

Language reference

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Articles

The indefinite article a/an

A/an is used for something general or non-specific, or when we refer to something for the first time:

Have you got **a** bicycle? (= any kind of bicycle)

He's **a** good gymnast. (= one of many)

There's **a** tennis club in our town.

Other uses:

- to refer to someone's job or function:
*She used to be **a** hotel receptionist.*
- to mean one:
*I have **a** sister and two brothers.*

The definite article the

The is used with any type of noun when it is clear which thing/person we are referring to. It may be specifically identified in the sentence, it may have been mentioned before, or there may be only one of these things:

Where's **the** furniture we ordered last week? (I'm identifying the furniture I mean)

We ordered a table and six chairs. **The** chairs have arrived but **the** table hasn't. (= the one(s) I've just mentioned)

She's at **the** station. (= the local station, the only one)

We're meeting at **the** café later. (= you know the one I mean – the one we always go to)

Other uses:

- to refer generally to some geographical locations, e.g. *the beach, the coast, the mountains, the sea, the road:*
*We're spending a fortnight in **the** mountains, but I'd prefer to be somewhere on **the** coast.*
- to refer to a type of musical instrument:
*He's learning to play **the** trumpet.*
- to refer generally to public transport and other services:
*You can take **the** train to Edinburgh.*
*I like reading on **the** bus.*
*Have they contacted **the** police?*
- with adjectives used as nouns for groups of people, e.g. *the rich, the poor, the living, the dead, the blind, the deaf, the unemployed:*
*There's a growing gap between **the** rich and **the** poor.*

No article

No article is used:

- with plural and uncountable nouns with a general meaning:
***Cats** chase **mice**.*
***Pollution** is ruining our towns and cities.*
- in certain phrases which relate to a type of place or institution, but not a specific one:
Did you go to university?
What did you do in class today?

Other similar phrases:

be in / go to church, court, hospital, prison, bed
be at / go to sea, school, university, college, work
be at / go home

at, in and on to express location

Use at

- when a place is thought of as a point, not an area (including *at home, at school, at work, at university*):
*I'll meet you **at** the airport when you arrive.*
- to talk about an event involving a number of people:
*Tina met Joe **at** Charlie's wedding.*
- for addresses:
*She lives **at** number 11, Abbey Road.*

Use in

- when a place is thought of as an area or space:
*Gary lives **in** a small flat at the top of a tower block.*
- for cars and taxis:
*Let's talk **in** the car.*
- in phrases such as *in class, in hospital, in prison, in court*:
*He studied for a degree while he was **in** prison.*
- *for the world*:
*It's the tallest building **in** the world.*

Use on

- to talk about a position in contact with a surface:
*We've hung the picture **on** the wall above the fireplace.*
*She lay **on** the beach, soaking up the sunshine.*
- to talk about a position on something thought of as a line, e.g. a coast, a road, the outskirts, the edge:
*Keyhaven is a small village **on** the south coast.*
*There were huge traffic jams **on** the motorway.*
- with means of transport apart from cars and taxis:
*Hi, Karen. I'm **on** the train now so I'll be home soon.*

- with some forms of technology including *television, telephone, computer, Internet, website*:
*I've seen him **on** television.*
*I'm afraid she's **on** the phone at the moment.*
*You can find all the information **on** our website.*
- with *left* and *right*:
*The post office is **on** the left just past the supermarket.*
- with these words: *premises, farm, floor* and *island*:
*Our office is **on** the fifth floor.*

Avoiding repetition

Using pronouns

- Instead of repeating a noun or noun phrase, use a pronoun:
*Derek Foster worked in advertising after the war. **He** became a professional painter in the early 60s.*
- Use *they/them* to refer to plural nouns and to a person in the singular when you cannot state whether the person is male or female:
*If you ask **an** artist how **they** started painting, **they**'ll often say that one of their parents taught **them**.*
- Use *himself, herself, themselves*, etc. when the object is the same as the subject:
***He** poured **himself** a glass of water.*
(Compare: *He poured **him** a glass of water*, where *him* refers to a different person.)
- *It, this, that, these, those* may refer to a noun / noun phrase, or to the whole of the previous clause or sentence:
*Artists now have a vast range of materials at their disposal. **This** means that they can be much more versatile than in the past.*

That is often used when giving reasons:
*The artist is my cousin and **that's** why I'm here.*

One/ones, another, the other(s), both, neither, all, none

- Use *one* to refer to a singular countable noun in a group, and *ones* to refer to plural countable nouns in a group.
*I've made some **sandwiches** – would you like **one**?*
*There are some excellent exhibitions on. I strongly recommend **the one** at the National Gallery.*
***Our neighbours** are generally nice, but **the ones** in flat 4 aren't very sociable.*

Use *a(n)/the ... one* or *(the) ... ones* with an adjective:
*I've bought a lot of new **shirts** recently, but for gardening I prefer to wear **an old one**.*
*I enjoy **romantic films**, especially **sad ones**.*

- Use *another* to refer to a second/third (etc.) singular countable noun in a group:
***One picture** showed a girl combing her hair. **Another** was of the same girl dancing.*
- Use *the other* when referring to the second of two things/people already mentioned, and *the others* when referring to the rest of a number of things/people:
*Pablo has **two houses**. **One** is in São Paulo and **the other** is in Singapore.*
***Most of the actors** went to a party. **The others** went home to bed.*
- Use *both* and *neither* to refer to two things/people:
*He's written **two novels** and **both** have won prizes.*
***Neither** is autobiographical.*
- Use *all* and *none* to refer to more than two things/people:
*He's written **twenty novels** and I've read **all of them**.*
*Mariella invited **her friends** but **none of them** came.*

who, which, whose

→ See pages 171–172: Relative clauses.

Using auxiliary and modal verbs

- Instead of repeating a whole verb or verb phrase, we can often use an auxiliary or modal verb:
*Not many people have **read** 'The Dungeon' and I'm one of the few that **have**.*
*A year ago I **couldn't** drive a car, but now I **can**.*
- Use a form of *do* to replace a verb in the present or past simple:
*I really **enjoy** good comedy films, but then I think everyone **does**.*
*Most people **liked** the film, but I **didn't**.*

Using so

- With verbs like *think, suppose, believe, hope*, etc., use *so* to avoid repeating a clause or sentence:
*'Do you think Real Madrid will win the championship?' 'I guess **so**.'* (= I guess they will win the championship.)
- Use *do so* to avoid repeating a verb or verb phrase:
*I told my students to hand in the essay on Monday and all of them **did so**.* (= handed in the essay on Monday)

Omitting words

- With a verb or adjective that is followed by an infinitive with *to*, it is sometimes possible to use *to* on its own, instead of repeating a whole phrase.
*Kim suggested **going to the ballet**, but I didn't want **to**.*
***Give me a call later** if you're able **to**.*
*I'd like to be able to **solve your problems** but I just don't know how **to**.*

Cleft sentences for emphasis

Emphasis involves showing that something is particularly important or worth giving attention to. Cleft sentences are one way of doing this. These can be formed by:

- a clause starting with *what*, linked to the rest of the sentence by *is/was*:
I really enjoy pasta. → **What I really enjoy is pasta.**
She wanted to find a job in New Zealand. → **What she wanted was to find a job in New Zealand.**
- Note:** The verb in the *what* clause is often *do*. In this case, *is/was* is followed by an infinitive, with or without *to*:
They advertised on television. → **What they did was (to) advertise on television.**
- a clause starting with *all*:
My house only needs a swimming pool now. → **All my house needs now is a swimming pool.**
- a clause starting with *It is/was*, linked to the rest of the sentence by *that* or *who*:
Mike paid the bill. → **It was Mike who paid the bill.**
You should speak to the manager. → **It's the manager (that) you should speak to.**
They left Poland in 2012. → **It was in 2012 that they left Poland.**
I like visiting other countries, but I don't enjoy flying. → **I like visiting other countries – it's flying (that) I don't enjoy.**

