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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Question forms



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Neil**

Today's programme is all about questions.

**Sophie**

Yes: we'll take a look at different types of yes-no questions...

**Neil**

We'll hear lots of w-h questions...

**Sophie**

And we'll be using the questions to get to know each other a little bit better.

**Neil**

So if you want a reminder of English question forms...

**Sophie**

Or if you're if you're studying them for the first time...

**Neil**

Keep listening and join in with the task we'll be giving you later on.

**Sophie**

So let's get started.

In English, there are two basic question types: yes/no questions and w-h questions.

**Neil**

And here's Finn with our first yes-no question:

**Finn**

*Can you speak English? Can you speak English?*

**Neil**

Thanks Finn. That's a useful first question.

**Sophie**

Yes, and it's made with the auxiliary verb *can*, plus the subject *you* and a verb: *speak*. *Can you speak? Can you speak English Neil?*

**Neil**

Yes, *I can*. Another question please Finn?

**Finn**

*Do you work every day? Do you work every day?*

**Sophie**

Auxiliary *do*, subject *you*, verb *work*. *Do you work every day, Neil?*

**Neil**

*I don't, no. I don't work at weekends. Finn?*

**Finn**

*Do you have any brothers and sisters?*

**Sophie**

Auxiliary *do*, subject *you*, verb: *have*. *Neil, do you have any brothers or sisters?*

**Neil**

Yes I do I've got one sister. Now another way to make yes-no questions is with the verb *to be* plus a subject. Let's demonstrate. Sophie: *Are you married?*

**Sophie**

*No, Neil, I'm not. Is your boss married?*

**Neil**

*My boss? No, he isn't. Neil, Were you in the office yesterday?*

**Sophie**

*Yes, sadly I was in the office yesterday.*

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Neil**

And we're talking about question forms.

**Sophie**

Now the second main type of question in English starts with either *what*, *where*, *when*, *which*, *why*, *who*, or the odd one out:

**Neil**

... *how*.

**Sophie**

So let's try making a question with *where*. We add an auxiliary...

**Neil**

... such as *do*

**Sophie**

... then we can add a subject plus a verb. For example: Neil: *Where do you live? Where do you live?*

**Neil**

I live in south London. *Where do you live Sophie?*

**Sophie**

I live in north London. Now let's change the question word and the verb. *Which languages do you speak?*

**Neil**

And here we add a noun to *which*: *Which languages do you speak?*

**Sophie**

Just English. And with a different auxiliary: *Which languages can you speak?*

**Neil**

We can add nouns to some of the other question words: *What time do you start work?*

**Sophie**

About 9 o'clock in the morning. And if we ask *What time is it?* We're making a *w-h* question with the verb *to be*. I can ask: *Where were you born?*

**Neil**

I was born in England. *When is your birthday?*

**Sophie**

In September. *What is your work address?*

**Neil**

It's WIA. Lots of useful questions with *to be* there. Now for a very personal question with *to be*: Sophie: *How old are you?*

**Sophie**

You should never ask a woman her age! And for questions with *how*, we usually add an extra word. To ask about age it's:

**Finn**

*How old...*

**Sophie**

For price it's:

**Finn**

*How much...*

**Neil**

For size we ask:

**Finn**

*How big...*

**Sophie**

And for height it's

**Finn**

*How tall.*

**Sophie**

*How tall are you, Neil?*

**Neil**

About 180cm. And of course, you can't answer a *w-h* question with *yes* or *no*. *How tall are you, Sophie?*

**Sophie**

I think we're actually the same height.

**Neil**

Let me see, back to back... No, I'm taller!

Is it time for a practice task Sophie?

**Sophie**

Yes, it is. Join in at home if you like. I'm going to give you a topic to ask me about, and you have to make one *yes/no* question and one *w-h* question. And Neil will give some possible answers. Here's the first topic: Ask me about my age.

**Neil:**

Ok so you could ask: *How old are you? When were you born?*

**Sophie**

Now ask me about my home.

**Neil**

*Do you live with your family? What is your address?*

**Sophie**

Now ask me about my work.

**Neil**

*Do you work near here? How much do you earn?*

**Sophie**

Thanks Neil. And well done to you at home if you joined in with the task.

**Neil**

So that's a look at some basic question types we can use when we're getting to know people. We had *yes/no* questions,

**Sophie**

And we looked at questions starting with *w-h* words.

**Neil**

And we found out some interesting information about each other. I didn't know how tall you were, Sophie?!

**Neil**

I know, it's quite amazing really. And there's lots more about questions forms on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present simple and present continuous



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Sophie**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Sophie.

**Neil**

And me, Neil. Hello.

**Sophie**

Today we're talking about the present simple tense...

**Neil**

...and the present continuous tense. Coming up in today's programme:

**Sophie**

We'll take a look at positives, negatives, and question forms...

**Neil**

We'll find out when to use each tense...

**Sophie**

We'll hear some short forms...

**Neil**

And we'll have a quiz to test what we've learnt.

**Sophie**

But first: the present simple tense. We use it to talk about things that happen regularly. Here's Finn with an example:

**Finn**

*John checks his email every morning.*

**Sophie**

Thanks Finn. So the verb 'to check' is in the present simple – *John checks* – because he checks his email regularly – every morning.

**Neil**

We make the present simple with a subject plus a base verb – *I check, you go, we live, they wear*.

**Sophie**

For *he, she* and *it*, add an 's' to the verb.

**Finn**

*I always **wear** a coat in the winter. My brother **wears** a jacket.*

**Neil**

Now we also use the present simple to talk about facts and permanent situations. So we can say...

**Finn**

*I work in the fashion industry. My sister lives in China.*

**Sophie**

To make the present simple negative, use *don't* or *doesn't*. And there's no 's' on the end of the verb. Finn?

**Finn**

*I don't work in the modelling industry. My brother doesn't like fashion.*

**Neil**

For questions, use *do* or *does*.

**Finn**

*Do your friends live in London? Does John check his email in the morning?*

**Neil**

So that's present simple. Now: let's look at the present continuous tense. [Phone rings] ooh just a minute, let me get that... [to caller] Hello? No sorry, *I'm working at the moment*. Can I call you back? [hangs up phone] Sorry about that everyone...

**Sophie**

No problem...

**Neil**

So: I just said *I'm working at the moment*.

**Sophie**

Aha! A clever demonstration!

**Neil**

That's right – I said *I'm working at the moment*, because it's an activity that's happening now. I can say *I work at the BBC* in the present simple because my job is a permanent situation. But **right now at this moment** I'm doing the activity of working, so I use present continuous to say *I'm working at the moment*.

**Sophie**

Right. As well as activities, we use the present continuous tense for temporary situations like this:

**Finn**

*My parents are staying with me this week. I'm sleeping on the sofa.*

**Sophie**

Sorry to hear that Finn. To make the present continuous, use *am*, *is* or *are* plus an *i-n-g* verb.

**Finn**

*I'm checking my email at the moment. Emily's wearing a pink hat today. They're eating dinner now.*

**Neil**

And did you hear those short forms? The words *I am* are shortened to *I'm*...

**Sophie**

*Emily is* sounds like *Emily's*.

**Neil**

And *they are* sounds like *they're*. We'll have short forms in just a moment.

**IDENT**

You're listening to [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Neil**

And today we're talking about the present simple tense...

**Sophie**

...and the present continuous.

**Neil**

Let's look at present continuous negatives. We make them with the little word *not*.



**Finn**

*I'm **not** wearing a raincoat because it isn't raining.*

**Sophie**

And here are those short forms again:

**Neil**

*I **am not** becomes...*

**Sophie**

*...I'm **not**.*

**Neil**

*Is **not**...*

**Sophie**

*...isn't.*

**Neil**

*And for **are not** we get...*

**Sophie**

*...aren't.*

[Sound of Neil typing.]

**Sophie**

Umm Neil, are you sending an email?

**Neil**

Errr - yes... What are we doing? Are we talking about questions?

**Sophie**

Yes, we are.

**Neil**

Ooh, sorry. OK, back to the programme!

**Sophie**

Aha! Another clever demonstration! I said: *Are you sending an email?*

**Neil**

And I said: *Are we talking about questions?*

**Sophie**

And of course, we both asked present continuous yes/no questions.

**Neil**

And to make them, you just change the word order. Instead of **You are** sending an email, it's **Are you** sending an email? It's fine to put question words like 'Why' or 'What' at the start of the question.

**Finn**

*What are we doing? Why are you sending an email?*

**Neil**

So that's present continuous questions.

**Sophie**

So that means: it's time for a quiz. I'm going to say a sentence and you need to make it negative. Number 1. *Paolo speaks Chinese.*

**Neil**

*Paolo doesn't speak Chinese.*

**Sophie**

Now make this sentence into a yes/no question: *The children are playing a game.*

**Neil**

*Are the children playing a game?*

**Sophie**

And one more: this time, make a present continuous question starting with *why*. *Simon is learning Japanese.*

**Neil**

*Why is Simon learning Japanese?*

**Sophie**

And that's the end of the quiz – well done if you got them all right.

**Neil**

And that's also the end of the programme – but there's more about these tenses on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Sophie**

Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### 'Like' as a verb and preposition



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello. Today, we're talking about the word **like**.

**Finn**

Yes, the word **like**. We'll be looking at two different ways to use it.

**Sophie**

We'll also give you a useful tip about time expressions.

**Finn**

And there'll be a quiz to practice what we've studied...

**Sophie**

And we'll even get to find out a bit of personal information about Finn!

**Finn**

Oh no, not too personal I hope!

**Sophie**

Let's wait and see shall we? Now - the word **like**.

**Finn**

**Like**. It's an interesting word in English, because when it comes to grammar, we can use it as a verb and we can also use **like** as a preposition.

**Sophie**

So let's start with **like** as a verb. And here's Neil with our first example:

**Neil**

*James likes playing football.*

**Finn**

Thank you Neil. So we have the subject 'James', the verb **likes**, and the object **playing football**. Let's hear it again – this time, Neil, as a question.

**Neil**

Does James like playing football?

**Sophie**

This question is made with **does** plus the subject, plus the base form of the verb **like**.

**Finn**

And the verb **like** is asking about preference – things you enjoy.

**Sophie**

Yes exactly. For example, I can find out about Finn's sporting preferences by asking: **Do you like playing football?** Do you like playing football, Finn?

**Finn**

I love playing football! But sadly, I'm not very good. Now, the second way we can use **like** is when we ask for a description, like this:

**Neil**

What's your house like?

**Sophie**

So here, **like** is a preposition, not a verb, and it goes at the end of the question.

**Finn**

This time, we don't use **do** or **does**. The question is made of **what** plus the verb **to be**, plus the subject plus **like**. What's your house like, Sophie?

**Sophie**

My house Finn? It's very beautiful actually! Let's have another example:

**Neil**

*What was your weekend like?*

**Finn**

So – thank you Neil – it's **what** plus **to be**, plus a subject, plus **like**, to ask for a description. And as for the answer – remember to use adjectives in your descriptions. What was your weekend like, Sophie?

**Sophie**

It was lovely, thank you Finn. Very relaxing! I had coffee with friends, and then we went for a long walk! What was your weekend like?

**Finn**

It was very very busy. I spent the whole weekend tidying my flat.

**Sophie**

You poor thing! Now, you can also use **like** to ask someone to describe a person. Finn, what's your dad like?

**Finn**

My Dad, my Dad's great. He's very clever.

**Sophie**

Clever, eh?

**Finn**

Yep. And he's tall... and he's a little bit bald. And he likes writing, too!

**IDENT**

You're listening to [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Sophie**

And in this programme we're finding out a bit about Finn...

**Finn**

And we're talking about using **like** in two different ways.

**Sophie**

We can use **like** as a verb to show preference, for example: 'My mother likes Italian food' or 'Does your father like reading?'

**Finn**

And we can use **like** as a preposition with the verb **to be** to ask for descriptions, starting with **what** and ending with **like**.

**Sophie**

Finn, what's your girlfriend like?

**Finn**

A good example but I think that's enough personal questions for one programme! It's time for a quiz. I'm going to ask three questions. For each question, first: can you decide whether I'm asking for preference or for a description. Then - answer the question! Here's the first one: *Do you like Chinese food?*

**Sophie**

Right, well the question starts with **does**, and **like** isn't at the end, so you're asking for preference. Actually, I really like Chinese food.

**Finn**

Me too! Now, the next one. *What's the new shopping centre like?*

**Sophie**

This question starts with **what**, ends in **like**, and there's no **do**, **does** or **did**, so you're asking for a description. The new shopping centre is usually very busy!

**Finn**

Is it indeed! Now, here's the last question. *What movies do you like?*

**Sophie**

This is an interesting one: the question starts with **what**, and ends with **like**, but it has **do**, so **like** is a verb, and you're asking for preference. What movies do I like? I like comedies.

**Finn**

Me too. Well done if you got those right.

**Sophie**

So, that's **like** as a verb to talk about preference, and **like** as a preposition to ask for a description. Remember to use **do** or **does** for preference and **to be** for a description.

**Finn**

Now, there's lots more about this on our website at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Do join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Adverbs of frequency



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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- Finn:** Hello everyone and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.
- Sophie:** And me, Sophie. Hello.
- Finn:** Today we're talking about adverbs of frequency.
- Sophie:** That's right. Adverbs of frequency give us more information about a verb. They help us talk about how often we do something. We can use them to describe daily routines. Here's Neil with our first example:
- Neil:** *I always drink coffee in the morning.*
- Finn:** Thanks Neil. From most frequent to least frequent, you can use *always*, followed by *usually*, and then *sometimes*, then *rarely* for things that don't happen a lot and finally *never* for things you don't do. What do you do before you go to bed, Sophie?
- Sophie:** Well, I always brush my teeth before I go to bed – and I sometimes have a decaff cup of tea! Let's have another example:
- Neil:** *I always take the bus to work.*
- Sophie:** So we can use *always* for repeated actions – things you do every day.
- Finn:** Now let's look at word order.
- Sophie:** Yes - adverbs of frequency usually go between the subject and the main verb. Tell us about something you do every day, Finn!
- Finn:** Well, when I'm at work: I *always have* lunch with you! Now a question for you Sophie: What do you do after work?
- Sophie:** I *usually go* to the gym after work - not every day – maybe three or four times a week. I *often watch* TV in the evenings and I *sometimes read* in bed.

- Finn:** Well, believe it or not, I *rarely watch* TV – maybe just once a week, and I *never drink* coffee in the evening: it keeps me awake!
- Now let's talk about auxiliary verbs with adverbs of frequency. Neil.
- Neil:** *I can never remember Michael's birthday.*
- Finn:** So here we have the auxiliary verb *can*. *Can* shows ability and it goes between the subject *I*, and the adverb *never*. *I can never remember Michael's birthday*. Let's have another one:
- Neil:** *You should never look directly at the sun.*
- Sophie:** Good advice using the auxiliary *should*, again between the subject and the adverb: *You should never look directly at the sun*.
- Finn:** Another useful auxiliary is *might* for possibility - like this:
- Neil:** *We might never see each other again.*
- Finn:** So we can use the auxiliary *might* if we aren't certain about something- and it goes before the adverb. *We might never see each other again*.
- Sophie:** The verb *to be* also goes before the adverb:
- Neil:** *Ali is always late for work.*
- Finn:** Right. *Ali is always late for work*. *Is* goes before the adverb *always*. Let's have another example with *to be* please Neil:
- Neil:** *British weather is rarely good.*
- IDENT** You're listening to BBC Learning English.
- Finn:** Now for a note about negative adverbs *never* and *rarely*.
- Sophie:** Yes: Remember, you can't use negative adverbs in negative sentences. For example, you can't say *British weather isn't never good* because *isn't* and *never* are both negative.
- Finn:** That's right. Instead, say *British weather is never good*, or perhaps *British weather is rarely good*.



