous tense.

Both the simple present tense and the present continuous tense can be used to refer to future events or actions, and, in informal English, to what has happened in the past.

- 2 The **simple past tense** is used to describe single, repeated or habitual actions that happened in the past or things that were true in the past. [Unit 31] It is also used with *if only* to express wishes.

The **past continuous tense** is used to describe what was going on when some other action or event took place, or gradual processes, or unplanned actions.

The **present perfect tense** refers to actions which started in the past and which are still going on at the time of speaking and to actions which took place at some unspecified time in the past. The **present perfect continuous tense** is used to emphasize that some action that started in the past is not over yet or to describe an action in the past that has been going on for some time or that has just finished.

The **past perfect tense** refers to an action or event in the past that happened before some other action or event or before a particular time in the past that is being spoken about. The **past perfect continuous tense** has much the same meanings as the present perfect continuous tense but, like the past perfect tense, it refers to actions or events in the past that happened before other actions in the past or before a time in the past that is being referred to.

- 3 The **future tense** in English is formed with ***will*** or, less commonly, ***shall***, plus a bare infinitive. [Unit 32] The **future continuous tense** is used to describe something that will happen in the future over a period of time rather than as a single action or event.

The **future perfect tense** is used to refer to an action or state that is expected to be in effect by some time in the future. The **future perfect continuous tense** is used to refer to an uncompleted action or state that is expected at some time in the future.

- 4 The **conditional tense** and the **conditional continuous tense** describe what *would* happen in the future or what *would* be possible or true *if* something else happened, existed or was true. They also describe what *would not* happen *unless* something else was true or happened first. [Unit 33]

The **perfect conditional tense** and the **perfect conditional continuous tense** say what *would have* happened in the past if something else had happened first or what *would have* been true if something else had been true, or what *would not have* happened *unless* something else had happened first.

A **conditional sentence** is a sentence which states the necessary conditions for something to happen or apply. **Conditional clauses** usually begin with ***if***, but may begin with other words such as ***unless***. [Unit 33]

First conditionals state simple facts about what will or may happen in the future if something else happens or unless something else happens.

Second conditionals are used to describe what would happen in the future if something else happened first or something that would be possible or true if something else existed or was true.

Third conditionals say what would have or might have happened if something else had happened first or what would have or might have been true if something else had been true.

Implicational conditionals state that if one thing is true, then something else must also be true.

General conditionals state that if one thing happens, something else also generally happens.

- 5 **Direct speech** consists of the exact words a person says or thinks, while **indirect speech** reports what someone has said or thought. [Unit 34]

If the verb of saying, thinking, etc is in the present tense or the present perfect tense, the tense of the verb in indirect speech is the same as in direct speech.

If the verb of saying, thinking, etc is in the past tense, a verb that is in the present tense in direct speech becomes a past tense in indirect speech, a verb in the future tense becomes a future in the past, a verb in the present perfect tense becomes a past perfect tense, and a past tense either remains a simple past tense or becomes a past perfect tense.

However, if what was said in the past still applies at the time of being reported, a present tense in direct speech may remain as a present tense even after a verb of saying, etc in the past tense.

A verb in the subjunctive mood remains in the present tense even after a verb of saying, etc in the past tense.

Appendix

A Table of Irregular Verbs

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
arise	arises	arising	arose	arisen
awake	awakes	awaking	awoke; <i>in Am. Eng., also awaked</i>	awoke; <i>in Am. Eng., also awaked</i>
be	is <i>(Note also: I am; we/you/they are)</i>	being	I/he/she/it was; we/you/they were	been
bear	bore	bearing	bore	borne

borne, born

The normal past participle of ***bear*** in all meanings of the word is ***borne***:
a woman who has borne three children • *He has borne his sufferings with great dignity.* • *a mosquito-borne illness* • *This theory was borne out by our later findings.*

Born is only used when referring to giving birth; it is used in passive constructions, usually after the verb ***be***: *He was born in Singapore.* • *Although born in Singapore, he lived most of his life in Kuala Lumpur.* • *He was born of Indian parents.*

Borne may be followed by the preposition ***by***, whereas ***born*** is not followed by ***by***: *This is a study of the children borne by a randomly chosen Canadian mother who gave birth in 1945. Of the children born to her, all but one survived to adulthood.*

beat	beats	beating	beat	beaten
become	becomes	becoming	became	become
befall	befalls	befalling	befell	befallen
begin	begins	beginning	began	begun
behold	beholds	beholding	beheld	beheld
bend	bends	bending	bent	bent

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
bet	bets	betting	bet; <i>less commonly, betted</i>	bet; <i>less commonly, betted</i>

bet, betted

The normal past tense and past participle form of **bet** is **bet**: *He bet me \$10 that I couldn't climb that tree.* **Betted** is rarely used nowadays, but is still possible when what is being talked about is the general practice of gambling and making bets rather than a specific instance of making a bet: *Rich men betted heavily at cock fights in times gone by.*

bid (= offer money)	bids	bidding	bid	bid
bid (= ask someone to do something, say)	bids	bidding	bade /bad, beid/; <i>less commonly, bid</i>	bidden; <i>less commonly, bid</i>
bind	binds	binding	bound	bound
bite	bites	biting	bit	bitten
bleed	bleeds	bleeding	bled	bled
blow	blows	blowing	blew	blown
break	breaks	breaking	broke	broken
breed	breeds	breeding	bred	bred
bring	brings	bringing	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcasts	broadcasting	broadcast; <i>less commonly, broadcasted</i>	broadcast; <i>less commonly, broadcasted</i>
build	builds	building	built	built
burn	burns	burning	burned or burnt	burned or burnt

burned, burnt

In American English, **burned** is commoner than **burnt**. In British English, **burned** is commoner than **burnt** when there is no following object (*The fire burned brightly*) and **burnt** is commoner than **burned** when the verb is followed by an object (*I'm afraid I've burnt the toast.*)

In both British and American English, **burnt** is the form used as an adjective: **burnt toast**.

burst	bursts	bursting	burst	burst
buy	buys	buying	bought	bought
cast	casts	casting	cast	cast
catch	catches	catching	caught	caught
choose	chooses	choosing	chose	chosen
cling	clings	clinging	clung	clung
come	comes	coming	came	come

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
cost	costs	costing	cost; costed	cost; costed

cost, costed

When **cost** means 'to calculate the cost of something', the past tense and past participle are both **costed**: *This project was never properly costed.*

In all other senses of the verb, the past tense and past participle are both **cost**: '*Their new car must have cost a lot of money*' • 'Yes, it **cost** over \$300,000.'

creep	creeps	creeping	crept	crept
cut	cuts	cutting	cut	cut
deal	deals	dealing	dealt /delt/	dealt
dig	digs	digging	dug	dug
dive	dives	diving	dived; <i>in Am. Eng., also dove</i> <i>/douv/</i>	dived; <i>in Am. Eng., also (rarely) dove</i>
do	does /dʌz/ draws dreams	doing drawing dreaming	did drew dreamed (pronounced <i>/dri:mɪd/ in Am. Eng., /dreɪmt/ or <i>/dri:mɪd/ in Br. Eng.) or dreamt /dreɪmt/</i></i>	done /dən/ drawn dreamed or dreamt

dreamed, dreamt

Dreamed and **dreamt** are equally common in British English, but **dreamed** is the commoner form in American English.

drink	drinks	drinking	drank	drunk
drive	drives	driving	drove	driven
dwell	dwells	dwelling	dwelt; less commonly, dwelled	dwelt; less commonly, dwelled
earn	earns	earning	earned	earned

earned, earnt

Earnt is being increasingly used as the past tense and past participle of **earn**, but it is not yet accepted as correct in Standard English. You may see **earnt** in books and newspapers, but always use **earned**.

eat	eats	eating	ate /et/ or <i>/eɪt/ in Br. Eng.; in Am. Eng., only /eɪt/</i>	eaten
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Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
fall	falls	falling	fell	fallen
feed	feeds	feeding	fed	fed
feel	feels	feeling	felt	felt
fight	fights	fighting	fought	fought
find	finds	finding	found	found
fit	fits	fitting	<i>in Br. Eng., fitted; in Am. Eng., fitted or fit</i>	<i>in Br. Eng., fitted; in Am. Eng., fitted or fit</i>
flee	flees	fleeing	fled	fled
fling	flings	flinging	flung	flung
fly	flies	flying	flew	flown
forbear	forbears	forbearing	forbore	forborne
forbid	forbids	forbidding	forbade /fə'bad/ or /fə'beɪd/; forbad /fə'bad/	forbidden
forecast	forecasts	forecasting	forecast; less commonly, forecasted	forecast; less commonly, forecasted
forego see forgo				
foresee	foresees	foreseeing	foresaw	foreseen
foretell	foretells	foretelling	foretold	foretold
forget	forgets	forgetting	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgives	forgiving	forgave	forgiven
forgo	forges	forgoing	forwent	forgone /fə'gɒn/
forsake	forsakes	forsaking	forsook	forsaken
freeze	freezes	freezing	froze	frozen
get	gets	getting	got	got; also in Am. Eng., gotten

got, gotten

The past participle **gotten** is archaic in British English. Its only common use nowadays is in the phrase **ill-gotten gains** (= something acquired by illegal or immoral means).

