

# The syntax of events

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The syntax of  
events

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No tense

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Here be dragons!!

Here be crocodiles!!

Here be chocolate cravings!!

Here be politicians!!

Here be liberals!!

Here be conservatives!!

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# Finite and non-finite forms

Verb forms can be either **finite** or **non-finite**

Finite forms express **tense**

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# Finite and non-finite forms

Verb forms can be either **finite** or **non-finite**

Finite forms express **tense**

e.g. *laugh-ed*

Non-finite forms **do not have tense**, e.g. *He loves to laugh/laughing*

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# Finite forms

Finite forms often have rich **inflectional morphology**.

	Singular	Plural
	<b>I talk</b>	<b>We talk</b>
First person (refers to speaker)	Yo habl <u>o</u>	Nosotros habl <u>amos</u>
	<b>You<sub>sing.</sub> talk</b>	<b>You<sub>pl.</sub> talk</b>
Second person (refers to conversational partner)	Tu habl <u>as</u>	Vosotros habl <u>áis</u>
	<b>He/she/it talk<u>s</u></b>	<b>They talk</b>
Third person (refers to third party)	El / ella habl <u>a</u>	Ellos ellas habl <u>an</u>

# Finite forms

	Singular	Plural
First person (refers to speaker)	<b>I talked</b> Yo habl <b>é</b>	<b>We talked</b> Nosotros habl <b>amos</b>
Second person (refers to conversational partner)	<b>You<sub>sing.</sub> talked</b> Tu habl <b>aste</b>	<b>You<sub>pl.</sub> talked</b> Vosotros habl <b>astaís</b>
Third person (refers to third party)	<b>He/she/it talked</b> El / ella habl <b>ó</b>	<b>They talked</b> Ellos ellas habl <b>aron</b>

# Non-finite forms

Present participle, e.g. *She is laugh-**ing***

Past participle, e.g. *She has*  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{dropped} \\ \text{broken} \\ \text{lost} \end{array} \right\}$  *it*

Infinitive form, e.g. *You must*  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{go now!} \\ \text{be quiet!} \\ \text{come quickly!!} \end{array} \right\}$

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# Non-finite forms

Infinitive	Regular / irregular	Present participle	Past simple	Past participle
be	Irr.	<b>being</b>	was/were	been
have	Irr.	<b>having</b>	had	had
go	Irr.	<b>going</b>	went	gone
take	Irr.	<b>taking</b>	took	taken
wake	Irr.	<b>waking</b>	woke	woken
teach	Irr.	<b>teaching</b>	taught	taught
meet	Irr.	<b>meeting</b>	met	met
swim	Irr.	<b>swimming</b>	swam	swum
laugh	Reg.	<b>laughing</b>	<b>laughed</b>	<b>laughed</b>
rob	Reg.	<b>robbing</b>	<b>robbed</b>	<b>robbed</b>

# Non-finite forms

**Infinitive = bare form or base form**

Identical to present tense (NOT third person singular)

*Be* is the only irregular form

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I want to go home ( *to-infinitive* )

You can't go home ( *bare infinitive* )

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3rd person test. . .

**I** can run fast  $\Rightarrow$  **he** can run-s fast

No -s, therefore *run* is the (bare) infinitive  
(we need the infinitive after *can*)

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Are the verbs in **bold** present simple or the infinitive? Use the "third person singular" test.

1. Can we **have** spaghetti for dinner?
2. I don't know whether they **like** meat

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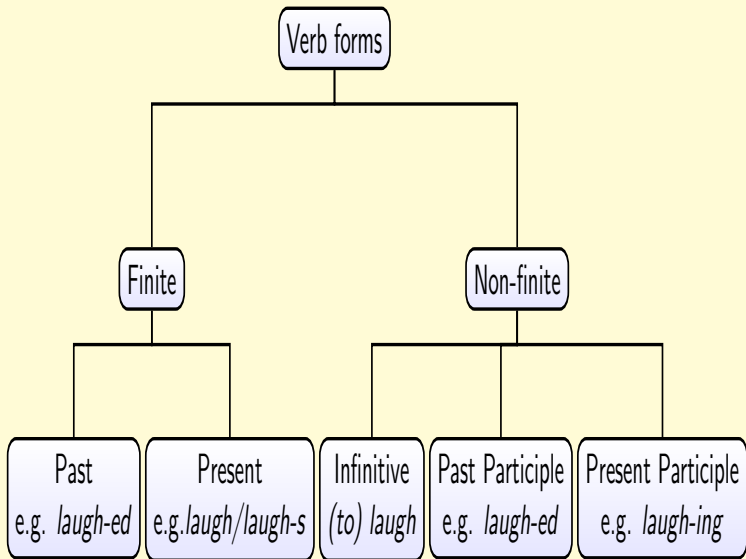
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# The importance of tense-marking

In English, tense is marked by the third person singular present tense ending (*he go-es*)

...or a variety of regular and irregular past forms (*dropped, gave, left*).

With a few exceptions, sentences in English **must** have tense.

