

Ultimate IELTS Series Book 6

GRAMMAR

for IELTS

*Essential grammar
for IELTS writing and
speaking*

Written and developed by Impact Learning

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Test your grammar level for IELTS

This 60-question quiz will tell you your current level of grammar, running from Beginner to Advanced. Before you start the quiz, please read these notes:

1. If you do not know the answer, don't guess – this will not give you an accurate level.
2. The quiz increases in difficulty from the beginning to the end.
3. The test should take you no more than 30 minutes.

1. I _____ from New Zealand.

- A is
- B am
- C are
- D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

2. John _____ from Canada.

- A is
- B am
- C are
- D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

3. I _____ a car.

- A don't have
- B don't have not

C do haven't

D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

4. I _____ Coca-Cola.

A don't like not

B don't like

C do liken't

D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

5. _____ have much time left?

A Do I

B Has I

C Does I

D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

6. _____ speak English?

A Do she

B Does she

C Has she

D [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

7. Last night, he _____ computer games until 11 p.m.

A play

- B** did play
- C** has played
- D** played
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

8. Yesterday, she _____ her homework, so she is doing it now.

- A** didn't finish
- B** didn't finished
- C** finished not
- D** not finished
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

9. _____ late last Wednesday? I can't remember!

- A** Did I work
- B** Did I worked
- C** Do I worked
- D** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

10. What are the matching past tense forms of the following verbs? buy – give – swim – teach

- A** buyed - gived - swimmmed - teached
- B** boughted - gaved - swammed - teached
- C** bought - gave - swam - taught
- D** buyed - gave - swimmmed - teach
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

11. I _____ in a shop at the moment, but I want to change my job soon.

- A work
- B will working
- C am working
- D is working
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

12. John _____ his dinner now.

- A is eating
- B will be eat
- C was eating
- D is eats
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

13. I _____ today – I have a day off!

- A is not work
- B am not working
- C not am working
- D am not work
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

14. Eric _____ television – he's busy in the garden.

- A does not watching
- B are not watching
- C is not watching
- D not am watching
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

15. _____ my time?

- A Am I wasting
- B Is I wasting
- C I am wasting
- D Are I wasting
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

16. _____ dinner now? I'm really hungry.

- A Jack is cooking
- B Jack cooks
- C Jack is cook
- D Is Jack cooking
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

17. My grandfather is _____ than my father.

- A old
- B the oldest
- C more old

- D older
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

18. A horse is _____ than a cat.

- A faster
- B more fast
- C fast
- D fasterer
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

19. The keys are _____ the table.

- A at
- B on
- C in
- D above
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

20. What is the participle form (third form) of the following verb? swim > swam > _____

- A swimmmed
- B swim
- C swum
- D swam
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

21. I have _____ cat and two dogs.

- A a
- B an
- C the
- D NOTHING IS NEEDED HERE
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

22. My hair is wet because I _____ it.

- A had just washed
- B was washed
- C have just washed
- D just have washing
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

23. Where can we sit? There _____ chairs here.

- A aren't any
- B isn't some
- C isn't any
- D not are some
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

24. An elephant is _____ animal I know!

- A the heavier
- B the most heavy

- C** the heaviest
- D** heavier
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

25. By 2050, the population of the planet _____ 7 billion people.

- A** will be
- B** is going to be
- C** will be going to
- D** is will be
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

26. In an exam, you have to finish _____ the time you are given. You can't have any extra time.

- A** during
- B** within
- C** after
- D** before
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

27. Which one of the following nouns is countable? MILK – BREAD – INFORMATION – KNIFE .

- A** milk
- B** bread
- C** information
- D** knife
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

28. I usually get home from work around 5.30 p.m. If _____ the 6 o'clock news.

- A I get home in time tonight, I watch
- B I get home in time tonight, I will watch
- C I got home in time, I will watch
- D I get home in time, I would watch
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

29. Change the following sentence to the passive form. They deliver the newspapers in the morning.

- A In the morning, they deliver the newspapers.
- B The newspapers in the morning are delivered.
- C The newspapers are delivered in the morning.
- D They in the morning deliver the newspapers.
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

30. Which one of these sentences is incorrect?

- A I'm believing in you.
- B I'm listening to you.
- C I'm playing tennis with you.
- D I'm waiting for you.
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

31. Change the following sentence into reported speech: 'I have lived here for a long time' he said.

- A He said he had lived there for a long time.
- B He said he lived there for a long time.
- C He says he had lived there for a long time.
- D He says he is living there for a long time.
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

32. A: 'You look very hot!' B: 'Yes, I _____. I've covered over 5 kilometres this morning!

- A have run
- B had been running
- C have been running
- D had been running
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

33. John had a car accident. He's in _____ hospital at the moment, but I don't know which one.

- A a
- B an
- C the
- D NO ARTICLE NEEDED HERE (BLANK)
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

34. The _____ isn't actually mine. (BE CAREFUL OF PUNCTUATION HERE!)

- A car, which I use to get to work,
- B car, what I use to get to work,
- C car which I use to get to work
- D car, that I use to get to work,
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

35. I couldn't drive home because I _____ my keys.

- A losed
- B had losed
- C have lost
- D had lost
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

36. It's 7.05 p.m. now and I have about 20 minutes more work to do, so I _____ by 7.30 p.m.

- A will have finished
- B will have been finished
- C will be finish
- D will finish
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

37. He walked _____ her until he could hear what she was saying.

- A along
- B beside
- C against

- D towards
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

38. I don't have a lot of money and my job doesn't pay well, but _____ a new sports car.

- A if I am rich, I will buy
- B if I was rich, I would buy
- C if I was rich, I will buy
- D if I were rich, I would bought
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

39. Listening to his accent, he _____ be German, but you'd have to ask him to be certain.

- A could
- B can
- C will
- D must
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

40. Some people find English grammar _____ to learn.

- A so hard
- B such hard
- C such a hard
- D hard so
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

41. Her eyes were tired because she _____ on the computer all day.

- A typed
- B had been typed
- C had been typing
- D is typing
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

42. By the time my course finishes next year, I _____ for over four years.

- A am going to study
- B will study
- C will be studying
- D will have been studying
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

43. Can you hand me _____? I just need to write down a telephone number.

- A some paper
- B a slice of paper
- C papers
- D a paper
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

44. Have you seen my _____?

- A big, German, blue grammar book
- B German, blue, grammar big book
- C big, blue, German grammar book
- D blue, big, German grammar book
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

45. The trip _____ better.

- A will be brilliant if the weather was
- B would have been brilliant if the weather has been
- C would have been brilliant if the weather had been
- D is brilliant if the weather will have been
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

46. (On a highway sign): Work _____ by the end of the month. Sorry for any delays!

- A will be finish
- B will have be finished
- C will have been finishing
- D will have been finished
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

47. I'm going to the hairdresser to _____.

- A get my hair cut
- B get my hair cutted
- C had my hair cut

- D cut my hair
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

48. Turn the following into an indirect question. When does he arrive?

- A Do you know when does he arrive?
- B Do you know when he arrives?
- C Do you know when he arrive?
- D Do you know when he does arrive?
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

49. At 2 p.m. this afternoon, I _____ a speech at the conference, so I won't be able to call you until after it's finished.

- A will be giving
- B will have given
- C give
- D will have been given
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

50. I often make mistakes with grammar, but my classmate John is very good _____ it.

- A of
- B for
- C at
- D with
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

51. _____, she locked the door and walked to her car.

