

The syntax of events

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The syntax of
events

Nick Riches

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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 |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | I talk | We talk |
| First person (refers to speaker) | Yo habl <u>o</u> | Nosotros habl <u>amos</u> |
| | You_{sing.} talk | You_{pl.} talk |
| Second person (refers to conversational partner) | Tu habl <u>as</u> | Vosotros habl <u>áis</u> |
| | He/she/it talk<u>s</u> | They talk |
| 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) | I talked Yo habl é | We talked Nosotros habl amos |
| Second person (refers to conversational partner) | You_{sing.} talked Tu habl aste | You_{pl.} talked Vosotros habl astáis |
| Third person (refers to third party) | He/she/it talked El / ella habl ó | They talked Ellos ellas habl aron |

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

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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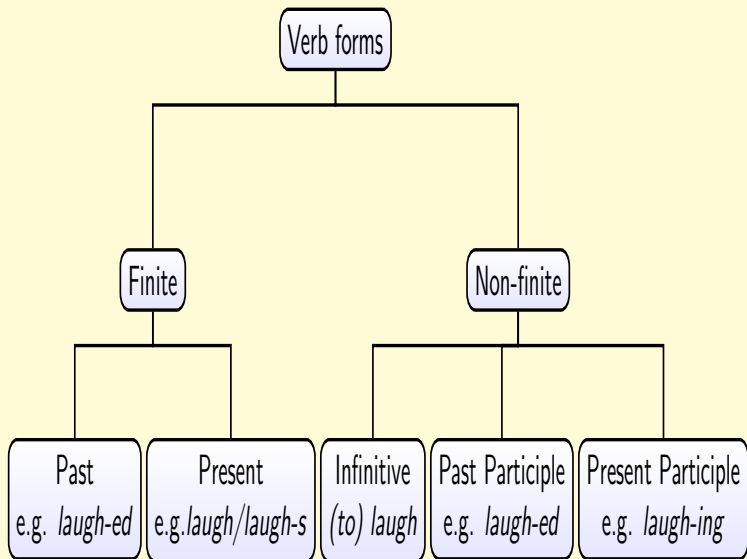
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The importance of tense-marking

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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.

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

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EXERCISE

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

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- ▶ take , took, taken = IRREGULAR
- ▶ look
- ▶ make
- ▶ speak

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- ▶ speak

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

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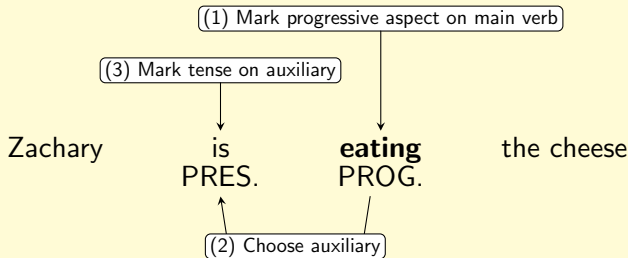
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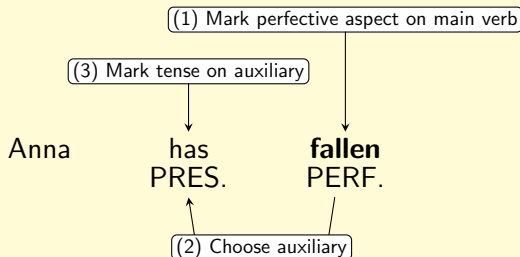
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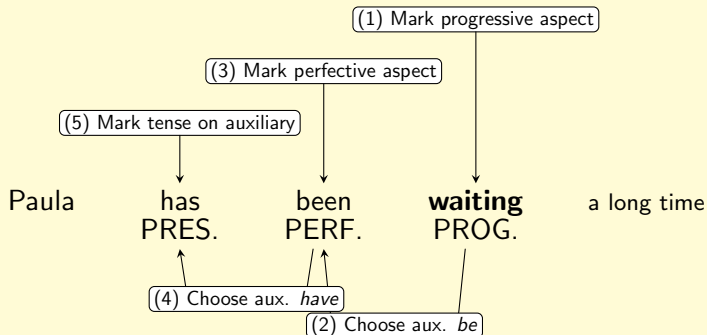
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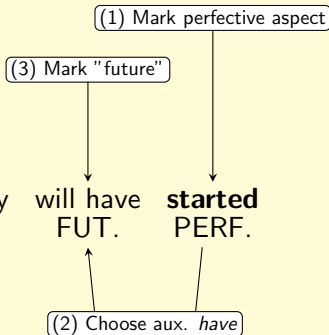
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By the time we get there the play **will have** **started**
FUT. PERF.



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When we build the sentence we go backwards

When we describe the tense-aspect combination we go forwards

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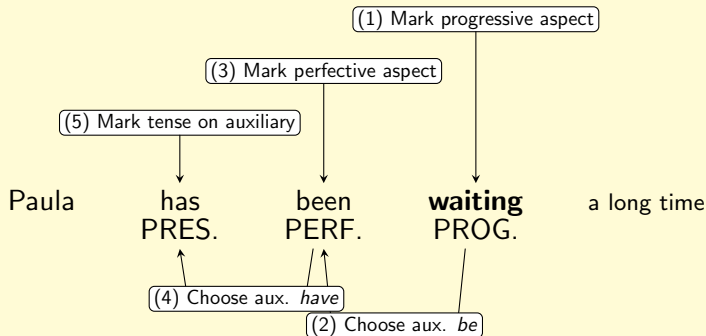
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Meanings of tense-aspect combinations

Meanings are built up compositionally

ASPECT expresses 'viewpoint' (internal or external)

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

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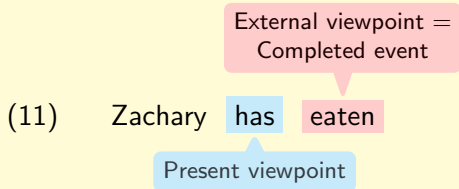
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Meanings of tense-aspect combinations



A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

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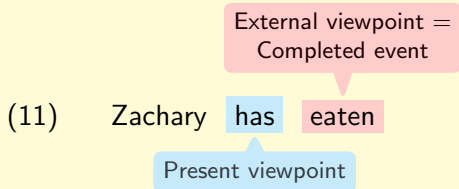
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Meanings of tense-aspect combinations



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

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

Internal viewpoint =
Ongoing event

Past Viewpoint

An ongoing event with a viewpoint located in the past

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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(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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EXERCISE

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

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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

Tense-marking duties

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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 **has₁n't been₂** 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?

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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

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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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NB when we use do-support the main verb is the infinitive

Why?

Because the tense is marked on auxiliary DO we cannot mark it **again** on the main verb.

You could possibly conceptualise this as the tense 'moving' to the auxiliary, e.g.

(31) Do **-es** she like _ fish ?

A red dashed arrow originates from the space between 'like' and the blank line, arches upwards and to the left, and points down to the '-es' suffix on the auxiliary 'do'.

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Do support

(32) Does he do it?

(33) He did n't do it

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(34) I have_{Aux} occasionally seen_V shooting stars

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- (34) I have_{Aux} **occasionally** seen_V shooting stars
- (35) Jake is_{Aux} **really** motoring_V down the home straight
- (36) Helen has_{Aux} **sometimes** been_{Aux} seen_V 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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EXERCISE

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

1. I don't like this book!

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EXERCISE

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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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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Negation-marking duties

Question-marking duties

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Placement of adverbs

EXERCISE

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 ?
Aux. verb

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

What are they?

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