**Sophie:** Now for a quiz. I'll give you an auxiliary and an adverb, and you have to make a sentence. Finn will give an example of a possible answer. First one: *can* and *sometimes*.

**Finn:** You could say: *I can sometimes catch the early bus if I wake up in time.*

**Sophie:** Right. Next: *should* and *never*.

**Finn:** Ok. *You should never drink coffee before you go to bed.*

**Sophie:** Yes, excellent advice. It can be difficult to sleep. Last one: *to be* and *often*.

**Finn:** Ok, well *often* means *nearly always*, so... *You are often late for lunch!*

**Sophie:** I know... sorry, Finn!

**Finn:** I forgive you. Now for a pronunciation tip.

**Sophie:** Yes. Some people say *often* like this: *often*. You can hear the 't' sound: *often*. Other people pronounce it with a silent 't'.

**Finn:** Like this: *often... often*. Both ways are acceptable.

So that's adverbs of frequency – *always, usually, often* or *often, sometimes, rarely* and *never*. They go before the main verb, after an auxiliary, and you can use them to talk about how regularly you do things.

**Sophie:** Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All:** Bye.

**STING**

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### 'Have to' and 'must'



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Alice**

And me, Alice. Hello.

**Finn**

In today's programme we're talking about **have to** and **must**...

**Alice**

**Have to** and **must**. We'll look at what they mean...

**Finn**

We'll find out how to use them in sentences...

**Alice**

We'll have a pronunciation tip...

**Finn**

And we'll do some practice with a quiz.

**Alice**

So let's get started. We use both **must** and **have to** in front of verbs, to talk about obligations – things that are necessary. In natural English, they often have very similar meanings. And here's Catherine to demonstrate.

**Catherine**

I **have to** leave work early today.

I **must** leave work early today.

**Finn**

Thanks Catherine. I **have to leave** and I **must leave**. Those sentences have pretty similar meanings – but that's not always the case.

**Alice**

So let's look more closely at **have to**. Catherine.

**Catherine**

**My doctor says I have to lose weight.**

**If you go to Russia, you have to get a visa.**

**Alice**

So we use **have to** for things that are necessary – including laws. You can't go to some countries without a visa – you **have to** get one.

**Finn**

Yes, with **have to**, the obligation usually comes from someone else: a doctor, a government... or maybe your boss.

**Alice**

And this is where **must** is sometimes different. **Must** often suggests that the speaker decided themselves that it's necessary to do something. Here are some examples:

**Catherine**

**I'm putting on weight. I must join a gym.**

**I haven't spoken to my sister this week. I must give her a call.**

**Finn**

So that's **must** for personal necessities.

**Alice**

We can also use **must** to make recommendations, like this:

**Catherine**

When you go to Germany, **you must try Bratwurst**. It's delicious!

**Alice**

We sometimes see **must** in formal notices or rules of an organisation. A hospital sign might say:

**Catherine**

**Visitors must wash their hands before leaving the ward.**

**Alice**

Now, let's look at negatives. First: **don't have to**.

**Finn**

Ok: if you **don't have to** do something, it isn't necessary to do it, but you can if you want. Catherine.

**Catherine**

**In the UK, you don't have to drink alcohol in pubs.**

**Alice**

**Don't have to** means: it's your choice. But **mustn't** means: don't do it: It is necessary not to do it.

**Catherine**

**You mustn't eat meat that's old.**

**Finn**

In other words: don't eat meat that's old – it could make you ill.

**Alice**

So – we can use **mustn't** for both rules, and personal recommendations. Catherine.

**Catherine**

**You mustn't forget to call your sister!**

**Passengers must not speak to the driver while the bus is moving.**

**Alice**

Passengers **must not**... that sounds serious.

**Finn**

It does. The long form **must not** is more formal than the short form **mustn't**.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English dot com.

**Finn**

And we're talking about **must** and **have to**. Now, a quick word about tenses.

**Alice**

Yes: it's important to note that we don't use **must** in the future or the past. Instead, it's **will have to** for the future and **had to** for the past. Catherine.

**Catherine**

**You must talk to your doctor. You'll have to see her tomorrow.**

**You didn't have to answer all the questions in yesterday's exam, but you must answer all the questions in today's exam.**

**Finn**

Now: time for that pronunciation tip we promised you.

**Alice**

Yes: In natural speech, **have to** and **must** can get a bit squashed.

**Catherine**

**I have to go to the doctor.**

**I must join a gym.**

**Alice**

So **have to** sounds like 'hafta': **I have to** [hafta] go to the doctor. 'Hafta'.

**Finn**

And **must** sounds like 'mus': without the final 't' sound: **I must** join [musjoin] a gym. 'Mus'.

**Alice**

So listen out for those sounds in our quiz.

**Finn**

Ooh yes, we **must** have a quiz before we go. I'll say a sentence with **must**. You decide if I'm talking about a rule or if it's just a personal recommendation. Ready? Number 1. I need some exercise. I **must** go to the gym.

**Alice**

And that's a personal recommendation.

**Finn**

That's right... number 2. Again, is this a rule or is it a personal recommendation? You **mustn't** smoke in the building.

**Alice**

No smoking in the buildings – that's a rule.

**Finn**

That's right. Number 3. I'm going to say a sentence in the present tense, and you have to put it into the past. Here goes: I **must** have a cup of tea!

**Alice**

And in the past it's I **had to** have a cup of tea.

**Finn**

Well done if you got all those right!

**Finn**

... There's lots more about **must** and **have to** on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Past simple



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Finn**

In today's programme we're talking about the past simple tense...

**Sophie**

... when we use it, how we form it for regular verbs...

**Finn**

... we'll take a look at some irregular verbs, negative sentences and questions.

**Sophie**

... and we'll finish as usual with a quiz.

**Finn**

Ok - so let's get started! The past simple is a tense in English that we use to talk about an event that happened and finished in the past. Here's Neil with our first example:

**Neil**

Jack Dorsey **invented** Twitter in 2006.

**Sophie**

Thanks Neil. Now, we often find the past simple in stories like this:

**Neil**

The boy **started** running. Suddenly, he **stopped** and **listened**...

**Finn**

Wow - sounds like an exciting story! And it had three past simple verbs: **started**, **stopped**, and **listened**.

**Sophie**

... and they are all regular verbs. We make the past simple of regular verbs by adding an 'e' and a 'd' to the infinitive.

**Finn**

... so the past simple of **start** is **started**,

**Sophie**

... the past simple of **stop** is **stopped**,

**Finn**

... and the past simple of **listen** is **listened**...

**Sophie**

... did you spot the difference in the pronunciation there?

**Finn**

Yes, sometimes the 'e' and 'd' at the end sounds like a 't'. Listen: **Stopped. Stopped.**

**Sophie**

Sometimes it sounds more like 'id'. 'id'. **Started. Started.**

**Finn**

... or like a 'd': **Listened. Listened.**

**Sophie**

Let's hear all three again:

**Neil**

**Stopped, started, listened. Stopped, started, listened.**

**Finn**

So, listen out for those 3 different pronunciations of the past simple e-d ending. It's simple, isn't it...

**Sophie**

Yes, well we are talking about the past simple, ... but ... irregular verbs are not quite so simple.

**Finn**

That's true: can you give us some examples of irregular verbs, please, Neil?

**Neil**

I **went** to the interview yesterday and **got** the job!

**Finn**

And another one please?

**Neil**

Kurosawa **made** some wonderful films.

**Finn**

So the past simple of **go** is **went**.

**Sophie**

...**get** is **got**.

**Finn**

...and **make** is **made**.

**Sophie**

And I'm afraid you just have to learn irregular verbs. There is no one simple rule for them.

**Finn**

But the good news is that the past simple is the same for all people.

**Sophie**

Yes – it's **I got** the job, **you got** the job, **he got** the job...

**Finn**

**We got** the job... **they got** the job...

**Sophie**

**Everybody got** the job!

**Both**

Hooray!

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Finn**

Now, for negatives in the past simp... [sfx: loud sound of unwrapping of biscuit and someone taking a bite] ...Sophie, are you hungry?

**Sophie**

[munching] Yes, sorry, **I didn't have** breakfast this morning.

**Finn**

You didn't have breakfast! Aha! ... past simple negatives ... this is simple... you just put didn't in front of the main verb.

**Sophie**

That's right. Didn't plus the infinitive makes a past simple negative: **I didn't have** breakfast this morning.



**Finn**

So remember: it's not I didn't had, it's **I didn't have** breakfast.

**Sophie**

**I didn't have** breakfast. **I didn't have** time!

**Finn**

Now, let's move on to past simple questions. Here's an example:

**Neil**

**Did you make** that cake? It's delicious!

**Sophie**

Did you say 'cake'? Where?

**Finn**

Sorry Sophie, it was just the example! So in past simple questions it's did plus subject plus an infinitive: **Did you make**? Let's hear that again - with an answer this time:

**Neil**

**Did you make** that cake? It's delicious!

**Finn**

**Yes, I did.**

**Sophie**

Or we could say: **No, I didn't.** For short answers, just drop the verb and use the subject with did or didn't, so it's **Yes, I did.**

**Finn**

Or: **No, I didn't.** Good! Now for a quiz. I'll say a sentence in the present simple and you change it to the past simple. Here goes: We start work at 10 in the morning. We start work at 10 in the morning.

**Sophie**

Ok, in the past simple it's: **We started** work at 10 in the morning.

**Finn**

We started work at 10 in the morning. Great! Number 2. Here's a sentence in the past simple: you have to make it negative. Ready? Scientists found a cure for the disease. Scientists found a cure for the disease.

**Sophie**

And the answer is: Scientists **didn't find** a cure for the disease. We change 'found' to 'find' and put 'didn't' in front of the verb: Scientists **didn't find** a cure for the disease.

**Finn**

And finally, I'll ask a past simple question. Can you give me a short answer, Sophie: Did you have breakfast this morning? Did you have breakfast this morning?

**Sophie**

**No, I didn't.** Or I could say: **Yes, I did.** Finn, what did you have for breakfast?

**Finn**

Oh, I had cereal, eggs, toast, orange juice ... coffee, croissants ....

**Sophie**

Stop, stop! I'm so hungry... [munching a biscuit]... There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Past simple & past continuous



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Rob**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Rob.

**Emma**

And me, Emma. Hello.

**Rob**

In today's programme we're talking about the past simple and the past continuous tenses...

**Emma**

Yes, we'll look at when we use each tense...

**Rob**

We'll show you how to form the positive, negative and question forms of each one...

**Emma**

And as usual, we'll finish with a quiz.

**Rob**

And first, here's a quick reminder of the past simple. Hello Finn.

**Finn**

Hello Rob.

**Rob**

Could you give us an example please?

**Finn**

Last night I saw the film 'Titanic'.

**Rob**

Ooh Titanic, what a movie! Finn saw it last night. So, we use the past simple for completed actions in the past.

**Emma**

And we had the past simple of the verb **see**, which is the irregular form **saw**.

**Rob**

And as we know, you just have to learn the irregular verbs.

**Emma**

But the good news is that lots of verbs are regular, and to make them into the past simple, you just add **e** and **d** to the infinitive, like this:

**Finn**

Hundreds of passengers **jumped** into the sea.

**Rob**

**Jump** – **jumped**. Simple. To make past simple negatives, we add **didn't** to the infinitive, like this:

**Finn**

Sandra Bullock didn't win an Oscar for Gravity.

**Rob**

Now let's look at past simple questions. Emma, did you see the news last night?

**Emma**

Yes, I did.

**Rob**

So, for the question, it's: **did** plus the **subject** plus the **infinitive**.

**Emma**

And the short answers are: **Yes** plus **subject** plus **did**: **Yes, I did**.

**Rob**

Or: **No** plus **subject** plus **didn't**: **No, I didn't**.

**Emma**

So that's the past simple for completed actions in the past.

**Rob**

Now, to talk about past activities, we can use the past continuous. Here's an example:

**Finn**

I was watching a movie on TV. It was raining. We were feeling very bored.

**Emma**

Now, we can use the past continuous to talk about an activity that was already happening when something else happened, like this:

**Finn**

Dad was cooking dinner when the police arrived. The children were watching TV when the officers came into the living room.

**Rob**

Ooh the police! Very dramatic! Yes, think about one activity interrupting the other – the activity that was already happening is in the past continuous - **Dad was cooking dinner...**

**Emma**

And the activity that interrupted it is in the past simple: **the police arrived.**

**Rob**

So you can put the past simple and continuous together to talk about activities and actions that happened one on top of another.

**Emma**

Remember those examples everyone - I'm going to test you later!

**Rob**

OK. To make the past continuous, it's **was** or **were** plus an **i-n-g verb**.

**Finn**

**Dad was cooking dinner. The children were watching TV.**

**Rob**

Now to make the negative past continuous, you just put **wasn't** or **weren't** in front of the -ing verb, like this:

**Finn**

**The baby wasn't sleeping. The children weren't playing games.**

**Rob**

**Wasn't sleeping and weren't playing. Wasn't and weren't** are short forms of **was not** and **were not**.

**Emma**

Now for past continuous questions, it's **was** or **were**, with the **subject** plus an **i-n-g verb**. And I'm going to demonstrate this by testing you on the examples we had before. Rob, **was Mum cooking dinner?**

**Rob**

**No, she wasn't: Dad was cooking dinner.**

**Emma**

That's correct: well done. **Were the children playing games?**

**Rob**

**No, they weren't.**

**Emma**

Correct, well done again!

**Rob**

For past continuous short answers it's: **Yes** plus **subject** plus **was**, or: **No** plus **subject** plus **wasn't**.

**IDENT**

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**Emma**

Right, time for a quiz. I'm going to say a sentence and you have to choose the right verb form to go in the gap. Ready? OK. Number 1. When the phone rang, we \_\_\_\_\_ a film. Is it a) watched or b) were watching? When the phone rang, we \_\_\_\_\_ a film.

**Rob**

It's b) When the phone rang, we were watching a film.

**Emma**

Good, number 2: Cate Blanchett \_\_\_\_\_ an Oscar for Best Actress. Is it a) was winning or b) won? Cate Blanchett \_\_\_\_\_ an Oscar for Best Actress.

**Rob**

It's b) Cate Blanchett won an Oscar for Best Actress.

**Emma**

And here's the final question. Ready? When the police \_\_\_\_\_, Dad was cooking dinner. Is it a) arrived b) were arriving? When the police \_\_\_\_\_, Dad was cooking dinner.

**Rob**

When the police arrived, Dad was cooking dinner. Good old dad. Still cooking that dinner. What a hero!

**Emma**

So, well done if you got those right. And don't forget there's lots more about tenses on our website at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye!

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Articles



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Rob**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Rob.

**Emma**

And me, Emma. Hello.

**Rob**

In today's programme, we're talking about three little words: **a**, **an** and **the**.

**Emma**

Also known as **articles**. So let's start by saying hello to Finn.

**Finn**

Hello.

**Emma**

And Finn, you're going to tell us about your time in Phnom Penn, which is the capital city of Cambodia. Listen out for the words **a**, **an** and **the**.

**Finn**

Yes, I was living in **a** flat near the city centre. I was lucky because every morning I saw **an** elephant walk past my front door. **The** elephant was giving rides to tourists. **The** owner told me that her name was Sambo. I discovered later that she was **the** only elephant in Phnom Penh. Here's **a** photo.

**Rob/Emma**

Ahhh...

**Emma**

And quite a few articles there. We had **a** flat and **a** photo ...

**Rob**

Yes, we use **a** before singular nouns. **A** flat and **a** photo ...

**Emma**

...but in spoken English it's 'uh' not 'a'.

**Finn**

I was living in **a flat**. Here's **a photo**.

**Emma**

... Now, Finn also said he saw **an** elephant. Not **a** elephant. **An** elephant.

**Rob**

That's because 'elephant' begins with 'e'. We use **an**, not **a**, before nouns that begin with 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o' - and most words starting with 'u'. We say **an apple, an elephant, an ice-cream, an orange, an uncle**.