Conditionals

First conditional		
Form	Use	Examples
<i>If/Unless</i> + present simple/continuous – <i>will/may/must</i> , etc. + infinitive	To talk about very possible or probable situations/events in the present or future	<i>If you're hungry, I'll start getting the lunch ready.</i> <i>We should get there by midday if the trains are running on time.</i>
Second conditional		
<i>If/Unless</i> + past simple/continuous – <i>would/could/might</i> + infinitive	To talk about improbable or imaginary situations/events in the present or future	<i>I might miss the city if we moved away from here.</i> (but we probably won't move) <i>If I was driving the car, we'd be arriving by now.</i> (but I'm not driving, so we aren't arriving yet)
Third conditional		
<i>If/unless</i> + past perfect simple or continuous – <i>would have / could have / might have</i> + past participle	To talk about imaginary situations/events in the past	<i>I could have got better results if I'd taken the photos earlier.</i> (but I didn't take them early enough.) <i>If it hadn't been snowing, we wouldn't have got lost.</i> (but it was snowing, so we got lost)

Comment adverbials

Comment adverbs and adverbial phrases:

- express how certain the speaker is about something. Some common adverbs: *certainly, definitely, possibly, probably, undoubtedly*
*She's **definitely** happier now than she used to be.*
Some common phrases: *without a doubt, in theory, in all likelihood/probability*
***In all likelihood**, the meeting will have to be postponed.*
- express the speaker's attitude or opinion about what they are saying. Some common adverbs: *frankly, personally, (un)fortunately, obviously, surprisingly, strangely*
***Strangely**, I haven't heard from her since she moved.* (= I think her failure to communicate is strange.)
***Personally**, I'd prefer not to live abroad.*
Some common phrases: *quite honestly, generally speaking, to my surprise*
***Quite honestly**, I don't think you should have given him so much money.*

Comment adverbials expressing opinions often go at the beginning of a sentence. However, they can also be placed:

- in a middle position in the sentence (often after the subject or after the verb):
*Martina, **unfortunately**, didn't arrive until midday.*
*She was, **unfortunately**, too late for her appointment.*
- at the end of the sentence:
*Luca is thinking of going to Australia, **apparently**.*

These comment adverbials are usually separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

- *Unless* is sometimes used instead of *if ... not*, especially in first conditional sentences:
We'll have to eat indoors unless the weather improves.
(= if the weather doesn't improve)
- Note that *would* and *could* can be used with a conditional meaning in sentences without *if* or *unless*. The idea that we are talking about an unreal situation is understood without being explicitly stated:
'How **would** you communicate with someone whose language you **couldn't** speak?' 'I'd use sign language.'
Otherwise may be used with *would* or *could* to introduce a conditional idea:
Arsenal played well in the last 20 minutes. Otherwise (= If the situation had been different) they would have lost the match.

Mixed conditionals

If one part of the sentence speaks about the present/future and the other part about the past, 2nd and 3rd conditionals can be 'mixed':

- *If I hadn't met Julia in Bulgaria last year (past – 3rd conditional), we wouldn't be married now (present – 2nd conditional).*
- *If Anastasia didn't need this book for her PhD (present – 2nd conditional), she would never have bought it (past – 3rd conditional).*
- *If you weren't leaving tomorrow (future – 2nd conditional), we could have had more time together (past – 3rd conditional).*

Other uses of conditionals

You can:

- give advice using *if I were you + I would + infinitive*:
If I were you, I'd take that laptop as hand luggage.
- make criticisms or strong requests using *If you would + infinitive – would + infinitive*:
If you'd stop making so much noise, perhaps we'd all be able to enjoy the programme.
- make polite formal requests using *I'd appreciate it / I'd be grateful if you would/could*:
I'd appreciate it if you could hand in the report by Thursday.

Countable and uncountable nouns

Countable nouns

- Countable nouns can be singular or plural and are used for individual things which we can count.
In our family we have a cat and two dogs.
- In the singular form they can be preceded by *a/an* or *one*, or determiners such as *this/that, each, every*:
A human being has two hands. Each hand has a thumb and four fingers.
- In the plural form they can be preceded by numbers or determiners such as *some, any, many, (a) few, no, these/those*:
There are a few teenagers in the room but no children.

Uncountable nouns

- Uncountable nouns are neither singular nor plural and are used for things that are not normally divided into separate items:
We use gas for cooking and electricity for heating.
- They are used with singular verbs and can be preceded by determiners such as *some, any, no, much, this/that*:
'Is there any coffee left?' 'No, but there's some tea.'

Note: *a/an, one, each* and *every* cannot be used with uncountable nouns.

- To refer to particular quantities of an uncountable noun, use a phrase which includes a countable noun + *of*:
a jug of water, two cups of tea, a loaf of bread, three slices of toast, twenty litres of oil

Note: Some nouns which are uncountable in English may be countable in other languages, e.g. *accommodation, advice, applause, bread, damage, equipment, fruit, furniture, homework, housework, information, knowledge, luggage, money, news, rubbish, shopping, toast, traffic, travel.*

Nouns that can be countable or uncountable

Many nouns can be countable or uncountable, depending on how they are used.

- *Would you like some chocolate?* (= the food substance in general)
There are only two chocolates left in the box. (= individual items)
- *French people love wine and cheese.* (= these substances in general)
France has many different wines and cheeses. (= individual products)

- *I don't eat lamb or chicken.* (= general types of meat)
I'm going to roast a chicken tonight. (= a whole bird)
I love lambs and chickens. (= animals)
- *Coffee is expensive here.* (= the type of drink)
Can I have two coffees, please? (= cups of coffee)
- *People are crazy about sport.* (= the general field of activity)
Football is a great sport. (one of many individual sporting activities)

Dependent prepositions

Many verbs, nouns and adjectives are followed by a particular preposition before a noun, noun phrase, pronoun or verb + *-ing*:

The film reminded me of my childhood.

He apologised to them for damaging their car.

There are no clear rules to help you decide which preposition to use: the best strategy is to learn the preposition with the word. Examples given in a dictionary will show how they are used.

Here are some common words + prepositions (sb = somebody; sth = something).

Verb + preposition

account for	focus on
accuse sb of	help (sb) with
accustom sb to	hope for
agree with (sb/sth) about	impress sb with
amount to	include sb/sth in
apologise (to sb) for	insure (sth) against
appeal to	interfere with
apply to	invest (sth) in
approve of	involve sb in
attach sth to	link sb/sth to/with
attribute sth to	listen to
base sth on	object to
believe in	operate on
blame sb/sth for	participate in
charge sb for	persist in
comment on	prepare (sb/sth) for
compare sb/sth to/with	prevent sb/sth from
compete with	prohibit sb/sth from
concentrate on	protest against
connect sb/sth with	provide sb with
consider sb/sth as	react to/against

consist of
contrast sb/sth with
cope with
dedicate sth to
depend on
devote sth to
differ from
disapprove of
discourage sb from
distinguish sb/sth from
distract sb from
divide sth into/between
dream of
exclude sb/sth from
experiment on

Adjective + preposition

afraid of
angry with/about
anxious about
available to/for
capable of
confident of
delighted with
dependent on
different from/to
disappointed with
good/bad/clever at
independent of
interested in
involved in

Noun + preposition

attention to
belief in
capacity for
confidence in
criticism of
difficulty in/with

recognise sb/sth as
recover from
refer sb/sth to
regard sb/sth as
relate sb/sth to
rely on
remind sb of
resort to
result in
search for
separate sb/sth from
spend sth on
suffer from
think about/of
warn sb about/against

kind to
pleased with
prejudiced against
proud of
relevant to
responsible to/for
shocked at/by
sorry about/for
suitable for
suited to
surprised at/by
tired of
upset about

discussion about
experience of
information on/about
problem of/with
reputation for
trust in