In American English, **gotten** is used as the past participle of **get** when the verb has the meaning 'acquire, obtain', 'become' or 'move': *Palestinians who staged a general strike protesting the policies of Israel's hard-line government appear to have gotten results.* ▪ *Things might have gotten interesting if he had decided to argue with the man.* ▪ *He had been coughing since he had gotten out of bed.* **Got**, on the other hand, is used when **get** means 'have': *The proposal has got the support of the local Congressman.* This distinction between **got** and **gotten** can be clearly seen in the following sentences: *I've gotten some money* (= I've obtained some money) and *I've got some money* (= I have some money). Note also the difference in American English between **He has got to go** (= he must go) and **He has gotten to go** (= he has been allowed to go).

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
give	gives	giving	gave	given
go	goes	going	went	gone /gɒn/
grind	grinds	grinding	ground	ground
grow	grows	growing	grew	grown
hang	hangs	hanging	hung; hanged	hung; hanged

hung, hanged

In most sense of the verb ***hang***, the past tense and past participle form is ***hung***: *She hung her coat on the hook.*

When the verb refers to capital punishment, suicide, etc, the correct past tense and past participle form is ***hanged***: *After being bullied for years, the poor girl went out into the woods and hanged herself.* However, ***hung*** is now being increasingly used in this latter sense, and is now acceptable in informal English, though still best avoided in more formal contexts.

have	has <i>(Note also: I/we/you/ they have)</i>	having	had	had
hear	hears	hearing	heard	heard
hide	hides	hiding	hid	hidden
hit	hits	hitting	hit	hit
hold	holds	holding	held	held
hurt	hurts	hurting	hurt	hurt
keep	keeps	keeping	kept	kept
kneel	kneels	kneeling	knelt or kneeled	knelt or kneeled

kneeled, knelt

In British English, the form used is usually ***knelt***. In American English, both forms are used, but ***knelt*** is perhaps slightly more common than ***kneeled***.

knit knits knitting knitted or knit knitted or knit

knitted, knit

Knitted is the correct past tense and past participle to use when the verb is used in the sense of making clothes, etc with knitting needles and wool: *I've knitted you a pair of socks.*

Knit is used in figurative senses: *Adversity knit the family together.* • *a close-knit community.*

Both forms are correct in the phrase ***to knit one's brows*** (= to frown): *She knit/knitted her brows as she read what he had written.*

know knows knowing knew known

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
lay	lays	laying	laid	laid
<i>lay, lie</i>				
See the note at <i>lie</i> .				
lead	leads	leading	led	led
lean	leans	leaning	leaned or leant /lent/ in Br. Eng.; leaned in Am. Eng.	leaned or leant in Br. Eng.; leaned in Am. Eng.
leap	leaps	leaping	leaped or leapt in Br. and Am. Eng.; also leapt in Am. Eng.	leaped or leapt in Br. and Am. Eng.; also leapt in in Am. Eng.
<i>leaped, leapt</i>				
<i>Leaped</i> is pronounced /lept/ or /li:pɪt/ in British English, /li:pɪt/ in American English. <i>Leapt</i> is pronounced /lept/ in British English, /li:pɪt/ or /lept/ in American English.				
learn	learns	learning	learned /lɜːnd/ or /lɜːnt/, or learnt in Br. Eng.; in Am. Eng., learned /lɜːnd/ or /lɜːnt/	learned or learnt in Br. Eng.; learned in Am. Eng.
leave	leaves	leaving	left	left
lend	lends	lending	lent	lent
let	lets	letting	let	let
lie	lies	lying	lay	lain
<i>lie, lay</i>				
In the sense 'to be in a flat or level position', the verb <i>lie</i> has <i>lay</i> and <i>lain</i> as its past tense and past participle: <i>The boys lay flat on the ground.</i> • <i>The body must have lain undiscovered for months.</i>				
The other verb <i>lie</i> (= to tell lies) is regular: <i>You have lied to me over and over again.</i>				
Do not confuse the past tenses and past participles of <i>lay</i> and <i>lie</i> : <i>lay, laid, laid; lie, lay, lain.</i>				
light	lights	lighting	lit or lighted	lit or lighted

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
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lighted, lit

Lit is more common than ***lighted*** except when the past participle is being used as an adjective: *He lit a candle.* • *No-one has lit the candles yet.*

As an adjective, ***lighted*** is the usual form, except when the adjective is preceded by an adverb: *a lighted match* • *a well-lit room.*

lose	loses	losing	lost	lost
make	makes	making	made	made
mean	means	meaning	meant /ment/	meant
meet	meets	meeting	met	met
mislay	mislays	mislaying	mislaid	mislaid
mistake	mistakes	mistaking	mistook	mistaken
mow	mows	mowing	mowed	mowed or mown

mowed, mown

Mowed is preferred as the past participle in both British and American English: *I've cut the hedge but I haven't mowed the lawn yet.*

As an adjective, the form to use in British English is ***mown***: *new-mown hay*. In American English, both ***mowed*** and ***mown*** function as adjectives: *new-mowed/new-mown hay*.

overdo	overdoes	overdoing	overdid	overdone
override	overrides	overriding	overrode	overridden
overrun	overruns	overrunning	overran	overrun
oversee	oversees	overseeing	oversaw	overseen
overshoot	overshoots	overshooting	overshot	overshot
overtake	overtakes	overtaking	overtook	overtaken
partake	partakes	partaking	partook	partaken
pay	pays	paying	paid	pald
plead	pleads	pleading	pleaded in Br. Eng.; pleaded, pled or plead /pled/ in Am. Eng.	pleaded in Br. Eng.; pleaded, pled or plead in Am. Eng.
prove	proves	proving	proved	proved; less commonly, proven

proved, proven

Proved is the normal form of the past participle in British English. In American English, ***proved*** and ***proven*** are equally common. ***Proven*** is pronounced /'pru:vn/ in American English, /'pru:vn/ or /'prouvn/ in British English.

Proven is the form normally used as an adjective: *a proven remedy for acne.*

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
put	puts	putting	put	put
quit	quits	quitting	quitted in Br. Eng.; quit in Am. Eng.	quitted in Br. Eng.; quit in Am. Eng.
read	reads	reading	read	read
rend	rends	rending	rent	rent
rid	rids	riddling	rid	rid
ride	rides	riding	rode	ridden
ring (= make a ringing sound)	rings	ringing	rang	rung

ring

Note that **ring** in the sense of 'to form or put a ring round something' is a regular verb: *Troops ringed the village after receiving a tip-off about the presence of terrorists.* • *the jungle-ringed city of Ocosingo* • *The Ringed Python is a beautifully coloured species of snake.*

rise	rises	rising	rose	risen
run	runs	running	ran	run
saw	saws	sawing	sawed	sawn or sawed

sawed, sawn

Sawed is the preferred past participle in American English; **sawn** is the more common of the two forms in British English.

As an adjective, the form to use is **sawn**: *hand-sawn timber*.

say	says	saying	said /sed/	said /sed/
see	sees	seeing	saw	seen
seek	seeks	seeking	sought	sought
sell	sells	selling	sold	sold
send	sends	sending	sent	sent
set	sets	setting	set	set
sew	sews	sewing	sewed	sewn or sewed

sewed, sewn

Sewed is preferred as the past participle in American English; **sewn** is perhaps the more common of the two forms in British English.

As an adjective, the form to use is **sewn**: *hand-sewn curtains*.

shake	shakes	shaking	shook	shaken
shave	shaves	shaving	shaved	shaved

shaved, shaven

The past participle of **shave** is **shaved**. The old past participle **shaven** is nowadays only used as an adjective: *clean-shaven* (= not having a beard or moustache).

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
shear	shears	shearing	sheared	sheared or shorn

sheared, shorn

The past participle is usually ***sheared*** in American English, ***shorn*** in British English, but both forms are found in both dialects.

Shorn is frequently used when referring to cutting off hair or wool: *The sheep are usually shorn out in the fields using hand shears.* Also in figurative senses: *The palaces have been shorn of all their glory, and are in a state of great neglect.*

Only ***sheared*** can be used when the verb has the sense of cutting or breaking metal: *A piece of the propeller had sheared off.*

shed	sheds	shedding	shed	shed
shine	shines	shining	shone; shined	shone; shined

shone, shined

Shined is only used in the sense of polishing something until it shines: *He shined his shoes until they shone.*

shoe	shoes	shoeing	shoed or shod	shoed or shod
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shod, shoed

Both forms are in theory correct as the past tense and past participle of ***shoe***, but ***shoed*** is the usual form when referring to the shoeing of horses (and this is the most frequent sense of the verb ***shoe***): *After he had shoed the horses, he stopped for lunch.* ***Shod*** is therefore not very common as a verb.