**Emma**

But in spoken English, **an** sounds like 'un'. Finn.

**Finn**

**An apple, an elephant, an ice-cream, an orange, an uncle.**

**Rob**

Now let's look at **the** ['thuh'] and **the** ['thee']. Finn said:

**Finn**

**The elephant** was giving rides to tourists ...

**Emma**

Yes, and it's **the elephant** because it's the second time he mentions the elephant:

**Rob**

A first time, and **the** ['thuh'] or **the** ['thee'] second time. And it's **the** ['thee'] not **the** ['thuh'] with elephant because elephant starts with 'e'. Finn.

**Finn**

I saw **an elephant**. **The elephant** was giving rides to tourists.

**Emma**

Ok, and there was another one – **The owner**. Finn only mentioned the owner once, so why **the** and not **an**?

**Rob**

Good question, and the answer is: we use **the** before a person or thing when it's clear exactly which person or thing we're talking about, even if it's the first time. Let's hear it again:



**Finn**

**The owner** told me that her name was Sambo.

**Emma**

So Finn's talking about the owner of Sambo, not the owner of any unknown elephant.

**Rob**

OK, so that's **a**, **an** and **the**. Now let's hear more about elephants. Can you spot the articles in this sentence?

**Finn**

African elephants are bigger than Indian elephants.

**Rob**

Actually there were no articles. Trick question, sorry! There's no article before African elephants and Indian elephants because we're talking about African elephants and Indian elephants in general...

**Emma**

...not a specific African or Indian elephant.

**Rob**

So in Finn's story, he didn't use an article when he talked about tourists in general.

**Finn**

**The elephant** was giving rides to **tourists**.

**IDENT**

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**Emma**

And we're talking about articles.

**Rob**

And now here are some top tips for using **the**.

**Emma**

Tip one. Don't use **the** before the names of **most countries, cities** and **continents**.

**Rob**

Just say: **Saudi Arabia, Warsaw** and **Europe**.

**Emma**

Tip two: say **the** with **countries with plural names** or the words **Republic** or **Kingdom** in the name...

**Rob**

**The Maldives; The United Arab Emirates.**

**Emma**

Tip three: use **the** for the names of **rivers, seas, oceans** and **mountain ranges**...

**Rob**

**The Mississippi; The Red Sea; The Andes.**

**Emma**

Tip four: Don't use **the** before names of **single mountains** and **lakes**...

**Rob**

**Mount Kilimanjaro; Lake Titicaca.**

**Emma**

And now it's quiz time. I'm going to say a sentence with or without an article and you have to say if it's correct or wrong. Ready? Number 1: I've got cat.

**Rob**

That's wrong. It should be: **I've got a cat**. Because you need an article before a singular noun when you mention it the first time. Or you can say **I've got the cat** if it's clear which cat we're talking about.

**Emma**

Number 2. I'm going on holiday to United States next week. I'm so excited!

**Rob**

Wrong again. It should be: I'm going to **the United States** next week because it's a plural country name.

**Emma**

And number 3. I love elephants!

**Rob**

And that's correct because you're talking about elephants in general, so: no article needed.

**Emma**

Well done if you got those right.

**Rob**

There's lots more information about articles on our website at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Rob / Emma**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present continuous & 'going to'



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Finn**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Emma**

And me, Emma. Hello.

**Finn**

In today's programme we're looking at two ways to talk about the future.

**Emma**

Let's start with some sample sentences. Rob, can we have an example of a future arrangement?

**Rob**

Sure. Farid is meeting his cousin at the airport on Saturday.

**Emma**

Thanks Rob. The sentence **Farid is meeting his cousin at the airport on Saturday** describes an arrangement, made between two people, to do a particular activity, at a particular time.

**Finn**

Yes, and we can use present continuous, that's **subject** plus **am, is** or **are** plus **verb i-n-g** to talk about this type of future arrangement. Now, let's look at going to. We use **going to** with **an infinitive verb** to talk about future plans – things we intend to do. An example please Rob?

**Rob**

When I finish university, I'm going to spend a year travelling.

**Finn**

I'm going to spend a year travelling. That sounds like an exciting plan. And another please:

**Rob**

Simon and Ibrahim are going to spend the whole weekend playing football.

**Finn**

So Simon and Ibrahim have some interesting plans too. But, do they seem very similar to arrangements, would you say, Emma?

**Emma**

Well yes, they do. We can often use either the present continuous or going to for future plans.

**Finn**

So we could say: **I'm meeting some friends for a drink tonight.**

**Emma**

Or you could say: **I'm going to meet some friends for a drink tonight.**

**Finn**

But sometimes we can only use going to. Here's an example.

**Rob**

It's really cold. I think it's going to snow.

**Finn**

**It's going to snow.** That isn't a plan, and it isn't an arrangement.

**Emma**

But the speaker can say what's going to happen, based on the present situation – whatever is happening now.

**Finn**

And to do this, it's **subject** plus **am, is** or **are**, plus **going to** plus an infinitive **verb without to**.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC learning English.

**Finn**

And we're looking at present continuous for future arrangements, and going to plus a verb to talk about future plans and arrangements – and things we know are going to happen based on the present situation.

**Emma**

That's right. So, Finn, are you doing anything interesting tonight?

**Finn**

Well, I'm taking my girlfriend to the theatre and the play is starting at 7 o'clock.

**Emma**

Ooh very good. What are you **going to [gonna]** see?

**Finn**

Aha! Emma I do believe you're asking me questions about my future arrangements and plans! You asked me a yes/no present continuous question:

**Emma**

**Are you doing anything interesting tonight?**

**Finn**

And you asked me a question word **going to** question:

**Emma**

**What are you gonna see?** You're quite right Finn, and I used a special short form of going to that we usually only find in informal spoken English: I said **gonna**. Gonna. It's very common in spoken English. **What are you gonna see?**

**Finn**

That's right. The long form is: What are you going to see?

**Emma**

And the informal short form is: **What are you gonna see? What are you gonna see?**

**Finn**

Well, I'll tell you later – but first, it's time for a quiz. So, question 1: Imagine you're at a football match. Your team is playing really well. Do you say a) I'm sure they're going to score a goal! Or do you say b) I'm sure they are scoring a goal!

**Emma**

And the answer is a) **I'm sure they are going to score a goal!**

**Finn**

That's right – based on the present situation – they are playing well – we can talk about a probable future situation with going to: **I'm sure they are going to score a goal.**

**Finn**

Right, number 2 - which is correct? a) We're gonna going by train. b) We're going go by train. Or c) We're gonna go by train.

**Emma**

It's c) **We're gonna go by train.** It's the shorter, spoken form of: We're going to go by train.

**Finn**

Now, number 3. Which is a correct future sentence: a) Hurry up – the train is leaving. Or b) Hurry up – the train is going to leave in ten minutes?

**Emma**

And the correct answer is b) **the train is going to leave in ten minutes.** Sentence a) needs a time expression to give it future meaning.

**Finn**

Yes indeed. Well, I'm going to leave in a minute, because I'm going to see a Shakespeare play with my girlfriend. See you next time, Emma!

**Emma**

Don't forget - there's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Both**

Bye!

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Verb patterns



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Alice**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Alice.

**Finn**

And me, Finn. Hello.

**Alice**

Today we're talking about verb patterns.

**Finn**

Yes: we're looking at what happens when we use two verbs together in English.

**Alice**

We'll be looking at four verb patterns – and there's a quiz at the end of the programme – so listen carefully!

**Finn**

So, on with the show! Our first pattern is: **verb plus gerund**.

**Alice**

A **gerund** is the **i-n-g** form of a verb – words like **seeing**, **complaining** and **giving** are all gerunds.

**Finn**

And here's Catherine to give us some examples of the pattern verb plus gerund. Catherine.

**Catherine**

I really **enjoyed seeing** Rachel again last night.

Jackie **kept complaining**, so I went home.

Would you **mind giving** me a lift to the station?

**Finn**

Thanks Catherine. So we had the verb **enjoy** plus the gerund **seeing**...



**Alice**

We had **keep** plus **complaining**...

**Finn**

And the verb **mind** plus the gerund **giving**.

**Alice**

Good. **Enjoy seeing; keep complaining; mind giving**. Other verbs that can be followed by gerunds include: **finish, practise, suggest, and recommend**.

**Finn**

So I can say: I **suggest keeping** a list of verbs that take gerunds.

**Alice**

Haha, good example.

**Finn**

Thank you.

**Alice**

Now for the second pattern: **verb plus infinitive**. An infinitive is the word **to** plus a base verb, for example: **to see, to drive, to study**. Some examples please Catherine?

**Catherine**

I really **want to see** the football tonight.

My brother's **learning to drive**.

Mario's **hoping to study** medicine.

**Finn**

So that's: **want to see, learning to drive, hoping to study**... Other verbs in this group are **agree, decide, choose** and **learn**. Now for the third pattern: these verbs can be followed by either a gerund or an infinitive - without changing the meaning. Some examples please Catherine.

**Catherine**

I've **started learning** Arabic - and my boyfriend's **started to learn** French.

**Finn**

So **started learning** and **started to learn** have more or less the same meaning. Now, another example please?

**Catherine**

Snow will **continue to fall** in the mountains and temperatures will **continue falling** throughout the night.

**Finn**

So **continue to fall** and **continue falling** have the same meaning.

**Alice**

OK. Time for pattern 4.

**Finn**

Yes - and this one's a bit tricky. With some verbs, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive afterwards, BUT...

**Alice**

...and it's a big but...

**Finn**

Yes... the meaning changes from gerund to infinitive.

**Alice**

So if I say... I **stopped drinking coffee** last week.

**Finn**

Well, I probably wouldn't believe you...

**Alice**

Yes, well... this means I drank coffee regularly in the past, but last week, I decided to give up coffee. I completely stopped and now I never drink coffee.

**Finn**

But, if I say, on my way home yesterday, I **stopped to have** a cup of coffee...

**Alice**

This means that yesterday you interrupted your journey and you went into a cafe for a cup of coffee.

**Finn**

So, very different meanings.

**Alice**

Yes. Here's an example, with the verb **remember**:

**Catherine**

We **remembered closing** the door.

We **remembered to close** the door.

**Finn**

OK, in the first one, we formed a picture in our mind of us closing the door. The second example means we didn't forget to close the door.

## IDENT

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### Alice

And it's time for a quiz. Question one. Which is correct: a) They **decided taking** the train – or b) They **decided to take** the train.

### Finn

OK, so this is: b) They **decided to take** the train. After decide, we need the infinitive.

### Alice

Number 2: a) Catherine **hates cooking** in the evening. b) Catherine **hates to cook** in the evening.

### Finn

And that's a trick question. They are actually both correct, because after hate, you can use either a gerund or an infinitive.

### Alice

Yes you can. Finally, number 3: is it a) Do you **want to go** for a coffee? Or b) Do you **want going** for a coffee?

### Finn

This one is: a) Do you **want to go** for a coffee? Because after want you need the infinitive... but Alice?

### Alice

Yes?

### Finn

You said you'd stopped drinking coffee?!

### Alice

Oh yes I did. Never mind. Thanks for listening and don't forget - there's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

### Both

Bye.

### Finn

Time for a coffee?

### Alice

Maybe later.

### Both

Bye.

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present perfect and ever/never



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Alice**

And me, Alice. Hello.

**Finn**

And today we're talking about the present perfect tense.

**Alice**

That's right: the present perfect tense. When we use it, how to form it, how to make negatives and questions...

**Finn**

We'll look at the words **ever** and **never**...

**Alice**

And we'll have some pronunciation tips.

**Finn**

And there'll be a quiz at the end of the show, so keep listening!

**Alice**

Let's get started with some present perfect sentences. Hello Catherine!

**Catherine**

Hello.

**Alice**

Some example sentences please...

**Catherine**

I've seen Miley Cyrus in concert.

Janie has travelled all over the world.

**Finn**

Thank you, Catherine. So one way we use the present perfect tense is to talk about life experience: things we've done at some time in the past.

**Alice**

That's right and we make the present perfect tense with a subject, plus **have** or **has**, plus a past participle. Once more please Catherine.

**Catherine**

I've seen Miley Cyrus in concert.  
Janie has travelled all over the world.

**Alice**

Now we don't say when this experience happened, because with the present perfect, we are interested in the experience itself.

**Finn**

That's right. The present perfect often focusses on what happened, not when it happened.

**Alice**

Ok. So Finn, ask me a question about something I've done.

**Finn**

Ok. **Have you seen Skyfall?**

**Alice**

**Have I seen Skyfall?** The James Bond film? **Yes, I have: I've seen it three times.**

**Finn**

Three times, eh? So with the present perfect we don't say when, but we can say how many times the experience happened.

**Alice**

Now, let's look at **ever** and **never**. They basically mean 'at any time in someone's life'.

**Finn**

**Ever** is very common in questions. Alice: **Have you ever eaten sushi?**

**Alice**

**Yes, I have.** I love sushi.

**Finn**

Me too. And Alice, have you **ever** ridden a camel?

**Alice**

No Finn, no: I have never ridden a camel.

**Finn**

Well, actually, neither have I. And we use **never** to talk about life experiences that we haven't had. **Alice has never ridden a camel.** Though I think you should try it: I hear it's fun!

**Alice**

Really? Let's do it together.

**Finn**

Yes, ok.

**Alice**

Let's look at pronunciation. We use lots of short forms with present perfect.

**Finn**

First, **I have** is often shortened to **I've**. **I have** read that book becomes...

**Alice**

**I've read** that book.

**Finn**

And **has** becomes just a **s** or a **z** sound. So instead of **Janie has** travelled it's...

**Alice**

**Janie's** travelled.

**Finn**

And as for negatives: we make them by putting **not** between **have** or **has** and the past participle. But we can shorten **have not** to **haven't** and **has not** to **hasn't**. Catherine.

**Catherine**

**I haven't** seen all the Bond films.

Rachel **hasn't** taught English in Japan.

**Finn**

Now, in sentences with **never**, the subject and **have** or **has** can be shortened. **I have** becomes **I've**, and **he has** becomes **he's**. Catherine

**Catherine**

**I've** never heard of Sportlobster.

Poor Alice – **She's** never ridden a camel!

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Finn**

And we're talking about the present perfect tense. Alice, now ask me a question about my life experiences.

**Alice**

Ok... Finn, have you seen Skyfall?

**Finn**

Well, a negative answer would be **No, I haven't**. But my answer is: **Yes I have**. Guess how many times I've seen Skyfall?

**Alice**

Ok... I think **you've seen it** five times.

**Finn**

No... not five times.

**Alice**

Ok. **How many times have you seen Skyfall?**

**Finn**

**I've seen Skyfall** 20 times... I **watched** the DVD last night; I **saw** it on TV last week; and I **saw** it at the cinema when it first came out...

**Alice**

Ok, Finn – we get the picture... When we answer a present perfect question about our experience, we can add a past simple sentence to give more information – like saying when the experience happened.

**Finn**

Quiz time?! So here's question one – and play along at home if you want. **Alice**, you have to answer with **never**. So: **Have you ever seen a ghost?**

**Alice**

No, I've never seen a ghost.

**Finn**

Are you sure?

**Alice**

Maybe.

**Finn**

Now, for question two, answer with **times**. **How many times have you eaten sushi?**

**Alice**

I've eaten sushi about a million times.

**Finn**

About a million times? Really? Only a million? Now for question three, I need a short answer. **Have you ever visited BBC Learning English on Facebook?**

**Alice**

Yes, I have!

**Finn**

OK – me too. And as well as on our Facebook page, you can find lots more information about the present perfect tense on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar. Head. H

**Both**

Bye.



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Neil**

In this programme, we're going to show you how to use the words **for** and **since** with the present perfect tense.

**Sophie**

That's right and there'll be a quiz at the end of the show, so listen carefully!

**Neil**

Let's get started. Catherine here has got two sentences for us – but: which one uses present perfect?