Expressing ability, possibility and obligation

Ability: *can, could, be able to*

- Use *can/can't* for abilities in the present:
*Cats **can** see in the dark.*
*I **can't** drive.*
- Use *could/couldn't* for general abilities in the past:
*When I was younger, I **could** run very fast.*
*I **couldn't** walk until I was nearly two years old.*
- For ability to do something in a specific past situation, we use the negative *couldn't*, but we don't often use the affirmative *could*. Instead of *could*, it is usually better to use *be able to*, *manage to* or *succeed in -ing*:
*We **couldn't** open the door with the key. Eventually we **managed to** break a window and **were able to** get in.*
- For future abilities, use *will be able to*:
*My little sister **will soon be able to** read and write.*
- Use *be able to* for other forms where there is no option with *can* or *could*:
*I'd like to **be able to** see better.*

Possibility: *can and could*

- Use *can/could* to describe what it is possible to do. Use *can/can't* for the present and future, and *could/couldn't* for the past. We also use *be able to*, especially for the past and future:
*Passengers **can** get to London from here in 35 minutes.*
*Where we used to live, we **couldn't** get there by train.*
*We **can** / We'll **be able to** discuss this at tomorrow's meeting.*
- Use *could* (but not *can* and not *couldn't*) for uncertain future possibilities:
*I think it **could** rain later. (not ~~can~~ rain)*
But It may/might not rain tomorrow. (not ~~couldn't~~ rain)
- Use *could have* (not ~~can have~~) + past participle for uncertain past possibilities:
*I don't know where she went. I suppose she **could have gone** to the supermarket.*
- Use *can't/couldn't + be* for logical impossibility in the present, and *couldn't have + past participle* for the past:
*It **can't/couldn't be** Paul at the door. He's in Japan.*
*He **can't/couldn't have had** lunch yet. It's only 11:15.*

→ See also page 169: Expressing possibility, probability and certainty, for other modals and structures to express possibility.

Rules and obligations: *must and have to*

Use *must* and *mustn't / must not*:

- to state rules and laws, often in a formal context:
*Meat packaging **must** comply with the new regulation.*
*Motorists **must not** exceed 120 kph on the motorway.*
*You **mustn't** ride your bike without a helmet.*
- to express a personal feeling of obligation or a personal belief that something is important:
*I **must** phone my sister today. I **mustn't** forget.*
*You **must** see this film – it's great!*

Use *have to*:

- to describe a duty or obligation, often coming from an external source:
*She **has to** be at a meeting at 8:30 tomorrow morning.*
Compare these sentences:
*I **have to** finish this report by tomorrow. (= This is something that someone else is insisting on.)*
*I **must** finish this report by tomorrow. (= I myself feel that this is essential.)*
*He **has to** go to the police station. (= The police have given this order.)*
*He **must** go to the police station. (= I believe it's essential for him to go.)*

Use *don't have to*:

- to describe a lack of obligation or necessity:
*You **don't have to** go to the party if you don't want to.*
Compare these sentences:
*We **don't have to** use this machine. (= We can use it if we want to, but it isn't essential.)*
*We **mustn't** use this machine. (= We're not allowed to use it – it's prohibited.)*

Necessity

- For necessity, use *need to* or *have to*:
*To get to the airport in time, we'll **need to** / **have to** catch the 4:30 train.*
- There are two negative forms of *need*:
*We have plenty of time, so we **needn't hurry** / **don't need to hurry**.*

In the past, these two forms have different meanings:
*We **didn't need to hurry**. (= We didn't hurry because there was no need.)*
*We **needn't have hurried**. (= We hurried but it wasn't necessary.)*

Expressing possibility, probability and certainty

Possibility

Modal verbs: *may, might, could*

- Use *may (not)*, *might (not)* or *could* (but not *could not*) to say it's possible that something is true, happens or will happen, but we don't know:
*The photocopier isn't working – there **may** be some paper stuck inside. (not ~~there can be some paper~~)*

Note: *can* is used to say that something is a general possibility but not with reference to any particular occasion or event:

*It **can** rain heavily in this region in autumn.*

But *It **might** rain this evening.*

*Children **can** be very irritating.*

But *You **may** find my children annoying when they make a lot of noise.*

- Use *may, might, could* + *well/easily* to say something is a strong possibility:
*The weather **may well** improve by the weekend.*
*I'd better write it down, otherwise I **could easily** forget.*
- Use *may, might, could* + *possibly/conceivably* or *just might* to say something is a remote possibility:
*My boss **could conceivably** change her mind and decide to give me a pay increase.*
*I **just might** have time to finish that report this week.*

Other words and phrases

- It's (just/quite/very/entirely) possible that* + clause:
*It's **just possible that** we'll finish the project by March.*
- There's (a/some / a slight / every / a good/strong/real) possibility/chance that* + clause or *of* + *-ing* verb:
*There's **every possibility that** the business will succeed.*
*There's **some chance that** the weather will improve tomorrow.*
*Is there **any chance of seeing** you this weekend?*

Probability

Modal verbs: *should, shouldn't*

- Use *should* and *shouldn't* to say that you expect something is or will be true:
*You're extremely well qualified – you **should** have no difficulty landing the job.*

Other words and phrases

- be (quite/very/highly) likely / unlikely* + *infinitive* or *It's (quite/very/highly) likely that* + clause:
*He's **unlikely to make** the same mistake again.*
*It's **quite likely that** they'll be on the 8:30 train.*

- There's little / some / every / a strong likelihood of* + *-ing* verb or *that* + clause:
*I'd say **there's a strong likelihood of** him **getting** a first class degree.*
***There's little likelihood that** we'll manage to meet our deadline.*

Certainty

Modal verbs: *must, can't, couldn't*

- Use *must* (affirmative) and *can't/couldn't* (negative) to express things you feel certain about because you have evidence:
*With so many customers, they **must** be making a lot of money.*
*He didn't know what we were talking about, so he **can't/couldn't** have read our letter.*
- Note:** *mustn't* is not used to express certainty (see Rules and obligations on page 168).

Other words and phrases

- be bound* + *to infinitive*:
*This machine is very badly designed. It's **bound to break** down before long.*

Notes on modal verbs

- To talk about actions in progress now or arranged for the future, use the continuous form, i.e. modal verb + *be* + *-ing*:
*You all **must be wondering** why I have called this meeting.*
- To talk about actions in the past, use modal + *have* + past participle:
*Martin is abroad at the moment, so you **can't/couldn't have seen** him yesterday.*
- To talk about actions which took place over a period of time in the past, use the past continuous form, i.e. modal + *have been* + *-ing*:
*Ulrike wasn't in when I called – she **may have been doing** the shopping, I suppose.*

Expressing purpose, reason and result

Expresses	Phrase(s)	Followed by	Position	Example(s)
purpose	so (that)	a clause	between clauses	<i>He always dresses smartly so (that) people will notice him.</i>
	for the purpose of / with the intention of	verb + -ing	after the main clause	<i>Teresa got up early with the intention of studying before going in to university.</i>
	so as to / in order to	infinitive		<i>Carla came home early so as not to have an argument with her parents.</i>
	to	infinitive		<i>Dieter goes to the gym every day to keep fit.</i>
reason	because / since / as	a clause	between clauses or at the beginning of the sentence (more emphatic)	<i>We'd better postpone the meeting because/since/as Eva has been delayed. Because/As/Since he was feeling ill, he spent the day in bed.</i>
	in case		after the main clause	<i>Take your mobile with you in case you need to call me.</i>
	otherwise			<i>Candice always writes things down, otherwise (= because if she doesn't) she forgets them.</i>
	because of / due to / owing to	noun or verb + -ing	at the beginning of the sentence or after the main clause	<i>All flights have been cancelled because of / due to / owing to the bad weather.</i>
	For this/that reason	a sentence	at the beginning of a sentence and referring to the previous one	<i>Someone called me unexpectedly. For this reason I was late for the meeting.</i>
result	so / with the result that	a clause	between clauses	<i>The bridge was damaged, so we couldn't get across the river. Children are no longer learning their tribal language, with the result that fewer and fewer people speak it.</i>
	Consequently / Therefore / As a consequence / As a result	a sentence	at the beginning of a sentence and referring to the previous one. As a consequence and as a result can also be used at the end of the sentence.	<i>Ranjit injured himself in training yesterday. As a consequence, he won't be taking part in the match today. Keiko didn't write a very good letter of application. She was rejected as a result.</i>
	using conditional sentences (see page 165–166) <i>If children start learning foreign languages when they're young, they learn them effortlessly.</i> (If clause = possible action, they learn them effortlessly = the result)			

