## **LEAST**  (lēst)

*adj.*A superlative of [**little**](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/little)

**1.**Lowest in importance or rank.

**2. a.**Smallest in magnitude or degree. ; **b.**Slightest or tiniest: *didn't care the least bit. adv.*Superlative of **little**

To or in the lowest or smallest degree.

*n.*

One that is the lowest or smallest in importance, rank, magnitude, or degree: *The dinner menu is the least of myworries tonight. The least you can do is to be polite.*

***Idioms:***

***at least***

**1.**According to the lowest possible assessment; not less than: *We waited at least an hour.*

**2.**Regardless of what has occurred or will occur; in any case: *You might at least answer the letter.*

**3.**Used to emphasize a somewhat positive aspect following a negative one: *The results weren't encouraging, but atleast they were accurate.*

***in the least***

At all: *I don't mind in the least.*

***least of all***

Particularly not: *Nobody cared, least of all the manager.*

## Definition of at the (very) least

—used to indicate the least thing that is true, acceptable, desirable, or certain to happen

* He wanted to win the race, or at the least, to finish second.
* It will change your life or, at the very least, teach you something new.
* At the very least, she deserves to be heard.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **WITH**  In such locutions, {intransitive verb} **with** {noun}, the object of the preposition **with** is that which causes or motivates, or informs the action expressed by the verb.  He bounced with joy.  Joy made him bounce.  He roared with laughter.  Laughter made him roar.  He danced with glee.  Glee made him dance.  He shuddered with fear.  Fear made him shudder.  He seethed with anger.  Anger made him seethe.  The meaning is:  He was so joyful, he was bouncing.  He was laughing so hard and so loudly, he roared.  He was so gleeful, he was dancing.  He was so afraid, he shuddered.  He was so angry, he was seething.  As you can see from the examples, usually the {verb} is figurative or exaggerated. People do not actually reach a *boil* when they are angry, and they don't actually bounce like a ball when they're happy, though they might jump up and down. <https://ell.stackexchange.com/questions/90144/roar-with-laughter-is-american-or-british> |

# 

# “**Should**” **versus** “**would**”

# The NOAD reports the following notes about **should** and **would**: The traditional rule is that **should** is used with first person pronouns (I and we), as in I said I **should** be late, and **would** is used with second and third persons (you, he, she, it, they), as in you didn't say you **would** be late.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| up vote7down vote | The trouble here is that should has many meanings depending on the context.   * It can imply obligation   You should check your oil level.   * It can imply probability   He should have finished checking the oil level by now.   * It can represent a condition   If I should run out of oil, what then?   * It is the past tense of shall   I told him he should have checked his oil level.  Nowadays, as your NOAD quote says, would is used where should used to be.  Consider "I should like a new car." This is valid but sounds old-fashioned. Here the use of shouldimplies a kind of politeness: you're not presuming that you deserve a new car. Nowadays you'd more likely hear "I would like a new car" or the contracted "I'd like a new car."   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | [share](https://english.stackexchange.com/a/10079)[improve this answer](https://english.stackexchange.com/posts/10079/edit) | [edited Apr 21 '13 at 18:56](https://english.stackexchange.com/posts/10079/revisions)  [[https://i.stack.imgur.com/jSlyx.gif?s=32&g=1](https://english.stackexchange.com/users/2085/tchrist)](https://english.stackexchange.com/users/2085/tchrist)  [tchrist](https://english.stackexchange.com/users/2085/tchrist)**♦**  **99.9k**26261422 | answered Jan 26 '11 at 11:33  user3444 | |
|  | * I guess that *would* doesn't imply obligation. I would not say *you would check your oil level*. I also give to *I would not say that* a different meaning than to *I should not say that*. – [kiamlaluno](https://english.stackexchange.com/users/252/kiamlaluno) [Jan 26 '11 at 12:25](https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/10066/should-versus-would#comment16856_10079)   Top of Form  Bottom of Form  add a comment |
| up vote1down vote | '**should**' implies that a constraint or obligation is anticipated:  I said I should be late.  It implies that there is something inhibiting my being on time or that I'll deliberately choose to be late.  '**would**' implies a degree of certainty:  I said I would be late.  I'm going to be late and that's it.  '**could**' implies possibility:  I said I could be late.  I'll try to be on time, but something might happen to prevent me. |

# [***When should I use “Would”, “Would have”, “Will”, and “Will have”?***](https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/3657/when-should-i-use-would-would-have-will-and-will-have)

This question is quite broad, and I find it quite hard to come up with an answer that is comprehensive yet succinct, technically impeccable yet easy to understand. At the risk of failing miserably, I'll give it a try nonetheless.

Will, would, and have are auxiliary verbs used to form different [tenses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_tense).

Will is used to form Future Simple, to describe something that takes place in the future.

* I will be there.  
  ⇒ I am not there. But I plan to be there at some point in the future.
* I will do that.  
  ⇒ I am not doing it right now. But I plan to do it at some point in the future.