- A Before to leave the house,
- B Having left the house,
- C To leave the house,
- D Leaving the house,
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

52. That country is separated from _____ .

- A the America by the Pacific Ocean
- B the America by Pacific Ocean
- C America by Pacific Ocean
- D America by the Pacific Ocean
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

53. Which is the most 'natural' construction? When the police stopped his car, _____ a valid driving licence.

- A not only drunk, but also he didn't have
- B not only was he drunk, but he also did not have
- C not only he was drunk, but he also didn't have
- D he is drunk and not only did he have
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

54. Tom is not going to come to the party tonight because I forgot to invite him, but he _____ .

- A will be coming if I had remembered to ask him.
- B will come if I had remembered to ask him.
- C would be coming if I had remembered to ask him.
- D would have come if I remembered to ask him.
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

55. The school demands that every student _____ in the correct school uniform.

- A is dressing
- B had been dressed
- C be dressed
- D is dress
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

56. She can speak English very well, _____?

- A doesn't she
- B can't she
- C is she
- D does she
- E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

57. Turn this into reported speech: 'I really wish I had got that job.' > She said she really _____ that job.

- A wish she had got

- B** had wished she had got
- C** wished she had got
- D** had wished she got
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

58. It doesn't matter _____ you are rich or poor, you should never steal from anyone.

- A** whether
- B** although
- C** unless
- D** meanwhile
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

59. Which of the following is a complete sentence?

- A** John isn't enjoying his new job, he doesn't really like the boss.
- B** John isn't enjoying his new job. Doesn't really like the boss.
- C** John isn't enjoying his new job he doesn't really like the boss
- D** John isn't enjoying his new job; he doesn't really like the boss.
- E** [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

60. He had a little spare time, so he _____.

- A** stopped smoking
- B** stop smoking
- C** stopped to smoke
- D** was stopping smoke

E [I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER]

Answers:

Answer	Points for a correct answer	Points I scored	What did this question test?
1. B	5		First person present simple positive
2. A	5		Third person present simple positive
3. A	5		First person present simple negative
4. B	5		First person present simple negative
5. A	5		First person present simple question
6. B	5		Third person present simple question
7. C	5		Past tense positive regular
8. A	5		Past tense negative regular
9. A	5		Past tense question regular
10. C	5		Irregular past tense verbs
11. C	6		First person present continuous positive
12. A	6		Third person present continuous positive
13. B	6		First person present continuous negative
14. C	6		Third person present continuous negative
15. A	6		First person present continuous question
16. D	6		Third person present continuous question
17. D	6		Comparatives
18. A	6		Comparatives
19. B	6		Prepositions of place

20. C	6		Irregular participle verbs
21. A	7		Articles
22. C	7		Present perfect tense
23. A	7		Quantifiers + countable / uncountable nouns
24. C	7		Superlatives
25. A	7		The future simple
26. B	7		Prepositions of time
27. D	7		Countable and uncountable nouns
28. B	7		Conditional sentences
29. C	7		Passive voice
30. A	7		Stative and dynamic verbs
31. A	8		Reported speech
32. C	8		Present perfect continuous
33. D	8		Articles
34. C	8		Relative clauses
35. D	8		Past perfect tense
36. A	8		Future perfect tense
37. D	8		Prepositions of place
38. B	8		Second conditional
39. A	8		Modal verbs
40. A	8		So and such
41. C	9		Past perfect continuous
42. D	9		Future perfect continuous
43. A	9		Countable and uncountable nouns
44. C	9		Adjective order
45. C	9		Third conditional
46. D	9		The passive
47. A	9		The causative

48. B	9		Direct and indirect questions
49. A	9		Other ways of talking about the future
50. C	9		Verbs and dependent prepositions
51. D	10		Participle clauses
52. D	10		Articles (advanced)
53. B	10		Inversion
54. C	10		Mixed conditionals
55. C	10		The subjunctive
56. B	10		Tag questions
57. C	10		Reported speech (advanced)
58. A	10		Adverb clauses
59. D	10		Punctuation (sentence fragment)
60. C	10		Gerund and infinitive
TOTAL:	450		

Score conversion:

YOUR SCORE	YOUR LEVEL
0 – 67	Your current English level is A1 (Beginner)
68 - 289	Your current English level is A2 (Pre Intermediate)
290 - 359	Your current English level is B1 (Lower Intermediate)
360 - 404	Your current English level is B2 (Upper Intermediate)
405 - 430	Your current English level is C1 (Low Advanced)
431 – 451	Your current English level is C2 (Advanced)

Present simple

In English grammar, the present simple is used to talk about habits and routines. Here is an example of the present simple in a sentence:

I **work** on weekdays.

The present simple can also be used to talk about something you don't do.

I **don't eat** meat.

The present simple verb can change if you talk about other people.



	Positive +	Negative –
I	work	don't work.
You	work	don't work.
We	work	don't work.
He	works	doesn't work.
She	works	doesn't work.
It	works	doesn't work.
They	work	don't work.

The present simple also changes if you ask questions about other people.

Do	I	work?
Do	you	work?
Do	we	work?
Does	he	work?
Does	she	work?
Does	it	work?
Do	they	work?

For he, she or it, the present simple changes:

I miss	He misses	verb ends in 's'	add +es
I fly	He flies	verbs ends in consonant + 'y'	add +ies
I wash	He washes	verb ends in 'sh'	add +es
I fix	He fixes	verb ends in 'x'	add +es
I buzz	It buzzes	verb ends in 'z'	add +es

Another change that happens with the present simple is with have.

I have a new car.	I don't have a new car.	Do I have a new car?
You have a car.	You don't have a new car.	Do you have a new car?
We have a car.	We don't have a new car.	Do we have a new car?
He has a new car.	He doesn't have a new car.	Does he have a new car?
She has a new car.	She doesn't have a new car.	Does she have a new car?
It has new tyres.	It doesn't have new tyres.	Does it have new tyres?
They have a new car.	They don't have new car.	Do they have a new car?

Complete the present simple exercises below to test your knowledge of the present simple.

Example: I work on weekdays. He **works** on weekdays.

1. We **listen** to the teacher. She _____ the teacher.
2. I **watch** television in the evenings. He _____ television in the evenings.
3. They **like** playing computer games. He _____ playing computer games.
4. They **taste** delicious. It _____ delicious.
5. We **fix** computers for our job. She _____ computers for her job.
6. I **write** to my brother every week. My brother _____ to me every week.
7. I **have** a dog. She _____ a dog.
8. I **don't eat** chocolate. He _____ chocolate.
9. They **do not have** bicycles. She _____ a bicycle.

10. They **don't like** dogs. He _____ dogs.
11. We **don't** eat meat. I _____ meat.
12. She **doesn't** have a computer. You _____ a computer.
13. **Do** you **work** in the city? _____ they _____ in the city?
14. **Do** you **like** him? _____ he _____ her?
15. **Does** he **go** to your school? _____ you _____ to his school?
16. What time **do** you **get up** in the mornings? What time _____ she _____ in the mornings?
17. **Does** he usually **walk** to work? _____ they usually _____ to work?
18. **Do** you **go** to the gym on Friday evenings? _____ he _____ to the gym on Friday evenings?

Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>listens</i> | 10. <i>doesn't like</i> |
| 2. <i>watches</i> | 11. <i>don't eat</i> |
| 3. <i>likes</i> | 12. <i>don't have</i> |
| 4. <i>tastes</i> | 13. <i>Do</i> they <i>work</i> |
| 5. <i>fixes</i> | 14. <i>Does</i> he <i>like</i> |
| 6. <i>writes</i> | 15. <i>Do</i> you <i>go</i> |
| 7. <i>has</i> | 16. <i>Does</i> she <i>get up</i> |
| 8. <i>doesn't eat</i> | 17. <i>Do</i> they usually <i>walk</i> |
| 9. <i>does not have</i> | 18. <i>Does</i> he <i>go</i> |

Present continuous (present progressive)

This is also known as the present progressive

In English grammar, the present continuous is used to talk about something that is happening now or around now. Here are some examples:

- I **am studying** English grammar now.
- They **are visiting** friends at the moment.
- He **is playing** football.

The present continuous can also be used to talk about something you ***are not doing now***.

- I **am not sleeping** right now.
- They **are not working** today. They have the day off.
- She **isn't watching** the TV, she's playing a computer game.