The language of comparison

Comparative adjectives and adverbs

Use comparative adjectives or adverbs to compare two things or actions:

*This camera is **smaller** and **more compact** than mine.
Glíma is **less violent** than other forms of wrestling.
She works **more efficiently** than most of her colleagues.*

- no + comparative adjective:
*Running is **no better** for you than walking fast.*
- as + adjective/adverb + as to show similarity or equality:
*My younger brother is **as tall as** me.
She doesn't play the piano **as well as** she used to.*
- the + comparative adjective/adverb + the to show a process in which one thing/action depends on another:
***The higher** he climbed, **the narrower** the path became.
The faster we walk, **the sooner** we'll get there.
The more I read, **the less** I understand.*

Note: With adjectives we often leave out the verb *be*:
***The stronger the material (is), the longer it lasts.**
The sooner we leave, the better (it will be).*

- repetition of a comparative adjective/adverb to express an increasing rate of change:
*He walked **faster and faster** until he was out of breath.
Food is getting **more and more expensive**.*

Superlative adjectives and adverbs

Use superlative adjectives or adverbs to put one thing or action above all others in the same category:

*Glíma is the **oldest** form of wrestling in Iceland.
That was the **least interesting** film I've ever seen.
She works **most efficiently** in the morning.*

- the + superlative adjective + of + plural noun:
*It was **the simplest** of ideas.
He was **the most inspiring** of teachers.*
- the + superlative adjective + noun + *imaginable/possible/available*:
*We had **the worst** weather **imaginable**.*

more, most, less, fewer + noun

Use *more/most* + noun to express a greater / the greatest number or amount:

- *more* + plural noun or uncountable noun:
*There were **more people** here than there were last year.
I wish I could spend **more time** with my friends.
Most sharks are quite harmless.
Most cheese is made from cow's milk.*

- *most of* + noun/pronoun when referring to part of a specific thing or group:
*The pizza was awful. I threw **most of it** away.
Most of our relatives live in Canada.
Most of the oil in the tanker leaked out into the sea.*

Use *less/fewer* + noun to express a smaller number/amount.

- *less* + uncountable noun:
*I'm getting **less money** now than in my last job.*
- *fewer* + plural noun:
*There were **fewer people** than usual at today's match.*

Qualifying comparatives

To intensify or qualify comparative adjectives/adverbs use:

- *a lot / a great deal / far*
- *slightly / a bit / a little*
- *even*

*My sister is **a lot more intelligent** than me, but my younger brother is **even cleverer** than her.*

*We've had **far less** snow this year than last year.*

*Could you drive **a bit more carefully**, please?*

Linking ideas

Relative clauses

She's the woman	who	bought our car.
	that	
	whose	son bought our car.
	from whom	we bought our car.
They've got a car	which	runs on electricity.
	that	
This is the town	where	I grew up.
Sunday is a day	when	many people relax.
There's no reason	why	you should be worried.

- To introduce a relative clause, use *who*, *that*, *whose* and *whom* to refer to people.

Note: *whom* is formal and is used mainly with prepositions:

*The person **to whom** this letter is addressed lives in Athens.*

- Use *that* and *which* to refer to things.
- Use *where*, meaning 'at which', 'in which' or 'to which', to refer to places:
*The village **where** (= in which) they live is in the middle of nowhere.
This is a restaurant **where** (= to which) we often go.*

- Use *when* to refer to times:
*I'm not sure of the date **when** they're leaving.*
- Use *why* to refer to reasons:
*The reason **why** I'm late is that my flight was cancelled.*
- A relative clause can be at the end of a sentence or it can be embedded in another clause:
*Madrid is the city **where** I grew up.*
*The city **where** I grew up is Madrid.*
*Madrid, **where** I grew up, is the capital of Spain.*
- *Who*, *that* and *which* can be the subject or the object of the verb in the relative clause:
Subject: *The people **who** know me best are my friends.*
Object: *The people **who** I know best are my friends.* (The subject is *I*.)

Where, *when* and *why* are always the object of the verb:
*We're going back to the hotel **where** we stayed last summer.* (The subject is *we*.)

Defining relative clauses

- A defining relative clause defines the noun which immediately precedes it, and is therefore essential to the meaning of the sentence:
*The couple **who brought me up** were not my real parents.* (The relative clause tells us which couple.)
- *Who*, *that* and *which* can be left out when they are the object of a defining relative clause:
The people (who) I know best are my close friends.
The DVD (that) you gave me for my birthday is fantastic.

When and *why* can also be left out:
2009 was the year (when) she left university.
That's the reason (why) I'm so disappointed.

Non-defining relative clauses

- Non-defining relative clauses give additional information, but are not essential to the meaning of the sentence:
*The hotel, **which has a hundred bedrooms**, is on the outskirts of the city.*
- Another type of non-defining clause is a comment clause, using *which* to introduce a comment on a previous clause:
*It had been raining nonstop for 24 hours, **which is why** I didn't go out.*
*We were stuck in the traffic jam for ages, **which** I found really frustrating.*
- The pronoun *that* cannot be used to introduce a non-defining relative clause.
- In writing, a non-defining relative clause is separated from the main clause by commas:
*My car, **which is seven years old**, has already done 200,000 kilometres.*

Participle clauses

Linking actions

With a present participle:

***Concentrating** on my work, I didn't realise how late it was.*

With a perfect participle:

***Having finished** his speech, he left the room.*

With a past participle:

***Seen** from a distance, the Pyramids look quite small.*

- Use a present participle clause to describe something happening at the same time as the main action or immediately after it:
***Opening the door**, I saw a parcel on the doorstep.*
- Present participle clauses can also be used with some conjunctions and prepositions:
***After watching that film**, I was too scared to go to bed.*

In this case, the participle clause can follow the main clause:
*She became interested in art **while travelling** in Italy.*
*You can take the train **instead of catching** the bus.*
- Use a perfect participle clause to describe something that happened before the main action. It may provide a reason for that action:
***Having left our map at home**, we got lost.* (= Because we had left our map at home ...)
- Use a past participle clause when the meaning is passive:
***Eaten in small quantities**, chocolate is good for you.*
***Built in 1889**, the Eiffel Tower is now a symbol of Paris.*
- Note that in all these cases the subject of the participle clause is the same as the subject of the main clause.

Used instead of relative clauses

Participle clauses can also be used instead of relative clauses. They are sometimes called reduced relative clauses.

- Use the present participle when the meaning is active:
*There are three pictures **hanging on the wall**.* (= that/ which are hanging ...)
*I noticed a man **wearing a suit and carrying a large box**.* (= who was wearing ..., who was carrying ...)
- Use the past participle when the meaning is passive:
*Anyone **caught shoplifting** will be prosecuted.* (= who is caught ...)
*I've brought you a jar of plum jam, **made by my mother**.* (= which was made ...)

Apposition

A common, economical way of linking two or more facts about the same person, thing or place is to put them next to each other in a sentence.

As with relative clauses, the second noun / noun phrase can be defining or non-defining.