Shod is, however, the usual form for the adjective: *The soldiers were shod in black leather boots.* • *We were all well shod for our hike over the hills.*

shoot	shoots	shooting	shot	shot
show	shows	showing	showed	shown or showed

shown, showed

As a past participle, either form is possible, but in the passive, use ***shown***: *I need to be shown what to do before I can do it.*

shrink	shrinks	shrinking	shrank	shrunk
shut	shuts	shutting	shut	shut
sing	sings	singing	sang	sung
sink	sinks	sinking	sank	sunk
sit	sits	sitting	sat	sat
slay	slays	slaying	slew	slain

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
slew, slayed				
	The usual past tense form in all senses of the word is slew . However, in the specific colloquial sense of amusing someone, the past tense may be slayed : <i>His jokes really slayed me!</i>			
sleep	sleeps	sleeping	slept	slept
slide	slides	sliding	slid	slid
sling	slings	slinging	slung	slung
slink	slinks	slinking	slunk	slunk
slit	slits	slitting	slit	slit
smell	smells	smelling	smelt or smelled	smelt or smelled

smite	smites	smiting	smote	smitten
sow	sows	sowing	sowed	sowed or, less commonly, sown
speak	speaks	speaking	spoke	spoken
speed	speeds	speeding	sped or speeded	sped or speeded

spell	spells	spelling	spelt or spelled	spelt or spelled
spelt, spelled				
	Spelt is the commoner form in British English, spelled in American English.			

spend	spends	spending	spent	spent
spill	spills	spilling	spilt or spilled	spilt or spilled
spilt, spilled				

	Spilt is the commoner form in British English, spilled in American English.			
	As an adjective, the form spilt is used in British English: <i>There's no use crying over spilt milk.</i> Both spilled and spilt are used as adjectival forms in American English.			

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
spin	spins	spinning	spun	spun
spit (= expel saliva from the mouth)	spits	spitting	spat; <i>in Am. Eng., also spit</i>	spat; <i>in Am. Eng., also spit</i>

spit, spitted

Note that the verb **spit** meaning 'to put something onto a spit' is a regular verb: *The chickens had been spitted ready for roasting.*

split	splits	splitting	split	split
spoil	spoils	spoiling	spoilt or spoiled	spoilt or spoiled

spoilt, spoiled

Spoilt is the normal past tense and past participle of this verb in British English, **spoiled** in American English.

As an adjective, **spoilt** is standard in British English, and quite common in American English: *a spoilt child.*

spread	spreads	spreading	spread	spread
spring	springs	springing	sprang	sprung
stand	stands	standing	stood	stood
steal	steals	stealing	stole	stolen
stick	sticks	sticking	stuck	stuck
sting	stings	stinging	stung	stung
stink	stinks	stinking	stank or stunk	stunk
stride	strides	striding	strode	stridden
strike	strikes	striking	struck	struck

stricken

The old past participle **stricken** is nowadays only used as an adjective or in figurative senses: *He was stricken with remorse for what he had done.* • *She was grief-stricken when her husband died.*

string	strings	stringing	strung	strung
strive	strives	striving	stroved or strived	striven or strived
swear	swears	swearing	swore	sworn
sweat	sweats	sweating	sweated; <i>in Am. Eng., also sweat</i>	sweated; <i>in Am. Eng., also sweat</i>
sweep	sweeps	sweeping	swept	swept
swell	swells	swelling	swelled	swelled or swollen

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
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swelled, swollen

Swelled and **swollen** are both used as the past participle of **swell**. *The crowd had swelled/swollen to over 30,000.* **Swollen** is, however, the form normally used in passive constructions: *The river was swollen by the recent heavy rain.*

Swollen is also the form used as an adjective: *a swollen river*. Note, however, that while in British English it is normal to say that a conceited person *has a swollen head* or *is swollen-headed*, in American English you say that a conceited person *has a swelled head* or *is swellheaded*.

swim	swims	swimming	swam	swum
swing	swings	swinging	swung	swung
take	takes	taking	took	taken
teach	teaches	teaching	taught	taught
tear	tears	tearing	tore	torn
tell	tells	telling	told	told
think	thinks	thinking	thought	thought
thrive	thrives	thriving	thrived or, <i>less</i> <i>commonly,</i> throve	thrived or, <i>much less</i> <i>commonly,</i> thriven
throw	throws	throwing	threw	thrown
thrust	thrusts	thrusting	thrust	thrust
tread	treads	treading	trod	trodden or trod
undergo	undergoes	undergoing	underwent	undergone
underlie	underlies	underlying	underlay	underlain
understand	understands	understanding	understood	understood
undertake	undertakes	undertaking	undertook	undertaken
undo	undoes	undoing	undid	undone
uphold	upholds	upholding	upheld	upheld
upset	upsets	upsetting	upset	upset
wake	wakes	waking	woke; <i>in Am. Eng., also</i> waked	woken; <i>in Am. Eng., also</i> waked
waylay	waylays	waylaying	waylaid	waylaid
wear	wears	wearing	wore	worn
weave (= make cloth, etc)	weaves	weaving	wove	woven

weaved

A different verb **weave**, meaning 'to move in a winding course', has **weaved** as its past tense and past participle: *She weaved her way through the crowd.*

Base Form (or Infinitive)	3rd Person Singular, Present Tense	Present Participle	Past Tense	Past Participle
wed	weds	wedding	wedded or, less commonly, wed	wedded or, less commonly, wed
weep wet	weeps wets	weeping wetting	wept wet or, less commonly, wetted	wept wet or, less commonly, wetted

wet, wetted

Wet is the normal past tense and past participle, except in the passive, when **wetted** is more often used: *The cloth needs to be wetted before the dye is added.*

win	wins	winning	won	won
wind <i>/waɪnd/</i>	winds	winding	wound	wound
withdraw	withdraws	withdrawning	withdrew	withdrawn
withhold	withholds	withholding	withheld	withheld
withstand	withstands	withstanding	withstood	withstood
wring	wring	wringing	wrung	wrong
write	writes	writing	wrote	written

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Answers

Chapter 1

Unit 1

A

- 1. parked
- 3. ran, opened
- 5. needs
- 7. hope, comes
- 9. believe, destroyed
- 11. laughed, walked
- 13. Go, fetch
- 15. returned, needed
- 2. hate
- 4. beat
- 6. washed, went
- 8. thanked
- 10. paid
- 12. asked, wanted
- 14. saw, knew

B

subject *the taxi*, verb *left*; (subject *the taxi*), verb *arrived*. subject *we*, verb *were*; subject *ten minutes*, verb *is*.

subject *the taxi company*, verb *was*; subject *they*, verb *said*; subject *the journey*, verb *took*.

subject *the journey*, verb *cost*; subject *I*, verb *searched*;

subject *I*, verb *wanted*, verb *give*; subject *he*, verb *got*; (subject *he*), verb *drove*.

subject *he*, verb *was*.

subject *he*, verb *had*.

subject *the plane*, verb *reached*; subject *our bus*, verb *was*; subject *we*, verb *were*.

subject *the house*, verb *is*; subject *I*, verb *realize*; subject *five weeks*, verb *is*.

subject *the garden*, verb *looks*; subject *I*, verb *expected*.

subject *it*, verb *is*; (subject *it*), verb *needs*.

C

- 1. verb *gets*, complement *more expensive*.
- 3. verb *be*, complement *a chartered account*; verb *be*, complement *a lion-tamer*.
- 4. verb *looks*, complement *badly damaged*.
- 6. verb *make*, complement *a good breakfast*.
- 7. verb *sounds*, complement *nice*.
- 8. verb *look*, complement *jolly good*.
- 10. verb *felt*, complement *beautifully soft and smooth*.

Unit 2

A

- 1. *could* (auxiliary verb), *hear* (main verb).
- 2. *have* (auxiliary verb), *liked* (main verb).
- 3. *will* (auxiliary verb), *go* (main verb).
- 4. *have* (auxiliary verb), *been* (auxiliary verb), *doing* (main verb).
- 5. *can* (auxiliary verb), *provide* (main verb).
- 6. *must* (auxiliary verb), *leave* (main verb).
- 7. *had* (auxiliary verb), *returned* (main verb); *could* (auxiliary verb), *use* (main verb).
- 8. *may* (auxiliary verb), *bless* (main verb).
- 9. *were* (auxiliary verb), *cheering* (main verb), *waving* (main verb).
- 10. *can* (auxiliary verb), *remember* (main verb).

11. *do* (auxiliary verb), *know* (main verb); *are* (auxiliary verb), *coming* (main verb).

12. *must* (auxiliary verb), *tell* (main verb); *has* (auxiliary verb), *been* (auxiliary verb), *happening* (main verb).

B

They had (auxiliary verb) *been* (auxiliary verb) *searching* for him for hours. *He was* (auxiliary verb) *lying* under a tree when they found him, and *was* (main verb) *fast asleep*, snoring loudly. *He might just have* (auxiliary verb) *been* (main verb) *very tired*, but he *might have* (auxiliary verb) *been* (auxiliary verb) *drinking*. *He had* (auxiliary verb) certainly bought a bottle of whisky earlier in the day. *He had* (auxiliary verb) wanted to buy two bottles but *had* (auxiliary verb) only *had* (main verb) enough money for one. His friends *had* (auxiliary verb) often told him he shouldn't drink, but he *did* (auxiliary verb) *listen* to them. He just *did* (main verb) as he pleased. Some day the alcohol would kill him, but he *did* (auxiliary verb) *never* seem to care. *He was* (main verb) beyond hope, some people said. Certainly it seemed that he *had* (auxiliary verb) lost all hope and *had* (main verb) nothing to live for.