**Catherine**

I've worked at the BBC for 8 years.

I worked at the BBC for 8 years.

**Neil**

Thank you, Catherine. And the first sentence – **I've worked at the BBC for 8 years** is in the present perfect tense. It means that Catherine started work at the BBC 8 years ago and still works at the BBC now.

**Sophie**

The second sentence is in the past simple, and the meaning is different. *I worked at the BBC for 8 years* means the speaker worked for the BBC in the past, but they don't work there now. Let's hear those again.

**Catherine**

I've worked at the BBC for 8 years.

I worked at the BBC for 8 years.

**Sophie**

So: the present perfect helps us talk about situations that started in the past and are still happening now. We make the present perfect tense with the **subject** plus **have** or **has** -

**Neil**

...Or **haven't** or **hasn't** -

**Sophie**

Yes: **subject** plus **have**, **has**, **haven't** or **hasn't**, plus the **past participle** form of the verb. Some more examples please Catherine?

**Catherine**

Alisha has lived in Paris since 1996.

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Neil**

So these situations are still happening – Alisha still lives in Paris...

**Sophie**

...and Catherine and Alex are still friends.

**Neil**

And both examples have a time expression. Here's the first one again.

**Catherine**

Alisha has lived in Paris **since 1996**.

**Sophie**

The word **since** gives the exact point in the past when the situation started - a particular year, for example: **since 1996**.

**Neil**

...and the point in the past that we use with **since** could be a day, a month, a season or a time of day. Catherine.

**Catherine**

They've been married **since March**.

I've been ill **since last Friday**.

Faruk has drunk three cups of coffee **since 2 o'clock**.

**Sophie**

The point in the past can also be a situation or event.

**Catherine**

I haven't eaten anything **since I got up**.  
I've known Alex **since primary school**.

**Neil**

So: that's **since** to refer to a point in time when a situation started.

**Sophie**

Now let's look at **for**. We use **for** with the present perfect tense to say how long a situation has lasted.

**Catherine**

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Sophie**

...**for** twenty years. Catherine met Alex twenty years ago, and they still know each other now. So it's **present perfect**, plus **for**, plus a **length of time**.

**Catherine**

I've known Alex for twenty years.

**Sophie**

The length of time could be: **for six months, for a week, for two minutes, for ten seconds...**

**Neil**

**For fifty years, for ten thousand years!**

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.com.

**Neil**

And we're talking about the present perfect tense with **for** and **since**. Did you know Sophie, I've worked for the BBC for 13 years.

**Sophie**

Really?

**Neil**

Yes I have. And I haven't had a day off sick since I started.

**Sophie**

Really?

**Neil**

No, not really. How long have you worked at the BBC, Sophie?

**Sophie**

Well, Neil, I've done bits and bobs for about a year.

**Neil**

You can also ask this question with the present perfect continuous tense, like this:

**Catherine**

How long **have you been working** at the BBC?

**Neil**

It's very similar to the present perfect simple tense, and is common when we're asking about temporary or unfinished situations and activities.

**Sophie**

And now, it's quiz time. Neil will give the answers. Number 1. Which sentence is correct?

a) I've lived here since two years. Or b) I've lived here for two years.

**Neil**

It's b) I've lived here for two years.

**Sophie**

Number 2: a) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie for they went on holiday. b) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie since they went on holiday.

**Neil**

It's b) Mika hasn't spoken to Jackie since they went on holiday.

**Sophie**

...and number 3: a) You have been listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes b) You're listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes.

**Neil**

It's a) You have been listening to 6 Minute Grammar for the last 6 minutes - because you are still listening...

**Sophie**

...we hope!

**Neil**

There's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for some more 6 Minute Grammar.

**All**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Comparatives and superlatives



*NB This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Rob**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Rob.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Rob**

Today we're talking about comparatives and superlatives – what they are and how to use them.

**Sophie**

Yes, we use comparatives and superlatives to compare people and things. Listen carefully because, as usual, there is a quiz at the end of the show.

**Rob**

OK, we'll start with some examples of the comparative. So, Sophie, can you stand up, please.

**Sophie**

OK...

**Rob**

Right, look, back to back here. I'm taller than you.

**Sophie**

But I'm thinner than you!

**Rob**

Good point. The sentences **I'm taller than you** and **I'm thinner than you** both use the comparative form.

**Sophie**

We use comparatives to compare two people or things that are different in some way.

**Rob**

Listen again to the examples we've just used: where does the word **than** come?

**Neil**

I'm taller than you.

I'm thinner than you.

**Sophie**

**Than** comes after the comparative adjective. We usually use **than** in comparative sentences.

**Rob**

But not always, for example, I can ask: **Who is taller – you or me?**

**Sophie**

Now, there are different ways to make the comparative form: For short words, just add 'er'. That's spelled E – R. So **tall** becomes **taller** ...

**Rob**

...**thin** becomes **thinner** ...

**Sophie**

Adjectives like **happy, funny, easy**... that end in the sound /i/ [phonemic sound 'y'], spelled with a 'y', add 'ier', spelled: I – E – R.

**Rob**

...so **happy** becomes **happier**...

**Sophie**

...**easy** becomes **easier**. An example, please Neil.

**Neil**

English is *easier* than Chinese.

**Rob**

Not if you're Chinese, though! Now, adjectives that have two or more syllables but don't end in /i/ (spelled 'y'), use 'more'. Neil has some examples.

**Neil**

A tablet is more useful than a laptop.

The film of 'The Hobbit' is more exciting than the book.

**Rob**

'Useful' has two syllables and 'exciting' has three, so we say **more useful** and **more exciting**.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from the BBC.

**Sophie**

And we're talking about comparatives and superlatives. We've seen how to use and make comparatives...

**Rob**

Now we're going to tell you what superlatives are and how to use them. Sophie, are you good at geography?

**Sophie**

I'll have a go.

**Rob**

OK. Here's a question for you: What's the longest river in the world?

**Sophie**

Well, the Nile is a very long river, but I think that the longest river in the world is the Amazon.

**Rob**

And... you're right! It is the Amazon. 'The longest river' is a superlative. We use superlative forms to compare one person or thing with several others in a group. We often use them to say which thing or person is the greatest, the biggest...

**Sophie**

...the most beautiful, the best... in some way.

**Rob**

To make the superlative of short words like **high, deep, tall**, add 'est'. That's spelled E-S-T.

**Sophie**

So, the **highest** mountain... the **deepest** ocean, the **tallest** person...

**Rob**

And... remember to put 'the' before the adjective. So it's: *I'm the tallest person in my family.*

**Sophie**

Now for longer adjectives, with two or more syllables, we use **most**. Rob, who is the most famous actor in the world?

**Rob**

Well, there are many, aren't there, but I think Brad Pitt is the most famous actor in the world.

**Sophie**

...'the most famous actor'. So it's **the + most + adjective**.

**Rob**

For adjectives that end in /i/ – spelled 'y' – like **funny**, and **happy**, we add 'iest' – that's I-E-S-T. Here's an example.

**Neil**

The funniest show on TV is 'The Simpsons'.

**Sophie**

Now, finally, look out for the irregular comparatives and superlatives.

**Neil**

My iPhone 5 was better than my iPhone 4, but the iPhone 6 is the best phone on the market now, in my opinion.

**Rob**

The comparative form of **good** is **better** and the superlative form is **best**.

**Sophie**

The comparative of **bad** is **worse**.

**Rob**

...and the superlative is **worst**. Listen to these examples:

**Neil**

Winters have been bad the last few years. 2012 was worse than 2011, but 2013 was the worst winter since records began.

**Sophie**

Now for the quiz. I'll give you an adjective and a sentence and you have to complete the gap with a comparative or superlative.

**Rob**

OK. Number 1: the word is OLD. Jenny is ten and Simon is fifteen, so Simon is \_\_\_\_\_ than Jenny.

**Sophie**

And the answer is: older. Simon is older than Jenny.

**Rob**

Next word: BEAUTIFUL. The Taj Mahal is the \_\_\_\_\_ building I've ever seen.

**Sophie**

And the answer is: most beautiful. The Taj Mahal is the most beautiful building I've ever seen.



**Rob**

Final word: GOOD. Using BBC Learning English is the \_\_\_\_\_ way to improve your English.

**Sophie**

Best. Using BBC Learning English is the best way to improve your English.

**Rob**

There's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar soon.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### The present perfect with 'just', 'already' and 'yet'



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Alice**

And me, Alice. Hello.

**Finn**

Today's programme is all about the present perfect tense...

**Alice**

...and how to use it with the words **just**, **already** and **yet**.

**Finn**

That's right, and there'll be a quiz for you at the end to see how much you remember.

**Alice**

Yes. So let's get started! Now, the present perfect with **just**... [sound of mobile phone ringing] Oh, hold on... Sorry.

**Hamish (on the phone)**

Hey Alice. It's Hamish, yeah, I'm here! I've just arrived at Kings Cross Station.

**Alice**

King's Cross... King's Cross here? In London?

**Hamish (on the phone)**

Yeah, London town. Here I am! My train got in an hour ago. I've already visited Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square...

**Alice**

What, already?

**Hamish (on the phone)**

Yeah, but I haven't been on the London Eye yet, no - I want to go there next. Can you meet me in there in 10 minutes?

**Alice**

(To Hamish) Sorry Hamish, we've just started the programme... (To Finn) Sorry about that...

**Finn**

Don't worry, Alice, those were great examples of the present perfect with **just**, **already** and **yet**! And here's Catherine, hello...

**Catherine**

Hello.

**Finn**

...to repeat those examples for us. Catherine.

**Catherine**

I've just arrived at Kings Cross Station.

I've already visited Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square.

But I haven't been on the London Eye yet.

**Finn**

Now, you may have spotted that the sentences with **just** and **already** are positive, but the sentence with **yet** is negative.

**Alice**

Yes: we use **just** and **already** mainly in positive sentences.

**Finn**

And **yet** in negative sentences, and in questions.

**Alice**

Ok. Now let's look at some other differences between **just**, **already** and **yet**.

**Finn**

First: we use **just** with the present perfect for something that happened only a short time ago – **Hamish has just phoned. He's just arrived** in London.

**Alice**

And **I've just told** him to call back later.

**Finn**

Now we use **already** with the present perfect when an action has happened before now - or before we expected it to happen.

**Alice**

Yes, **Hamish has already been** to Buckingham Palace!

**Finn**

Now let's look at word order. Both **just** and **already** come between the auxiliary and the past participle. Catherine, can we have some examples again, please:

**Catherine**

Hamish has just phoned.

He's already visited Buckingham Palace.

**Alice**

Thanks Catherine.

**Hamish (on the phone)**

Hey Alice, it's me – Hamish – again. So...

**Alice**

I'm sorry, Hamish. I've already told you. I'm doing 6 Minute Grammar. I'll call you in a few minutes.

**Finn**

Great! Another example of **already**, Alice! **I've already told you.**

**Alice**

(talking to Hamish) Have I finished yet? No, sorry, we haven't finished yet. Bye...

**Finn**

Hamish?

**Alice**

Hamish again... Aha! He asked: "**Have you finished yet?**"

**Finn**

And you said: "**We haven't finished yet.**"

**Alice**

Yes, **yet** with present perfect. We use **yet** to ask if something has happened before now – or to say something has not happened up to now.

**Finn**

So: that's **yet** for negative sentences or questions with the present perfect. And **yet** always comes at the end of the sentence. By the way, Alice, **we haven't explained how to form the present perfect yet.**

**Alice**

You're right, Finn. So, we make the present perfect with the **subject** plus **have, has, haven't, hasn't** and **the past participle.**

**Finn**

Remember, we put **just** and **already** between **have** or **has** and the **past participle.**

**Alice**

And we put **yet** at the end of a negative sentence or question.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Hamish (on the phone)**

(can't hear what he says)

**Finn**

Hamish?

**Alice**

Hamish. He's in reception.

**Finn**

Has he got here **already**? That was quick.

**Alice**

Yes! So: sometimes we can put **already** at the end of a question to show surprise.

**Finn**

I think it's time for a quiz now! Number one. I'm going to say a sentence and you have to fill in the gap. Here goes. I haven't seen Spiderman 2 \_\_\_\_\_.

**Alice**

It's: I haven't seen Spiderman 2 **yet**. Because you haven't seen the film before now.

**Finn**

Correct. Number 2: Hamish has only been in London for one hour and he's \_\_\_\_\_ been to Trafalgar Square.

**Alice**

It's **already**. Because we are stressing the fact that he's done something before we expected it.

**Finn**

Great. Now, question 3. [Phone rings] Your phone has \_\_\_\_\_ rung.

**Alice**

**Just.**

**Finn**

No, really, your phone has just rung. Pass me the phone, Alice... Hamish, Alice has **just** told you that we haven't finished **yet!**.... Oh, oh, sorry...

**Alice**

What's the matter?

**Finn**

It's not Hamish - it's your mum!

**Alice**

Oh Finn! Never mind. There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Defining relative clauses



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Alice**

And me, Alice. Hello.

**Finn**

Today we're talking about **defining relative clauses**.

**Alice**

That's right: defining relative clauses. We'll explain what they are...

**Finn**

We'll look at how they work...

**Alice**

We'll hear lots of examples...

**Finn**

And we'll have a quiz to practice what we've learned. So: on with the show. Let's start by looking at what relative clauses are, and how we make them.

**Alice**

Yes. Defining relative clauses give information about a noun in a sentence or question. They define – or, give more information about – the thing that we are talking about. Here's Catherine with our first example:

**Catherine**

Have you seen the shoes that I bought today?

**Finn**

The defining relative clause is the phrase **that I bought today** – and it tells us **which** shoes Catherine is talking about.

**Alice**

That's right. Catherine probably has several pairs of shoes: adding the phrase **that I bought today** tells us exactly which shoes she means.

**Finn**

So: let's have a closer look at the grammar of relative clauses. We start with a noun and then we add a relative pronoun, such as **who** or **that**, plus a verb phrase. The relative pronoun **who** is for **people**... Catherine.

**Catherine**

The man **who** owns this restaurant is my best friend.

**Alice**

So the defining relative clause **who owns this restaurant** tells us exactly which man is Catherine's best friend.

**Finn**

The pronoun **which** is for things, and we use **that** for both people and things. Here's an example with **which**.

**Catherine**

Spring is the season **which** I enjoy the most.

**Finn**

Ahh – me too! So, to give more information about a thing – the season – we add the relative pronoun – **which**, plus the verb phrase **I enjoy the most**.

**Alice**

Here's another example.

**Catherine**

That woman is the doctor **who** saw me yesterday.

**Finn**

This time, the pronoun **who** refers to the doctor. And the doctor is the subject of the verb saw – the doctor saw Catherine.

**Alice**

Right. **Who** refers to the **subject** of the verb: The doctor who saw me yesterday. Now this next example is slightly different: listen carefully.

**Catherine**

That woman is the doctor **who I saw** yesterday.



**Alice**

Again, **who** refers to the doctor. But this time, the doctor is the **object** of the verb **saw** - Catherine saw the doctor.

**Finn**

So the rule is: when the pronoun refers to the **subject**, it's:

**Catherine**

She's the doctor **who saw me** yesterday.

**Alice**

And when the pronoun refers to the **object**, it's:

**Catherine**

She's the doctor **who I saw** yesterday.

**Alice**

Now some people like to use **whom** instead of **who** in object relative clauses:

**Catherine**

...the doctor **whom I saw**....

**Alice**

And that's fine. **Whom** is correct here.

**Finn**

Although **who** is probably more common in spoken English these days.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Alice**

And we're talking about defining relative clauses.

**Finn**

And now it's quiz time. They're all about Harry Potter, these questions. So if you like the film it may be easier for you...I'll say some key words and you have to make them into a sentence with a defining relative clause. Here's the first one. **Robbie Coltrane - actor - play - Hagrid.**

**Alice**

Robbie Coltrane is the actor **who** played Hagrid... in Harry Potter.