The present continuous verb can change when you talk about other people.

	Positive +	Negative –
I	am working	am not / I'm not working.
You	are working	are not / aren't working.
We	are working	are not / aren't working.
He	is working	is not / isn't working.
She	is working	is not / isn't working.
It	is working	is not / isn't working.
They	are working	are not / aren't working.

The present continuous verb changes when you ask questions.

Am	I	working?
Are	you	working?
Are	we	working?
Is	he	working?
Is	she	working?
Is	it	working?
Are	they	working?

Some verbs cannot be used in the present continuous form.

For example:

I like Coca-Cola 

~~I am liking Coca-Cola~~ 

Click [here](#) for more information about dynamic and stative verbs

Present continuous for future

We can also use the present continuous tense to talk about arrangements we make with other people that are planned and will happen in the future.

For example:

I **am meeting** David next week.

My company **is moving** to a new office next year.

They **are flying** to Thailand tomorrow.

.....

Are you having dinner with Louise tomorrow?

Is your mother visiting you next week?

Are they coming to the party on Saturday?

Complete the present continuous exercises below to test your knowledge of the present continuous.

A. Present continuous exercises – use the correct form of the present continuous to complete the sentences and question below.

Example: Right now I _____ (take) a grammar test.

Right now I **am taking** a grammar test.

1. John _____ (watch) television in the lounge.
2. It is a national holiday so I _____ (not work) today.
3. What is that noise? Someone _____ (sing) really badly!
4. I'll call you back, I _____ (eat) dinner at the moment.
5. _____ they still _____ (sleep)? I can call again later.

B. Present continuous exercises – use the correct form of the present continuous OR present simple to complete the sentences and questions below.

Tip: When you complete these present continuous exercises remember to watch out for static verbs (they do not take the continuous form!)

6. He isn't here, he _____ (visit) his sister in France.
7. This is a lovely meal – it _____ (taste) delicious.
8. These flowers _____ (smell) wonderful!
9. I _____ (meet) my sister for lunch every Tuesday.
10. _____ you _____ (meet) Susan later?
11. He normally tells the truth but this time I _____ (not believe) him.
12. I _____ (read) a book about New Zealand at the moment – it looks like such a beautiful country.
13. What are you doing? I _____ (check) my emails.
14. I'm sorry, I _____ (not know) the answer to that question.
15. _____ you _____ (play) tennis very often?

Answers

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. <i>is watching</i> | 6. <i>is visiting</i> | 12. <i>am reading</i> |
| 2. <i>am not working</i> | 7. <i>tastes</i> | 13. <i>am checking</i> |
| 3. <i>is singing</i> | 8. <i>smell</i> | 14. <i>don't know</i> |
| 4. <i>am eating</i> | 9. <i>meet</i> | 15. <i>Do</i> you <i>play</i> |
| 5. <i>Are</i> they still
<i>sleeping</i> | 10. <i>Are</i> you <i>meeting</i> | |
| | 11. <i>don't believe</i> | |

Past simple

In English grammar, the past simple is used to talk about finished events or actions in the past.

Here are some example sentences including regular past simple verbs:

A. I **worked** last Monday.

B. They **studied** for an English test last week.

C. She **smiled** when she saw him.

The past simple can also be used to talk about something you did not do.

A. I **didn't work** last weekend.

B. He **didn't do** his homework.

C. You **didn't tell** me!

The past simple verb doesn't change when you talk about other people.

	Positive +	Negative –
I	worked	didn't work.
You	worked	didn't work.
We	worked	didn't work.
He	worked	didn't work.
She	worked	didn't work.
It	worked	didn't work.
They	worked	didn't work.

The past simple verb doesn't change when you ask questions.

Did	I	work?
Did	you	work?
Did	we	work?
Did	he	work?
Did	she	work?
Did	it	work?
Did	they	work?

To make the past simple tense form of regular verbs, we add +ed .

Present	Past
I work	I worked
He works	He worked

However, pronunciation of regular past tense tense verbs can change.

For example, 'He worked' *sounds* like 'He workt'

Base verb	Sounds like /t/	Sounds like /d/	sounds like /id/
Work	Worked		

Look	Looked		
Talk	Talked		
Like	Liked		
Watch	Watched		
Laugh	Laughed		
Wish	Wished		
Listen		Listened	
Open		Opened	
Learn		Learned	
Change		Changed	
Climb		Climbed	
Try		Tried	
Paint			Painted
Want			Wanted
End			Ended
Decide			Decided

Present perfect continuous

Present perfect continuous (also known as the present perfect progressive)

Present perfect tenses are used to talk about situations that connect the past to now.

Present perfect continuous is formed using:

have / has + been + [verb] + ing

For example:

I have been running.

Have you been running?

He has been studying?

Has he been studying?

Do you know when to use present perfect simple and when to use present perfect continuous?

Read the information that follows to check your ideas.....

When to use present perfect continuous instead of present perfect simple

1. Using present perfect continuous to focus on a recent but unfinished activity

Look at these examples.

I have been reading that book you gave me. (present perfect continuous)

I have read the book you gave me. (present perfect simple)



In the present perfect continuous sentence, the person is focussing on the recent action of reading. Using present perfect continuous does not tell us that the reading is actually finished – the person wants to emphasise their recent activities.

In the present perfect simple sentence, the person is focussing on the recently completed activity. Using present perfect tells us that the reading is finished with a present result (nothing left to read in the book).

2. Using present perfect continuous to focus on the duration of a recent activity (how long) instead of quantity (how much)

Compare these two sentences.

I **have been reading** the book you gave me *all afternoon*. (present perfect continuous)

I **have read** *four chapters* of the book you gave me. (present perfect simple)

In the present perfect continuous sentence, the person is focussing on the recent action of reading and the time they have spent doing it, using present perfect continuous does not tell us that the reading is actually finished, the person wants to emphasise their recent activities and the length of time spent doing it.

In the present perfect simple sentence, the person is focussing on the recently completed activity and quantity completed. Using present perfect tells us that they have finished four chapters of their book.

BUT some verbs in this situation could be used in both forms to talk about duration.

For example: I **have studied** English *for 4 years* / I **have been studying** English *for four years*.

3. Using present perfect continuous where a recent activity is more temporary

Compare these two sentences.

I usually work in Auckland, but for the last month I **have been working** in Wellington. (present perfect continuous)

I **have worked** for the same company since I left school. (present perfect simple)

In the present perfect continuous sentence, the person is focussing on the recent action of working in Wellington, but use of present perfect continuous there instead of present perfect simple in the second sentence indicates that the work situation is more temporary.

Past continuous tense

The past continuous is also known as the past progressive tense.

Example:

- He **was washing** his hands when the phone rang.
- We **were singing** and they **were dancing** all night.

Past continuous form:

was / were + [verb -to] + ing

Uses of past continuous:

1. To talk about an activity in progress at a particular time in the past
2. To talk about two actions happening at the same time in the past
3. To talk about a longer activity that was interrupted by a shorter activity
4. To give a background to an event

Past continuous use #1:

To talk about an activity in progress at a particular time in the past

1. This time last week, I **was relaxing** on the beach.

The particular time is 'this time last week', and we are referring to an activity (relaxing).

Past continuous use #2:

To talk about two actions happening at the same time in the past

1. Last night I **was cooking** dinner while my friends **were watching** television.

Using *was cooking* and *were watching* tells the listener that both actions were happening at the same time.

Past continuous use #3:

To talk about a longer activity that was interrupted by a shorter activity

1. I **was reading** a book when the doorbell *rang*.

The longer activity = '**was reading** a book'

The interruption or shorter activity = 'the doorbell *rang*'

We would not say:

I was reading a book when the doorbell ~~was ringing~~.

This would mean that the two actions were happening together over the same length of time.

Past continuous use #4:

To give a background to an event

- It was a quiet night. The moon **was shining** and the wind **was blowing** gently.

In this example, you are simply describing the background of what was happening that night.