Will have is used to form Future Perfect, to describe something that not simply takes place in the future, but is completed ("perfected") at some reference point in the future (which is usually specified).

* I will have done that by the end of the week.  
  ⇒ I will do that, and at the reference point (end of the week), my action will be over; I will be able to say "I have done it".

Would is a past-tense form of will. If you are writing about past events, you can use it to indicate something that was in the future at that point in time, but is not necessarily in the future right now. In other words, you use would to preserve the future aspect when talking about the past.

* She said that she would visit me.  
  ⇒ This is the same as: She said, "I will visit you". It's called making verb tenses "agree".
* I thought she would have visited me by now, but she hasn't.

Would is also used as a modal verb to indicate a conditional or subjunctive mood, or to "soften" what is being said:

* I would love to see that movie.
* If I had a hammer, I would use it as often as possible.
* Would you give me that book, please?

I realize that I have omitted a few things (say, Future Perfect Continuous). Again, that was a conscious decision for the sake of simplicity. <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/3657/when-should-i-use-would-would-have-will-and-will-have>

**HAD BETTER**

**phrase** You use had better or 'd better when you are advising, warning, or threatening someone, or expressing an opinion about what should happen.    
It's half past two. I think we had better go home..., You'd better run if you're going to get your ticket...     <http://dictionary.reverso.net/english-cobuild/you'd%20better%20behave%20yourself>

COME vs. CAME

The past participle of the verb to come is **come**, so you should say “I have come to a place where…”. came is the past tense (or preterite), so you would say “I came to a place where…”.

"I have come to a place where[…]" is correct, as I have come is the present perfect tense. Came is used in sentences like "I came to visit you", where the used tense is the simple past.

When to use the present perfect, and when to use the simple past, is then [a different topic](https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/1357/present-perfect-tense-versus-past-tense).

**OVER, FOR, IN (…the past years)**

Over the past 20 years the government has been unstable (from time to time).  
For the past 20 years the government has been unstable (continually).  
In the past 20 years the government has been unstable (on one or more occasions but that instability may well be over).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ALWAYS**   |  | | --- | | Basically, there isn't a specific rule. It depends on what you want to say. If it's a normal action in the present ? use Simple Present. If it's in the past ? use Simple Past. If it's in the future, use Simple Future, etc.  **Examples:**  I always arrive home at 8 o'clock. (Simple Present) He was always so nice to us. (Simple Past) I will always love you. (Simple Future) I have always hated the winter. (Present Perfect) They are always complaining about something. (Present Progressive)  And so forth :) | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**HAVE & HAD**

You are asking (whether you realize it or not) the difference between the simple past tense (“I had”) and the present perfect tense (“I’ve had”). The simple past tense indicates that something happened in the past—pretty simple. The tricky tense is the present perfect because it implies that the action or state has some consequence or effect in the present.

“I had a hard week last week.” This is a statement about the past which has no clear or implied connection to the present.

“I’ve had a hard week.” In this case you are implying that there is some effect in the present such as “that’s why I’m tired now” or “that’s why I seem upset.”

**Bad or Badly?**

"I would feel bad if I treated you badly."

That's an illustration of the correct use of the words *bad*and *badly.*

*Bad/badly*is a grammar point that trips up many of us. Even people who are very careful about their speech and writing are confused about those two words. They say "feel badly," which is **incorrect**.

Here are the rules and examples.

With the verb *feel*, use adjective forms, like these:

Sarah feels confident. (not confidently)  
Vic feels happy. (not happily)  
Kwame feels proud. (not proudly)  
Mina feels bad. (not badly)

In the examples above, the word after *feels* describes the subject: confident Sarah, happy Vic, proud Kwame, bad Mina. (It's as though Mina is blaming herself: "Bad Mina!")

With action verbs, use adverb forms, like these:

Sarah smiled confidently.  
Vic sang happily.  
Kwame stood proudly.  
Mina typed badly.

When you hear someone say "I feel badly," don't correct him or her. That would be rude and the person might take the correction *badly*. Instead kindly ask, "Why do you feel bad?" or respond, "I'm sorry you feel bad." I use this subtle approach with my 11-year-old daughter all the time, and she doesn't feel *bad* about it at all.

Send your grammar questions. I will be happy to respond.

*Lynn http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business\_writing/2006/02/bad\_or\_badly.html*

# **Can or could?**

Like [may and might](http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/04/may-or-might-whats-the-difference/), can and could cause a lot of confusion.

Understanding how all the modal verbs are used is vital to speaking and writing English effectively and idiomatically, so let’s explore the meanings and uses of can and could. Given that these are quite complex verbs, I’d like to focus on explaining some key points (otherwise this post would be verging on a book chapter, lengthwise). If you’re interested in exploring other issues, I recommend consulting a reference book, such as [Practical English Usage](http://elt.oup.com/catalogue/items/global/grammar_vocabulary/practical_english_usage/) by Michael Swan, which is written for learners of English but which is also useful for native English speakers who don’t have specialist grammatical knowledge.