Unit 3

A

- 1. has arrived
- 2. is making
- 3. must meet
- 4. had been accused
- 5. do believe
- 6. can be
- 7. may have understood
- 8. could have been
- 9. have been speaking
- 10. was thinking, would be, could stay
- 11. had been raining
- 12. Could have

B

- 1. No, I did not apologize to them.
- 2. Yes, I will always remember what you told me.
- 3. No, they haven't seen us.
- 4. Yes, I have often played billiards.
- 5. Yes, I am just coming.
- 6. Yes, you must always wait at the gate for me.
- 7. Oh, they will almost certainly come back again.
- 8. Yes, I can just see them now.
- 9. Yes, we are definitely going away on holiday this year.
- 10. Yes, you would probably be right in thinking they lost all their money.
- 11. Yes, there could well be another reason for her disappearance.
- 12. No, I don't like lychees at all.
- 13. No, we haven't been waiting very long.
- 14. No, they couldn't possibly have known where to look.

Unit 4

A

- 1. *need* (verb), *some more nails* (dir. obj.)
- 2. *give* (verb), *me* (ind. obj.), *any more nails* (dir. obj.)

3. **tell** (verb), **you** (ind. obj.), **what I want** (dir. obj.); **what** (dir. obj.), **want** (verb)
4. **makes** (verb), **me** (dir. obj.), **very angry** (complement)
5. **what more** (dir. obj.), **need** (verb)
6. **say** (verb), **that we should give him a medal** (dir. obj.); **give** (verb), **him** (ind. obj.), **a medal** (dir. obj.)
7. **take** (verb), **her** (ind. obj.), **a box of chocolates** (dir. obj.)
8. **allow** (verb), **yourself** (ind. obj.), **enough time to check your answers** (dir. obj.); **check** (verb), **your answers** (dir. obj.)
9. **lend** (verb), **you** (ind. obj.), **the book** (dir. obj.); **finished** (verb), **it** (dir. obj.)
10. **call** (verb), **yourself** (dir. obj.), **a doctor** (complement); **know** (verb), **anything about medicine** (dir. obj.)
11. **made** (verb), **himself** (ind. obj.), **a cup of tea** (dir. obj.)
12. **made** (verb), **himself** (dir. obj.), **useful** (complement)

B

I **hope** (transitive) yesterday **was** (linking) a good day for you, even though you were **working** (intransitive) on your birthday. It would have **been** (linking) nice if you could have **had** (transitive) a holiday. I **suppose** (transitive) you **got** (linking) wet on your way to and from the office, though I was **hoping** (transitive) the rain might have **stopped** (intransitive) at the times when you would be **standing** (intransitive) at the bus-stop.

I **thought** (transitive) the weather was **getting** (linking) better these days and that spring was **coming** (intransitive), but after the rain yesterday we even **had** (transitive) some snow this morning. Some of the showers were (linking) quite heavy.

Billy Reid the joiner **came** (intransitive) with the new window for the garden hut this afternoon. Luckily the snow had **stopped** (intransitive) by then, though it **was** (linking) still very cold. I **gave** (transitive) him a cup of tea to **keep** (transitive) him warm while he was **working** (intransitive). The job didn't **seem** (linking) very difficult — he **finished** (transitive) it in less than ten minutes. He'll **come** (intransitive) again when the weather is (linking) not so windy and **cover** (transitive) the bare bit on the hut roof with roofing felt.

I **forgot** (transitive) to **tell** (transitive) you when we **spoke** (intransitive) last Sunday on the phone that your Uncle Tony **fell** (intransitive) and **broke** (transitive) his leg on Saturday. Of course, they had to **call** (transitive) an ambulance for him. He **had** (transitive) an operation on Sunday morning. He is **getting** (linking) better, though, and can already **walk** (intransitive) with the help of a nurse. I **think** (transitive) that in spite of the pain he is really **enjoying** (transitive) his stay in hospital. When I **visited** (transitive) him last night, he **gave** (transitive) one of the nurses an enormous smile as she **passed** (transitive) his bed. I **think** (transitive) he **likes** (transitive) **getting** (transitive) all the attention.

I'll **phone** (intransitive) when I **have** (transitive) more news.

C

1. I've spent all evening writing letters.
2. She parked the car OR her car outside the library.
3. He nodded his head in agreement.
4. They sang a happy song as they marched along.
5. My pen has leaked ink all over my jacket.
6. I don't understand the meaning of this sentence.
7. Don't drink lemonade OR the lemonade OR your lemonade so quickly.
8. She is saving her pocket money to buy a new guitar.
9. John left the meeting early.
10. We had to leave the city because the rebels were attacking. OR We had to leave because the rebels were attacking the city.

Unit 5

A

- | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|
| 1. for | 2. by | 3. down |
| 4. up | 5. for | 6. back |
| 7. of | 8. for | 9. for |
| 10. at | 11. In | 12. after |
| 13. for | 14. into | 15. on |

B

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. investigating | 2. died | 3. scolded |
| 4. discuss | 5. left | 6. happen |
| 7. resembles | 8. deceived | 9. improve |
| 10. start | 11. appear | 12. found |

C

I still remember when I first ran into **him**. He was down at the harbour on his boat. He was bailing **it** out. I could see that he was using an old jug. I looked at **it** in amazement, and I told Tim he had better look after **it**. 'Don't you know that it's a valuable antique?' I said. 'The handle might come off, and if you break **it** off, the jug won't be worth much. I own an antique shop. That jug interests me. If you care about **it** and about how much it might be worth to you, bring it to the shop some day soon.'

Tim brought **it** round the very next day. 'OK. Hand **it** over,' I said.

'Is this a trick?' he said. 'If it is, I won't fall for **it**.'

'Look. This is a valuable jug,' I told him. 'Let me try to sell it for you. That is my suggestion. If you fall in with **it**, you will be a rich man, even though you will not have the jug any longer. But if you hang on to **it**, you may break it and then you will have neither the jug nor the money. You will have to do without **them both**.'

Tim liked my proposal. In fact, he jumped at **it**. 'I can do without that jug,' he said. 'I can certainly do without **it**. I thought it was just a cheap old jug. My grandparents handed **it** down to me. I can't get over my luck,' he said. 'I just can't get over **it**.'

I have got on very well with **him** ever since then.

Unit 6

The last time I **met** (finite verb) Sally **was** (finite verb) when I **was** (finite verb) **living** (non-finite verb) **In Paris**. She **was** (finite verb) **outside a café**, **sitting** (non-finite verb) **in the sunshine** and **watching** (non-finite verb) **the people who were** (finite verb) **walking** (non-finite verb) **past**. At the same time, she **seemed** (finite verb) **to be** (non-finite verb) **sketching** (non-finite verb) **the old church across the street** from where she **was** (finite verb) **sitting** (non-finite verb).

I **watched** (finite verb) **her** for a little while, not wanting (non-finite verb) **to disturb** (non-finite verb) **her** while she **was** (finite verb) **busy drawing** (non-finite verb). A waiter **came** (finite verb) out of the **café carrying** (non-finite verb) a tray with a glass of red wine on it. Just as he **passed** (finite verb) Sally's table, he **tripped** (finite verb) on her handbag, which she **had** (finite verb) **left** (non-finite verb) on the ground beside her chair, and **tipped** (finite verb) the wine all over her sketch pad. I **waited** (finite verb) **to see** (non-finite verb) what **would** (finite verb) **happen** (non-finite verb). I **thought** (finite verb) Sally **would** (finite verb) **be** (non-finite verb) furious. But she just **laughed** (finite verb), and **held** (finite verb) up her pad of paper while the wine **dripped** (finite verb) off it.

Then she **caught** (finite verb) sight of me, and **waved** (finite verb) to me to come (non-finite verb) over and join (non-finite verb) her. She **showed** (finite verb) me her drawing and **said** (finite verb), 'Do (finite verb) n't you think (non-finite verb) the red wine adds (finite verb) something to this picture? Red trees, red sky, red church, red people — it's (finite verb) perfect in a strange way, I would (finite verb) never have (non-finite verb) thought (non-finite verb) of it myself.'

Chapter 2

Unit 7

A

A serious problem **has** occurred at the school. The principal **is** looking very worried and so **are** some of the teachers. The maths exam and physics exam **are** being held tomorrow, but one of the teachers **has** found out that some exam papers **have** gone missing from the cupboard where they **were** being stored. No-one **knows** whether they **have** been lost or stolen, but if the papers **are** not found, then the exam **will** have to be cancelled.

A thorough search of the classrooms **is** carried out, but no papers **are** found. The question is then asked, 'Who **has** got into the cupboard where the papers **were** being kept?' Both the room and the cupboard **were** locked and only one of the teachers **has** the keys. No student **could** have got in, and no-one else **would** have wanted to.

'The staff and I **are** completely baffled,' says the principal. 'But I **have** no choice. Since the papers **are** missing, the exams **have** to be cancelled.'