Present perfect simple

Present perfect simple tense examples:

I **have cleaned** my shoes.

He **has gone** to America.

I **have travelled** through Asia, but I **haven't been** to Africa.

Uses of the present perfect simple:

1. To talk about something completed some time in the (recent) past that has an effect now
2. To talk about an experience we have had in our lives.



Present perfect simple form:

have / has + [3rd form of the verb / past participle]

Present perfect simple use #1:

We can use present perfect simple to talk about something completed in the past that has an effect now.

- I **have cleaned** my shoes.

This tells us that:

- a) the speaker cleaned his/her shoes in the past
- b) that there is a present effect of this – probably that they are now clean.

- I **haven't finished** my homework!

- a) the speaker did not do their homework in the past
- b) that there is a present effect of this – that they are not prepared for class.

NOTE: you cannot use present perfect simple with a specific time in the past – you have to use past simple.

e.g. I *didn't finish* my homework **last night**. NOT ~~I haven't finished my homework last night.~~

Present perfect simple use #2:

We can use present perfect simple to talk about an experience we have had in our lives.

“**Have** you *ever visited* New Zealand?”

“No, I **haven't**” been there *yet*. I **have been** to Australia though!

“I **have eaten** tofu but I **have never eaten** crocodile meat”

NOTE:

American English does not use this form of the present perfect. In American English, the past simple is used instead.

“Have you ever visited New Zealand?” (British English)

“Did you ever visit New Zealand?” (American English)

‘Ever’, ‘never’, ‘yet’ with present perfect simple

Have you ever.....?

Used for *questions* about experience up to now.

Example:

- **Have** you *ever* **taken** an over night train?
- **Has** he *ever* **met** your wife?

Have you..... yet?

Used for *questions* and *negative sentences* about experience up to now.

- **Have** you **seen** that new film *yet*?
- I **haven't asked** him *yet*.

NOT: ~~Have you ever visited New York yet.~~

Never

Used for *negative sentences* about experience up to now.

I **have** *never* **climbed** a mountain.

I **have** *never* **spoken** to her.

NOT: I have ~~never drunk champagne yet.~~

Future simple tense (will and be going to)

The future simple tense has two forms in English – ‘will’ and ‘(be) going to’.

When you use the future simple tense to talk about the future, using ‘will’ or ‘(be) going to’ can alter the meaning of what you are saying.

Read the information below to see what the differences are and when to use which form of the future simple tense.



Future simple tense – differences between ‘will’ and ‘(be) going to’

will: will + (base form of the verb)

(be) going to: be (am, are is) + going to + (base form of the verb)

Will

1. To talk about a future ‘fact’.

*The population of New Zealand **will be** 6 million by 20**.*

2. To talk about something we have just decided to do (had no plan – decision made at the time of speaking).

*Person A: “I feel really ill.” Person B: Do you? I’**ll drive** you home.*

3. To make a promise.

*I **will love** you forever.*

(Be) going to

1. When we have evidence that something will happen (we can see something or know something that gives us evidence).

*You've eaten so many chocolates! You **are going to be** sick!*

2. To talk about something we will do in the future and have already planned

*I'm **going to have** a holiday next week.*

Future simple tense – will – more examples

Use #1: To talk about a future 'fact'

'The sun **will rise** at 6.10 a.m. tomorrow.'

Using 'will' means that this is fact.

Remember that a 'fact' can be subjective.

For example:

'My team **will win** the World Cup' is a 'fact' for the speaker, but not necessarily for the listener.

Use #2

A: "I have a headache!"

B: "Really? I **will (I'll) get** you a tablet"

Speaker B has made a decision at the same time as speaking, so uses will.

Use #3

To make a promise (about something you will definitely do in the future).

I **will call** you as soon as I arrive.

I **will remember** and follow your advice!

Future simple tense – (be) going to – more examples

Use #1: When we have evidence (we can see something or know something) that something will happen in the future

Look at those clouds! It **is going to** rain!

We can say 'going to' because we have evidence – we can see the clouds.

Use #2: To talk about something we will do in the future and have already planned.

'I'm **going to have** my hair cut tomorrow – I booked the appointment last week'

We say 'going to' because this must have been decided last week when the appointment was booked.

Compare:

A: I'm **going to see** that new film at the cinema today with John. (*speaker is talking about something they will do in the future and have already planned*)

B: But John can't go – he asked me to tell you that he's not feeling well.

A: Oh, OK. I'll **go** to the library instead then. (*speaker is talking about something they have just decided to do (they had no plan – the decision was made at the time of speaking)*).

Now try these exercises!

Example: He _____ (resign) today as he accepted a new job offer last week.

He *is going to resign* today as he accepted a new job offer last week.

1. “Why don’t you come to my house this evening?”. “Oh, okay. I _____ (bring) some pizza.”
2. Look at that driver! He’s on the wrong side of the road and he’s travelling too fast. I’m sure he _____ (crash)!
3. By 2014, the global population _____ (be) nearly 7 billion.
4. A: we need some more milk. B: I know. I _____ (get) some later – it’s on my shopping list.
5. He _____ (win) the race easily. Look, he’s so far ahead of the others!
6. I promise I _____ (send) you an email at least once a week while I’m away!
7. I _____ (exercise) more regularly from now on. I joined the local gym yesterday.
8. Future generations _____ (live) longer than people do now.
9. I didn’t know he needed a lift. I _____ (take) him home if you like.
10. I _____ (have) a check up at the dentist tomorrow – I booked the appointment last week.

Answers

1. *will bring*
2. *is going to crash*
3. *will be*
4. *am going to get*
5. *is going to win*
6. *will send*
7. *am going to exercise*
8. *will live*
9. *will take*
10. *am going to have*

Past perfect simple and continuous

Past perfect simple and continuous are used to talk about an 'earlier' past when you are also talking about another (more recent) past situation.

In general terms, while both past perfect simple and continuous actions are finished, past perfect simple emphasises the 'completion' of the action and past perfect continuous emphasises the 'length' of that completed action.

Term	The past perfect simple
Example	When I <i>arrived</i> at the office, my boss had already gone home.
Form	had + [3rd form]

Uses	1. To talk about an action that happened at some point before another action in the past.
------	---

Example:

I saw John at the conference yesterday. It was not the first time – I **had met** him before.

2007: First time you met John

Yesterday: You saw John again

NOW: You are talking about the two times in the past when you met John.

Term	The past perfect continuous
Example	It was clear she had been crying when I <i>saw</i> her.
Form	had + been + [3rd form] + ing
Uses	1. To talk about a longer action that continued up until (or finished shortly before) another action in the past.

Example:

He **had been driving** for 6 hours without a break before he crashed the car.

4pm to 10pm: He was driving and didn't take a break

10.01 pm: He crashed the car

NOW: You are talking about a longer action in the past (6 hours of driving without a break) that happened before another past action (the car crash).

Past perfect simple and continuous differences

Past perfect simple	Past perfect continuous
To emphasise longer lasting or permanent situations. <i>The castle had stood for 500 years before the storm destroyed it.</i> (though continuous could be used here without any real difference in meaning)	To talk about more temporary past actions before another past event. <i>His legs were tired because he had been standing for hours.</i> (though continuous could be used here without any real difference in meaning)
To emphasise the completion of an action before another action in the past. <i>He had studied the chapter his teacher told him to, so he decided to take a break.</i> (indicates the chapter was finished)	To emphasise the duration of the action before another action in the past. <i>He had been studying the chapter all day, so decided to take a break.</i> (indicates he stopped studying because he had studied for a long time that day – doesn't confirm that he finished the chapter, we just know that he finished the action of studying)

Remember that some verbs are not used in the continuous form! e.g. stative verbs such as:

1. he had believed NOT ~~he had been believing~~
2. it had tasted NOT ~~it had been tasting~~
3. she had belonged NOT ~~she had been belonging~~.... etc

Past perfect exercises

Complete the past perfect simple and continuous exercises below to test your knowledge of the past perfect simple and continuous.