### Can and could

The main ways in which the verb can is used are given below. In some cases, could functions as the past tense of can, but there are some important usage differences between the two.

**1.) Can is used to say that someone or something is able to do something, either now, or as a natural characteristic, as a continuing skill, as something learnt:**

After five operations, today he ***can*** walk and run.

A sea snake ***can*** live its whole life without ever touching land.

**Can** you speak Greek?

* We tend to use could as the past tense of can to talk about ability in the past:

I ***could*** hear Beth sniggering and cringed in embarrassment.

Mozart ***could*** play the piano blindfolded.

By the 1970s, jumbo jets ***could***fly almost anywhere non-stop.

**2.) When talking about what is possible in a given situation, or about an opportunity that is open to someone, use can or be able to:**

By joining a club or gym, you ***can*** meet so many people.

Parents ***can*** save money by booking their holiday outside the peak season.

I ***can*** go to London tomorrow as I’ve got the day off.

* We use could to talk about less definite aspects of possibility or suggested options, either now or in the future:

We ***could*** go for a walk now and then have dinner.

There ***could*** be a storm later.

She ***could*** be in line for a top government job.

It would be acceptable to use can in the first example, where a suggestion is being discussed (We ***can*** go for a walk now…), but this would make the suggestion or option more definite. It’s not idiomatic English to use can in the second and third examples though, which refer to a hypothetical future situation which, although possible, may well not happen:

**X** There ***can*** be a storm later.

**X**She ***can*** be in line for a top government job.

[It’s also possible to use [may and might](http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/04/may-or-might-whats-the-difference/) here, rather than could.]

* We use could have to refer to something that was an option or generally possible in the past but didn’t happen:

She never stopped daydreaming about the life she ***could have*** lived in Greece.

**3.) Can is used to talk about being allowed to do something now or in general:**

Resorts ***can*** only be built on deserted islands, and must have their own generators.

You ***can***have an hour for lunch, except on Fridays.

* If you’re referring to a general past situation when something was allowed, use could:

The Americans were under instructions that no-one ***could*** smoke indoors.

But if something was only permitted on a particular past occasion, it is more common to use a different wording rather than could, for example:

**√**  I ***was allowed*** to leave work early today as I had to go to the dentist.

**X** I ***could*** leave work early today as I had to go to the dentist.

* See the section on **Can and could versus may and might** below with regard to asking for permission, making requests, etc.

### Could

So far, we’ve seen that could is often used as the past tense of can. Other important meanings and uses include the following.

* Use could (not can) to refer to conditional situations, in which something has to happen or be the case in order for someone to be able to do something or for something else to occur:

We ***could*** buy a new sofa if we stop eating takeaway meals every night.

* People often use could (never can) to talk about completely unrealistic situations, so as to deliberately exaggerate how they’re feeling at a particular time:

***√***    I’m so angry, I ***could***murder her.

**X** I’m so angry, I ***can***murder her.

To refer to a past unrealistic situation or strong inclination, use could have:

She was so thirsty, she ***could have*** drunk a gallon of water.

He irritated me so much that I ***could have*** screamed.

* Could have is also used (in a similar way to might) to show annoyance when you think someone should have done something, but they didn’t:

You ***could have*** told me that she wouldn’t be at work today!

### Can or could versus may or might

This section provides more information on some points outlined in the [may and might](http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/04/may-or-might-whats-the-difference/) post, concentrating on the way these verbs are used to make offers and requests and to ask for and give permission.

**1.) Requests and offers**

* When making a request for something, the most usual way to do this in everyday English is to use canor could:

**Can** I have two coffees please?

**Could** I have two coffees please? [more polite than can]

Although can and could are perfectly acceptable, some people prefer to use may in such cases, as it’s regarded as more polite and more formal:

**May**I have two coffees please?

Nowadays, using might to make requests is generally reserved for very formal situations and to make the request sound more like a polite suggestion than a firm instruction:

**Might**I ask the Court to glance briefly at the judgment of Sir Harry Gibbs?

* When making an offer, can is the most frequent way of doing this in everyday English; could is used when we want the offer to sound more tentative; may is more formal and more polite:

**Can** I get you another drink?

**Could** I help you in any way?

**May** I get you another drink?

**2.) Asking for and giving/refusing permission**

* The most typical way of asking for permission in today’s English is to use can, or if you want to sound more polite, could:

**Can** I borrow your pen?

**Could** I borrow your pen?

Although this is part of standard English, many people believe that can and could are incorrect within the context of permission and should be reserved for talking only about ability and possibility, and thus it is advisable to use may in more formal writing and speaking (might is regarded as very formal):

**May** I borrow your pen?  [polite, formal]

**Might**I borrow your pen?  [rare, polite, very formal]

* When giving (or refusing) permission, only can (or can’t) and may (or may not) are acceptable, can being subject to the same caveats as when asking permission to do something:

***√***    Yes, you ***can*** (borrow my pen) [everyday English, considered incorrect by some]

***√***   Yes, you ***may*** (borrow my pen).  [more polite/formal]

***X***   Yes, you ***could*** (borrow my pen).

**X**  Yes, you ***might*** (borrow my pen).

**√**   No, you ***can’t***(borrow my pen). [everyday English, considered incorrect by some]

***√***    No, you ***may not*** (borrow my pen).  [more polite/formal]

**X**  No, you ***could not*** (borrow my pen).

**X**  No, you ***might not***(borrow my pen).

Incidentally, can, could, and might would be acceptable answers if you wanted to express possibility or conditionality rather than give permission. For example: yes, you could borrow my pen would imply that yes, if I had a pen, it would be possible for you to borrow it.