B

My family and I **are** off on holiday next week. We **are** going to the north of France again. My son and daughter **like** France, and we always **go** back to the same village every year. The people who **live** in the village **seem** to like us too.

My wife and I **have** been very fond of France since we **were** students at university many years ago and **spent** a year studying in Paris. I **speak** French very well, and so **does** my wife, and she and I **have** many French friends. Our children also **speak** the language now since they **have** had many holidays in France with us, and the two of them also now **have** good friends in the village.

Close to the village, there **is** an old ruined castle which stands at the top of a wooded hill. It **was** built by some knights in the 13th century. The villagers **say** that there **are** ghosts in it, but we **don't** believe it. This year we **are** planning to spend a night in the castle to see what **happens**. Perhaps we **will** see a ghost, perhaps not.

Unit 8

A

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| 1. knows | 2. is | 3. believe | 4. is |
| 5. happen | 6. is | 7. believes | 8. has |
| 9. were | 10. are | 11. is | 12. was |
| 13. was | 14. go | 15. were | 16. were |

B

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. possesses | 2. is |
| 3. rise, listen | 4. falls |
| 5. loses | 6. stresses, emphasize |
| 7. is | 8. are |
| 9. is | 10. consists |

Unit 9

A

1. **was smiling** — past continuous tense.
2. **was** — simple past tense.
3. **failed** — simple past tense.
4. **have been** — present perfect tense.
5. **will discuss** — future tense.
6. **teaches** — simple present tense.
7. **had seen** — past perfect OR pluperfect tense.
8. **have been having** — present perfect continuous tense.
9. **Is** — simple present tense.
10. **is snowing** — present continuous tense.
11. **had hoped** — past perfect OR pluperfect tense.
12. **had thought** — past perfect OR pluperfect tense; **would have been hoping** — perfect conditional continuous tense.
13. **did realize** — simple past tense; **would be missing** — future continuous in the past tense; **did come** — simple past tense.
14. **has happened** — present perfect tense.
15. **will be hearing** — future continuous tense.

B

1. he will take
2. he walked
3. he is going
4. he has frightened; he has been frightening
5. he had followed
6. he has had
7. he will be talking
8. he laughs
9. he turned; he had turned; he had been turning
10. he was breaking
11. he would be needing
12. he will be brushing
13. he will read; he will be reading; he will have been reading
14. he would have packed

Unit 10

A

*jump, jumps, jumped, jumping, jumped
 fix, fixes, fixed, fixing, fixed
 fry, fries, fried, frying, fried
 obey, obeys, obeyed, obeying, obeyed
 coach, coaches, coached, coaching, coached
 hate, hates, hated, hating, hated
 permit, permits, permitted, permitting, permitted
 sweat, sweats, sweated, sweating, sweated (Am. Eng. past tense and past participle sweat)
 tiptoe, tiptoes, tiptoed, tiptoeing, tiptoed
 shoo, shoos, shooed, shooting, shooed
 lie, lies, lied, lying, lied
 lay, lays, laid, laying, laid
 guarantee, guarantees, guaranteed, guaranteeing, guaranteed
 singe, sings, singed, singeing, singed
 frolic, frolics, frolicked, frolicking, frolicked
 roam, roams, roamed, roaming, roamed
 ram, rams, rammed, ramming, rammed
 kidnap, kidnaps, kidnapped, kidnapping, kidnapped (Am. Eng. also kidnaped, kidnapping)
 parallel, parallels, paralleled, paralleling, paralleled
 ski, skis, skied or ski'd, skiing, skied or ski'd*

B

Letting Helen get away with **making** so many spelling errors when she was young **turned** out to be a serious mistake. Her parents **admitted** as much. They **agreed** that they ought to have **corrected** her written work more often and insisted that she **spelt** all her words correctly. But Helen had been a rather **spoilt** child, and she had usually been **allowed** to do as she pleased.

By the time she had grown up, her bad spelling had become a serious problem for her. She was **employed** as a secretary, and her boss frequently **pencilled** (penciled is correct in American English) angry comments on work she had **typed** for him. He had already **said** to her more than once that if her spelling did not improve, she would have to look for a new job.

This made Helen very sad, because she **enjoyed** her job and didn't want to leave. But there was no point in **panicking**. She knew she would have to do something about her spelling, so she **enrolled** in a night class.

Helen **studied** hard for weeks at the class, and her efforts **paid** dividends. She was soon able to spell well and with confidence.

Unit 11

A

*go, goes, went, going, gone
 tell, tells, told, telling, told
 lend, lends, lent, lending, lent
 give, gives, gave, giving, given
 stand, stands, stood, standing, stood
 swing, swings, swung, swinging, swung
 sing, sings, sang, singing, sung
 hit, hits, hit, hitting, hit
 flee, flees, fled, fleeing, fled
 fight, fights, fought, fighting, fought
 rise, rises, rose, rising, risen
 take, takes, took, taking, taken
 speak, speaks, spoke, speaking, spoken
 read, reads, read, reading, read
 shoot, shoots, shot, shooting, shot
 fall, falls, fell, falling, fallen
 run, runs, ran, running, run
 draw, draws, drew, drawing, drawn
 beat, beats, beat, beating, beaten
 burst, bursts, burst, bursting, burst*

B

There was once a lonely man who **thought** that life would be more fun if he **had** a pet. So he **drove** to the nearest pet shop and **told** the owner that he **hankered** after something unusual. After some discussion, he finally **bought** a centipede, which **came** in a little white box with a door at the front, to use for its house.

The man **took** the centipede back home and **found** a good place to keep the box. He **put** it on a shelf in his living-room beside some plants.

Later that day, the man **made** up his mind to take his new pet to his favourite bar for a drink. He **tapped** on the centipede's door.

'Would you like to go for a drink?' he **said**.

'Certainly,' **replied** the centipede. 'I'll just get ready.'

The man **waited**. Five minutes **went** by, then ten minutes, then fifteen minutes. The man **wondered** if the centipede still **intended** to go to the bar with him. He **rapped** on the door again. Nothing **happened**. He **let** another ten minutes go by, then **clapped** his hands loudly.

'Well, are you going with me or aren't you?', **shouted** the man.

'Of course I am,' **answered** the centipede, 'but I'm still putting on my shoes!'

Unit 12**A**

1. Let's not stop here.
2. Don't stop what you are doing.
3. Do not listen to what she is telling you.
4. Don't let's eat our sandwiches here.
5. Do not leave your shoes in the corridor.
6. Don't come back next week.
7. Let's never go to Spain again.
8. Never do that again.
9. Don't do that again.
10. Do not watch your fingers while you're typing.

B

1. don't
2. let's
3. not
4. don't
5. not, Let's
6. Do
7. Let's
8. let
9. do
10. not

Unit 13**A**

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1. be | 2. drink | 3. say | 4. discuss |
| 5. give | 6. were | 7. Come | 8. weren't |
| 9. Suffice | 10. were | 11. leave | 12. be |

B

1. many changes be made to the company's security procedures.
2. the new procedures be brought in as soon as possible.
3. we come to some agreement soon.
4. the war be brought to an end as soon as possible.
5. drivers wear seat-belts.
6. we paint the doors before the walls.
7. the doors be painted before the walls.
8. they meet us here.
9. we invite her to the funeral.
10. the work be completed by next week.

C

1. It is important for the new procedures to be brought in right away.
2. Why have my orders for the machinery to be switched off not been carried out?
3. It is essential for us to be seen to be co-operating.
4. It would be better for him to come here than for us to go there.
5. My preference would be for you to meet me at the station.
6. Her instructions were for her money to be left to charity.
7. It might be preferable for you to leave before then.
8. It is just not appropriate for young children to attend a funeral.

2. 'I'll be back,' said Arnie.
3. We'd enough food to last us for a week or more.
4. They'll not OR They won't tell me what they are thinking.
5. The president's not OR The president isn't responsible for the increase in crime.
6. I can't tell you how sorry I am.
7. We've been through a lot together.
8. You've not OR You haven't seen the last of me!
9. She'd not OR She hadn't forgotten her promise.
10. There'll not OR There won't be enough time tomorrow for us to go swimming.
11. If you've not OR you haven't read the paper today, you'll not OR you won't know the news.
12. I've not OR I haven't had an opportunity to thank you for what you did.

B

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Isn't | 2. won't | 3. cannot |
| 4. doesn't | 5. I'm not | 6. there'll not |
| 7. wouldn't | 8. I've not | 9. they'd not |
| 10. hadn't | 11. I've not | 12. hasn't |

Unit 15**A**

1. Are we staying here tonight?
2. Can James come with us if he wants to?
3. Have the workmen been here all day?
4. Should we have locked the garage door when we left?
5. Would they have had enough time to get out when the fire started?
6. Were they perhaps pretending to be aliens from outer space?
7. Might they have been men from Mars?
8. Do they come here quite often?
9. Did his parents live in that house over there?
10. Does he intend to sell his field to a builder for housing?
11. Did his wife help them move into their new house?
12. Did they get out safely when the fire started?
13. Do the girls enjoy gardening?
14. Did she always enjoy gardening?