Example: He _____ (work) for 8 hours without a break before his boss arrived.

He **had been working** for 8 hours without a break before his boss arrived.

1. By the time I got to the party John _____ (left).

[click here to see the answer](#)

had left

2. I couldn't wait any longer because I _____ (already / arranged) to meet Debbie in the city.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had already arranged

3. He _____ (completed) the task by the time he went home.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had completed

4. They _____ (paint) all morning before they ran out of paint and went to buy more.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had been painting

5. He _____ (not finish) work when I called him at 7pm.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had not finished

6. She _____ (run) for over an hour so she was very hot and sweaty.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had been running

7. They _____ (date) for several years before they got engaged.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had been dating

8. She _____ (watch) the movie before but wanted to see it again.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had watched

9. He _____ (studied) all week so decided to take some time off.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had been studying

10. I _____ (not eat) all day so I was so hungry when we arrived at the restaurant.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had not eaten

11. I _____ (not see) Jake for 10 years when I met him unexpectedly at the conference.

[click here to see the answer](#)

had not seen

12. _____ you _____ (know) Jenny long before you went on holiday together?

[click here to see the answer](#)

Had you known

Countable and uncountable nouns

The English language has different rules about **countable** and **uncountable** nouns than some other languages. Basic rules about countable and uncountable nouns are –

1. A **countable** noun can be counted (e.g. one apple, two apples).

2. An **uncountable** noun cannot be counted (e.g. sugar – it's hard to 'count' the number of small sugar grains).

Abstract nouns (things you cannot can't feel, touch, see, hear, or taste) are *usually* uncountable too. For example: knowledge, leisure.

Here are some examples of countable and uncountable nouns.

There are more examples of uncountable and uncountable nouns in the picture too.

Countable nouns:

car, table, pencil, computer

Uncountable nouns:

water, bread, milk, information, education

When you learn new words in English, it is important to know whether the nouns you are learning are countable or uncountable nouns because the words and the grammar you use in sentences are different.

Remember that the rules in English might be different to the rules about countable and uncountable nouns in your own language!

Countable and uncountable nouns – 'a' or 'an' and making plurals

1. Use **a** or **an** before a **single countable noun**.

Single countable noun examples:

1. **a** car

2. **an** apple

2. **Don't** use **a** or **an** before an uncountable noun

Uncountable noun examples:

- water (not ~~a water~~),
- information (not ~~an information~~)

3. Add **+s** or **+es** after **more than one countable noun** (plural countable nouns).

Plural countable noun examples:

- two cars
- five potatoes

Remember though that some nouns are irregular – you don't add 's' or 'es' when you make them plural and you just need to learn them! e.g. child / children, man / men, tooth / teeth etc.

4. **Don't** add **+s** or **+es** after an uncountable noun (they have no plural)

Uncountable noun examples:

1. milk (not ~~milks~~)
2. leisure (not ~~leisures~~)

Countable and uncountable nouns – 'some' and 'no'

1. Use **some** when talking about **more than one countable noun** and with **uncountable nouns** in **positive sentences**.

For example:

- There are **some** cars parked on the street. (*there is more than one car on the street*)
- There is **some** milk in the fridge. (*there is milk in the fridge*)

Also note the differences in grammar. Remember uncountable nouns have no plural form so in the example above 'milk' takes the 'is' form of the verb 'to be'.

There **are some** cars. (NOT ~~There is some cars~~ or ~~There are some car~~)

There **is some** milk. (NOT ~~There are some milk~~ or ~~There is some milks~~)

2. The opposite of '**some**' is '**none**'. You can use '**no**' in a 'positive' sentence structure to say that something is not present.

For example:

A There are **no** cars parked on the street. (*there zero cars on the street*)

B There is **no** milk in the fridge. (*milk is not in the fridge*)

Also note the differences in grammar. Remember uncountable nouns have no plural form so in the example above 'milk' takes the 'is' form of the verb 'to be'.

There **are no** cars. (NOT ~~There is no cars~~ or ~~There are no car~~)

There **is no** milk. (NOT ~~There are no milk~~ or ~~There is no milks~~)

Countable and uncountable nouns rule – 'any'

Use **any** when talking about **more than one countable noun** and with **uncountable nouns** in **negative sentences** and in **questions**.

1. There aren't **any** books about that topic at the library.
2. Are there **any** books about that topic at the library?
3. There isn't **any** information about that topic at the library.
4. Is there **any** information about that topic at the library?

Also note the differences in grammar. Remember uncountable nouns have no plural form so in the example above 'information' takes the 'is' form of the verb 'to be'.

There **aren't any** books. (NOT ~~There aren't some books~~ or ~~There isn't no books~~)

Are there **any** books? (NOT ~~Is there some books?~~ or ~~Are there any book?~~)

There **isn't any** information. (NOT ~~There isn't no information~~ or ~~There aren't any information~~)

Is there **any** information? (NOT ~~Is there some informations?~~ or ~~Are there any information?~~)

Countable and uncountable nouns rule – 'many' and 'much'

Use **many** when talking about **more than one countable noun** in **negative sentences** and in **questions**.

Use **much** when talking about **uncountable nouns** in **negative sentences** and in **questions**.

Much and **many** follow the same rules as 'any' but the meaning is different.

Can you see the difference? Look at the examples below.

1. Countable nouns – 'any' and 'many'

- There aren't **any** books about that topic at the library. (*there are zero books on the topic*)
- There aren't **many** books about that topic at the library. (*there are a small number of books on the topic*)
- Are there **any** books about that topic at the library? (*the speaker wants to know if the library has books on the topic*)
- Are there **many** books about that topic at the library? (*the speaker wants to know the quantity of books on the topic at the library*)

2. Uncountable nouns – 'any' and 'much'

- A. There isn't **any** information about that topic at the library. (*there is zero information on the topic*)
- B. There isn't **much** information about that topic at the library. (*there is a small amount of information on the topic*)

1. Is there **any** information about that topic at the library? (*the speaker wants to know if the library has information on the topic*)
2. Is there **much** information about that topic at the library? (*the speaker wants to know the quantity of information on the topic*)

Also note the differences in grammar. Remember uncountable nouns have no plural form so in the example above 'information' takes the 'is' form of the verb 'to be'.

There **aren't many** books. (NOT ~~There aren't much books~~ or ~~There isn't many books~~)

Are there **many** books? (NOT ~~Is there many books?~~ or ~~Are there much books?~~)

There **isn't much** information. (NOT ~~There isn't many information~~ or ~~There aren't much information~~)

Is there **much** information? (NOT ~~Is there many information?~~ or ~~Is there much informations?~~)

Countable and uncountable nouns – a lot of (lots of), too many, too much

A lot of (lots of), too many and **too much** can be used with countable and uncountable nouns to talk about quantity (bigger amounts).

Here are some rules and information about when to use them and the differences in meaning.

1. Use **a lot of (lots of)** and **too many** when talking about **plural countable nouns**. Be careful as the meanings are different!

Compare these examples:

1. There were **some** people at the party. (*There was more than one person at the party*)
2. There were **a lot of** people at the party. (*There were a large number of people at the party*)

3. There were **lots of** people at the party. (*There were a large number of people at the party*)

Note: **Too many** describes the quantity in a **negative** way.

- There were **too many** people at the party (negative – *the speaker thinks the party was so crowded they didn't enjoy it*)

2. Use **a lot of (lots of)** and **too much** when talking about **uncountable nouns**. Be careful as the meanings are different!

Compare these examples:

- The manager gave his staff **some** information to read before the meeting. (*The staff had something to read*)
- The manager gave his staff **a lot of** information to read before the meeting. (*The staff had a large amount of information to read*)
- The manager gave his staff **lots of** information to read before the meeting. (*The staff had a large amount of information to read*)

Note: **Too much** describes the quantity in a **negative** way.