- If it tells us who or what, no commas are used:
Her friend Klaus is a computer engineer.
- If it provides additional descriptive information, commas are used:
I'm going to see Bev Jackson, my maths tutor, this afternoon.

no, none, not

no

- No means *not any* or *not even one* and can be used with countable or uncountable nouns:
I have no idea what you're talking about.
There were no cars on the road at that time of night.
There's no salt on the table.
- It can also be used with comparative adjectives or adverbs and with the word *different*:
The traffic is no worse today than it was yesterday.
I had to work late every evening last week, and so far this week has been no different.

none

- None is a pronoun which means *not one* or *not any*. It is usually followed by *of* + a plural or uncountable noun or a pronoun:
None of my friends know/knows it's my birthday today.
None of the milk in the fridge is fresh.
- It can also be used on its own:
'How much coffee do we have?' 'None (at all). We finished it yesterday.'
We need to buy some more eggs – there are none left.
- In formal written English *none* is considered to be a singular word and is followed by a singular verb:
None of my colleagues speaks Japanese.
However, in everyday speech a plural verb is more commonly used:
None of this morning's flights have been delayed.

not

- Not is mainly used to make verbs negative and is often contracted to *n't*:
You have not / haven't answered my question.
That isn't / That's not the correct answer.
She told me not to phone her after ten o'clock at night.
He was silent, not knowing what to say.
- It can also make other words or phrases negative:
I ordered tea, not coffee.
Not many people voted in yesterday's election.
Not everyone can win the lottery.
Not all Canadians speak French.
Not surprisingly, he failed his driving test.
'Can you come out?' 'No, I'm afraid not.'

The passive

The goods	are were are being were being are going to be have been had been will be can be have to be might have been must have been	imported	from Italy.
-----------	--	----------	-------------

- The passive is formed with the verb *be* + past participle.
- Intransitive verbs (verbs with no object, e.g. *appear, come, go*) cannot be used in the passive form.
- There is no passive form for the present or past perfect continuous tense or the future continuous tenses. (We do not say ~~The goods have/had been being imported~~ or ~~will be being imported~~.)

We use the passive to focus attention on the person or thing that is affected by the action of the verb:

- when the identity of the person/thing doing the action (= the agent) is unknown or unimportant:
My office was broken into last night.
Tonight's football match has been cancelled.
- when it is obvious who/what the agent is:
He was arrested and charged with theft. (Only the police can arrest and charge people.)

If we want to mention the agent in a passive sentence, we use the preposition *by*:

The goods are imported by a chain of supermarkets.

The passive is often used to describe technical or scientific processes:

Water **was added** and the mixture **was heated** to 85°C.

With verbs like *know, believe, think, consider, expect, report* we can use the passive + infinitive. We can also use an impersonal construction with *It + passive + that + clause*:

Bill Gates is known to be one of the world's richest people.

Twenty people are reported to have been injured in the fire.

It is believed that the accident was caused by a gas leak.

It has been estimated that average house prices will fall by 5% this year.

Structures like these are often used:

- to express an opinion that is widely accepted as true
- when you can't or don't want to identify a source of information.

We also use the passive to create a 'flow' in text:

- to put 'known information' at the beginning of a sentence:

The police have started to take a tougher line with

petty criminals. Many of them are now being given prison sentences.

- to avoid the awkwardness of a very long subject:

The player who has won 'footballer of the year' most times addressed the club management.

→ *The club management was addressed by the player who has won 'footballer of the year' most times.*

Prepositions in time expressions

Use **at**

- with points of time:
at four o'clock, at dawn, at midday.
- with short periods which we think of as points:
I'm always short of money at the end of the month.
- with mealtimes:
We can discuss it at lunch tomorrow.
(We can also say *over/during lunch*.)
- with *the weekend, Christmas* and *Easter*:
What are you doing at the weekend?
(In American English *on the weekend* is also possible.)
- with *night* when talking about night-time in general, not a particular night:
The traffic noise makes it difficult to sleep at night.
(Compare: *in the night* – see below.)

Use **in**

- for years, months and seasons:
in 2006, in March, in the autumn
- with *the* for parts of the day:
Sam always goes shopping in the morning.
(Compare: *on Saturday morning* – see below.)
The ground was wet because it had rained in the night.
(= during the night. Compare: *at night* – see above.)
- to say the period of time before something happens or how long something takes:
I'll call you back in 20 minutes.
In six months' time I'll have finished university.
Clara managed to do all her homework in half an hour.

Use **on**

- for particular dates or days, or parts of particular days:
My holiday starts on July 22nd.
We're having a party on Saturday if you'd like to come.
Let's go bowling on Friday night.
- with occasion:
Tatiana has visited us on several occasions in the past.

Reported speech

Verb tense changes

When we report what someone said, the tense of the verb is often 'further back' in time:

'I'm feeling ill.' → *He said he was feeling ill.*

'You can borrow my phone.' → *She said I could borrow her phone.*

'The rain has stopped.' → *He said the rain had stopped.*

'We drove all night.' → *They said they had driven all night.*

'We'll try to help.' → *They said they would try to help.*

The past perfect tenses and the modal verbs *would, could* and *should* cannot move 'further back', so they remain unchanged:

'I'd never spoken to her before.' → *He said he'd never spoken to her before.*

'I wouldn't go skiing again.' → *She said she wouldn't go skiing again.*

The tense of the reported speech does not need to change:

- if we want to make it clear that what the speaker said is still true now or remains relevant:

'I love black coffee.' → *He said he loves black coffee.*

'Picasso was born in Spain.' → *She told us that Picasso was born in Spain.*

- if the reporting verb is in the present:

'I'm looking forward to my holiday.' → *She says she's looking forward to her holiday.*

Pronoun, possessive adjective and adverb changes

- Pronouns and possessive adjectives often need to change in reported speech, especially when the reporter is different from the original speaker:

'I love **you**,' Dan said. → Dan said **he** loved **me**.

'You didn't give **me your** address,' said Jane. → Jane said **we** hadn't given **her our** address.

- Time and place adverbs change if the time or place is no longer the same as in the direct speech:

'I'll see you **tomorrow**.' → Jackie said she would see me **the next/following day**.

'We've lived **here** for six years.' → They said they had lived **there** for six years.

The adverb does not change if the time/place remains the same:

'I came **here** yesterday.' → (reported the same day) He says he came **here** yesterday.

- These are some of the time reference changes:

Direct speech	Reported speech
(ten minutes) ago	(ten minutes) before/earlier
last week/month/year	the previous week/month/year the week/month/year before
next week/month/year	the following week/month/year the week/month/year after
now	at that time / immediately / then
this week	last/that week
today	that day / yesterday on Monday/Tuesday, etc.
tomorrow	the next/following day the day after
yesterday	the previous day the day before

Reporting questions

- When we report a question, we change it into the form of a statement. This means that we change the word order and do not use the auxiliary *do*, *does* or *did* in the present and past simple:

'What are you watching?' → He asked us **what we were watching**.

'Where do you live?' → She asked me **where I lived/live**.

- When we report Yes/No questions, we add *if* or *whether*:
'Do you speak Italian?' → He asked me **if/whether I spoke/speak Italian**.

Reporting verbs

There are many verbs which we can use to introduce reported speech. Most of them can be followed by more than one grammatical pattern.

verb + to infinitive

- agree: They agreed **to broadcast** the programme.
- offer: He offered **to buy** me lunch.
- promise: The mayor has promised **to give** us an interview.

verb + object + to infinitive

- advise: The newspaper advises **people to be** careful about using social media.
- ask: She asked **the reporter to repeat** his question.
- invite: They've invited **us to attend** the show.
- order/tell: The teacher ordered/told **the children to wait** outside.
- persuade: I persuaded **the magazine to print** my story.
- remind: Can you remind **me to update** my blog?
- warn: She warned **him not to be** late for the interview.

verb + preposition + noun / verb + -ing

- complain about: The actress has complained **about the paparazzi** outside her house.
- apologise for: The organisation has apologised **for publishing** misleading information on its website.
- accuse (somebody) of: The president accused the press **of distorting** the truth.

verb + noun / verb + -ing

- deny: The minister has denied **the accusation**.
- admit: He admitted **inventing** some details in his report.
- recommend: She recommended **doing** more research.
- suggest: The directors have suggested **paying** for online content with advertising.

verb + clause

These verbs can also be followed by (*that*) + clause:
admit, agree, complain, deny, promise, recommend, suggest:

She suggested that they should interview local people.