B

1. Who was walking along the street?
2. Where was the man walking?
3. When will she be here?
4. How will she be coming?
5. Who was the shopkeeper talking to? OR Who was talking to the detective?
6. Which one would she prefer?
7. What reason could she have for leaving so suddenly?
8. What was he drawing? OR What was he drawing a picture of?
9. Why did she leave like that?
10. Who had given the money to the girl at the cash desk? OR Who had he given the money to?

Chapter 3**Unit 14****A**

1. They'll talk to me about their problems.

C

1. O **did you come** by the water-side?
Did you pull the rose or the lily?
Or did you come by the meadow green,
And **did you see** my sweet Willie?
2. Why **do you weep** by the tide, lady?
Why do you weep by the tide?
I'll wed you to my youngest son
And you shall be his bride.
3. **Did you hear** the noise of battle loud,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
4. You stars, that measure life to man,
Why do your motions seem quicker?
5. Why, as we reach the Waterfall of Death
Do we feel its pull more rapid?
6. O where **do you live**, my pretty lass?
And tell me what they call you.
7. And as she gave to me a kiss,
She said, 'Dear heart, how **do you like** this?'
8. And if she be not kind to me,
What **do I care** how kind she be?

Unit 16**A**

1. We haven't been here before.
2. I didn't know what to do.
3. You mustn't listen to what she says to you.
4. We weren't sitting next to her in the theatre.
5. Was she not sitting next to us in the theatre?
6. Weren't they sitting next to us in the theatre?
7. Could we not borrow some money from your father?
8. I wouldn't have known what to do.
9. She doesn't need to be reminded how lucky she is.
10. We might not want her to be there with us.
11. Should they not have gone home?
12. They won't be getting married very soon.
13. She doesn't want to help them.
14. Does it not matter where he put the spade?
15. Doesn't it matter where he put the spade?

B

1. Have you got anything that removes greasy stains from tablecloths?
3. He hasn't got a snowball's chance in an oven of winning the art prize.
4. She has got a bit of a cold at the moment.
6. Have you got snow at the moment?
7. If the union hasn't got a new contract by Friday, we're going on strike.
8. I believe she has got friends in high places.
9. Have you got any idea how much that would cost?
10. I can't talk to you now. I have got a meeting with the boss in ten minutes.

Unit 17**A**

1. You don't like him very much, do you?
2. We are leaving tomorrow, aren't we?
3. She had planned this from the very beginning, hadn't she?
4. She planned this from the very beginning, didn't she?
5. I should have checked the route before I started, shouldn't I?
6. There must be some explanation for these strange phenomena, mustn't there?
7. They had a bit of an argument this morning, didn't they?
8. We can be at the seaside in less than an hour, can't we?
9. Jack is teaching the boys to play baseball, isn't he?
10. Jack teaches French, doesn't he?
11. The little girl was wearing a red velvet dress, wasn't she?
12. She wore a red velvet dress, didn't she?

B

'You could be mistaken, couldn't you?' she said to her friend. 'You could be quite wrong. You could keep on and on searching for proof of John's guilt, but if in fact he isn't guilty of any wrongdoing, you would be wasting your time, wouldn't you? What you need to do is look again at all the evidence you have, and consider who might have the most to gain from what has happened here. It might well be John, but it might be someone else entirely, mightn't it?'

'Okay,' he replied. 'Let's begin by checking through all the computer files for the past month, shall we? That wouldn't be a waste of time, would it? If someone has been tampering with the data, it should be easy to spot. And after all, there are only a few people who have access to those files, aren't there? John is certainly one of them, but there's Jim as well, isn't there, and also Tracy and Ellis. If the files have been tampered with, it must surely have been by one of them, mustn't it? And none of them can be ruled out, can they?'

'But again,' she said, 'the question is, who has anything to gain from it? Perhaps we need to look not at our own staff but at our rivals. If we were to go bankrupt, who would get our business?'

'That isn't hard to work out, is it?' he said. 'Brown Brothers would pick up all the business round here if we ceased trading, wouldn't they?'

'And we know who has a connection with Brown Brothers, don't we?'

'An easy one again,' he replied. 'Tracy's cousin Bill works for Brown Brothers, doesn't she?'

'Well then,' she said in triumph, 'we should be considering Tracy's possible role in this, shouldn't we?'

Unit 18**A**

I did go into town shopping this morning. And when I was in town, I did see Elvis Presley. I do know it was him. I am absolutely sure it was. He did look at me and smile, and then he did come over to me and sing 'Are you lonesome tonight?', just for me. A crowd did start to form round us, and at the end of the song they did clap and cheer. Then suddenly Elvis was gone. I do realize that this does sound very unlikely, but I do know that it wasn't a dream. I really did meet Elvis today, and I will never forget it.

B

- | | | |
|----------------|----------|------------------|
| 1. have | 2. are | 3. will |
| 4. are | 5. did | 6. couldn't |
| 7. did | 8. won't | 9. would |
| 10. was OR did | 11. does | 12. did OR would |

Unit 19**A**

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| 1. don't | 2. Need | 3. dares | 4. needs |
| 5. need to | 6. didn't | 7. weren't | 8. suggest |
| 9. to run | 10. oughtn't | | |

B

'Tim needs someone to help him. He says he can't move that big stone on his own.'

'I suppose we ought to give him a hand, oughtn't we?'

'Dare we refuse? I wouldn't want him to hurt himself.'

'He wouldn't hurt himself, would he? After all, he used to be a boxer, didn't he? And you need to be pretty strong for that, don't you?'

'Nonetheless, I think he might need help. Let's go and see, shall we?'

'OK, then. I won't argue with you. I never do, do I?'

Unit 20**A**

'Hurry up, you two,' called Mrs Brown to her two daughters. 'Had I thought that you were going to take as long as this to get ready, I would have told you to pack last night.'

Five minutes later, there was still no sign of the girls.

'The taxi will be here in a minute. Aren't you ready yet?' Mrs Brown asked.

'I'm nearly ready,' said Kay. 'And so am I,' said Kim, 'but there were no clean hankies in my drawer and I had to iron some. There was lots more to do this morning than I had thought.'

'I must just clean my teeth, though,' said Kay. 'And so must I,' said Kim.

'There's no time for that now,' their mother warned them.

'But I must do, said Kim. Scarcely had she said this when the doorbell rang. The taxi had arrived. Down the stairs rushed the two girls, dragging their suitcases behind them.

'You're wearing two different shoes!' laughed Kay.

'Oh, so I am,' said Kim. 'I must go and change.'

'Do hurry up, said Mrs Brown. 'I don't want you to keep the taxi waiting any longer.'

'Nor do I,' called Kay to her mother.

At last, a few minutes later, Kim came back downstairs.

'Here I am,' she said.

'Come on,' said Kay, 'the driver has been kept waiting long enough.'

The girls leapt into the taxi and off it went. Soon they arrived at the station. The girls got out and paid the driver, and off went the taxi again.

'Should we have given the driver a tip?' Kim asked her sister.

'Had he been a little more helpful, I might have,' said Kay, 'but he didn't even help us with our cases.'

'Oh, no! My case!' gasped Kim. 'It's still in the taxi! What'll I do?'

'If I were you, I'd telephone the taxi company and find out where the taxi is,' said her sister. 'Perhaps the driver will be coming back to the station soon.'

B

1. One rarely receives such courtesy and consideration in a shop nowadays.
2. She had hardly got off the ship in New York when her problems began.
3. A vet seldom sees any cases of foot-and mouth disease.
4. We were so hungry, we even ate grass and bark.
5. I never for a moment imagined that I would win the prize.
6. We little suspected that we had an uninvited guest, a very large cobra.
7. If the female bird had actually begun to sit on the eggs immediately, they might eventually have hatched.
8. We little thought at the time that that would be our last holiday together.
9. Robin and his men barely avoided being caught by the Sheriff of Nottingham's soldiers.
10. These phone-calls only too frequently turn out to be hoaxes.

Chapter 4**Unit 21****A**

When the police arrived, I was sitting (present participle) in my garden looking (present participle) at my flowers and listening (present participle) to the birds singing

(present participle) and the bees **buzzing** (present participle). The **buzzing** (verbal noun) of the bees made me feel very relaxed and the birds' **singing** (verbal noun), though at times **piercing** (present participle as adjective), was hardly **deafening** (present participle as adjective). I was **beginning** (present participle) to feel rather sleepy, although **sleeping** (verbal noun) is not something I normally do in the middle of the afternoon.

Suddenly there was a **screeching** (verbal noun) of brakes and an **opening** (verbal noun) and **closing** (verbal noun) of car doors outside my house, followed by a loud **banging** (verbal noun) on my front door. I got up from my seat, **wondering** (present participle) who it could be that was **making** (present participle) so much noise. When I opened the front door, I found three policemen **standing** (present participle) there.

'Can I help you?' I said, **smiling** (present participle) at them uncertainly.

None of the policemen were **smiling** (present participle). 'Are you Andrew Wong?' said one of them, almost **snarling** (present participle) at me.

'No,' I replied, **beginning** (present participle) to feel just a little nervous.

'There is no point in **lying** (verbal noun) to us,' said the policeman. 'We know you are Andrew Wang, and you have been seen **stealing** (present participle) **shopping** (verbal noun as adjective) trolleys from the local supermarket.'