**Finn**

And another one: **Hogwarts - school - Harry Potter - go.**

**Alice**

Hogwarts is the school **that** Harry Potter went to.

**Finn**

Very good. Last one: **Hermione - marry - Ron Weasley.**

**Alice**

Ooh. Hermione is the girl **who** married Ron Weasley.

**Finn**

Or as an object clause it's:

**Alice**

Hermione is the girl **who** Ron Weasley married.

**Finn**

Well done if you got those right. Now before we finish, there's just time to mention that, in everyday English, it's fine to leave out the pronoun completely when the relative pronoun is the **object** of the relative clause.

**Alice**

For example: **Hermione is the girl who Ron Weasley married** becomes:

**Finn**

**Hermione is the girl Ron Weasley married.**

**Alice**

Ahhh. Don't you think she should have married Harry?

**Finn**

Well, I really think it's Hermione's choice, Alice.

**Alice**

Fair enough.

**Finn**

So, that's the end of our brief look at defining relative clauses. They begin with a pronoun and go after the noun that you want to define.

**Alice**

Yes. There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### May, might, could



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Sophie**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Sophie.

**Neil**

And with me, Neil. Hello.

**Sophie**

Today's programme is all about the words **may**, **might** and **could**.

**Neil**

Yes, we'll look at how to use these three little words to talk about present and future possibilities...

**Sophie**

We'll tell you what to watch out for...

**Neil**

We'll give you a top tip to make your spoken English sound really natural...

**Sophie**

... and we'll finish with a quiz.

**Neil**

So listen carefully! Now the first thing to say about **may**, **might** and **could** is that they are often followed by an infinitive verb without **to**. And here's Catherine... Hello!

**Catherine**

Hello!

**Neil**

...to bring us our first example. Catherine, what are you having for dinner tonight?

**Catherine**

Well, I **may make** chicken curry.

**Neil**

Sounds good.

**Catherine**

...Or I **might have** steak...

**Neil**

Even better.

**Catherine**

...Or I **could get** a takeaway.

**Neil**

Not very healthy - but very convenient.

**Sophie**

So, tonight Catherine **may have** chicken; she **might have** steak: she **could get** a takeaway. **May, might** and **could** with an infinitive show all three options are future possibilities.

**Neil**

Good. Now those examples were about future possibilities – Catherine's dinner tonight – but we can also use **may, might** and **could** with an infinitive to talk about present possibilities, like this:

**Catherine**

I think Jackie likes chicken - but she **might prefer** fish.

I don't know where Shaheen is. He **could be** at work.

The agency **may have** the information you want.

**Sophie**

Right, so that's present and future possibilities. Now, we can also... *(someone knocks at the door)* ...er, hello?

**Woman**

Oops, sorry – wrong studio!

**Neil**

Who was that?

**Sophie**

I'm not sure. She **may be** from IT.

**Neil**

Or, she **might be** the new presenter.

**Sophie**

She **could be** the studio manager.

**Neil**

We're all guessing ...

**Sophie**

Yes, well, anyway, as I was about to say, we often use **may**, **might** and **could** to make guesses.

**IDENT**

You're listening to 6 Minute English.

**Sophie**

And we're talking about **may**, **might** and **could**. Now, for negatives, we use **might not** or **may not**. So we can say:

**Catherine**

I **might not cook** chicken curry.

I think that woman is the new studio manager – but she **may not be**.

**Sophie**

The short form of **might not** is **mightn't**, but this is not so usual.

**Neil**

...and some people shorten **may not** to **mayn't**, but that's unusual too.

**Sophie**

Now, we promised you a word of warning...

**Neil**

We did.

**Sophie**

... and here it is. The negative of **could** is **couldn't**, but be very careful with **couldn't** when you're talking about future possibility or future uncertainty. Neil, give us an example situation.

**Neil**

Yes. Imagine you're in an airport. Your plane is due to take off in an hour from now, but the weather is getting worse – you're getting worried. You might say this:

**Catherine**

If the weather gets worse, our plane **could take off** late. We **might not take off** at all!

**Neil**

Now that's all fine, but if you say: We **couldn't take off** – you're talking about an impossible situation in the past, not an uncertain situation in the future. So you can't use **couldn't** in our airport example.

**Sophie**

So watch out for **couldn't**.

**Neil**

Yes. Stick with **might not** or **may not** if you want to play it safe here.

**Sophie**

Now, for questions, you can use **might**, **may** and **could**, but a top tip to make your English sound more natural is to use the phrase **Do you think...?**

**Neil**

So you can say **Might Catherine have chicken curry for dinner?** But it sounds more natural to say **Do you think Catherine might have chicken curry for dinner?**

**Sophie**

So it's **Do you think**, then a **subject**, then **might**, **may** or **could** plus **infinitive**.

**Neil**

Sophie, I think we could be ready for our quiz. Number one. Which is the correct answer to the question: Where are you going on holiday? Is it a) I may to go to Spain or b) I may go to Spain.

**Sophie**

It's b) I **may go** to Spain.

**Neil**

That's right. Number two. Which is correct? The traffic is getting worse, so a) I may not be home on time or b) I could not be home on time.

**Sophie**

It's a) The traffic is getting worse, so I **may not be** home on time.

**Neil**

And the last one. Which sounds more natural? a) Might we have to go now or b) Do you think we might have to go now?

**Sophie**

It's b) Do you think we might have to go now?

**Neil**

Well done if you got those right and yes, we do have to go now. There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.



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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Subject questions



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Rob**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Rob.

**Catherine**

And me, Catherine. Hello.

**Rob**

Hello. In this programme we're talking about subject questions. We'll show you what they are, and how to make them...

**Catherine**

And we'll have a quiz to test what you've learnt...

**Rob**

And we'll finish with a top pronunciation tip.

**Catherine**

So, let's get started. In everyday English, the words **who**, **what**, **which** and **whose** are very common in questions. Here's Neil, hello Neil.

**Neil**

Hello Catherine.

**Catherine**

With an example:

**Neil**

*Who did David meet?*

**Rob**

Thanks Neil. Now the answer could be:

**Neil**

*David met Victoria.*

**Catherine**

Subject: David; verb: met; object: Victoria. So Victoria is the *object* of the verb met.

**Rob**

So in the question **Who did David meet?** The word **who** is asking about the **object**.

**Catherine**

But we can also use question words to ask about the **subject**, like this:

**Neil**

*Who lives in The White House?*

**Catherine**

OK, so we have a question word: who, plus a verb: lives. And it's a **subject question** because it asks who is **doing** the **verb**. **Who lives in The White House?**

**Rob**

Now we don't use **do**, **does** or **did** in subject questions. We don't say **Who does live** – it's just **Who lives**. So Catherine **Who lives in the White House?**

**Catherine**

Tough one Rob. I think it's the US president.

**Rob**

Yes, correct.

**Catherine**

Let's have another one please.

**Neil**

*What makes you happy?*

**Catherine**

**What makes me happy?** Knitting actually makes me happy! So this question word is **what**. **What** is the subject, and the verb is **makes**. Rob, what makes you happy?

**Rob**

It's got to be riding my bike, I think. So that's **who** to ask about people, and **what** for things.

**Catherine**

Exactly. Now, can we have another one please Neil?

**Neil**

*Which key opens this door?*

**Catherine**

So, the question word **which** usually comes with a **noun**. For example: which key. **Rob, which key opens this door?**

**Rob**

The smallest key opens this door. We use **which** when the choice of possible answers is limited, like which key, or which day, or which colour.

**Catherine**

And what if the choice of possible answers **isn't** limited?

**Rob**

Well, then we use **what** without a noun.

**Neil**

*What happened last night? What caused the accident?*

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Rob**

And we're looking at subject questions. Neil, can we have one more subject question word please?

**Neil**

*Whose story won first prize?*

**Rob**

The word whose shows that something **belongs** to someone, and it usually comes with a noun, so: whose story is the subject; the verb is won. **Whose story won first prize?**

**Catherine**

And now: a pronunciation warning. In spoken English, the words **who is** and the words **who has** are often shortened to:

**Both**

**Who's!!!**

**Catherine**

That's right: it sounds exactly the same as the question word **whose**. **Who's - whose**.

**Rob**

It's confusing, isn't it? So here's a little tip for you. If you remember that the question word **whose** usually comes with a noun, you should be able to tell the difference. Here's Neil with two questions - but only one of them has a noun after the word **whose**. See if you can tell which one:

**Neil**

***Who's** using my mobile phone? **Whose** mobile phone has a signal?*

**Rob**

Did you get that? The second question had **whose** plus a **noun** so that means it's a **subject question: Whose mobile phone has a signal?**

**Catherine**

Top tip Rob. So now we have four words we can use for **subject questions: who, which, what, and whose**.

**Rob**

Do you know what, I think that means: it's quiz time.

**Catherine**

And you're right, it is Rob. But actually, today we're doing a backwards quiz: I'll say the answer, and you at home have to work out what the subject question is. Here's the first answer: *Keiko speaks Japanese*.

**Rob**

So, the **subject** is Keiko – that's a person. It's **who** for people, so the question is **Who speaks Japanese?**

**Catherine**

Exactly. Here's another answer: *Kate's dog won the competition*.

**Rob**

So it's **whose** because the dog belongs to Kate. With **whose** we need the noun dog, so: **Whose dog won the competition?**

**Catherine**

Right, very good. And Kate's dog is a clever dog! No doubt about it. Right, last one: **The shop on the corner sells gloves**.

**Rob**

So it's **which** with shop because we're asking about a thing - and we can suppose there's a limited choice of shops in the area – so: **Which shop sells gloves?**

**Catherine**

So that's **subject questions**. They don't need the auxiliary **do, does** or **did**...

**Rob**

...but they all start with a question word. Just remember to choose the right one!

**Catherine**

There's more about this on our website at [www.bbclearningenglish.com](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Too, very, enough



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Catherine**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

**Rob**

And me, Rob. Hello.

**Catherine**

Today's programme is all about describing things.

**Rob**

That's right. We're going to explain how to use the words **too** and **very** with adjectives to describe things.

**Catherine**

We are, and we'll show you how to use the word **enough** with adjectives and nouns ...

**Rob**

... we'll explain the difference between **too much** and **too many**...

**Catherine**

and we'll finish with a quiz – so listen carefully.

**Rob**

And to help us with all our example sentences today we're bringing you this episode of 6 Minute Grammar from a clothes shop.

**Catherine**

Yes, we're clothes shopping!

**Rob**

We are, well, Catherine's clothes shopping.

**Catherine**

I'm going to a party. Rob, look, this blue dress - I love it - do you?

**Rob**

It's not really my colour.

**Catherine**

You're not going to wear it Rob. Actually... it's too big. Oooh – this one's nice – what do you think Rob?

**Rob**

It's a bit short isn't it.

**Catherine**

Mmmm... It's too small.

**Rob**

Too big... too small. Catherine used the word **too** here with the adjectives **big** and **small** to say that the dress is not right – it's bigger or smaller than she wants or needs.

**Catherine**

Right! Rob! Found one - red one, look. What do you think?

**Rob**

I do like the colour. It suits you.

**Catherine**

It is lovely but... it's very expensive!

**Rob**

Yes, [whistles] £150. I see what you mean... So, we use **very** with an adjective to make it stronger. The red dress is not just **expensive** – it's **very expensive**.

**Catherine**

Very, very expensive. But look! Green one, look at this green one, it's cheaper – and it looks big enough. What do you think, Rob?

**Rob**

It does suit you and it's cheaper. Let's take it before you change your mind... Do you have enough money?

**Catherine**

Do I have enough money! Are you serious? Yes, of course...

**Rob**

Let's see your purse then. So, the word **enough** with an adjective describes the right amount of something. So, the green dress is **big enough** – and **long enough**. We've found it! We've got the dress! Hooray!

**Catherine**

Er Rob... Actually, I don't have **enough cash** on me...and I've left my credit card in the office... I don't suppose... would you mind...?

**Rob**

What are you saying...? Ok, ok... How much is it? ...so we can also use **enough** before a noun to say that we have the right amount of something: so we can ask: Do you have **enough money**? ... and we can also use **enough** in the negative to say we have less of something than we need. Catherine doesn't have enough cash.

**Catherine**

Thank you Rob. You're very generous.

**Rob**

Ok, time for a recap. We use **too** before an adjective:

**Catherine**

The blue dress is **too small**.

**Rob**

**Very** goes before an adjective...

**Catherine**

The red dress is **very expensive**.

**Rob**

**Enough** goes after an adjective...

**Catherine**

This dress is **big enough**.

**Rob**

And **enough** goes before a noun...

**Catherine**

I don't have **enough money**.

**Rob**

Let's go. I've done enough shopping for today.



**Catherine**

Ok, come on.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar, from BBC Learning English.

**Rob**

Phew ... We're back in the studio. It's just like magic isn't it! And Catherine, you got the dress so, how was the party?

**Catherine**

Well, it was great except ... I ate **too much food**... and ...

**Rob**

...yes?

**Catherine**

...there were **too many people** wearing my dress!

**Rob...**

Oh, that's a pity. So this is **too** with **much** and **many** to talk about an amount or number of something that's more or less than we want or need.

**Catherine**

Yes, I ate more food than I needed.

**Rob**

... and it's a pity there were too many green dresses. So, for plural countable nouns like **dresses**, we use **too many** – **too many dresses, too many people**.

**Catherine**

Yes, and for uncountable nouns like **food** and **money**, we use **too much**.

**Rob**

...and Catherine ate **too much food** ...

**Catherine**

...and the red dress cost **too much money**.

**Rob**

It did, luckily. Now, be careful not to use **very** with strong adjectives. You cannot say the party was very fantastic...

**Catherine**

Instead, say: the party was **absolutely** fantastic!

**Rob**

But not for you! And now, it's time for a quiz! Fill the gaps. Number one. I can't hear you - there's too [beep] noise.

**Catherine**

And the answer is: I can't hear you – there's too **much** noise.

**Rob**

Good. Number two. Hiro is only 13. He's not old [beep] to drive yet.

**Catherine**

Hiro is only 13. He's not old **enough** to drive yet.

**Rob**

And Number three. Those shoes don't fit me. They are [beep] small.

**Catherine**

Those shoes don't fit me. They are **too** small.

**Rob**

So, no more parties, then?

**Catherine**

...Well actually Rob, there's one at the weekend and... I saw a lovely pair of blue shoes, they're not too expensive...

**Rob**

You've got time to go and get your credit card for this one – I'm not paying! There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar soon.

**Both**

Bye.

**STING**

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Tenses



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil...

**Catherine**

And me, Catherine. Hello.

**Neil**

In today's programme we're looking at six different English tenses.

**Catherine**

And our first tense is: the present simple. So, Neil, a question: Where do you live?

**Neil**

**I live** in London. And the present simple **I live** tells us this is a fact, or a permanent situation. London is home.

**Catherine**

Good - and as well as facts, we use the present simple for regular activities too, with phrases like **every day** or **on Saturdays**. For example **we bring you 6 Minute Grammar on Tuesdays!**

**Neil**

Indeed, and words like **usually**, **sometimes**, **always**, and **often** go with the present simple.

**Catherine**

Here's Harry with an example.

**Harry**

**6 Minute Grammar usually finishes** with a quiz!

**Catherine**

That's true, it does. And our second tense is: the present continuous.

**Neil**

Yes, and one of the uses of the present continuous tense to talk about activities happening now. Here's Harry, with an example.

**Harry**

**You're listening** to 6 Minute Grammar right now.

**Neil**

That's an activity happening now. But here's a different example.

**Harry**

I'm from near Bristol, but **I'm living** in London at the moment.

**Catherine**

The present continuous **I'm living** tells us that this is a temporary situation. London isn't Harry's permanent home. With this use of the present continuous, look out for time expressions like **at the moment, this year, these days**.

**Neil**

And a sentence like **I'm studying Russian this month** doesn't mean I'm studying it right this minute. It means I'm doing it off and on, around this time.

