

## Aspect Annotation Guidelines

This task is about aspect. Aspect is usually grouped as part of a larger linguistic system including tense and mood; however, it is distinct from both. While tense describes where in time an event takes place, aspect is the “lens” through which the event is viewed. For example, the events in both (1) and (2) take place in the past, but they differ through their aspect, meaning different parts of the event are emphasised.

- (1) Anna was walking to the park.
- (2) Anna walked to the park.

In (1) the continuous aspect is used, meaning the emphasis is on the act of walking to the park, whereas in (2) the emphasis is on the end of the event, i.e. the fact that Anna reached the park. This is why (3) makes sense, but (4) does not.

- (3) Anna was walking to the park when she saw Ben.
- (4) Anna walked to the park when she saw Ben.



Your task is to classify the verb phrases in the context of the following sentences as one of 5 aspect classes. This annotation distinguishes five base-level aspectual values: State, Habitual, Activity, Endeavor, and Performance.

The **State** value corresponds to stative events: no change occurs during the event. This is also used for modal verbs (*want*, *need* etc.).

*I am a doctor.* – *The glass is shattered.* – *They have a cat.* – *He's lying on the bed.*<sup>1</sup>

The **Habitual** value is annotated on events that occur usually or often.

*I usually wake up at 7.* – *I go to work by bike.*

The **Activity** value indicates a process where it is not clear whether the event has come to an end. This also covers events in the present tense.

*He was writing his paper yesterday.* – *She was phoning someone when I saw her.*  
– *He is singing.* – *They started to laugh.* – *She kept on playing the violin.*

**Endeavor** is used for processes that end without reaching completion/termination (i.e. an end-point inherent in the process itself).

*They mowed the lawn for 30 minutes.* – *We were walking until dusk.*

**Performance** is used for processes that reach a completed result state.

*He denied any wrongdoing.* – *We reached the summit in 4 hours.*

Some sentences have several possible interpretations. For example: “Let the streets be **filled** with song” could be both a state and an endeavor. This is an important part of the annotation. In this case, please enter all classes which are plausible, separated by a comma.

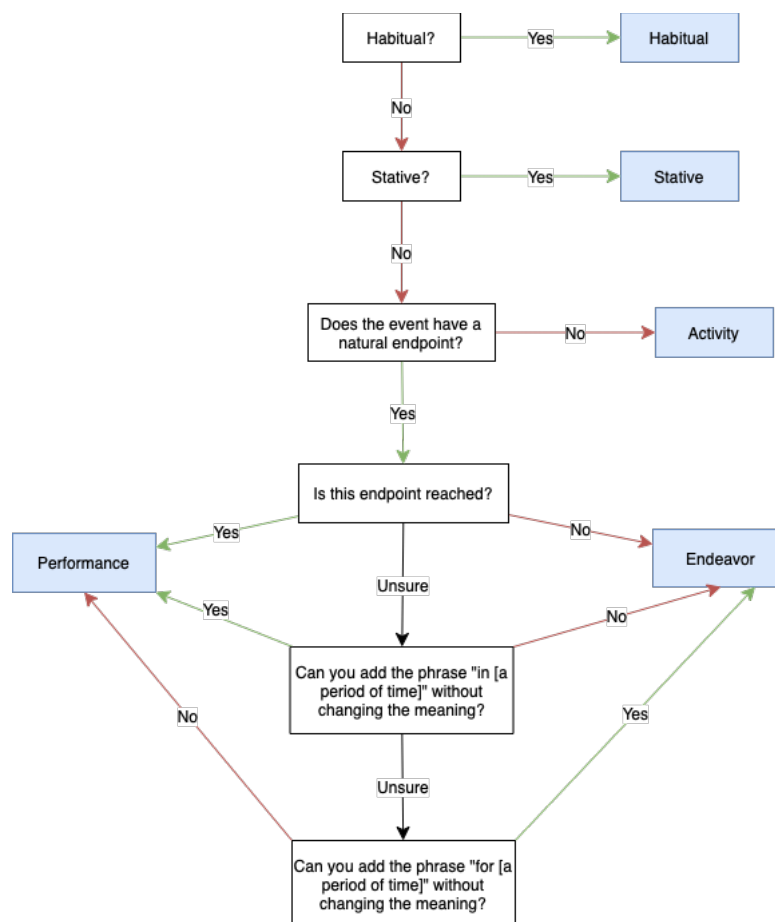
---

<sup>1</sup> This example is ambiguous and could also refer to an activity since it is a so-called “inactive action”.

For convenience, please just enter the *first letter* of the correct class corresponding to the sentence, as in the table shown. See below for an example.

State	S
Habitual	H
Activity	A
Endeavor	E
Performance	P

For further guidance, see the official [UMR guidelines](#) or the following flowchart:



If you are unsure, please enter which of the 5 classes you think fits best, along with a ‘Y’ in the ‘Unsure?’ column.

Example:

Sentence	Class	Unsure
He was writing his paper yesterday.	A	
He's lying on the bed.	A,S	
This sentence is hard to figure out.	S	Y