'How dare you accuse me of **lying** (verbal noun),' I said, **looking** (present participle) him straight in the eye. 'I am not the man you are **looking** (present participle) for. There is no-one by the name of Andrew Wang **living** (present participle) in this house. I'm not a trolley thief, I'm a **singing** (verbal noun as adjective) teacher, and what is more, I am more interested in **racing** (verbal noun as adjective) cars than **shopping** (verbal noun as adjective) trolleys!'

B

Once upon a time there was a tailor. One day this tailor was **sitting** inside his shop, **sewing** a pair of trousers, when he saw an old woman **coming** up the street, **carrying** a basket full of pots of jam. Poking his head out of the window, the tailor called to her, **saying**, 'Please bring your pots of jam in here.'

The tailor spent a long time **examining** the jams, **smelling** and **tasting** each one and **holding** them up to the light, until finally, **having** made up his mind, he said to the woman, 'I would like a little of this blackcurrant jam.'

The old woman had been **hoping** to sell the tailor several pots of jam, since he had seemed so interested in them all, and after **accepting** his money she went off up the street **grumbling** to herself.

Meanwhile the tailor, **taking** a loaf of bread from his cupboard, **cutting** a large slice from it, and **spreading** it thickly with the jam, said to himself, 'Before **eating** any of this, I must finish **stitching** the trousers I was **making**. But while he was **beavering** away, a swarm of flies, being

attracted by the **pleasing** smell, flew in through the window and down onto the jam.

The tailor rushed towards them, **waving** his hands and **shouting**, trying to chase them away. But not understanding what was **annoying** the tailor, the flies refused to leave the jam. So, **tying** some heavy cloth to a stick, the tailor began **hitting** out at the flies.

Unit 22

A

The tailor had **tried** in vain to drive away the flies with his hands, so he had **made** a fly-swatter and had **hit** as many flies as he could with it. When he had **seen** that he had **brought** it down on seven flies in a single stroke, he had **become** very **pleased** with himself, and had **decided** to make himself a belt, on which he had **written** 'Seven with one blow'.

Having **ties** the belt round his waist, the tailor had then **set** out to tell the whole world what he had **done**. Before leaving the house, he had **put** a small piece of cheese into one of his pockets so that he would not get hungry on his journey. Outside his house, he had **seen** a small bird, which he had **caught** and **put** into his other pocket.

On his way to the next town, the tailor had **met** a huge giant. The giant had **seen** the tailor's belt and had of course **thought** that the tailor had **slain** seven men with one blow, not seven flies. The giant had **been** very **impressed** by this, and had **challenged** the tailor to a contest.

First of all, the giant had **taken** a stone and **squeezed** it so hard that water had **come** out of it. 'Can you do that?' the giant had **asked** the tailor. 'I can do better than that,' the tailor had **replied**, and taking the cheese out of his pocket, had **pressed** it so hard that sour milk had **pour** out of it.

This feat had **amazed** the giant, who had then **picked** up another stone and **flung** it so high into the sky that it had **been** fully five minutes before it had **dropped** back to earth again. 'Can you do that?' the giant had **demanded**. 'I can do even better than that,' the tailor had again **replied**, and, taking the bird out of his pocket (pretending that it was a stone), he had **thrown** it up into the sky. The bird had of course **flew** away at once and so had not **returned** to earth. This too had **stunned** the giant, who had then **invited** the tailor to spend the night at his house.

B

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| 1. broken | 2. hidden | 3. knitted | 4. known |
| 5. fallen | 6. paid | 7. swollen | 8. stolen |
| 9. ground | 10. burnt | 11. grown | 12. thought |
| 13. spoken | 14. read | 15. meant | |

Unit 23

A

At first the tailor didn't know what to say, but he could not think of any reason not to go with the giant, so in the end he agreed to go with him. The giant said he was very

pleased to take the tailor home to stay with him for a night or two.

In fact, the giant was planning to kill the tailor at the first opportunity, but the tailor did not know that at the time. 'Let's go,' said the giant. 'It's getting late, and it is time to start on our way.'

The giant walked so quickly that the little tailor found it hard to keep up with him. He had to take five steps for every one that the giant took. But eventually they arrived at the giant's cottage and went inside. The giant showed the tailor a room where there was a large box in which he could lie down and sleep and a cupboard to put his clothes in. 'What would you like to eat?' said the giant. (The giant was, of course, intending to munch and crunch the tailor.) 'I don't want to eat anything,' said the tailor, beginning to be suspicious of what the giant was planning. 'I will just go to bed now, I think.'

However, the tailor found that the box was too small for him to lie down in, so he lay down in a dark corner of the room instead and fell asleep. At midnight, the giant came into the room and hit the box several times with a large iron bar. He was expecting the tailor to be in the box. He meant to kill him so that he could cook him for his breakfast.

The next morning, the tailor got up and came out of the room, still very much alive. The giant was so shocked by this that he began to scream and ran out of the cottage into the forest. This let the tailor make his escape.

B

- 1. break 2. blow 3. bite 4. buy 5. take
- 6. tear 7. catch 8. swim 9. sting 10. see
- 11. speak 12. fight 13. hurt 14. hold

Unit 24

A

- 1. She was bitten by a snake.
- 2. He had been stung by a bee.
- 3. The council's proposals were opposed by the whole village.
- 4. Nothing has been achieved by your protests.
- 5. The Christmas tree had been decorated by the nurses and had been put up in the ward. OR The Christmas tree had been decorated by the nurses and put up in the ward. OR The Christmas tree had been decorated and put up in the ward by the nurses.
- 6. She had been accused of theft by her boss.
- 7. The castle was taken from the invaders by Bruce's soldiers.
- 8. Our car had been broken into by thieves.
- 9. Second-hand clothes are being collected for the poor by our church ladies' group. OR Second-hand clothes are being collected by our district's ladies' group for the poor.

- 10. He was advised by his lawyer to tell the police.
- 11. Tom was awarded the prize by the judges. OR The prize was awarded to Tom by the judges.
- 12. The man responsible for the hoax has been caught by the police.

B

10 cm³ of sodium hydroxide was measured out into a small beaker. 10 cm³ of hydrochloric acid was then measured out into a second small beaker. The hydrochloric acid was carefully added to the sodium hydroxide. The solution was poured into an evaporating basin. The basin was set on top of a tripod. The solution was heated until the liquid boiled. This process was continued until nearly all the water had boiled off. The basin was removed from the source of heat when the residue in the basin started to spit. The basin was allowed to cool. A small sample of the solid left on the side of the basin was carefully tasted to see what had been formed.

Unit 25

A

- 1. to realize, done
- 2. broken
- 3. see
- 4. persuading, to come
- 5. take
- 6. to answer
- 7. swept
- 8. washing
- 9. learning
- 10. to tell, to do
- 11. to bring
- 12. to dissuade, singing

B

- 1. smoking
- 2. having, to like
- 3. to put off announcing
- 4. to leave
- 5. to go
- 6. missing
- 7. saying
- 8. to hunt
- 9. going
- 10. laughing
- 11. find OR to find
- 12. to listen, play OR playing

Chapter 5

Unit 26

A

- 1. can
- 2. could
- 3. could have
- 4. can OR could
- 5. could have
- 6. can OR could
- 7. could have
- 8. could OR could have
- 9. could have
- 10. Can OR Could

B

- 1. couldn't
- 2. couldn't have
- 3. can't
- 4. couldn't
- 5. couldn't have
- 6. couldn't
- 7. can't
- 8. couldn't
- 9. couldn't
- 10. couldn't have

C

- 1. Not allowed to.
- 2. Doesn't know how to.

3. Not able to.
4. Not allowed to.
5. Not able to.
6. Not allowed to.
7. Not able to.
8. Not allowed to.
9. Doesn't know how to.
10. Not willing to.

Unit 27

(A)

1. His greatest achievement **may be** having climbed Mount Everest at the age of 56.
2. She **may have** forgotten all about us.
3. He **might not** tell anyone what you said.
4. He **may not have** seen the advertisement for the job.
5. This **might be** an indication that your plants are not getting enough water.
6. This plant **might** grow better in a different part of the garden.
7. I **may not have** read the instructions carefully enough.
8. This **might be** a clue to the murder.
9. They **may** let us use the tickets tomorrow instead of today.
10. They **may have been** at the concert but I didn't see them.

(B)

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. may I ask | 4. might as well |
| 2. may well OR might as well | 5. might have known |
| 3. may say so | 6. may it continue |
| 5. may well | 8. may I say |
| 7. might as well | 10. might add |

Unit 28

(A)

1. She **would** often **write** me long letters from abroad.
2. My mother **would** always **sing** me a lullaby when she tucked me into bed at night.
3. We **would** always **buy** chips on the way home from the seaside.
4. She **would** invariably **stand** at the door and **wave** until the car turned the corner.
5. She **will** often **go** to meet her children as they come home from school.
6. Whenever I saw her, I **would** always **ask** her how she was feeling and she **would** usually **laugh** and **say** that she was as fit as a fiddle.
7. My grandmother **will** usually drink tea rather than coffee.
8. When I was a reporter, I **would** never **go** anywhere without a notebook and pencil in my pocket.
9. Criminals **will** often **go** back to the scene of their crime.
10. Whenever she saw me, my grandmother **would** always **tell** me how pretty I looked.