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In English, tense is marked by the third person singular present tense ending (*he go-es*)

...or a variety of regular and irregular past forms (*dropped, gave, left*).

With a few exceptions, sentences in English **must** have tense.

(1) \*I going home

(2) \*He go home

# EXERCISE

What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- ▶ consider
- ▶ put
- ▶ take
- ▶ look
- ▶ make
- ▶ speak

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What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- ▶ consider , considered, considered = REGULAR
- ▶ put
- ▶ take
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- ▶ speak

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What are the past simple and past participle forms of the following verbs?

- ▶ consider , considered, considered = REGULAR
- ▶ put , put, put = IRREGULAR
- ▶ take
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- ▶ make
- ▶ speak

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- ▶ look , looked, looked = REGULAR
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- ▶ speak

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- ▶ make , made, made = IRREGULAR
- ▶ speak , spoke, spoken = IRREGULAR

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# How to mark aspect

Marked using participles

Progressive aspect (INTERNAL perspective on the event) is expressed using the **present participle**

Perfective aspect (EXTERNAL perspective on the event) is marked using the **past participle**.

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# How to mark aspect

In addition to using the participle, we need to use an appropriate **auxiliary verb** which must "agree with" the participle.

The present participle selects **be** as the agreeing auxiliary verb

(3) Zachary **is** eating

and the past participle selects **have** as the agreeing auxiliary verb, e.g.

(4) Julia **has** eaten

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# Building up complex tenses

1. Mark aspect on the *rightmost* verb and insert an appropriate *auxiliary verb*
2. Repeat last rule if necessary
3. Mark tense (plus "the future") on the *leftmost verb*

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# Building up complex tenses

(5) Zachary eats

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(5) Zachary eats

(6) \*Zachary eating

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(5) Zachary eats

(6) \*Zachary eating

(7) Zachary is eating

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(8) Anna falls

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(8) Anna falls

(9) \*Anna fallen

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(8) Anna falls

(9) \*Anna fallen

(10) Anna has fallen

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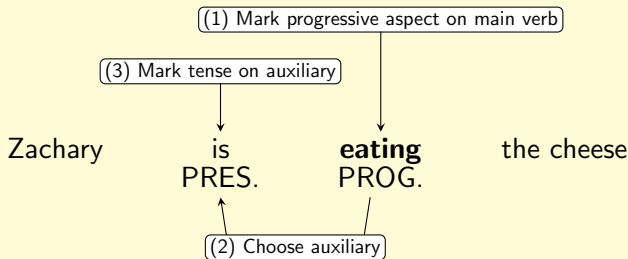
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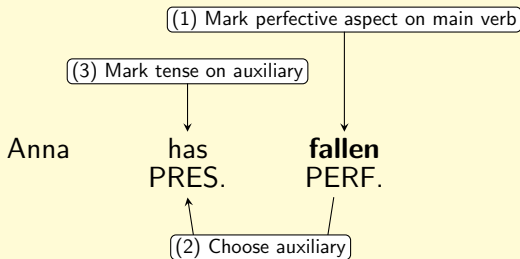
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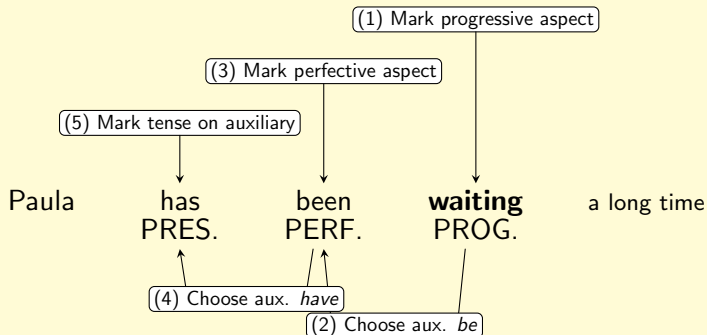
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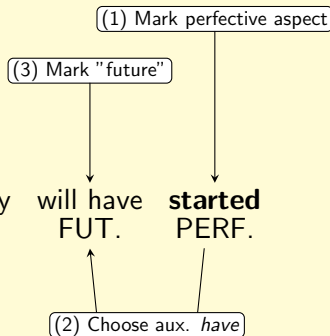
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By the time we get there the play **will have** **started**  
FUT. PERF.



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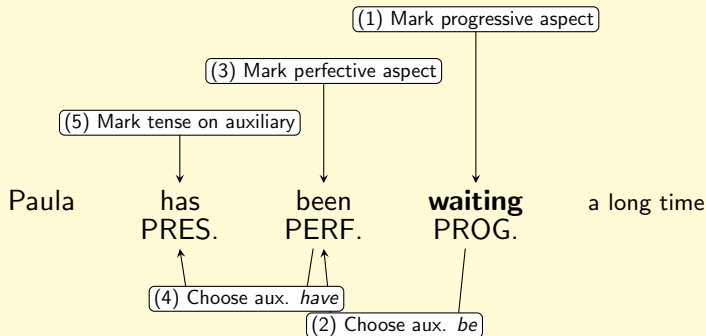
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When we build the sentence we go backwards