That’s all for now: I hope this has clarified some aspects of can and could. More on modals in future blogs!

<https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2013/07/01/can-or-could/>

The Markers**SA**and**KAY/KINA**

A. **SA**

There is one more set of markers that goes with nouns: **SA** and **KAY/KINA**. The marker**SA** has many different meanings. In the most general sense, **SA** is a marker that deals with direction and location. It covers the meaning of most prepositions in English.

If we break down the word **preposition**, we see it is made up of the Latin based component **pre** which means *"before*", and **position** which means *"position*". So a preposition is a word that is positioned before another word (its like a marker).    
  
For example, in the sentence

Go **to** the house,

**to** is a preposition. In English grammar, it is often said that a preposition is anything that a squirrel can do to a tree (it can go through the tree, around the tree, up the tree, down the tree, etc.). Well, in Tagalog, instead of having a whole lot of different prepositions they just have one: **SA**. The marker **SA** is a very broad word that is used anytime the speaker is talking about the location or direction of something. The exact meaning of **SA** depends on the context.

It is important to note that, like **NG**, the words marked by **SA** are not in focus.

Functions of the maker **SA**  
  
1. **SA** marks location. Most prepositional phrases in English indicating some location are expressed in Tagalog as **SA***-*phrases. Below are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| May party **sa bahay ko** sa Sabado. | There's going to be a party ***at my house***on Saturday. |
| Nakatira ako **sa San Juan Village**. | I live ***in San Juan Village****.* |
| Nag-aaral si Maya **sa Unibersidad ng     Pilipinas.** | Maya studies***at the University of       the Philippines****.* |
| Nagluluto ang nanay **sa kusina**. | Mom is cooking***in the kitchen****.* |

2. **SA** marksdirection. Prepositional phrases in English indicating some direction towards or away from a place, a person, or some other noun are also generally expressed as **SA***-*phrases in Tagalog. Below are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pumunta sila **sa Zamboanga** noong     bakasyon. | They went***to Zamboanga***last vacation*.* |
| Umalis siya **sa klase** nang maaga. | He left ***(from) the class****early.* |
| Ibinigay niya ang bulaklak **sa nanay**. | He gave the flowers***to mother****.* |
| Kinuha niya ang libro **sa akin**. | He got the book***from me****.* |

3.**SA** marks the beneficiary of an action. It is equivalent to the English *for-*phrase in the context of doing something for someone/something. Look at the following sentence for example:

I baked a cake **for Bill**.

In this sentence, I let you know that I baked a cake, and I baked it for Bill. Bill benefits from my action of making a cake, so we say that Bill is the beneficiary of the action. In English, the beneficiary of the action is marked by the word *for*. In Tagalog, whenever **SA** marks the beneficiary of an action it always follows the word **PARA** (from Spanishmeaning*for*).  Below are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gumawa siya ng eksamen **para sa klase**. | She made an exam***for the class****.* |
| Naghanda kami ng sorpresa **para sa     tatay.** | We prepared a surprise***for dad****.* |
| Bumili si Ana ng regalo **para sa asawa     niya.** | Ana bought a gift***for her husband****.* |
| Nagdala si Butch ng laruan **para sa bata**. | Butch brought a toy ***for the kid****.* |

4. **SA** marks a future time expressed as a specific day/date/season.  Below are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| May trabaho ako **sa Lunes**. | I have work***on Monday****.* |
| Uuwi si Ellen sa Cebu **sa Pasko**. | Ellen is going home to Cebu***at     Christmas****.* |
| Magtatapos siya ng pag-aaral **sa      summer**. | She is graduating***in the summer****.* |
| Kaarawan ni Jun **sa Pebrero 16**. | It is Jun's birthday ***on February 16****.* |

http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/_themes/nature/anarule.gif

B.**KAY**and**KINA**

The markers**KAY** and **KINA** take the place of **SA** when the noun being marked is a name of a person (like Bob, Jane,  etc.).  It occurs in the same way that **SI** and **SINA** replace **ANG**, or **NI** and **NINA** replace **NG**when dealing with personal names. **KAY** marks the name of a person, and **KINA** marks the names of two or more persons.  These markers have some of the functions of **SA**.