(B)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. would have forgiven | 2. would have spoken |
| 3. would have done | 4. would have slept |
| 5. wouldn't have eaten | 6. would have thought |
| 7. would have withdrawn | 8. would have smelt |

(C)

- | | | |
|------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. expect | 2. dislikes | 3. seats |
| 1. would | 2. would | 3. should |
| 4. will | 5. should | 6. will, will |
| 7. Would | 8. Should | 9. should |
| 10. shall | 11. Will OR Would | |
| 12. should | | |

Unit 29

(A)

1. can't, must
2. must, can't
3. had to
4. mustn't, must
5. must, can't, must, must
6. must, can't, have to
7. must OR have to OR need to
8. must
9. needn't OR don't need to, can't, must
OR have to
10. must

(B)

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. had to, could | 2. must have been |
| 3. Did ... have to | 4. had to, last week |
| 5. needn't have OR didn't need to, needn't have OR
didn't need to | |
| 6. must have rung OR had to ring | |
| 7. were, couldn't | 8. must have been |
| 9. had to | 10. had to |

Chapter 6

Unit 30

(A)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. is coming | 2. comes |
| 3. leaves | 4. catch |
| 5. fight | 6. are forever chasing |
| 7. am leaving, am never coming | |
| 8. get | 9. are you doing |
| 10. do you, do | 11. is behaving |
| 12. snows | |

(B)

- | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. expect | 2. dislikes | 3. seats |
| 4. tastes | 5. I'm expecting | 6. I'm tasting |
| 7. He's holding | 8. does ... cost | 9. suppose |
| 10. includes | 11. seems | 12. holds |

Unit 31

(A)

1. was driving, ran
2. saw, was wearing, was painting OR had painted

3. had left, got
4. was raining, arrived, had been raining, came
5. finish OR have finished
6. saw, was feeding, stopped, noticed
7. knocked OR had knocked, rang OR had ... rung, came OR had come
8. have knocked, have ... rung, has come
9. have been cleaning
10. washed, did, OR had washed, done, went, listened OR was listening, wrote
11. told OR had told, had decided, interviewed OR had interviewed
12. have been

B

A full-scale investigation **was launched** yesterday by Glasgow Police after important government files **were found** on a second-hand computer. Details of possible changes to the tax system that the government **has not made public** **were discovered** on the hard disc of a PC that **was sold** OR **had been sold** to a local shopkeeper by an Edinburgh computer firm.

The Sunday Post **has obtained** a copy of the disc from the new owner of the computer, who claims that he **bought** the computer at a computer fair three weeks ago.

A police spokesman **said** this morning that he could not confirm that the police **had received** a complaint from the Scottish Parliament regarding obsolete computer equipment that **had been given** to an outside agency for safe disposal, but in a later announcement the police **admitted** that enquiries **were being made** at that time to determine whether actions of a criminal nature **had been perpetrated**.

C

What do you think happened to me today? I **was out** for a breath of fresh air at lunch-time, as it gets very stuffy in the office, and I **was standing** on the path beside the river, watching the ducks, when someone **tapped** me on the shoulder. I **looked** round and there **was** my old school-friend Martin. We **started** to chat, and lo and behold, a few minutes later, while we **were talking**, along **came** another old friend of ours. So the three of us **decided** to go for a cup of coffee. But when we **went** into the café, who **did we see** but yet another fellow who was at school with us. Talk about coincidence! So the three of us **sat** down at his table and **began** to catch up on all our news. We **told** each other about our lives since we left school and **gossiped** about other people we **knew**.

There **was** so much to say that we **didn't notice** the time passing. Suddenly I **realized** that it **was** well past two o'clock and I should **have been** back in the office for an important meeting. We all hastily **exchanged** addresses and telephone numbers and **agreed** that we should meet again soon some evening. Then I **said** goodbye to the others and **ran** back to the office as fast as I **could**. Fortunately I **was** not late for the meeting.

Unit 32

A

1. I'm **playing** golf with Peter on Saturday.
2. I'm **going to buy** a new car OR I'm **buying** a new car.
3. I'm **not going to lend** Judy any more money OR I'm **not lending** Judy any more money. OR I **won't lend** Judy any more money.
4. I'm **not going** for a walk OR I'm **not going to go** for a walk. OR I **won't go** for a walk.
5. Will you **take** me to the zoo next week?
6. Will we **be going** to the zoo next week? OR Are we going to the zoo next week?
7. I'm **not going to let** anyone bully my brother OR I'm **not letting** anyone bully my brother. OR I **won't let** anyone bully my brother OR I'm **not about to let** anyone bully my brother.
8. Look out! You're **going to fall** off that ladder.
9. I'll **be** in New York by this time next week.
10. You **will go** and apologize for your behaviour.

B

At six o'clock I **will be lying** in bed. At seven o'clock I **will be having** breakfast. At eight o'clock I **will be leaving** the house and **heading** for school. By eight thirty, I **will probably be playing** football in the playground as usual. By nine o'clock, I **will be sitting** in the maths class, but I **will still be thinking** about football. I **will be wishing** that I was at home watching football on television.

Unit 33

A

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. hears | 2. win' | 3. had known |
| 4. saw | 5. had asked | 6. would be |
| 7. Is | 8. be | |
| 9. have been killed | | 10. write |
| 11. had had | 12. have got | 13. die |
| 14. keep | 15. had behaved | |

B

1. If you **hadn't drunk** too much coffee last night, you **wouldn't have** a headache this morning.
2. If you **had watered** them enough, the flowers **wouldn't be** dying.
3. If he **hadn't been lifting** heavy boxes yesterday, your father **wouldn't have** a sore back today.
4. If you **work** harder, you **will** succeed.
5. If I **had had** enough money, I **would have bought** you a present.
6. If you **had put** the chain on it when you went into the shop, your bike **wouldn't have been stolen**.
7. If they **hadn't ridden** quickly through the forest, the wolves **would have been able** to catch them.
8. If I **could afford** it, I **would go** to the cinema every week.
9. If we **hadn't missed** the bus, we **wouldn't have missed** the beginning of the film.

10. If you **are** willing to go with me, I **will go** to see the doctor.

Unit 34

(A)

- 1. had been
- 2. she'd got
- 3. I'll do
- 4. could manage
- 5. was kept
- 6. must have been stolen
- 7. saw, was
- 8. were going
- 9. are going
- 10. saw OR had seen
- 11. had solved
- 12. was

(B)

I saw OR had seen a young man walking up and down outside the shop across the road. He might have been in his mid twenties. I had been washing my windows and I had noticed that the man had been there all the time it had taken me to clean them. OR I was washing my windows and I noticed that the man was there all the time it took me to clean them. He was wearing a dark jacket and faded blue jeans. He seemed OR had seemed a little nervous. Suddenly he went into the shop, and a few moments later he came running out again and ran round the corner. A moment later the owner of the shop also came out, obviously chasing the man. That was when I called the police.



VERBS and TENSES

About the Book

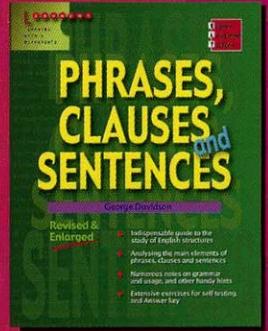
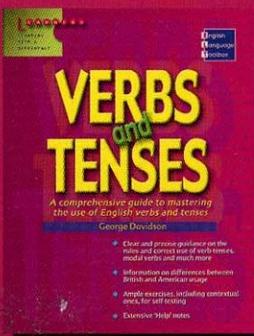
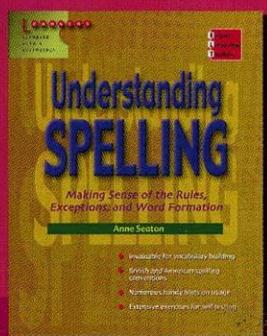
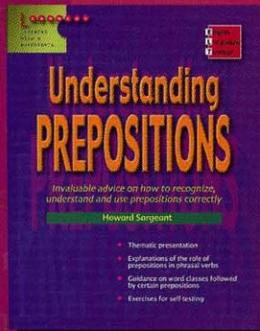
Verbs and Tenses aims to help English language learners through the difficulties they may encounter when they are trying to understand finite and non-finite verbs, lexical and auxiliary verbs, the modal verbs, the meanings and uses of the different tenses, and so on. The book is comprehensive in coverage and explains clearly and concisely the relevant rules and terminology. The explanations are illustrated by many examples.

There are ample exercises after each unit for learners to test their own understanding. An answer key is provided at the end of the book.

About the Writer

George Davidson is a graduate in French and General Linguistics of the University of Edinburgh. He is a former senior editor with W & R Chambers of Edinburgh, and is the author of three books on English grammar, usage and spelling. He is the current editor of *Roget's Thesaurus* and has contributed to *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, *Encarta World English Dictionary* and *New Penguin English Dictionary*.

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