These verbs must be followed by an object before (*that*) + clause:

persuade, promise, remind, tell, warn:

We warned our audience that they might find some of the photos distressing.

→ See also page 179: Verbs + to infinitive or -ing

Time clauses

Time clauses start with words like *when, while, as, before, after, until, as soon as*.

Referring to the future

When a time clause describes an action in the future, use a present tense (present simple, present continuous or present perfect), not a future tense:

I'll call you	when I leave work. (not will leave) when I'm leaving work. (not will be leaving) when I've left work. (not will have left)
---------------	---

Note these differences:

- *When she **goes** to Rome she **stays** with Carla.* (= She does this every time she goes to Rome.)
*When she **goes** to Rome she'll **stay** with Carla* (= She'll go there in the future and then she'll stay with Carla.)
- *I'll help you when you **cook** lunch.* (= I'll help you to cook lunch.)
*I'll help you when I've **cooked** lunch.* (= First I'll cook lunch. Then I'll help you.)
*I'll explain the problem while you're **cooking** lunch* (= I'll explain. At the same time, you'll be cooking lunch.)

Referring to the past

- *I called him when my train **got** to the station.* (= My train arrived and immediately afterwards I called.)
*I called him when my train **was getting** to the station* (= I called while the train was in the process of arriving.)
*I called him when the train **had left** the station.* (= The train left earlier. I called later.)

when and while

When is used:

- to show one action happening at the same time as another. It can mean 'During the time that' or 'At the time that':
***When** we lived / were living in Wales, I rode my bike everywhere.* (*While* can also be used here.)
*Our dog always barks **when** visitors come.*
- to show one action happening immediately after another, and often as a result of it:
***When** I get some money I'll buy a new jacket.*
*The snow melted **when** the sun came out.*
- to show an action interrupting or happening in the course of another longer action:
*He was playing squash **when** he injured his wrist.*

While is always used:

- to show one action happening at the same time as another. It means 'During the time that' and it is often (but not always) used with continuous tenses:
*She kept a blog **while** she **was travelling** in Asia.* (*When* can also be used here.)
*I'll do the crossword **while** I'm **waiting** for you.*
*The postman delivered the parcel **while** I **was washing** the car.* (My action lasted longer than the postman's.)
***While** Dad **heated** the soup, I made some toast.* (The two actions occupied approximately the same length of time.)

Other time expressions

during

The preposition *during* is followed by a noun or noun phrase. Use *during*:

- to describe an action lasting for the whole of a time period or event:
*Bears hibernate **during the winter**.*
*The town was lit up **during the festival**.*
- to describe an action happening at some point within a time period or event:
*I'll be spending a week in Prague **during the summer**.*
*Three players were given a red card **during the match**.*

meanwhile

Meanwhile is an adverb which comes at the beginning of a sentence. Use *meanwhile*:

- to introduce an action happening while another event, mentioned in the previous sentence, takes/took place:
Paz spent two hours this afternoon surfing the Internet.
***Meanwhile**, the rest of the family went for a long walk.*
- to introduce an action happening between two times:
*I'll be home in half an hour. **Meanwhile**, (= between now and then) could you prepare the vegetables?*

Transitive verbs

English verbs are classified as transitive or intransitive. Dictionaries identify them with the letters *T* and *I*.

- A transitive verb must be followed by an object:
*She **found the information** on the Internet. (the information is the object of the transitive verb **found**.)*
- An intransitive verb has no object:
*At five past seven our train **arrived**.*
- Because transitive verbs have an object, they can be used in the passive form:
Active: *Someone **stole our car** from outside the house.*
Passive: ***Our car was stolen** from outside the house.*
Intransitive verbs cannot be used in the passive form.
- Some transitive verbs can have two objects, a direct object and an indirect object:
*They will send **you an email** to confirm your booking. (an email is the direct object of **will send**; you is the indirect object.)*

Either of these objects may become the subject of a passive sentence.

You will be sent an email to confirm your booking.
An email will be sent to you to confirm your booking.

- Many verbs can be used transitively and intransitively, sometimes with different meanings:
*Could you help me **move this table**? (transitive)*
*We're **moving** tomorrow. (intransitive)*
*I think I **left my books** at college. (transitive)*
*They **left** at three o'clock. (intransitive)*
*She **runs her business** from home. (transitive)*
*A river **runs** through our village. (intransitive)*

Verb forms to talk about the past

Past simple

The past simple tense is used to describe:

- an action that happened or a state that existed at a specific time in the past:
*Yesterday I **felt** so tired that I **didn't go** to work.*
- an action that lasted for a period of time in the past, but is now finished:
*I **studied** in Paris for four years from 2005 to 2009.*
- a habitual action over a specific period in the past:
*While he was away, he **rang** his girlfriend every day.*
- actions which happened one after the other:
*She **opened** the fridge, **took out** the milk, **gave** some to the cat and **put** some in her coffee.*

Past continuous

The past continuous tense is used to describe:

- an activity which started before and continued until an event in the past:
*She **was driving** home when the police stopped her. (The activity of driving was interrupted by the police's action.)*
- an activity which started before and continued after an event in the past:
*I **was cooking** lunch when I heard the news. (And I continued to cook lunch afterwards.)*
- a situation which was temporary at a time in the past:
*I remember that summer well. I **was staying** with my aunt at the time, while my parents were away.*

Compare the use of the past simple when the situation in the past was more permanent:

*I **lived** in Rome when I was a child. (not ~~I was living~~)*

- something that frequently happened, with *always* or *forever*, often to express amusement or irritation:
*My dad **was always dressing up** in funny hats.*
*We got fed up with Jill, who **was forever complaining**.*

State verbs

We do not usually use the continuous with state verbs (this applies to all tenses). These are commonly:

- verbs which express **opinions, feelings or knowledge**, e.g. *agree, believe, disagree, hate, know, like, love, need, prefer, realise, regret, understand*
- verbs which describe **appearance**, e.g. *appear, look, seem, resemble*
- verbs which describe **senses** e.g. *smell, taste*
- these other verbs: *belong, consist, contain, cost, own*

The present perfect tenses

The present perfect tense is used:

- to describe an action that happened at an unspecified time in the past up to now:
They've recorded a lot of albums.
Have you ever visited Berlin?
- to describe a past action when the emphasis is on the result in the present:
Someone's stolen my phone! (It's not here now.)
I've told Tim about tomorrow's rehearsal. (He knows about it).
It's no wonder you're tired – you've been working so hard!
- typically with time adverbs that connect the past to the present, e.g. *just, already, lately, so far, up to now, yet, today* (when it is still the same day), *this morning* (when it is still the same morning):

Have you seen any good films lately?

England has only won the World Cup once so far.

(Note: this use of the present perfect is typical in British English. In American English, the past simple may be used: *Did you see any good films lately? England only won the World Cup once so far.*)

I've been cleaning the house this morning.

Compare: *I cleaned the house this morning.* (It's now the afternoon.)

- with *for* or *since* to describe an activity or state that started in the past and is still continuing in the present:
She's lived in Spain for nearly ten years.
They've known each other since they were children.
He's been driving for three hours,

The present perfect simple and continuous are sometimes interchangeable, although we only use the simple form with state verbs. However, note the differences in the table below.