1. The manager gave his staff **too much** information to read before the meeting. (negative – *the speaker thinks the boss was treating his staff unfairly*)

Countable and uncountable nouns – (a) few, (a) little

Few, a few, little, and a little can be used with countable and uncountable nouns to talk about quantity (smaller amounts).

Here are some rules and information about when to use them and the differences in meaning.

1. Use **few** or **a few** when talking about **plural countable nouns**.

Examples:

1. There were **a few** people waiting in the queue. (*There were a small number of people in the queue*)
2. There were **few** people waiting in the queue. (*There were a very small number of people*)

Note: **Few** describes the quantity in a **negative** way.

- He has **a few** friends (neutral)
- He has **few** friends (negative – *the speaker probably thinks the person doesn't have enough friends*)

2. Use **little or a little** when talking about **uncountable nouns**.

Examples:

I have **a little** money left. (*I have a small amount of money*)

I have **little** money left. (*My money is almost all gone*)

Examples:

Note: **Little** describes the quantity in a **negative** way.

- He has **a little** understanding of the subject. (neutral)
- He has **little** understanding of the subject. (negative – *the speaker thinks the person doesn't have enough knowledge about the subject*)

Complete the countable and uncountable noun exercises below to test your knowledge of countable and uncountable nouns.

Are the following nouns usually countable or uncountable?

1. Computer
2. Milk
3. Telephone
4. Bread
5. Rice
6. Cup
7. Coffee
8. Friend
9. Pasta
10. Flower
11. Flour
12. Knowledge
13. Education
14. Money
15. Coin
16. Ink
17. Photograph
18. Vehicle

Choose the correct words to complete each of the sentences below.

19. Do you have _____ (many / much) money with you? Could I borrow some please?

20. There isn't _____ (some / any) bread left. I'll get some when I go shopping.

21. I have _____ (some / any) coins in my purse if you need some change.

22. There were _____ (too many / too much) vehicles on the motorway today.

I was stuck in a traffic jam for hours!

23. _____ (a few / a little) of my friends are going to the party on

Saturday. I'm so glad I'll know some people there!

24. There were _____ (too many / a lot of) people at the party – it was

such a great atmosphere I had a brilliant time!

25. I can't help you I'm sorry. I have _____ (few / little) knowledge of that subject.

Answers

1. countable
2. uncountable
3. countable
4. uncountable
5. uncountable
6. countable
7. uncountable
8. countable
9. uncountable
10. countable

- 11. uncountable
 - 12. uncountable
 - 13. uncountable
 - 14. uncountable
 - 15. countable
 - 16. uncountable
 - 17. countable
 - 18. countable
 - 19. much
 - 20. any
 - 21. some
 - 22. too many
 - 23. a few
 - 24. a lot of
 - 25. little
-

Countable and uncountable nouns - more rules



Sometimes nouns can act as both countable and uncountable nouns (often with a slight difference in meaning). This can make learning the rules even more complicated!

For example, **coffee** is generally used as an uncountable noun. However, it is acceptable to say “I’d like two coffees please” because in this case the speaker is thinking about 2 **cups** of coffee.

This rule also applies when thinking of other uncountable liquids and the container they might come in.

For example: “Do you want **a** (bottle of / glass of) **beer**? Beer is uncountable, but the speaker is thinking about the bottle / glass it comes in.

The table below shows usage of the same words as countable and uncountable nouns – note the different forms of the same word.

Countable – There is **a hair** in my soup! (one countable strand of hair)

Uncountable – He doesn’t have **much hair**. (usually uncountable – all the hair on a person’s head)

.....

Countable – Do you often read **a paper**? (the speak means a newspaper – newspapers are countable)

Uncountable – Do you have **some paper** I can use? (paper is uncountable, BUT pieces / sheets of paper are countable)

.....

Countable – Did you leave **a light** on? (a light in the building that the person is talking about)

Uncountable – He couldn't sleep because of **the light** coming through the curtains. (the speaker means 'sunlight' – uncountable noun)

.....

Countable – On the farm they have **a few chickens**. (the birds – they are countable)

Uncountable – I love **chicken** – it's my favourite meat! (the meat – uncountable. The same applies to lambs (animals) lamb (the meat) / ducks (the birds) duck (the meat) etc.

.....

Countable – They had **a terrible time** last week! (the speaker is talking about one specific situation in the past)

Uncountable – Do you have **time** to help me? ('time' in general – uncountable noun)

Direct and indirect questions

When asking for information in English you can use direct and indirect questions. There are differences in sentence structure and levels of politeness and formality.

In English, a basic question can be formed using either an auxiliary verb or a question word.

For example:

Does he like swimming? (Auxiliary verb)

Where is the library? (Question word)

These are both examples of ***direct questions***.

However, in English there are situations where it can be considered impolite to ask a direct question so we might ask an ***indirect question***.

Whether we use direct and indirect questions depends on the situation, who we are talking to and what we are talking about. We tend to use direct questions with people we know well, in more informal situations and / or when the topic is not 'sensitive'. Indirect questions are often used when talking to someone we don't know well, in formal / professional situations, and / or where the topic might be 'sensitive'.

Indirect questions are a little more formal and polite. We use them when talking to a person we don't know very well, or in professional situations – See more at:

<http://www.espressoenglish.net/direct-and-indirect-questions-in-english/#sthash.umRljxmT.dpuf>

Compare the following direct and indirect questions:

When can we discuss this problem? – *Direct* question which in some cases is not very polite; e.g. when asking your boss to discuss a payment problem.

Would it be possible to discuss this problem soon? – *Indirect* question which is considered more polite; e.g. a politer way of stating that there is a problem you want to talk about.

Here are some ways of asking indirect questions. NOTE: some indirect questions are technically not questions at all – they are simply a way to encourage a response from the person we are talking too.

<i>Direct question</i>	<i>Indirect question</i>
How old are you?	Would you mind telling me how old you are?
Where's the bank?	Could you tell me where the bank is?
Why are they late?	I wonder why they are late?
What time is it?	Do you have any idea what time it is?
Help me!	Is there any chance you could help me?
Who's that?	Do you happen to know who that is?

Grammar differences in direct and indirect questions

There are three important grammatical changes between direct and indirect sentences.

1. When we start using an indirect question form (such as those on the right hand side of the table above), the word order is the same as a positive statement, not a question.

<i>Direct question</i>	<i>Indirect question</i>
What is his name?	Do you know what his name is? NOT Do you know what is his name?

What are you doing?	Can you tell me what you are doing?NOT Can you tell me what are you doing?
---------------------	---

2. If the direct question uses the auxiliary verb 'do' (i.e. does, did, do), it is left out of the indirect question.

Direct question	Indirect question
Where does she live?	Do you know where she lives?NOT Do you know where she does live?
Who did she work for?	Can you tell me who she worked for?NOT Can you tell me who she did work for?

3. If the direct question can be answered with 'Yes' or 'No', the indirect question needs 'if' or 'whether'.

Direct question	Indirect question
Is she coming back soon?	Do you know if she is coming back soon?
Have you seen this man before?	Can you tell me whether you have seen this man before?

Gerunds and infinitives

Gerunds and infinitives and when to use each form can be confusing.

When there are two main verbs in a sentence, the second verb must be either a gerund (+ing) or an infinitive form of the verb. There are some rules to help you decide when to use gerunds and infinitives.

Gerunds and infinitives rule #1: Use the gerund as the subject

If a sentence uses a verb as the *subject* of a sentence, it is most common to use a gerund.

For example:

Swimming is good for your health. (not To swim is good for your health.)

Learning is important. (not To learn is important.)

Gerunds and infinitives rule #2: Decided by the main verb

If a sentence uses a verb as the *object* of a sentence, the decision of whether to use a gerund or an infinitive is made by the main verb in the sentence..

For example:

The thief admitted stealing the money. (the main verb ADMIT is followed by a gerund)

He can't afford to buy a new car. (the main verb AFFORD is followed by the infinitive).