**Catherine**

So far so good. But Neil: if we use the present continuous tense for things happening now, why do we say things like **I understand** and **that coffee smells good**? That's happening now - but we used the present simple.

**Neil**

Good question! And the answer is, some verbs don't take a continuous form. They're often verbs of thinking or feeling like **understand** or **smell**, or **know, believe, remember, hear, sound, want, need**. We keep them in the simple tense.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from BBC Learning English.

**Catherine**

And we're talking about tenses. Now for tenses three and four: that's the past simple and the present perfect. And our examples are from a postcard that our colleague Finn sent us – and he's on holiday in India, the lucky man. So Harry, can you read it for us please?

**Harry**

Hello from Goa! **Have you ever been** here? **We arrived** two days ago. **It's been** really hot **since** then. **I've already done** some sunbathing but we **haven't seen much yet**.

### Catherine

Lucky Finn. So: let's look at the tenses. The sentence **we arrived two days ago** is past simple.

### Neil

Yes: use the past simple when something clearly finished in the past. It often goes with phrases like **two days ago**, **yesterday**, and **last month**.

### Catherine

But with the present perfect, we don't usually say when things happened. We just want to know whether something has happened or not.

### Neil

So, Finn's sentences **I've already done some sunbathing** and **we haven't seen much yet** are good examples of this.

### Catherine

Exactly. And the words **already**, **yet** and **just** often go with the present perfect. Examples please Harry...

### Harry

**Have you ever been** here? **It's been** really hot **since** then.

### Neil

With the present perfect, we're interested in past experiences more than past times or dates. So we use **ever** and **never**. **Have you ever been** to Goa, Catherine?

### Catherine

No: **I've never been** to Goa Neil. I'd like to, but I never have. And if we need to talk about when things happened, we can use the words **for** and **since** with the present perfect. Finn's **been** in Goa **for two days**; and it's **been** really hot **since he arrived**. Now for our next tense, and here's Harry with more of Finn's postcard.

### Harry

**We're going to visit** the market **tomorrow**, and we're coming home **next Wednesday**.

### Neil

We use **going to with an infinitive verb** for things you plan or expect to happen. Finn has a plan to visit the market tomorrow.

### Catherine

Yes, and Finn also says **we're coming home next Wednesday**. And that's tense six, the present continuous for future arrangements.

**Neil**

Yes. It's like **going to** but it's a definite arrangement. He's probably got his plane tickets.

**Catherine**

Right. So that's our six tenses. And now it's quiz time!! Question one. Which is correct? Is it a) **I'm needing** some new shoes or b) **I need** some new shoes?

**Neil**

It's b) **I need** some new shoes. Question two: which is correct: a) **Did you see** Luke since Saturday? Or b) **Have you seen** Luke since Saturday?

**Catherine**

And it's b) **Have you seen** Luke since Saturday. And the last one: which is correct? Is it a) It's **going to rain** tomorrow. Or b) **It's raining** tomorrow.

**Neil**

It's a) **It's going to rain** tomorrow.

**Catherine**

Well done if you got those right. That brings us to the end of the programme.

**Neil**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye!

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Indirect questions



*NB This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Catherine**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

**Rob**

And me, Rob. Hello.

**Catherine**

Today we're talking about indirect questions.

**Rob**

That'

s right: Indirect questions. We'll tell you what they are, how to make them and when to use them

**Catherine**

There'll a quiz at the end of the show, so listen carefully.

**Rob**

Let's start with a simple question. Catherine: What time is it?

**Catherine**

It is 18 minutes past 11, Rob.

**Rob**

And that question uses normal question word order. What – time – is – it? But there's another way to ask that question. Let's listen to Mike:

**Mike**

Could you tell me what the time is?

**Rob**

Yes, it's still 18 minutes past 11! Thanks Mike. This is a much more polite way of asking a question. It's called an **indirect question** and it has two parts. The first part is the phrase **Could you tell me...**

**Catherine**

... and the second part is the question word **what** with the information we want to know. Here it is again:

**Mike**

Could you tell me what time it is?

**Catherine**

And there are lots of phrases that we can use in the first part of an indirect question. Here are some of them:

**Rob**

Do you know....?

**Mike**

Do you know when the film finishes?

**Rob**

Have you any idea?

**Mike**

Have you any idea where I left my phone?

**Rob**

Would you mind telling me ...?

**Mike**

Would you mind telling me how this machine works?

**Rob**

Now, let's get a closer look at the second part of indirect questions. And it's important to note that we don't use question word order.

**Catherine**

That's right, the subject and verb are in the same order as they are in statements. So, we don't say **Can you tell me what time is it?** We say **Can you tell me what time it is?** It's subject - **it** - plus verb - **is**. Listen out for the statement word order in these indirect questions:

**Mike**

Do you know when the film finishes?

Have you any idea where I left my phone?

Would you mind telling me how this machine works?



**Catherine**

One more time please?

**Mike**

Do you know when the film finishes?

Have you any idea where I left my phone?

Would you mind telling me how this machine works?

**Rob**

Thanks Mike now, let's talk about yes - no questions. Here are some **direct** questions.

**Mike**

Is this coffee for everyone?

Does the canteen open for breakfast?

Can I use this computer?

**Catherine**

Now, listen to the **indirect** questions. They use statement word order again, so listen out for that, and also listen out for the two words that come after the part one phrases.

**Mike**

Do you know if this coffee is for everyone?

Do you know if the canteen opens for breakfast?

Do you know whether I can use this computer?

**Catherine**

One more time please?

**Mike**

Do you know if this coffee is for everyone?

Do you know if the canteen opens for breakfast?

Do you know whether I can use this computer?

**Rob**

So, use **if** or **whether** in yes - no questions. The meaning is the same, but **whether** is a bit more formal than **if**.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from BBC Learning English dot com.

**Rob**

And we're talking about indirect questions.

**Catherine**

That's right, and we use indirect questions a lot in English, especially when we are talking to people we don't know.

**Rob**

Let's recap: there are two types of indirect questions: those that use question words like **what, where, when, why** and **how** ...

**Catherine**

... and those that use **if** or **whether**.

**Rob**

But all indirect questions have the same word order as statements.

**Catherine**

They do. Now, a quick word about tenses. Listen to these direct questions.

**Mike**

Does this programme finish soon?

Did a package arrive for me this morning?

**Catherine**

The first question was in the present simple tense. We had the auxiliary **does** with the verb **finish**.

**Rob**

And the second question was in the simple past, with the auxiliary **did** and the verb **arrive**. Let's hear the indirect questions now.

**Mike**

Can you tell me if this programme finishes soon?

Could you tell me if a package arrived for me this morning?

**Catherine**

So, no **does** or **did** in the indirect questions. In the first question, it's **finishes** in the present simple.

**Rob**

...and in the second question, it's **arrived**, in the past simple.

**Catherine**

Simple!

**Catherine**

And now: it's quiz time. Number one. Which is correct? Is it a) Can you tell me where the coffee machine is? Or b) Can you tell me where is the coffee machine?

**Rob**

It's a) Can you tell me where the coffee machine is?

**Catherine**

Good. Number two. a) Do you know if this machine does give change? Or b) Do you know if this machine gives change?

**Rob**

It's b) Do you know if this machine gives change?

**Catherine**

And number three. Have you any idea what the time is? Or b) Have you any idea what is the time is?

**Rob**

It's a) Have you any idea what the time is?

**Catherine**

Well actually, it's time for the end of the show. Well done if you got those right.

**Rob**

There's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar soon.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present and past passives



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar. I'm Neil...

**Rob**

And I'm Rob. Hello.

**Neil**

Today we're talking about the passive voice.

**Rob**

Yes, the passive voice. In English, we can talk about things in both the active and passive voice.

**Neil**

Yes. And we're going to start with the active voice. And here's Mike with our first example.

**Mike**

**Pharrell Williams sang the song Happy.**

**Neil**

And one more time.

**Mike**

**Pharrell Williams sang the song Happy.**

**Neil**

**Pharrell Williams sang the song Happy.** Good song Rob, isn't it.

**Rob**

Well it makes me happy anyway.

**Neil**

And in grammatical terms, we've got the **subject** – **Pharrell Williams**, then the **verb**, **sang**, then the **object** of the verb – **the song Happy**. And that is an example of the active

voice because the **performer of the action**, the **doer**, is at the beginning of the sentence - Pharrell. We're focusing on the person or the thing that **does** the action of the verb.

**Rob**

So far so good – but what if we want to focus on what receives the action? That's the object in the active sentence. What if we're more interested in the song than we are in the singer? Can we put **the song Happy** at the beginning of the sentence?

**Neil**

Well yes, we can, but the grammar needs to change. Listen carefully:

**Mike**

The song Happy was sung by Pharrell Williams.

**Neil**

Again.

**Mike**

The song Happy was sung by Pharrell Williams.

**Neil**

So now the receiver of the action – **The song Happy** – comes first. It changes place with the doer. And because we've changed the sentence structure, we need to make two changes to the sentence. First, we need to add the verb **to be**, in the correct form. Second, we have to use the **past participle** of the verb.

**Rob**

And that gives us a sentence in the passive voice:

**Mike**

**The song Happy was sung by Pharrell Williams.**

**Neil**

Let's listen to those two sentences one more time. **Active voice:**

**Mike**

**Pharrell Williams sang the song Happy.**

**Neil**

And **passive voice:**

**Mike**

**The song Happy was sung by Pharrell Williams.**

**Rob**

Thanks Mike. And the two sentences have exactly the same meaning, don't they, Neil?

**Neil**

They do. They have exactly the same meaning. So you might be wondering why we need two different ways of saying the same thing.

**Rob**

I was wondering... But, the good thing about passive sentences is that we can give the receiver of the action more importance in our sentence by putting it at the start, but that's not the only reason that the passive voice is useful, right Neil?

**Neil**

Right! The passive voice is really useful when we don't know who or what performed the action – or if everyone knows it. So we don't need to say it. Can we have an example please, Mike...

**Mike**

**Millions of cars were sold in 2012.**

**Neil**

And one more time.

**Mike**

**Millions of cars were sold in 2012.**

**Neil**

So that's a passive sentence with **millions of cars** at the start. Then we've got the verb **to be** plus the past participle – **were sold** – and then for the doer of the action – well, there is no doer.

**Rob**

What's that? No doer of the action at all... sound strange? Well, actually, we don't have to have a doer in a passive sentence, so, if the doer is not really important, or if it's obvious, we can leave it out. We know that some people bought all these millions of cars. But we don't have to say it.

**Neil**

Yeah. So we leave the performer of the action out if it's not important or if everybody knows.

**Rob**

Right. You can also leave the doer out if you **don't** know it, like this:

**Mike**

**My bicycle was stolen last weekend.**

**Neil**

Oh, Mike!

**Rob**

Poor Mike.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Rob**

And we're talking about the passive voice. Now to make tenses in the passive voice, we change the form of the verb **to be**. Here's a present tense example:

**Mike**

**Millions of songs are downloaded every day.**

**Neil**

Again.

**Mike**

**Millions of songs are downloaded every day.**

**Neil**

And a past tense example:

**Mike**

**15 million songs were downloaded yesterday.**

**Rob**

And now – it's time for a quiz. Change these sentences from active into passive, and remember, you might not need a doer. Number one: People speak Spanish in Cuba and Chile.

**Neil**

And the answer is: **Spanish is spoken in Cuba and Chile.** Number two: The police arrested ten people last night.

**Rob**

And the answer is: **Ten people were arrested last night.** OK, last one: Brazil won the 1994 World Cup.

**Neil**

Ah, I remember it well! **The 1994 World Cup was won by Brazil.** And the doer – Brazil – is important here, isn't it Rob?

**Rob**

Yes it is, very important.

**Neil**

So we don't leave it out.

**Rob**

Well done if you got all those right. So that's the passive voice. We use it to give importance to the receiver of the action of a verb, or when we don't know who did it or everyone knows it.

**Neil**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye!



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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### First Conditional



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Neil**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Neil.

**Sophie**

And me, Sophie. Hello.

**Neil**

Today we're talking about the first conditional.

**Sophie**

Yes, the first conditional. We'll be looking at why and when we use it.

**Neil**

We'll see how to make it...

**Sophie**

There'll be a very helpful pronunciation tip...

**Neil**

And there'll be a quiz at the end of the show, so keep listening!

**Sophie**

OK, let's start with why and when. We use the first conditional to talk about possible future situations - and their possible results. Here's Catherine with our first example:

**Catherine**

If I lose my umbrella, I will buy another one.

**Sophie**

Thanks, Catherine. A weather-related example there: If I lose my umbrella, I will buy another one.

**Neil**

And it's made of two parts. The first part describes a possible future situation, and it's made from **if** plus the present simple: **If I lose** my umbrella...

**Sophie**

...and the second part is the result part. It's made of **will** plus an **infinitive**. **I will buy** another one. Can you put them both together now please Catherine?

**Catherine**

If I lose my umbrella, I will buy another one.

**Neil**

Thanks, Catherine. Here are some more examples.

**Catherine**

If I visit Mexico, I will stay with my friends.

They will go to the beach if it's sunny.

If Michal passes his exams, we'll have a party for him.

**Neil**

So that's the first conditional: **if plus present simple**, with **will plus an infinitive**, to talk about a possible future situation and its possible result.

**Sophie**

That's right. But if we're not sure if the result part will actually happen, we can use **might** instead of **will**. Catherine.

**Catherine**

If I lose my umbrella, I **might** buy another one.

**Neil**

I might buy you dinner tonight, Sophie, if you're nice to me!

**Sophie**

Well, I'm always nice, Neil. So that's **might** instead of **will** – when we're not certain about the future result.

**Neil**

But if we're sure that the future situation will happen, we can change **if** to **when**, like this:

**Catherine**

When I lose my umbrella, I'll buy another one.

**Sophie**

You should always look after your umbrellas, Catherine. Ok, let's look at using **should** for advice in a first conditional sentence.

**Catherine**

You shouldn't use the kettle if it isn't working properly.

**Sophie**

So the result part comes first. We have a modal verb, **shouldn't**, and we use this to give advice: Don't use the kettle! The **if** part gives the possible future situation: The kettle isn't working.

**Neil**

But how are we going to make the tea if the kettle's broken? I haven't had a cup all morning!

**Sophie**

I'll do my best to fix it, Neil. Now for a pronunciation tip. In our examples about umbrellas, the two words **I will** can be shortened to **I'll**. Here's Catherine with the long and short versions of I will. Listen carefully.

**Catherine**

If I lose my umbrella, I will buy another one.

If I lose my umbrella, I'll buy another one.

**Neil**

**I will** buy... **I'll** buy. So **will** is shortened to just a // sound. Here are some more examples:

**Catherine**

They will go to the beach if it's sunny.

They'll go to the beach if it's sunny.

If Michal passes his exams, we will have a party for him.

If Michal passes his exams, we'll have a party for him.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Sophie**

And we're talking about the first conditional.

**Neil**

And it's time for a quiz! Decide if these sentences are right or wrong. Sophie will give you the answers. Number one. If William wakes up late, he miss the school bus.

**Sophie**

And this sentence is wrong: the **if** part is correct; but **will** is missing from the result part. Here's the correct sentence, with a short **will**: If William wakes up late, he'll miss the school bus.

**Neil**

Great. Another one: I'll visit Central Park if I go to New York.

**Sophie**

This sentence is correct!

**Neil**

And the last one: I might go to the doctor if I won't feel better tomorrow.

**Sophie**

This sentence has the future form **won't** in the **if** part - and that's wrong. The correct sentence needs **present simple** in the **if** part, so: I might go to the doctor **if I don't feel** better tomorrow.

**Neil**

Well done if you got that right at home. Now, before we go, here's a top tip for using the first conditional correctly – you only need one **will**, and it's never in the **if** part. Here's a wrong example:

**Catherine**

If I will see Peter on Saturday, I will tell him to call you.