Functions of the markers **KAY** and **KINA**

1. **KAY** and **KINA** mark location. Here are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Nandoon **kay Rudy** ang libro mo. | Your book is***with Rudy****.* |
| Naroon **kay Tina** ang gamit mo. | Your stuff is***with Tina.*** |
| May salu-salo **kina Aida**. | There's a get-together***at Aida's.*** |
| Nakatira ako **kina Tiya Selma**. | I am staying***at Aunt Selma's.*** |

2. **KAY** and **KINA** mark direction. Any prepositional phrase  that indicates some kind of movement toward or away from someone is expressed using one of these markers. Here are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dadalaw ako **kay Lola** **Sela** bukas. | I am going to visit***Grandmother Sela***tomorrow**.** |
| Ibinigay ni Ana ang susi **kay Sally**. | Ana gave the key***to Sally.*** |
| Umalis siya **kina Mrs. Santos**. | He left***(from) Mrs. Santos' place.*** |
| Itinago ni Luz ang libro (mula) **kina     Pedro at Juan**. | Luz hid the the book***from Pedro and Juan.*** |

3. **KAY** and **KINA** mark the beneficiary of an action. Just like **SA**, **KAY**/**KINA***-*phrases are almost equal to English *for-*phrases expressing the idea of an action done for someone. The marker is always preceded by the word **PARA** (from Spanish meaning *for*).  Below are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gumawa ako ng cake **para kay Kit**. | I baked a cake***for Kit.*** |
| Binili ko ang bulaklak **para kay Ida**. | I bought the flowers***for Ida.*** |
| Nagluto ako ng adobo **para kina Rita     at Carlo**. | I cooked adobo***for Rita and Carlo.*** |
| Itinago ko ang mga sulat **para kina    Susan**. | I kept the letters***for Susan and company.*** |

4. **KAY** and **KINA** mark the possessor when it comes before the noun possessed. Structurally, the *possessor-*phrase is used as a *modifier* of the noun possessed. Thus,  the linker **NA** (i.e., -**ng** or **na**) is required between the two nouns. This function is limited to spoken discourse in its use. Here are some examples:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **kay** Maria**ng** kapatid | *Maria's*brother |
| **kay** Bob **na** kotse | *Bob's*car |
| **kina** Lita**ng** hardin | *Lita's*family's garden |
| **kina** Mr. Ramos **na** bahay | *Mr. Ramos'*family's house |

Putting the pieces together

Now that we have talked about the different types of markers, let's take a close look at how they work.

red=focused word (ang)   blue=relational word (ng)   green=location word (sa)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dinala | ng doktor | ang elepante | sa ospital. |
| Carried (verb) | the doctor | the elephant | to the hospital. |

The sentence above is saying that the doctor carried the elephant to the hospital. The word *elepante*is the focus of the sentence. *Elepante* is the most prominent part of the sentence. Because of the affix in the verb (don't worry, we will explain this later), we know that the focused word (*elephant*) is the one being carried. The marker sa let's us know that the elephant was carried to the hospital. *Doktor* is the relational word. Because of the context, the marker ng indicates that the *doctor*is the doer of the action (the doctor is the one carrying).

If we switch markers:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dinala | ang doktor | ng elepante | sa ospital. |
| Carried (verb) | the doctor | the elephant | to the hospital. |

This sentence is now saying that the elephant carried the doctor to the hospital. *Doktor*is now the focus and is being carried to the hospital and the *elepante* is now the relational word and is doing the carrying.

And now for one more switch:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dinala | ng ospital | ang doktor | sa elepante |
| Carried | the hospital | the doctor | to the elephant |

Here, the hospital carryed the doctor to the elephant. In order to fully understand how all this works, we need to understand more about verbs first. However, at this point you can see the way that a marker assigns a word its role in the sentence. If you change the marker, you change the whole meaning of the sentence! Cool huh?

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Grammar%20Activities/Grammar%201/Markers/Sa&Kay.htm>

# Writers Tip #5: Beware the gerund

*Posted on*[March 29, 2010](https://worddreams.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/writers-tip-5-beware-the-gerund/)*by*[JACQUI MURRAY](https://worddreams.wordpress.com/author/worddreams/)[12 Comments](https://worddreams.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/writers-tip-5-beware-the-gerund/#comments)

**When you read your story, does it sound off? Maybe you can’t quite put your finger on it, but you know you’ve done something wrong?**

**Sometimes–maybe even lots of times–there are simple fixes. I’ll point them out. They’ll come at you once a week, giving you plenty of time to go through your story and make the adjustments. Add comments with your favorite editing fixes.**

A gerund is a verb that ends in -ing and functions as a noun.