Unfortunately, there are no reliable rules for deciding whether a main verb should be followed by gerunds and infinitives. It is simply something that needs to be learned. You can use the table below to help.

Gerunds and infinitives rule #3: Either can be used as the object and have the same meaning

Sometimes the object of a sentence can be either a gerund or an infinitive with no difference in the meaning (see the table below for a more complete list of these words)

For example:

It started raining **OR** It started to rain

I began playing the guitar last year **OR** I began to play the guitar last year

Gerunds and infinitives rule #4: Either can be used as the object but they have a different meaning

Sometimes using gerunds and infinitives as the object of a sentence can make a difference to the meaning.

For example, look at the use of gerunds and infinitives below, we have these two possible meanings:

Gerund	Stop reading that magazine and get back to work!	This means that you should not read
Infinitive	Stop to read the instructions before you break it!	This means you should start reading

Gerunds and infinitives rule #5: use the gerund after prepositions

If there is a preposition after the main verb, then you always use a preposition.

For example:

I'm tired of waiting for you every day!

Many people surf the internet without having a website of their own.

Gerunds and infinitives – general rules

Look at the table below to learn more about general rules when using gerunds and infinitives.

<i>Verbs followed by gerund</i>	<i>Verbs followed by infinitive</i>	<i>Verbs that can be followed by either gerund or infinitive <u>with no real difference</u></i>	<i>Verbs that can be followed by either gerund or infinitive <u>but with a significant difference</u></i>
acknowledge admit adore anticipate appreciate avoid celebrate confess contemplate delay deny describe detest discuss dislike dread endure enjoy fancy finish imagine involve keep justify	afford agree appear arrange ask attempt care choose claim come consent dare decide demand deserve determine elect endeavour expect fail get guarantee help hesitate	begin continue hate like love prefer start	forget remember stop regret

mention	hope		
mind	hurry		
miss	incline		
omit	intend		
postpone	learn		
practise	long		
quit	manage		
recall	mean		
recommend	need		
regret	offer		
report	plan		
resent	prepare		
resume	pretend		
risk	promise		
suggest	refuse		
tolerate	resolve		
understand	say		
	seem		
	tend		
	threaten		
	want		
	wish		

NOTE: The table above is not a complete list (a complete list would be pages and pages long!)

Gerunds and infinitives exercises

Gerunds and infinitives exercises practice A

Complete the gerunds and infinitives exercises by choosing the correct option (a) or (b) to complete each of the sentences.

1. _____ is not just fun, it is also great exercise.

(a) To dance (b) Dancing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

2. I find _____ movies very relaxing.

(a) to watch (b) watching

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

3. I can't afford _____ my car at the moment.

(a) to replace (b) replacing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

4. I am contemplating _____ a new hobby.

(a) to take up (b) taking up

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

5. I demanded _____ the manager so I could make a complaint.

(a) to see (b) seeing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

6. I keep _____ you every time you come back to visit!

(a) to miss (b) missing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

7. He resents _____ so early every day.

(a) to get up (b) getting up

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

8. He came _____ with me yesterday.

(a) to talk (b) talking

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

9. I fail _____ what the problem is.

(a) to see (b) seeing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

10. _____ a book is more interesting than watching a film.

(a) To read (b) Reading

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

11. They acknowledged _____ the letter.

(a) to receive (b) receiving

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

12. She adores _____.

(a) to ski (b) skiing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

13. I chose _____ during the holidays.

(a) to work (b) working

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

14. I hope _____ the opportunity to work with him.

(a) to get (b) getting

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

15. They have delayed _____ a decision until the boss returns.

(a) to make (b) making

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

16. The customer threatened _____ the company for incompetence.

(a) to sue (b) suing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

17. He deserves _____ a holiday; he has been working so hard.

(a) to have (b) having

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

18. The teachers discussed _____ a new course at their last meeting.

(a) to introduce (b) introducing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

19. I recall _____ the issue during a previous meeting.

(a) to discuss (b) discussing

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

Gerunds and infinitives exercises practice B

The verbs in the sentences below can take either a gerund or an infinitive form but the meaning changes.

Complete the gerunds and infinitives exercises below by selecting the correct meaning (a) or (b).

20a. He forgot **posting** the letter.

(a) He had posted the letter, but didn't remember doing it

(b) He didn't post the letter because he didn't remember to do it

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

20b. He forgot **to post** the letter.

(a) He had posted the letter, but didn't remember doing it

(b) He didn't post the letter because he didn't remember to do it

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

21a. He stopped **drinking** coffee.

(a) He paused what he was doing to drink some coffee

(b) He no longer drinks coffee – he gave it up

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

21b. He stopped **to drink** coffee.

(a) He paused what he was doing to drink some coffee

(b) He no longer drinks coffee – he gave it up

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

22a. I regret **to inform** you about this situation.

(a) I have to give bad news in a formal situation

(b) I said something I wish I hadn't

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

22b. I regret **informing** you about this situation.

(a) I have to give bad news in a formal situation

(b) I said something I wish I hadn't

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

23a. I remember **locking** the door.

(a) Action then memory – I locked the door and now remember doing it

(b) Memory then action – I remembered I had to lock the door, then I did it

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

23b. I remembered **to lock** the door.

(a) Action then memory – I locked the door and now remember doing it

(b) Memory then action – I remembered I had to lock the door, then I did it

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

Adjective order

Adjective order is important if you are using more than one adjective before a noun. There is often a specific order in which they must be placed. For example:

A black leather jacket ✓

~~A leather black jacket~~ ✗

Here is a short acronym to help you remember:

OSASCOMP

opinion – size – age – shape – colour – origin – material – purpose

Below you will find an explanation for each letter and some example sentences.

Adjective Order Rule 1: **OSASCOMP** – O for **opinion**

Adjectives that talk about opinions, judgements or attitudes usually come first.

	<i>Opinions, judgements or attitudes</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	jacket.
a	perfect	plate.
an	expensive	bike.

Adjective Order Rule 2: **OSASCOMP** – S for **size**

Adjectives relating to size, length and height come next. For example:

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	jacket.
a	perfect	big	plate.
an	expensive	–	bike.

Adjective Order Rule 3: **OSASCOMP** – A for **age**

Next are any adjectives relating to age

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	bike.

Adjective Order Rule #4: OSASCOMP – S for ***shape***

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	–	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	round	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	–	bike.

Adjective Order Rule #5: OSASCOMP – C for ***colour***

Next are the adjectives that talk about colour.

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	–	black	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	round	white	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	–	red	bike.

Adjective Order Rule #6: OSASCOMP – O for ***origin***

This refers to adjectives that say where the noun is from.

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	–	black	–	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	round	white	Chinese	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	–	red	Italian	bike.

Adjective Order Rule #7: OSASCOMP – M for ***material***

This refers to what the noun is made of.

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	–	black	–	leather	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	round	white	Chinese	porcelain	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	–	red	Italian	–	bike.

Adjective Order Rule #8: OSASCOMP – P for ***purpose***

This refers to what the noun is used for (e.g. wedding ring). They are often nouns used as adjectives.

	<i>Judgements, opinions or attitudes</i>	<i>Size, length, height</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Noun</i>
a	lovely	large	new	–	black	–	leather	–	jacket.
a	perfect	big	old	round	white	Chinese	porcelain	dinner	plate.
an	expensive	–	modern	–	red	Italian	–	sports	bike.

Important notes:

1. The adjectives used in the tables above are examples only. It is uncommon in English to use more than three adjectives in the same sentence to describe a noun.
2. Some adjectives can be found in different positions, but if you follow the OSASCOMP rule you won't be wrong!

Complete the adjective order exercises below to test your knowledge.

Adjective order exercises practice

Complete the adjective order exercises by putting the words into the correct order to make a correctly ordered sentence.