Present perfect simple	Present perfect continuous
emphasises the result: <i>I've phoned my friends and they're coming to the party.</i>	emphasises the activity: <i>I've been phoning my friends. That's why I haven't done my homework.</i>
often describes an action that is now completed: <i>We've bought some food for the weekend.</i> (It's in the kitchen now). <i>Working conditions have improved a lot.</i> (They're much better now).	shows that an activity has continued for a period of time and may mean that it is still continuing: <i>We've been buying most of our food at the market lately.</i> <i>Working conditions have been improving since the new manager took over.</i> (They're in the process of getting better.)
says how much has been completed or how often something has been done: <i>I've cooked three pizzas.</i> <i>Sandra has phoned me four times today.</i>	says how long an activity has been happening: <i>I've been cooking all afternoon.</i> <i>I've been speaking on the phone for hours.</i>
may indicate a more permanent situation: <i>He's worked in this shop all his life.</i> <i>I've always lived here.</i>	may indicate a temporary situation: <i>I've been working on my art project for two weeks now.</i> <i>People have been living in terrible conditions in the refugee camp.</i>

The past perfect tenses

The past perfect simple tense is used:

- to indicate that we are talking about an action which took place, or a state which existed, **before** another activity or situation in the past, which is described in the past simple:
*When Maria got home, they **had eaten** dinner.*
Compare: *When Maria got home, they **ate** dinner.* (They ate dinner when she arrived.)
- typically with time expressions like *when, as soon as, after, before, it was the first time, etc.*
*He went home as soon as he'd **finished** his work.*

The past perfect continuous tense is used:

- to focus on the length of time:
*My eyes were really tired because I'd **been reading** for two or three hours in bad light.*
- to say how long something happened up to a point in the past:
*It was two months before any of the teachers noticed that Mike **hadn't been coming** to school.*

would and used to

Would + infinitive and *used to* + infinitive are used to talk about things which happened repeatedly in the past but don't happen now:

*When I was small, my mother **would read** to me in bed and she'd **sing** me a song to help me to sleep. While she was reading to me, my father **used to wash up** the dinner things.*

- Use *used to*, not *would*, to talk about past states which no longer exist:
*There **used to be** a grocer's opposite the bus station.* (not ~~*There would be.*~~)
- Used to* only exists in the past. It has no other tenses. The negative is *didn't use to*:
*He **didn't use to be** so short-tempered.*
The question form is *Did (subject) use to*:
***Did** you **use to enjoy** school when you were a kid?*
- Use the past simple, not *used to* or *would*, to specify how many times or how often something happened:
*Charlie **used to be** a very successful tennis player. He **won** the junior championship three times.*

Verbs + to infinitive or -ing

Verbs followed by the infinitive

The infinitive without *to* is used after:

- modal verbs:
*We **must hurry** or we'll be late.*

The *to* infinitive is used after:

- some verbs which are modal in meaning:
*I **have to go** to work tomorrow.*
*You **ought to get** more sleep.*
*You **need to think** again. You **don't need to worry**.*

Note: The verb *need* has an alternative negative form, *needn't*, which is followed by the infinitive without *to*:
*You **needn't worry**.*

- certain verbs, e.g. *afford, agree, arrange, appear, attempt, choose, decide, expect, hope, intend, learn, manage, offer, pretend, promise, refuse, seem*:
*We can't **afford to go** on holiday this year.*
- certain verbs + object, e.g. *advise, allow, ask, convince, enable, encourage, forbid, force, get, instruct, invite, order, persuade, remind, require, teach, tell, train, want, warn, wish*:
*You can't **force people to believe** something.*
*My father **taught me to swim**.*

Note: After the verb *help*, the *to* can be omitted before the infinitive:

*She **helped me (to) revise** for my exam.*

Verbs followed by the -ing form

The *-ing* form of the verb is used after:

- some verbs which express likes and dislikes, e.g. *dislike, enjoy, loathe, (don't) mind, (can't) stand*:
*She **can't stand getting** stuck in a traffic jam.*
But note the following exceptions:
 - hate/like/love/prefer* are usually followed by the *-ing* form but are sometimes followed by the *to* infinitive (see below).
 - would + hate/like/love/prefer* is always followed by the *to* infinitive:
*I'd **hate to get up** early every morning.*
- certain verbs, e.g. *admit, appreciate, avoid, can't help, consider, delay, deny, finish, imagine, involve, keep, miss, postpone, prevent, recommend, report, resist, risk, suggest*:
*The prime minister has just **finished speaking**.*

Verbs followed by to infinitive or -ing

A small number of verbs can be followed either by the infinitive or by the *-ing* form.

With no difference in meaning

begin, can't bear, cease, commence, continue, hate, intend, like, love, propose, start:

*I've just **started to learn / learning** to ski.*

*He had **intended to leave / leaving** before midnight.*

Note: With the verbs *like, love, hate* there can be this slight difference in meaning:

*I **like to clean** my car every week. (The focus is on the result of the activity.)*

*I **like cleaning** my car every week. (The focus is on the activity itself, i.e. I enjoy cleaning it.)*

With different meanings

- verbs expressing perception

*I **saw** the plane **land**. (= I saw the whole action.)*

*I **saw** the plane **landing**. (= I saw part of the action.)*

- forget*

*I **forgot to phone** my brother. (= I didn't phone him.)*

*I'll never **forget phoning** my sister that night. (= I phoned her and I recall it well.)*

- remember*

*Tom **remembered to close** the windows before he left.*

(= He did something he had to do; he didn't forget.)

*Tom **remembered closing** the windows before he left.*

(= He recalled doing it.)

- go on*

*She won her first race when she was seven and **went on to break** the world record. (= Breaking the world record was something she did later.)*

*He **went on walking** even though he was exhausted.*

(= He didn't stop walking.)

- mean*

*I'm sorry, I didn't **mean to be** rude. (= intend)*

*If we want to catch the early train, it'll **mean getting** up at 5:00. (= involve)*

- regret*

*I **regret to inform** you that you have not passed the test.*

(= I'm sorry about something unwelcome I'm about to say.)

*He now **regrets taking** the day off work. (= He wishes he hadn't taken the day off work.)*

- stop*

*We'd better **stop to look** at the map. (= stop what we are doing in order to do something else)*

*There's nothing you can do about it, so **stop worrying**.*

(= finish worrying)

- try*

*I've been **trying to repair** my computer all morning. (= attempt something difficult)*

*Have you **tried kicking** it? (= do something which might solve a problem)*

Ways of contrasting ideas

Conjunctions: *but, whereas, while, although, (even) though*

- But** can contrast words, phrases and clauses, normally within the same sentence:

*The work was tiring **but** worthwhile.*

*The work was tiring **but** it produced worthwhile results.*

However, in informal writing it may be used to start a sentence:

*We were half dead by the end of the day! **But** at least the job turned out well.*

- Whereas** and **while** are used to contrast different, but not contradictory, ideas:

He can eat anything he likes without putting on weight, **whereas** most people have to be more careful.

***While** I know she can be difficult at times, I'm very fond of her.*

The **while** clause usually comes before the main clause.

- Though / although / even though** introduce an idea that contrasts with the one in the main clause:

*He failed his driving test **although / even though** he had practised every day for the previous two weeks.*

Even though is more emphatic than *though/although*.

- Even if** is similar to **even though**, but adds a conditional meaning:

*I'm going to New Zealand for my holiday next year **even if** I have to save all year.*

Prepositions: *despite, in spite of*

- Despite** and **in spite of** are prepositions and therefore they are followed by a noun or an *-ing* form:

*The journey was very quick **despite / in spite of** the heavy traffic.*

***Despite / In spite of** feeling ill, / the fact that I felt ill, I enjoyed the party.*

Adverbs: *however, nevertheless*

- However** is used to contrast a new sentence with the previous one(s). It normally goes at the beginning of the sentence, but may be placed within it or at the end:

*This is one possible solution to the problem. **However**, there are others. / There are others, **however**. / There are, **however**, others.*

Note: Unlike *but*, *however* cannot be used to link two contrasting clauses in the same sentence.

- **Nevertheless** has the same function but is more formal. It normally goes at the beginning of the sentence:
This is an extremely difficult decision. Nevertheless, it is one that we have to make.