* learning
* running
* asking

Too many gerunds make your writing passive. You take a wonderful verb, attach it to the passive ***is***or ***was***and water down the energy of your action. Here’s how to fix it:

* Wrong: He was learning how to ice skate
* Right: He learned how to ice skate, or He took ice skating classes
* Wrong: He was looking out the window
* Right: He looked out the window
* Wrong: He was running down the street
* Right: He ran down the street
* Wrong: He was asking where the book store was
* Right: He asked where the book store was

All gerunds aren’t bad or I would have said: Delete the gerund. Just watch them.

https://worddreams.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/writers-tip-5-beware-the-gerund/

**TRAIN OF THOUGHT**

The phrase suggests that the thinker is wandering along playing with an idea as they go whereas ‘trail’ would suggest that thinker might be following along behind someone else’s train of thought. <https://www.quora.com/Is-the-saying-a-train-trail-of-thought>

**I MISSED YOU OR I HAVE MISSED YOU:**

Any of those comments on the phone would work.  
  
As for the differences between the sentences in your title, it's a question of straightforward elementary grammar:  
  
'I have missed you' (present perfect) - This is talking about the period from the time we parted until now.  
  
'I missed you' (past simple) - I missed you during the time that we were apart. I don't miss you now, because we are together again or back in contact.  
  
'I miss you' (present simple) - This is talking about now. <https://www.italki.com/question/306208>

**SHE DARE VS. SHE DARES**

The answer why 'She dare not interrupt Bruno' is correct is quite simple to answer.   
  
  
We must look at the fact that the verb 'dare' can be treated both as an [b]ordinary, transitive verb (1)[/b] and as a [b]modal auxiliary verb (2)[/b]   
  
  
(1) An ordinary, transitive verb is conjugated with an 's' for the third-person singular (he/she/it) and followed by the 'to'-infinitive form of the object's verb, as in   
  
  
[b][i]'She dares to interrupt Bruno'[/b][/i]   
  
  
As widely known, in order to negate a normal verb, we have to put a form of 'to do', conjugated with respect to the person:   
  
  
[b][i]'She doesn't dare to interrupt Bruno.[/b][/i]   
  
  
(2) In contrast, a modal auxiliary verb is not conjugated with respect to the person and always needs an object. Furthermore, the verb for the object is NOT preceded by 'to'.   
  
  
Typical modal auxiliary verbs are: [b]can, may, might, must[/b] or [b]'dare'[/b] as well.   
  
  
[b][i]'She dare interrupt Bruno'[/b][/i]   
  
  
or, in the negated form   
  
  
[b][i]'She dare not interrupt Bruno'.[/b][/i]   
  
  
If this sounds strange, bear in mind that with another auxiliary verb, 'can', the sentence has basically the same structure: [b]'She can interrupt Bruno'[/b] or [b]'She cannot interrupt Bruno'[/b].   
  
  
To my knowledge, there is no strict rule as when to use 'dare' as ordinary verb or modal auxiliary verb.   
I suppose ('I dare say') that in written English, 'dare' as ordinary verb is preferred.   
  
  
Basically, both versions 'She doesn't dare to interrupt Bruno' and 'She dare not interrupt Bruno' are equivalent.   
  
  
As to the list of possible answers in the exercise, I assume 'She doesn't dare to interrupt' was not the list. <https://forum.gymglish.com/discussion/9012/she-dare-or-she-dares>

# Awhile vs. a while



**Awhile**is an [adverb](http://grammarist.com/grammar/adverbs/) meaning for a while, and it only works where it would bear replacement with that three-word phrase. Where for a while wouldn’t work in its place, it is probably not an adverb, so it should be two words: **a while**.

|  |
| --- |
| 1 To 1 English native Teachers,  the best way to improve your English! [Click here to find out more!](http://grammarist.com/fluent-english/) |

For instance, in the sentence, “Guests waited awhile for food,” awhile is one word because it is an adverb modifying the verb waited (note also that for a while would work in its place). In the sentences, “We have a while left to wait,” and, “I saw her a while ago,”  a while is two words because while functions as a noun.

Awhile has existed in various spellings since the days of Old English,[1](http://grammarist.com/spelling/awhile-a-while/#fn1) but there is a mistaken belief among some English speakers that the word is a new form and thus questionable. That’s why it is so often unnecessarily rendered as two words. And in fact, if you are not comfortable with the word and are unsure if you’re using it correctly, making it two words is always safe because no one will consider it wrong. But careful writers who understand where to deploy the adverbial awhile need not fear it.

## Examples

But if they give him The Tonight Show back, maybe it ends up all right after a while. [[Hollywood.com](http://www.hollywood.com/news/The_2010_Late_Shift_Post_OBriens_Missive/6460695)]

Starlings foray across the land and rest awhile on the sunlit twigs of ash. [[Guardian](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/dec/04/bells-mulled-wine-sparkling-frost)]

After a while, Rawls came in to let another set of children have a chance. [[Washington Post](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-27/local/36030492_1_central-library-alexandria-library-dogs)]

Crazy Horse watched this awhile and then rode down the river where some men were going out to repair the talking wires. [[Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas]](http://books.google.com/books?id=5jwmu_0J_8wC&pg=PA168&dq=%22awhile%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=xX3jUMPjD4LRqgHC8YGwDQ&ved=0CFkQ6AEwBzhk#v=onepage&q=%22awhile%22&f=false)

We’ve been talking for a while when Baroness Campbell of Surbiton suddenly cuts to the chase, and leaves me speechless. [[Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/british-volunteer-awards/9732203/Baroness-Campbell-Disabled-people-are-the-best-problem-solvers.html)]

Beyond the bar, soft white leather booths beckon you to sit, take off your coat and stay awhile. [[In Arkansas](http://www.inarkansas.com/article/soiree/89714/muy-delicioso-local-lime-wows-with-inventive-menu-hip-vibe)]

<http://grammarist.com/spelling/awhile-a-while/>

**When to use "I" and when to use "me"**

**Wednesday February 29th 2012**

**Question**

When to use "I" and when to use "me"

**Answer**

#### Question

Pat from Australia asked: Which of the sentences below is correct and why?