**Sophie**

If I will see... I will tell him – two **wills** – that's got to be wrong. Let's have a correct version please, Catherine.

**Catherine**

If I see Peter on Saturday, I'll tell him to call you.

**Neil**

That's much better. Only one **will** and it isn't in the **if** part.

**Sophie**

So that's the first conditional. It's made of **if plus the present simple, with will plus the infinitive**.

**Neil**

And we mainly use it to talk about a possible situation in the future and its results.

**Sophie**

There's lots more about this at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### The second conditional



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Rob**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Rob.

**Catherine**

And me, Catherine. Hello. This programme is all about the second conditional.

**Rob**

Yes the second conditional. We'll see how to form it...

**Catherine**

We'll look at why and when we use it....

**Rob**

There'll be a very helpful pronunciation tip...

**Catherine**

And there'll be a second conditional quiz at the end of the show, so listen carefully!

**Rob**

Let's start by looking at why and when we use the second conditional. The main use of the second conditional is to talk about impossible, unlikely or imaginary situations. And here's an example to do with football. Catherine, are you a football fan?

**Catherine**

Err... I like to watch the big games, the internationals, the England games in particular – I do like an England game.

**Rob**

Yes, they haven't won for a long time...

**Catherine**

Not since '66, I think...

**Rob**

'66 was a long time ago, but maybe they'll win one day...

**Catherine**

Maybe!

**Rob**

But at the moment it's just a dream; not a strong possibility. So Mike's here: let's have a second conditional sentence about that situation Mike:

**Mike**

If England won the World Cup, Catherine would be so happy.

**Rob**

If England won the World Cup, Catherine would be so happy. Catherine, is that true?

**Catherine**

It is, actually, I'd be very happy. Unlikely, but, I'd be happy. So: this is a second conditional sentence and it is made of two parts. The first part starts with the word **if**, plus **a subject** and **a past simple verb**, and it describes an unlikely or imaginary situation, like this:

**Mike**

If England won the World Cup...

**Catherine**

Thanks Mike. And the second part of the sentence has the word **would** or the negative **wouldn't** with **an infinitive verb**. It describes a possible result of the unlikely or imaginary situation.

**Mike**

...Catherine would be so happy.

**Rob**

That's the result of the imaginary situation. And yes, If England won the World Cup, we would be very happy, wouldn't we, Catherine?

**Catherine**

We would!

**Rob**

Good. Now, we can change the order of the two parts, and the meaning stays the same:

**Mike**

We'd be so happy if England won the World Cup.

**Catherine**

Right, thanks Mike. Let's have some more examples.

**Mike**

If Sunny had more money, he'd get a better phone.

I wouldn't see you very often if I lived in the city.

Maria would have a better job if she spoke more English.

If I were you, I'd take a holiday.

**Rob**

Thanks: lots of examples there. And the last one is particularly interesting: **If I were you, I'd take a holiday**. And of course this isn't a real situation, because I can't be you, can I?

**Catherine**

You can't be anybody Rob, except yourself, just you: we're stuck with you.

**Rob**

You're stuck with me, yes: I'm afraid so. Anyway, we say a second conditional sentence starting with the words **If I were you** when we want to give someone some advice. And here the advice is to go on holiday.

**Catherine**

It's interesting that a lot of native speakers say **If I were you**, and not if **I was you**.

**Rob**

And if I were you, I'd go somewhere nice and hot with palm trees and sandy beaches.  
Mmm.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar, from BBC Learning English.

**Rob**

And we're talking about second conditionals.

**Catherine**

Now for a word about pronunciation. Contractions or short forms – are very common in second conditionals – but they can sometimes be difficult to hear.

**Rob**

Yes, that's a good point. In the last example, the two words **I** and **would** become **I'd**. **I'd** take a holiday.



**Catherine**

So **would** is shortened to just a /d/ sound. Listen out for the short /d/ sound in this next example:

**Mike**

If I knew the answer, **I'd** tell you.

**Catherine**

Yes, the phrase **I would tell** becomes **I'd tell**. One more time please Mike:

**Mike**

If I knew the answer, **I'd tell** you.

**Rob**

Well, wherever you are, I hope you know the answers to the quiz. It's coming up next!

**Catherine**

Yes, it's quiz time! Choose the correct word or phrase to fill each gap. Here's the first one. If you [beep] some money on the street, what would you do? Is the missing word a) find b) found or c) would find?

**Rob**

And the answer is b): If you **found** £50 on the street, what would you do?

**Catherine**

Another one: If you forgot your wife's birthday what [beep] she do? Is it a) does, b) will or c) would?

**Rob**

So the answer is c): If you forgot your wife's birthday what **would** she do? I wonder what she'd do...

**Catherine**

And the last one: I wouldn't eat that if I [beep] you. Is it a) am b) were or c) be?

**Rob**

And its b): I wouldn't eat that if I **were** you. Well done if you got all those right.

**Rob**

Great. So we've been talking about the second conditional. It's made of **if** plus **the past simple** tense, and **would** plus **the infinitive**. We use it to talk about imaginary situations and their results.

**Catherine**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again soon for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both:**

Bye.

**STING**

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### State verbs



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Catherine

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me Catherine.

#### Neil

And me, Neil. Hello.

#### Catherine

In this programme we're talking about **state verbs**. We'll explain what they are...

#### Neil

We'll show you how to use them...

#### Catherine

We'll give you lots of examples...

#### Neil

And we'll finish with a quiz to see what you've learnt.

#### Catherine

So let's get started. We can separate English verbs into two groups: **state verbs** and **action verbs**. Most verbs are action verbs...

#### Neil

And of course action verbs describe actions, so verbs like **go, kick, watch, rain** are all **action verbs**. And we can use them in any tense we want – past, present, future, perfect, passive, continuous, the lot.

#### Catherine

Yes but state verbs are different – because we don't usually use them in the continuous tenses.

#### Neil

That's right. We don't use state verbs in tenses that use the **i-n-g** form, such as the present continuous and the past continuous.

**Catherine**

Right, now, you're probably asking: what kind of verbs are state verbs? Well, there are three main types. The first type is verbs that describe **feelings and attitudes** such as **love, hate, like** and **prefer**. Here's Harry with an example.

**Harry**

What's this music? **I like** it.

**Catherine**

Thanks Harry. In that example, Harry is talking about his feelings now, but he doesn't say **I'm liking** it.

**Neil**

No, **I'm liking** is the present continuous tense and with state verbs that's usually wrong. We'll say a bit more about this later on, but the general rule is: use the present simple for verbs of feelings like **love, like** and **hate**.

**Catherine**

Now for the second type of state verb: that's verbs of **thinking**.

**Neil**

So verbs like **think, know, believe, understand, remember**. Here are some examples.

**Harry**

**I believe** Andrew's living in Dubai now. **Do you remember** if he's married?

**Catherine**

Good. In this example, Harry's using the present simple tense with the verbs **believe** and **remember**. You can't use them in the continuous.

**Neil**

And the third group of state verbs are verbs that describe **senses**. Verbs like **see, smell, taste, hear** and **sound**. Another example, please Harry.

**Harry**

What are you eating? **It smells** delicious!

**Catherine**

So Harry says **it smells** delicious and not **it's smelling** delicious.

**Neil**

Exactly. That would be wrong because **smell** is a state verb.

**Catherine**

It is. And as well as these three main types, there are some other common state verbs, for example: **have, own, belong...**

**Neil**

...**want, need, mean...**

**Catherine**

...**cost, seem, appear** and **wish**.

**Neil**

Well, that's quite a lot of verbs to remember. But one way to decide if a verb is a state verb is to ask yourself: does it describe an action?

**Catherine**

Good tip. And if the answer is "no it doesn't", then it's probably a state verb.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Catherine**

And we're looking at state verbs. OK so far? Good. Now: couple of points to make.

**Neil**

Yes. A few verbs can have two meanings. In one meaning, they are an action verb, so you can use them in the present continuous.

**Catherine**

But in the other meaning, they are state verbs, so you can't use a continuous tense. Some examples please Harry:

**Harry**

Mick **looks like** his sister.

**Catherine**

And:

**Harry**

Mick's **looking at** his sister.

**Neil**

Thanks. So, in the first example, **Mick looks like his sister**, **looks** is a state verb. We're talking about Mick's appearance, not his actions.

**Catherine**

But in the second example, **Mick's looking at his sister**, Mick's doing something. So, in this sentence, **look** is an action verb.

**Neil**

Another verb with two meanings like this is **have**, for example: **I have a cat** but **I'm having a bath**.

**Catherine**

And **think**. Listen. **I think you're right** - but - **I'm thinking of going to Spain**. And all the sense verbs can have two meanings too. Another example, Harry?

**Neil**

**Can you see** that man?

**Catherine**

And:

**Harry**

**I'm seeing** the doctor.

**Neil**

Right. Now, do you remember that we said it's wrong to say **I'm liking it** because it's the present continuous? Well, you might hear this sometimes in very informal spoken English. Or you might hear **I'm hating this movie** or **I'm loving your work**. But only in very informal conversations.

**Catherine**

Thanks for that Neil, I'm loving your explanations... And now it's quiz time! Are these sentences correct or wrong? Number one: **Do you prefer** jazz or rock music?

**Neil**

And that is correct. **Prefer** is a state verb so we use the present simple tense: **Do you prefer...**?

**Catherine**

Well done! Number two: **Are you belonging** to the football club?

**Neil**

That's not correct. **Belong** is a state verb. We have to say **Do you belong...**? Not: **Are you belonging...**?

**Catherine**

Right again! Number three: **I'm having** lunch with Kate today.

**Neil**

And that is correct. **Have** is an action verb here, so it's fine to use the present continuous tense. In this sentence, **I'm having** means **I'm eating**.

**Catherine**

Well done if got them all right. There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present perfect and past simple



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Catherine**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

**Neil**

And me, Neil. Hello.

**Catherine**

Today we're talking about the present perfect and the past simple tenses.

**Neil**

Yes – we're going to tell you how to form them, and give you three rules to help you decide which one to use and when.

**Catherine**

... we'll also look at using **ever** and **never** with the present perfect....

**Neil**

...and we'll finish with a quiz.

**Catherine**

Right then: let's start with the present perfect. And here's our first example:

**Example**

**I've looked at the sales figures. They've shot up by 20%!**

**Neil**

So, it's **subject**, plus **have** or **has**, plus a **past participle**.

**Catherine**

To make past participles of regular verbs, add **-ed** to the main verb... so **look** becomes **looked**.

**Neil**

But some verbs, like **shoot**, are irregular. The past participle of **shoot** is **shot**. You just have to learn your irregular verbs.



**Catherine**

That's right. And we often use short forms in the present perfect, like **I've**, **he's**, and **they've**.

**Neil**

Now, here's an example of the past simple.

**Example**

**I looked at the sales figures this morning. They shot up by 20% last month.**

**Neil**

For the past simple of regular verbs, add **-ed** to the main verb...

**Catherine**

So **look** becomes **looked**, but don't forget those irregular verbs. The past simple of **go** is **went**.

**Neil**

Now it's often difficult to know which tense to use.

**Catherine**

It can be so we've got some rules for you. Listen to the first example again:

**Example**

**I've looked at the sales figures. They've shot up by 20%.**

**Catherine**

And it's present perfect here because we're focusing on **what** happened, not **when**. But in the second example:

**Example**

**I looked at the sales figures this morning. They shot up by 20% last month.**

**Neil**

... it's the **past simple** because we say **when** the actions happened. So that's rule 1: use the present perfect to say **what** happened, but the past simple for **when** or **where** something happened.

**Catherine**

That's right. Now Neil just a minute because I actually... **I haven't eaten this morning...**

**Neil**

And that's an example of the present perfect with a time phrase. So sometimes, we **can** use the present perfect to say when something happened, when a situation started in the past and **is still true, or still happening** now. Here you go... Here's a biscuit Catherine...

**Catherine**

Thank you, Neil.

**Neil**

... because you haven't eaten anything this morning...

**Catherine**

... I haven't. But, if I said, **I didn't eat anything this morning**, with the past simple, it would mean it isn't morning any more – now, it's the afternoon or evening...

**Neil**

Yes, the action started and finished in the past... and you must be starving – go on, have another biscuit!

**Catherine**

Thank you very much. So that's rule 2: use the present perfect for events that started in the past and are **continuing now...**

**Neil**

...and the past simple for actions that started and finished in the past.

**Catherine**

Nice biscuits, Neil.

**IDENT**

6 Minute Grammar from BBC Learning English.

**Catherine**

And we're talking about when to use the present perfect and the past simple.

**Neil**

Now, we often use the present perfect with **ever** and **never**... for life experiences – things we've done at some point in the past. Here's a question for you, Catherine.

**Catherine**

Okay...

**Neil**

**Have you ever eaten** insects?

**Catherine**

Funnily enough, Neil, no, **I've never eaten** an insect, and I don't think I ever will. How about you?

**Neil**

Yes, actually **I have eaten** insects. I've eaten ants that were given to me by a friend from Colombia.

**Catherine**

Very good. So, rule 3: use **ever** with the present perfect to **ask** about a past experience, and **never** to talk about an experience you **haven't** had.

**Neil**

... but if you add information about time and place, use the past simple – **I ate insects last summer in Colombia.**

**Catherine**

... and Neil used present perfect in **I have eaten insects** because he was focusing on the event itself, not when it happened.

**Neil**

Actually, I wasn't focussing on anything. I kept my eyes shut the whole time! They didn't look very nice.

**Catherine**

But they tasted alright?

**Neil**

They tasted Okay, yes.

**Catherine**

Good.

**Neil**

It's now time for a quiz. Which is correct? Number one: a) **I've been for a job interview last week** or b) **I went for a job interview last week.**

**Catherine**

And it's b) **I went for a job interview last week.** Use the past simple when you say **when** something happened.

**Neil**

Number two: a) **I never went for a job interview** or b) **I have never been for a job interview.**

**Catherine**

And it's b) **I have never been for a job interview.** We use the present perfect with **never**.

**Neil**

And the last one: a) **Who has eaten all my biscuits?** or b) **Who ate all my biscuits?**

**Catherine**

And that's a trick question because actually both are correct! And by the way, Neil, it wasn't me! I didn't eat all your biscuits.

**Neil**

Yes, I'm sure. And that means we **have** now come to the end of our programme. Don't forget our three rules: One. Use the present perfect to say **what** has happened, but the past simple to say **when** or **where** it happened.

**Catherine**

Two: Use the present perfect for something that started in the past and is continuing now, but the past simple for something that started and **finished** in the past.

**Neil**

And three: Use **ever** with the present perfect to **ask** about a past experience, and **never** to talk about an experience you **haven't** had.

**Catherine**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Question tags



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Catherine

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

#### Finn

And me, Finn. Hello.

#### Catherine

Today's programme is about question tags, **isn't it** Finn?

#### Finn

Yes, it is Catherine. And, a question tag – also known as a tag question – is a short yes/no question that we put at the end of a statement. Here's an example. Catherine, you live near the station, **don't you?**

#### Catherine

I live very near the station, Finn. It's about five minutes from my house. The question tag Finn used was **don't you?** Finn thinks he knows where I live, but he wants to check. He checks by saying a statement, then adding a short question at the end. Here's Neil with some more examples.

#### Neil

Mike's working from home today, **isn't he?**

The kids haven't forgotten to do their homework, **have they?**

#### Finn

Now, forming question tags can be a little tricky, so here are some useful tips:

#### Catherine

Tip number one: when the statement is positive, the question tag is negative. The statement **You live near the station** is positive...

#### Finn

So we add a negative question tag: **don't you.**

**Catherine**

Tip two: When the statement is negative, the question tag is positive. Here's a negative statement: **You didn't eat all the chocolate...**

**Finn**

... with a positive question tag: **did you?**

**Catherine**

Actually Finn, talking about chocolate... I left some chocolate her, before. **You haven't seen it, have you?**

**Finn**

Chocolate, no.