Word formation

Adding prefixes

Prefixes to give negative meanings

Some words can be given a negative meaning by adding a prefix (e.g. *dis-* + *like* = *dislike*) to the beginning of a word. Here are some common prefixes which can be used to give a negative meaning:

- *dis-*: disrespect
- *in-*: inconvenience
- *un-*: unconventional

Before many (but not all) words beginning with:

- *l* we add the prefix *il-*: *illiterate*
- *m* and *p* we add the prefix *im-*: *imperfect*
- *r* we add the prefix *ir-*: *irrational*

Prefixes to say when something happens

- *pre-* means 'before a time or event':
premature (= happening or done too soon, especially before the natural or desired time)
- *post-* means 'after' or 'later than':
postgraduate (= a student who has already obtained one degree and is studying at a university for a more advanced qualification i.e. after graduating)

Prefixes to indicate attitude

- *pro-* means 'supporting or approving of something' and with this meaning it is normally used with a hyphen:
pro-European
- *anti-* means 'opposed to' or 'against' and is normally used with a hyphen:
anti-social, *anti-terrorist*

Other prefixes and their meanings

- *mis-* usually means 'wrongly' or 'badly':
misbehave (= behave wrongly or badly)
- *re-* usually means 'again' and is often added to verbs:
redevelop (= to change an area of a town by replacing old buildings, roads, etc. with new ones, i.e. to develop again)
- *inter-* means 'between' or 'among':
interactive (= involving communication between people)

- *over-* can mean '(from) above':
overview, *oversee*

It can also mean 'too much' or 'more than usual':
overworked, *overspend*

- *under-* can mean 'below':
underground, *undermine*

It can also mean 'not enough':
underpaid, *undervalue*

Adding suffixes

Verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs can be formed from other related or base words by adding a suffix to the end of the word (e.g. *appear* + *-ance* = *appearance*). There are no clear rules – each word and the words which can be formed from it must be learned individually.

Some of the most common suffixes and their usual meanings are listed below.

verb → noun

suffix	verb	noun	notes
-ment	<i>recruit</i>	<i>recruitment</i>	used to form nouns which refer to an action or process or its result
-ation, -ition, -tion, -sion	<i>accuse</i> <i>define</i> <i>distract</i> <i>provide</i>	<i>accusation</i> <i>definition</i> <i>distraction</i> <i>provision</i>	added to verbs to form nouns showing action or condition
-er, -or	<i>rule</i> <i>supervise</i>	<i>ruler</i> <i>supervisor</i>	added to some verbs to form nouns which refer to people or things that do that activity
-ance, -ence	<i>acquaint</i> <i>interfere</i>	<i>acquaintance</i> <i>interference</i>	used to form nouns which refer to an action, a series of actions, or a state
-ant	<i>contest</i>	<i>contestant</i>	used to refer to a person or thing performing or causing the action
-al	<i>arrive</i>	<i>arrival</i>	used to add the meaning 'the action of' to a noun
-ee	<i>train</i>	<i>trainee</i>	refers to the person to whom the action of the verb is being done

adjective → noun

suffix	adjective	noun	notes
-ance, -ence	<i>significant</i> <i>convenient</i>	<i>significance</i> <i>convenience</i>	added to adjectives ending in <i>-ant</i> or <i>-ent</i>
-ness	<i>ready</i>	<i>readiness</i>	added to adjectives to form nouns which refer to a quality or a condition
-ity	<i>diverse</i> <i>liable</i>	<i>diversity</i> <i>liability</i>	notice that <i>-able</i> becomes <i>-ability</i>

noun → adjective

suffix	noun	adjective	notes
-y	<i>filth</i>	<i>filthy</i>	added to nouns to form adjectives meaning 'like the stated thing'
-ful	<i>fruit</i>	<i>fruitful</i>	having the stated quality to a high degree, or causing it
-ous	<i>number</i>	<i>numerous</i>	
-less	<i>speech</i>	<i>speechless</i>	used to add the meaning 'without'
-al	<i>nutrition</i>	<i>nutritional</i>	used to add the meaning 'connected with'
-ic	<i>idealist</i>	<i>idealistic</i>	used to form adjectives which say what a person, thing or action is like
-ish	<i>snob</i>	<i>snobbish</i>	

noun → noun

suffix	noun	noun	notes
-ism	<i>material</i>	<i>materialism</i>	used to form nouns which describe social, political or religious beliefs, studies or ways of behaving
-ist	<i>violin</i> <i>therapy</i>	<i>violinist</i> <i>therapist</i>	used to form nouns which describe people with a particular expertise, set of beliefs or way of behaving
-ship	<i>sponsor</i>	<i>sponsorship</i>	having the rank, position, skill or relationship of the stated type

adjective/noun → adjective / noun

suffix	adjective/ noun	verb	notes
-ify	<i>clear</i>	<i>clarify</i>	used to form verbs meaning 'to cause to become or to increase'
-ise, -ize	<i>general</i>	<i>generalise /</i> <i>generalize</i>	added to form verbs meaning 'to cause to become'

verb → adjective

suffix	verb	adjective	notes
-ed	<i>bias</i>	<i>biased</i>	
-ing	<i>grip</i>	<i>gripping</i>	
-able, -ible	<i>sustain</i> <i>neglect</i>	<i>sustainable</i> <i>negligible</i>	added to verbs to form adjectives which mean 'able to receive the action' or 'worth receiving the action'
-ent	<i>persist</i>	<i>persistent</i>	
-ive	<i>exclude</i>	<i>exclusive</i>	added to verbs to form adjectives meaning 'showing the ability to perform the activity'

adjective → adverb

Adverbs are almost always formed by adding *-ly* to the adjective. However, if the adjective ends in *-ic*, change it to an adverb by adding *-ally*. (Exception: *public* → *publicly*)

suffix	adjective	adverb
-ly / -ally	<i>immense</i> <i>heroic</i>	<i>immensely</i> <i>heroically</i>

Spelling rules for adding affixes

Affixes are either prefixes or suffixes.

Below are some spelling rules when adding affixes.

When adding -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -ance, -ence, -en or -y, double the final consonant in:

- one-syllable words which end in consonant–vowel–consonant:
run – running, flat – flatten, mud – muddy
(But *w, x* and *y* are never doubled: *flowed, taxing*.)
- verbs of two or more syllables which end in consonant–vowel–consonant when the final syllable is stressed:
occur – occurrence, forget – forgetting
- verbs which end in *l* after one vowel in British English (in American English the *l* may not double):
travel – traveller, cancel – cancellation

Don't double the final consonant when:

- there are two final consonants:
correspond – correspondence
- there are two vowels before the final consonant:
disappear – disappearance
- the stress is not on the final syllable:
deepen – deepening

Drop the final -e:

- if there is a consonant before it and the suffix begins with a vowel (-er, -ed, -ing, -ance, -ation, etc.):
nonsense – nonsensical, amaze – amazing, sane – sanity
Note this exception: adding -able to words ending in -ce and -ge: *noticeable, knowledgeable*

Don't drop the final -e:

- when the suffix begins with a consonant:
safe – safety, arrange – arrangement, disgrace – disgraceful

Note this exception: *argue – argument*

Change -y to i:

- in words which end in -y after a consonant when a suffix (with the exception of -ing) is added:
happy – happiness, try – tried / trial, study – studious, family – familiar, rely – reliance

Note these exceptions:

dry – drier / drily but ***dryness***; *shy – shyness / shyly*

Change -ie to y:

- when adding -ing to words which end in -ie:
lie – lying, die – dying

Add -es rather than -s for plural nouns or present simple verbs when the word ends in:

- -s: *bus – buses, miss – misses*
- -ch: *watch – watches*
- -sh: *wish – wishes*
- -x: *relax – relaxes*

Note: For some common nouns ending in -f or -fe the plural ending is -ves:

leaf – leaves, loaf – loaves, knife – knives

Adding prefixes

When a prefix is added (before the word), the spelling does not change, e.g. with *dis-*, *un-* and *ir-*:

appoint – disappoint, satisfied – dissatisfied, truthful – untruthful, necessary – unnecessary, relevant – irrelevant