

The syntax of events

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The syntax of
events

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

Finite forms express **tense**

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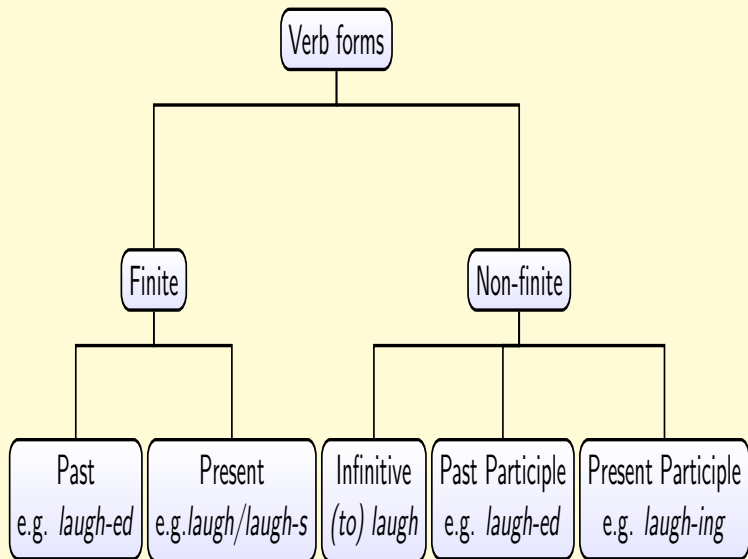
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Are the verbs in **bold** present simple or the infinitive? Use the "third person singular" test.

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

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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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(1) *I **going** home

(2) *He **go** home

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

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- ▶ speak

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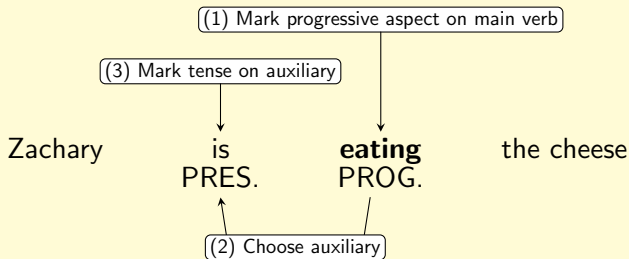
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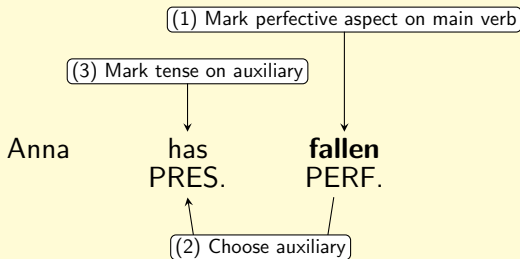
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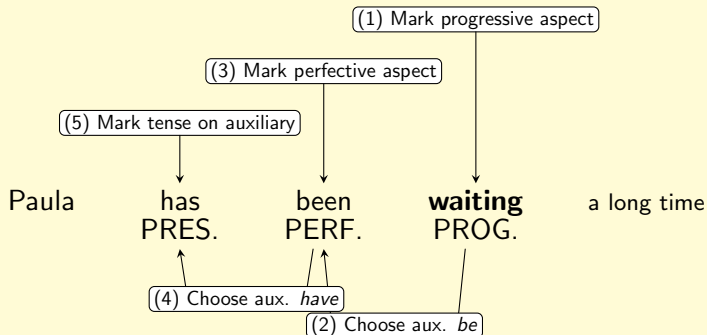
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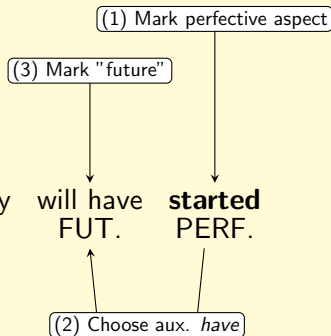
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By the time we get there the play **will have** **started**
FUT. **PERF.**



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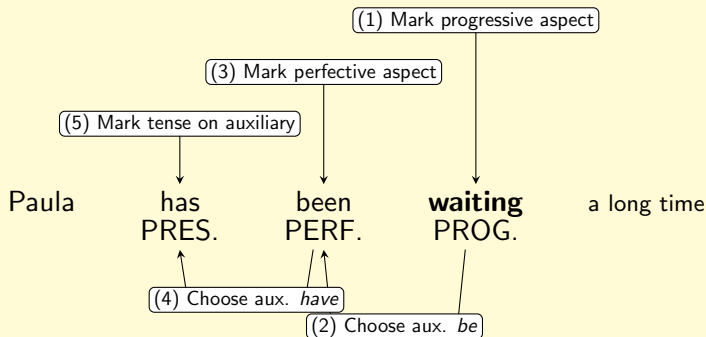
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When we build the sentence we go backwards

When we describe the tense-aspect combination we go forwards

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Meanings are built up compositionally

ASPECT expresses 'viewpoint' (internal or external)

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

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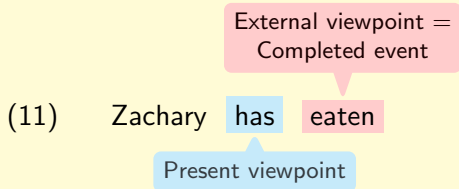
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A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

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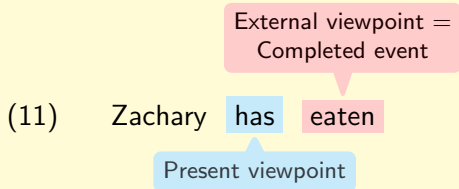
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A completed event with a viewpoint located in the present.

So what's the difference between the following?

(12) Zachary has eaten

(13) Zachary ate

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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

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(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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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 HARRIS

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(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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(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?

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**

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Do support

(31) Does he do it?

(32) He did n't do it

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

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- (33) I have_{Aux} **occasionally** seen_V shooting stars
- (34) Jake is_{Aux} **really** motoring_V down the home straight
- (35) 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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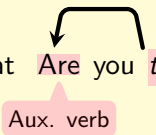
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Why are the following sentences incorrect? Can you correct them?

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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Borjars & Burridge, Chapter 6