**Catherine**

Are you sure?

**Finn**

No - **I think you had it with your coffee, didn't you?**

**Catherine**

Hmm. I'm not sure I did, actually. Anyway, moving on. Tip three. Question tags aren't complete questions: a question tag has just an auxiliary verb and a subject. There isn't a main verb in a question tag. For example, question tags are: are you... did they...

**Finn**

... don't you... isn't he...

**Catherine**

And so on. Now for tip four: the auxiliary verb can be positive or negative. Here's Neil.

**Neil**

You're lying, **aren't you?**...

**Catherine**

We have a positive auxiliary verb - **are** - in the statement...

**Finn**

... so we make it negative – **aren't** – in the question tag.

**Catherine**

A negative auxiliary verb in the statement becomes positive in the tag. Neil.

**Neil**

**You aren't lying, are you?**

**Catherine**

Thank you. Tip five. If there isn't an auxiliary verb in the statement, use the auxiliary verb **do** in the question tag. Here are some examples:

**Neil**

They always go by bus, **don't they?**

You ate my chocolate, **didn't you?**

**Catherine**

Don't remind me of chocolate.

**Finn**

I'm not guilty!

**Catherine**

So that's auxiliary verbs in question tags. Our next question tags tip is that the subject and tense of the question tag and statement are always the same. So when I say: **Finn, you didn't eat my chocolate, did you?** The subject is **you** in the statement and question tag.

**Finn**

And the tense is past simple in both.

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Finn**

We're talking about question tags...

**Catherine**

... and the mystery of my missing chocolate, Finn!

**Finn**

Ooh, well! A word about speaking. Question tags are used mostly in spoken English. We don't use them much in writing. And there are two main reasons to use them in speaking.

**Catherine**

First, use question tags to get someone to confirm something that we think we already know. For example, Finn... I definitely saw you eating something earlier... **You were eating my chocolate, weren't you!?**

**Finn**

Well...

**Catherine**

**Weren't you?!**

**Finn**

Well, yes I was! Catherine, I'll get you some more, I'm sorry. I promise. **It's not easy to resist chocolate, is it?**

**Catherine**

Clearly. Clearly not!

**Finn**

And if you were listening carefully, you probably noticed that Catherine's voice went down, from high to low, when she said the question tag.

**Catherine**

**You were eating my chocolate, weren't you!?...weren't you!?**

**Finn**

And that falling intonation means that Catherine thinks that what she is saying is correct. She wants me to confirm it. Or just make conversation. But when someone uses rising intonation in a question tag - when the voice goes up - they are asking a real question – they want to find out if the statement is really true. For example, you could say:

**Neil**

**There isn't any meat in the soup, is there?**

**You do serve vegetarian food, don't you?**

**I can order a plain omelette, can't I?**

**Catherine**

And now it's quiz time. I'm going to say three statements and you have to add the question tags. Number one: It's your birthday tomorrow...

**Finn**

...isn't it?

**Catherine**

Good, number two: Kumar won't be late...

**Finn**

...will he?



**Catherine**

Question three: You're going to get that chocolate now...?

**Finn**

...aren't you? Ok Catherine, I get the hint.

**Catherine**

Well done if you got all those right.

**Finn**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Will, going to, might, be likely to



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Catherine

Hello, and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Catherine.

#### Finn

And me, Finn. In this programme, we're bringing you four different phrases that we use to talk about the future.

#### Catherine

That's right, we're looking at **will**, **going to**, **might** and **be likely to**.

#### Finn

We'll tell you when we use each one...

#### Catherine

We'll look at their forms...

#### Finn

And there'll be a quiz to test what you've learned. Let's get started. Catherine, can you give us an example sentence with **will**:

#### Catherine

I can Finn. My example sentence is: I will be 29 years old next Tuesday.

#### Finn

That's amazing. I thought it was Wednesday. It's my birthday next Tuesday, too. **I'm going to be 28.**

#### Catherine

Really?!

#### Finn

No, it was just an example with **going to**!

### Catherine

And mine was just an example with **will**.

### Finn

So, for something we know that will happen for certain, we can use **will** or **going to** with an infinitive verb without to. We can often use either **will** or **going to** with no change in meaning. So I said: **I'm going to be 28**.

### Catherine

...and I said: **I will be 29 next Tuesday**.

### Finn

But... if we are sure that something is going to happen in the future, because of something that is happening in the present, it's best to use **going to**. And here's Neil with an example:

### Neil

Look at that clear blue sky! It's **going to** be a lovely day.

### Catherine

OK, so we don't usually look out of the window and say: Look at that clear blue sky! It will be a lovely day.

### Finn

Not usually. It's usually **going to** when something happens now that makes us know what will happen later. So that's **will** and **going to**. Now, sometimes we are not so certain that something is going to happen...

### Catherine

...and that's when we use **might** or **might not** plus an **infinitive without to**. Examples please, Neil?

### Neil

I **might move** to New York next year. It depends on work.

We **might not come** to the party. Our daughter isn't well at the moment.

### Catherine

We can also express future uncertainty with **be likely to** plus an **infinitive**. **Be likely to** is a bit more certain than **might**. **Neil**.

### Neil

There's a lot of traffic. The journey **is likely to take** more than three hours.

### Catherine

Thank you. And for negatives we use, **be not likely to**, or, more often, **be unlikely to**, again, with **an infinitive**. For example:

### Neil

He hasn't trained very hard. **He's not likely to win** the race.

It's a long way. The journey **is unlikely to take** less than three hours.

### IDENT

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### Finn

And we're talking about **will**, **going to**, **might** and **be likely to**. Let's look at questions.

For **will**, **going to** and **likely to**, the word order is: **will**, **going to**, or **be likely to**, plus **subject** plus **verb**. Here are some examples.

### Neil

**Will** they **win** the election? Yes, they **will**.

**Is he going to resign?** No, he **won't**.

**Is she likely to pass?** Yes, she **is**.

### Catherine

We can also start with a question word:

### Neil

**When will** my order **arrive**?

**Who will win** the World Cup?

### Finn

It's possible to ask questions with **might** plus **subject** plus **infinitive**, but you may hear questions with **Do you think** plus **subject** plus **might** plus **infinitive**, like this:

### Neil

**Do you think it might rain** later?

### Catherine

And now, it's quiz time! Question one. Which is correct? a) Jane and Joe likely to get married this year or b) Jane and Joe are likely to get married this year?

### Finn

And the answer's b) Jane and Joe are likely to get married this year. Number two. Which is correct? a) I might not to go to the cinema tonight or b) I might not go to the cinema tonight.

**Catherine**

The correct answer is b) I might not go to the cinema tonight. Number three. Which is correct? a) My birthday is likely to be on Saturday next year. Or b) My birthday will be on Saturday next year.

**Finn**

And the answer is b) My birthday will be on Saturday next year. 29 again, Catherine! That's the end of the quiz. Well done if you got those right.

**Catherine**

And that's also the end of the show. There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye!

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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### 'Used to' and 'would'



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Catherine**

And me, Catherine. Hello.

**Finn**

In this programme we're talking about the past with **used to** and **would**.

**Catherine**

That's right, so let's get started. Finn, tell us, please, about something interesting that **you used to do** when you were a child.

**Finn**

Right, OK, well... **I used to sleepwalk**.

**Catherine**

Sleepwalk? Every night Finn?

**Finn**

Yes, **I used to wake up** every night at around midnight. And **I would get out of** bed. Sometimes **I would even get dressed!** And then I would sleepwalk.

**Catherine**

Your poor mum and dad! So Finn said **he used to wake up** and **he would get out of** bed. We use **used to** and **would** to talk about things that happened regularly in the past, usually when we're comparing the past with the present. Here's Neil with those examples again:

**Neil**

**I used to** sleepwalk.

**I used to** wake up every night at midnight.

**I would** get out of bed.

Sometimes **I would** even get dressed.

**Finn**

Very good, thank you Neil. Usually either **used to** or **would** is possible. So I can say I **used to** get out of bed or I **would** get out of bed. Let's hear some more examples:

**Neil**

I **used to** get the bus to work but now I walk. It's quicker.

The bus **used to** take half an hour.

My girlfriend **would** meet me at the bus stop. Then we **would** go for a quick drink.

**Catherine**

OK. Now, we follow **used to** and **would** with an infinitive without to for all persons, so it's: **I used to get, the bus used to take, My girlfriend would meet me, we would go...**

**Finn**

And we often use the contracted, or short, form of **would**, so instead of **We would go** for a drink, I can say **we'd go** for a drink, **I'd** get dressed, and so on.

**Catherine**

But there's no contraction for **used to**.

**Finn**

So that's **used to** and **would** for repeated actions or habits in the past. Now we can also use **used to** to talk about a continued state, or situation in the past. Neil.

**Neil**

**Zina used to live** in Taiwan, but now she's living in the UK.

**I used to love** cooking, but I don't have much time now.

**There used to be** a restaurant here but they knocked it down.

**Catherine**

Now we don't use **would** in this way, so you can't say: **There would be** a restaurant here but they knocked it down. **Would** is for things that happened regularly. We can't use it to talk about past states or situations.

**IDENT**

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**Finn**

And we're looking at **used to** and **would** to talk about what happened regularly in the past.

**Catherine**

...and also to talk about some of Finn's strange night-time habits...

**Finn**

Come on... I was a kid! I don't do any of this anymore.

**Catherine**

Are you sure?

**Finn**

Nothing like this. Only worse things. What about you Catherine? **Did you use to do** anything strange when you were younger?

**Catherine**

Well, not as strange as sleepwalking, **I didn't use to sleepwalk**. But at night **I would sleep** on the floor from time to time.

**Finn**

Really?! **Didn't you use to sleep** in your bed?

**Catherine**

No, **I would get into** bed, but **I wouldn't stay** there.

**Finn**

Interesting! Right, OK, for questions and negatives with used to - we use **did** or **didn't** plus **subject** plus **use to** plus **infinitive**...

**Catherine**

...so Finn asked me: "**Did you use to do** anything strange?" And he asked me: "**Didn't you use to sleep** in your bed?"

**Finn**

...and Catherine replied: "I didn't use to sleepwalk..." That's **subject** plus **didn't** plus **use to** plus **infinitive**.

**Catherine**

...and that's **use to** written without a **-d**. In positive sentences **used to** has a **-d** at the end. But in negative sentences and questions, we write **use** without a **-d**.

**Finn**

...Now, the negative of **would** is **wouldn't**, so Catherine said **I wouldn't stay** there. We use **wouldn't** in questions, too. So Catherine, wouldn't you go back to bed?

**Catherine**

No, my parents used to put me back to bed.



**Finn**

OK, time for a quiz. Number one. Listen to this sentence. Is **used to** spelt with, or without, a **-d**? When I lived in Jordan, I used to go to the beach every day.

**Catherine**

And that's **used to** with a **-d**.

**Finn**

Good, now number two. Is this sentence right or wrong? Suleyman **would** have blond hair when he was a baby.

**Catherine**

And that's wrong. The correct sentence is Suleyman **used to** have blond hair when he was a baby.

**Finn**

Correct. Number three. Is this right or wrong? Do you used to live in Beijing?

**Catherine**

That's wrong. **Use to** questions need **did**, not **do**. And that's the end of the quiz. Well done if you got them all right.

**Finn**

There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again soon for 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.

*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Catherine**

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me Catherine...

**Neil**

And me, Neil. Hello.

**Catherine**

In this programme we're talking about modal verbs of ability.

**Neil**

Yes, we are. We'll explain what they are...

**Catherine**

We'll give you some useful tips on using them...

**Neil**

There'll be lots examples...

**Catherine**

And of course we'll finish with a quiz.

**Neil**

So here we go. First of all, what are modals of ability?

**Catherine**

Well, there are lots of different modal verbs like **must**, **might** and **have to**. We use them together with main verbs, to add meaning to what we say.

**Neil**

So in this programme we're talking about the modal verbs **can** and **could**. We're looking at how we can use these modals with main verbs to add meaning related to ability. Here's Mike with an example.

**Mike**

Humans **can** only **live** without water for three to five days.

**Catherine**

So that's **can** with the verb live to express ability: in this example, the ability to live without water. And in this programme we're also going to talk about ability with the phrase **be able to** plus a verb. It's similar to **can**, but it's particularly useful when we're suggesting that something is a bit surprising like this from Mike.

**Mike**

Humans **can** only **live** without water for three to five days.  
However, they **are able to live** without food for up to three weeks.

**Neil**

Okay. In those examples we're talking about ability in the present. Now for the past.

**Catherine**

Yeah, the past. And the past of **can** is **could**. We also use **be able to** in the past but of course it becomes **was able to** or **were able to**. Listen.

**Mike**

People in Asia **could write** before people in Europe.

**Catherine**

Or...

**Mike**

People in Asia **were able to write** before people in Europe.

**Neil**

But sometimes you have to use **be able to** and not **could**.

**Catherine**

And that happens when we're talking about a single event in the past, not general ability.

**Neil**

Exactly. Another example please, Mike.

**Mike**

After climbing for six hours, they **were able to reach** the top of the mountain.

**Catherine**

You can't use **could** in that example because **could** is for general ability, not a single occasion like climbing one mountain.

**Neil**

But there is another verb that you can use in that last sentence. Have a listen.

**Mike**

After climbing for six hours, they **managed to reach** the top of the mountain.

**Neil**

Thank you Mike. We often use **manage to** with a verb for ability if something is very difficult to do or if something is very successful.

**Catherine**

Exactly. Remember that **can** and **could** are always followed by the infinitive without **to**. And they are the same for all subject pronouns.

**Neil**

Right. But **be able to** changes for different persons. It's **am/is/are able to** for the present and **was/were able to** for the past.

**IDENT**

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**Catherine**

And we're looking at modal verbs of ability.

**Neil**

Yes, we are. And we've got a few extra tips for you today.

**Catherine**

We have. And the first tip is, you know, sense verbs like **see**, **hear** and **smell**? And verbs of thinking like **believe**, **understand** and **remember**? Well, we usually use **can** and not **be able to** with those. Examples please, Mike.

**Mike**

I **can't understand** this question.

**Catherine**

Good. Second tip. When we have two main verbs together, we can't put **can** or **could** between them. For example, with the sentence I'd like to swim. It's okay to say...

**Mike**

I'd like to **be able to swim**.

**Catherine**

But it's not okay to say...

**Mike**

I'd like to **can** swim.

**Neil**

Oh no, you can't say that! It sounds a bit strange.

**Catherine**

Yes, horrible.

**Neil**

Next tip: There is also no present perfect form of **can**. If we need the present perfect for ability, we use **be able to**. An example, please?

**Mike**

He **hasn't been able to walk** since the accident.

**Catherine**

Thank you, Mike. And now a tip about **manage to** in the negative form. We say **can't manage to** in the present, but it's **couldn't manage to** or **didn't manage to** in the past.

**Mike**

I **can't manage to swim** that far!

Fifty five pies?! I **can't manage to eat** all those.

The men **couldn't manage to lift** the piano.

He **didn't manage to get** the grades he needed for university.

**Catherine**

Okay, thank you, Mike. And now - it's quiz time. Will you manage to get three correct answers?

**Neil**

Let's see. Are these sentences correct or incorrect? Number one: The villagers were good hunters, but they **couldn't grow** crops.

**Catherine**

That's correct.

**Neil**

Well done! Number two: My phone wasn't working but the receptionist **could phone** for a taxi.

**Catherine**

That's not correct. The correct sentence is **the receptionist was able to phone for a taxi.**

**Neil**

And number three: I **want to can do** this.

**Catherine**

And that's not correct. Between two main verbs, we have to use **be able to**. So the correct sentence is **I want to be able to do this.**

**Neil**

And that is the end of the quiz. Congratulations if you **managed to get** them all right!

**Catherine**

Yes. Well done! There's more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

**Both**

Bye.