When we describe the tense-aspect combination we go forwards

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# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations

Meanings are built up compositionally

ASPECT expresses 'viewpoint' (internal or external)

TENSE expresses temporal location of viewpoint (past, present, future)

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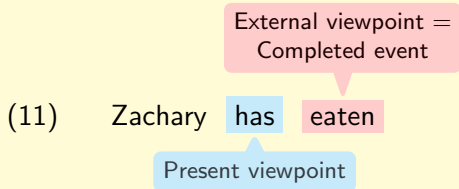
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# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations



A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

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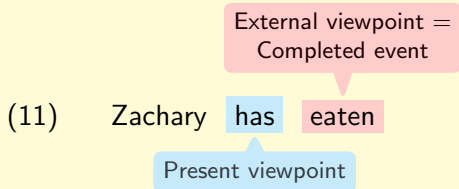
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# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations



A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

So what's the difference between the following?

(12) Zachary has eaten

(13) Zachary ate

# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations

(14) (When I arrived) Janice was cooking spaghetti

Internal viewpoint =  
Ongoing event

Past Viewpoint

An ongoing event with a viewpoint located in the past

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# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations

(15) By this time next week, I will have eaten the cheese.

Future Viewpoint

External viewpoint  
= completed event

A completed event with a viewpoint in the future

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# Meanings of tense-aspect combinations

(16) When he got home she **had** already **done** the cleaning

past viewpoint

COMPLETED event

A completed event with a viewpoint in the past

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# What are auxiliary verbs?

Auxiliary verbs are chosen to **support** the main verb (*an auxiliary = a helper*).

They are *servants* of the main verb.

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# What are auxiliary verbs?

Auxiliary verbs are chosen to **support** the main verb (*an auxiliary = a helper*).

They are *servants* of the main verb.

The main (non-modal) auxiliary verbs are *have*, *be*, and *do*

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**CAPTAIN  
AUXILIARY VERB**

**The Auxiliary Code of Honour**

**I do solemnly promise...**

- (1) To take over **tense**-marking duties where necessary
- (2) To take over **negation**-marking duties where necessary
- (3) To take over **question**-marking duties where necessary

**For the higher purpose of creating grammatical sentences**

**Your obedient helper**

***Captain Auxiliary Verb***

DESIGNED BY JEFF HAWARD 2011

# Tense-marking duties

(17) \*John broken his watch

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(17) \*John broken his watch

(18) ✓ John **has** broken his watch



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- (17) \*John broken his watch
- (18) ✓ John **has** broken his watch
- (19) \*Amy singing in the shower

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- (17) \*John broken his watch
- (18) ✓ John **has** broken his watch
- (19) \*Amy singing in the shower
- (20) ✓ Amy **is** singing in the shower

# Negation-marking duties

(21) \*I **like not** this food

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# Negation-marking duties

(21) \*I **like not** this food

(22) I **do not** / **don't** like this food

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(21) \*I **like not** this food

(22) I **do not** / **don't** like this food

The negative particle is always attached to the first auxiliary in the sentence;

(23) She **has<sub>1</sub>n't been<sub>2</sub>** coming here long

# Question-marking duties

(24) She has done it?

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(24) She has done it?

Aux. movement

(25) Has she t done it?

(26) He is doing it?

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(24) She has done it?

Aux. movement

(25) Has she t done it?

(26) He is doing it?

Aux. movement

(27) Is he t doing it?



# Do-support

If there is no auxiliary, we have to create one (*do/does/did*);

(28) Does he like it?

(29) Did he like it?

(30) I didn't like it

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If there is no auxiliary, we have to create one (*do/does/did*);

(28) Does he like it?

(29) Did he like it?

(30) I didn't like it

The process of adding *do/does/did* to express either negation or interrogative mood is sometimes called **do support**

# Do-support

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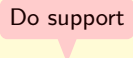

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- (31)  Does he do it?
- (32) He  did n't do it

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# Placement of adverbs

(33) I have<sub>Aux</sub> occasionally seen<sub>V</sub> shooting stars

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- (33) I have<sub>Aux</sub> **occasionally** seen<sub>V</sub> shooting stars
- (34) Jake is<sub>Aux</sub> **really** motoring<sub>V</sub> down the home straight
- (35) Helen has<sub>Aux</sub> **sometimes** been<sub>Aux</sub> seen<sub>V</sub> downing Bloody Maries in the Frog and Bucket

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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

1. I no like this book!
2. You had a good time at the party?
3. Mary been studying hard lately
4. You've seen Janet recently?



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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

1. I don't like this book!

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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

1. I don't like this book!

2. Did you have a good time at the party?

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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

1. I don't like this book!
2. Did you have a good time at the party?
3. Mary has been studying hard lately

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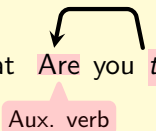
Placement of adverbs

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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

1. I don't like this book!
2. Did you have a good time at the party?
3. Mary has been studying hard lately

4. What Are you t doing ?  


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The expression *I'm a big dog man* has two meanings.

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