* Jill took Justin and I to the shop.
* Jill took Justin and me to the shop.

#### **"Could," "can," and "would"**

#### Answer

This is a part of a bigger question that troubles both learners and native speakers of English:  when to use I and when to use me.

**The difference between I and me**

Both I and me are 1st person singular pronouns, which means that they are used by one person to refer to himself or herself. I is the subject pronoun, used for the one "doing" the verb, as in these examples:

* I am studying for a Russian test. (I is the subject of am studying.)
* I can speak Russian, but I can't read it very well. (I is the subject of can speak and can’t read.)

Me is the object pronoun, used as the object (or receiver) of the action of the verb, as in these examples:

* My math teacher encouraged me to come for extra help after school. (Me is the object of encouraged.)
* She asked me to bring my homework. (Me is the object of asked.)

**The confusing part**

What gets confusing for many people is which form to use when there are two subjects or objects linked with and, as in these examples:

a. Jenny and me/I (?) joined the chess club.

b. Jill took Justin and me/I (?) to the shop.

In sentence a), Jenny and me/I are the subjects of the verb joined. Therefore, the subject pronoun, I, is considered correct. You will certainly hear native speakers say, “Jenny and me,” and it may be acceptable in spoken English, but most traditional grammarians and English teachers will disapprove. Don’t use it in writing.

The opposite is true for sentence b), which is the original example from above. Justin and me/I are the objects of took. Therefore me is considered correct by most grammarians and teachers, although you will hear people say, “Justin and I.” Again, don't use it in writing.

**Hint**   
If you’re having trouble deciding which one to use in a particular sentence, here's a hint: Take out the other person, and it should be clearer. You are not likely to be tempted to say, “Me joined the chess club,” or “Jill took I to the shop.”

I hope this helps. <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/qa/when-to-use-i-and-when-to-use-me>

Could, can, and would can be confusing in English. Editor **Kory Stamper**gives an explanation of how they are used.

Could, would, and can are all modal verbs (for more on some modal verbs, click [here](http://learnersdictionary.com/blog.php?action=ViewBlogArticle&ba_id=36)), and they can be difficult to master. Let's look at each one separately, and then compare some of their more confusing uses.

Can has many uses as a modal verb, but there are three uses that can be confusing to an English learner. These are: when can is used to describe ability ("I can change the oil in my car without help."), ask for permission ("Can I go to the movies tonight?"), or say whether something is possible or not ("Do you think he can win the race?"). Can is also used to suggest something might happen in the future ("If you finish your homework, we can go to the movies.").

Can, like could and would, is used to ask a polite question, but can is only used to ask permission to do or say something ("Can I borrow your car?" "Can I get you something to drink?").

Could is the past tense of can, but it also has uses apart from that--and that is where the confusion lies. When could is used as the past tense of can, it refers to an ability that a person generally had in the past or to something that was generally possible in the past ("When I was younger, I could run for miles," or "It used to be you could buy lunch for a dollar.").

Like can, could can be used of possibility as well, but the connotation is slightly different. In the sentence "We can have as many as ten people for dinner tonight," can is used to show ability ("We are able to have as many as ten people for dinner tonight;" “We have enough food/space for ten people.”).

By contrast, when could is used in this way, it refers to something that you believe is likely to be true or to happen. In the sentence "We could have as many as ten people come to dinner tonight," could is used to say that it is possible that ten people will come to the speaker’s home for dinner ("I think that it is possible we will have as many as ten people for dinner tonight.").

Could is also used to refer to something that you wish to have or do but that is not possible ("If only we could be free of this tyrant!"). It’s also used to describe something that was possible but did not happen, used with the verb have ("We could have won if we had practiced harder."). Could can also express annoyance or another strong emotion ("He could have asked me if I needed help!" or "I could have died I was so embarrassed!"), but can isn’t used this way.

When making general polite suggestions or asking a question, both couldand can are possible ("Excuse me, can/could you tell me what time it is?").

Would is a little easier to understand because it is not related to could or can, and its uses are more specific. Would is used to talk about a possible situation that has not happened or that you are imagining ("I would quit my job if I won the lottery."), and it is also used with have to describe a situation that could have happened but did not ("She would have eaten less if she had known there was going to be dessert.").

Like could, would is used to describe something that you think is likely to be true or likely to happen ("I think the meal would [=could] feed ten people." "He said he would help me with this set of exercises when he gets home.").

Would can also be used to ask polite questions ("Would you mind if I had another cup of tea?"), or to wish for something ("I wish she would write a book."). It has several distinct uses that can and could do not, however: it is used to give opinions ("I wouldn't do that if I were you," or "I would say that she is in her 30s. [=it is my opinion that she is between 30 and 39 years old]"); it is used to express a willingness to do something ("I would be happy to take her to the airport"); and it is used to express frustration with something that you believe a person always does ("Well, he would say that, wouldn't he?  He always says that!"). <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/qa/could-can-and-would>

**HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?**

Hi,  
  
I am not sure which of the following should be used:  
  
David told me on the phone last night that he was going to propose to Sarah. I couldn't believe it. How could this happen / How could this have happened?  
  
I'd appreciate your help.

I'm not bothered by the use of "happen." However, "happen" seems to suggest that there was an external factor/agent that caused David to propose, which would be sort of illogical (obviously, David proposed because he wanted to propose), but that's ok; the speaker is entitled to have an emotional/illogical reaction to the proposal, (he is human, after all). Perhaps the speaker loves Sarah, or maybe be loves David. Of course, you can always try a different construction, such as *How could this be?*  
  
As to the difference between "happen" and "have happened," it's simply a matter of temporal perspective. In "How could this happen," *happen*is an infinitive, and infinitives don't show tense. The result is that "happen" is *atemporal,* independent of "time:" *How could this****happen****?* If we wanted "happen" to refer specifically to the "past," then we use the perfect form, which is how a past tense *marker* is added to infinitives: *How could this****have happened****?*   
  
Either "happen" or "have happened" is fine (it's a stylistic choice, rather than a grammatical requirement); the temporal perspective of this verb doesn't alter the basic chronology of events: David's proposal, followed by the phone conversation, followed by the speaker's reaction.

**HAVE SENT**

They're different tenses.

**sent** - [past simple](https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/verbs/past-tense/past-simple) tense

* (for) something that happened once in the past
* (for) something that happened again and again in the past
* (for) something that was true for some time in the past

**have sent** - [present perfect](https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/verbs/present-tense/present-perfect) tense

* for something that started in the past and continues in the present
* for something we have done several times in the past and continue to do

(i.e. actions completed in the present)

**had sent** - [past perfect](https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/english-grammar/verbs/past-tense/past-perfect) tense

* for something that started in the past and continued up to a given time in the past
* for something we had done several times up to a point in the past and continued to do after that point

(i.e. actions completed in the past)

In all cases, the use of "already" jars, unless it's emphasising that the action had taken place by the time in question ([definition 1](https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/already)):

I keep asking you, where's that report?

But I sent you the email already!

I am aware that it's more common in north American (east coast?) English to use it in the form of definition 2 as well - the exasperated "enough already!" use.

## **call up**

1. verb To call someone or something by phone. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call" and "up." *Please callup your mother once in a while.* *I called up the school to find out the status of my application.*

2. verb To call by phone or yell to someone on a higher level of a house or building. A noun or pronoun can be usedbetween "call" and "up." *Call up to the CEO's assistant and tell him that the 3 o'clock interview is here.* *I called up tomy dad to tell him the kitchen sink was still leaking.*

3. verb To invite people to move from a lower level in a particular place to a higher one (such as a stage). A noun orpronoun can be used between "call" and "up." *We will call the graduates up one by one, so be sure to listen for yourname.*

4. verb To cause one to think of or remember someone or something. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call"and "up." *That song calls up many fond memories of my childhood.* *Can we go somewhere else for dinner? That placejust calls my ex-girlfriend up.*

5. verb To initiate a discussion on a particular topic or issue. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call" and "up."*You didn't miss much—Betsy just called up budgetary discrepancies as the next topic of discussion.*

6. verb To utilize something, often a quality or skill. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call" and "up." *Thechampionship game was so intense that I really had to call up my mental toughness just to get through it.*

7. verb To bring someone into active military service. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call" and "up." *Withthis war intensifying, I'm worried that my son will be called up and sent overseas.*

8. verb To retrieve information from a computer. A noun or pronoun can be used between "call" and "up." *Call up thelatest budget report for me, please. I'll need a printed copy for my meeting tomorrow.*

9. verb To give a minor league player a spot on a major league team's roster. A noun or pronoun can be used between"call" and "up." *The pitcher just got called up from the minors, so this will be his first big test.*

10. noun A minor league athlete who has been summoned to play for a major league team (perhaps temporarily). Thisphrase is usually hyphenated when used as a noun. *With so many veterans injured, their roster has a lot of call-upsright now, so it's no surprise they're going to miss the playoffs.*

11. noun The opportunity for a minor league athlete to play for a major league team. This phrase is usually hyphenatedwhen used as a noun. *Because I wasn't a high profile draft pick, I had to start my career in the minors and wait to get acall-up.*

<https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/Call+Me+Up>