1. red / drives / a / truck / Australian / he / big	
2. these / old / I / replace/ shoes / must / cheap	
3. such / old / a / man / he / is / kind	
4. lovely / is / she / a / wearing / red / dress / new	

5. a / meal / Indian / we / had / delicious	
6. lives / a / lovely / apartment / she / modern / in	
7. garden / beautiful / he / porcelain / has / a / Italian / statue / in / his	
8. dining / an / bought / wooden / antique / he / table	
9. face / my / watch / has / red / a / round / big	
10. wearing / my / I / love / pants / black / comfortable / cotton	

Answers

1. He drives a big, red, Australian truck.
2. I must replace these cheap, old shoes.
3. He is such a kind, old man.
4. She is wearing a lovely, new, red dress.
5. We had a delicious, Indian meal.
6. She lives in a lovely, modern apartment.
7. He has a beautiful, Italian, porcelain statue in his garden.
8. He bought an antique, wooden, dining table.
9. My watch has a big, round, red face.
10. I love wearing my comfortable, black, cotton pants.

Articles (a, an, the and Ø)

Using articles correctly in English can be very difficult as there are a lot of rules to remember. There are three articles in English 'a', 'an', 'the' and sometimes no article Ø is needed.

1. The indefinite article – A or AN

Examples of use of indefinite articles: *Do you have a pen? I need an umbrella.*

2. The definite article – THE

Examples of use of definite articles: *The boy lives at home. Here is the book I borrowed.*

3. The zero article – this is used when no article is used, often shown as Ø in grammar books

Examples of zero articles: I like (Ø) dogs. (Ø) English exercises can be difficult.

Below are the common rules for when to use articles.

Articles – rule #1

We use 'a' or 'an' when there are many of something and you are talking generally about a single one.

Examples:

Do you have a pen I can borrow? (it doesn't matter which pen)

I would like an apple (it doesn't matter which apple)

Articles – rule #2

We use 'the' when there is only one of the thing we are talking. It could be that it is unique, or it could be that there is only one that you could logically be talking about.

Examples:

The sun rises in the east. (it is unique – there is only one sun)

Have you fed the dog? (logically the people speaking must only have one dog)

Who's the girl over there? (we identify the girl so now the speaker and listening know which one)

Articles – rule #3

We use 'an' in front of words that begin a vowel sound, and 'a' in front of words with a consonant sound.

Examples:

- a potato
 - a carrot
 - an egg
 - an apple
 - an hour (the word hour sounds like 'our', so has a vowel sound to start)
 - a university (the word university sounds like 'you-niversity' so has a consonant sound to start).
-

Articles – rule #4

We use 'a' or 'an' the first time we talk about something; we use 'the' for the second, third, fourth etc time we talk about it.

Examples:

She has a dog and a cat. The dog is friendly but I don't like the cat.

Articles – rule #5

With uncountable nouns, we often use no article (Ø).

Examples:

- I like wine (not the wine or a wine)
- I listen to good advice (not the good advice or a good advice)

NOTE: Some nouns can be countable and uncountable.

Example:

- Sleep is important
 - I am tired. I need a good sleep.
-

Articles – rule #6

'The' is used for a lot of expressions regarding the physical environment

Examples:

- They live in the country.
 - They went hiking in the mountains.
 - The problem with Wellington is the wind.
 - I love holidays by the seaside.
-

Articles – rule #7

The is used with superlatives.

Examples:

- The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean in the world.
 - Lake Baikal in Russia is the deepest lake in the world.
 - Elephants are the biggest animals in Africa.
-

Articles – rule #8

‘A’ or ‘an’ can be used when a single member is referred to but actually refers to the whole group.

Examples:

- A doctor must be kind. (meaning all doctors / any doctor)
- A dog can make a very good pet. (meaning all dogs / any dogs)

Articles – rule #9

Sometimes we talk about things in general by using ‘the’ with a countable noun.

Examples:

- A. The panda is an endangered species.
 - B. Email is replacing the telephone as the most common way of communicating.
-

Articles – rule #10

Whether or not we use ‘the’ or Ø (no article) can sometimes depend on whether the speaker is describing a physical building or the purpose of a building.

Examples:

- A. Jane is in Ø hospital for her operation. (No article here because we are referring to the purpose of a hospital – for surgery, health etc)
 - B. Go straight along this street, turn left at the hospital and it's just on the right (now we use the because we are NOT thinking about the purpose of the building, but a specific physical landmark).
 - C. Other examples that follow this rule: Prison, school, church and university – almost any occasion where the name that describes the building also describes the function.
-

Articles – rule #11

The media also has similar rules. When we are referring to 'a means of entertainment' we use no article' when we talk about the actual place or item, we use the.

Examples:

- I'm going to the cinema (we are thinking of the actual place)
 - Cinema is different from television in many ways (we are thinking of the types of media)
 - The clock is on the television. (thinking of the actual tv set)
 - There is too much violence on television. (thinking of the media)
-

Articles – rule #12

We use 'the' with:

- the names of seas (the Pacific, the Atlantic)
 - mountain ranges (the Andes, the Himalayas)
 - a few mountains when the name is translated (Das Matterhorn = The Matterhorn)
 - countries made up of different islands (the West Indies)
-

- countries with state, union or republic (the People's Republic of China, The United States)
 - rivers (the Thames, the Mississippi)
 - deserts (the Sahara, the Gobi)
 - most hotels, cinemas, museums and art galleries (The Ritz, The Tate)
-

Articles – rule #13

We usually use Ø (no article) with:

- continents (Africa, Europe)
 - countries (except countries made up of different islands)
 - lakes (Lake Mead, Lake Placid)
 - towns (Chester, Auckland)
 - streets (Sunnyvale Road, Simmonds Street)
 - most single mountains (Everest, Kilimanjaro)
-

Complete the articles exercises below to test your knowledge.

Articles exercises practice

Complete the articles exercises by choosing the correct option (a), (b), (c) or (d) to complete each of the sentences with 'a', 'an', 'the' or no article 'Ø'.

1. I am going shopping to buy ____ new jacket.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

2. Sue went to ____ China last week.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

3. That is ____ man I was telling you about.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

4. I read ____ brilliant book last week!

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

5. My friend doesn't eat ____ meat.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

6. I have never been to ____ USA.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

7. I went to ____ great Italian restaurant last night.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

8. ____ town I grew up in is in the middle of England.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

9. I don't play ____ football.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

10. Winston Churchill was ____ famous English Prime Minister.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

11. Could you lend me ____ jacket please? It's so cold.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

12. ____ moon looks beautiful tonight; it's so bright!

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

13. Jenny is ____ English.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

14. I'll pick you up in ____ hour.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

15. He is such ____ unique individual!

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

16. I have two dogs. ____ smaller one is three years old

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

17. Mount Cook is ____ highest mountain in New Zealand.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

18. I am cooking ____ chicken and rice for dinner.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

19. It is such ____ ugly ornament!

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

20. We always took holidays by ____ seaside when I was a child.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

21. It is clear that ____ pets are good company for people who live alone.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

22. Susan is going to ____ university next semester.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

23. I feel like going to the cinema – ____ film I most want to see is on at 4pm.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

24. ____ Thames river runs through London.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

25. I like going out to ____ restaurants but I don't like nightclubs.

(a) a (b) an (c) the (d) no article 'Ø'

1. *Correct answer is A.*

2. *Correct answer is D.*

3. *Correct answer is C.*

4. *Correct answer is A.*

5. *Correct answer is D.*

6. *Correct answer is C.*

7. *Correct answer is A.*

8. *Correct answer is C.*

9. *Correct answer is D.*

10. *Correct answer is A.*

11. *Correct answer is A.*

12. *Correct answer is C.*

13. *Correct answer is D.*

14. *Correct answer is B.*

15. *Correct answer is A.*

16. *Correct answer is C.*

17. *Correct answer is C.*

18. *Correct answer is D.*

19. *Correct answer is B.*

20. *Correct answer is C.*

21. *Correct answer is D.*

22. *Correct answer is D.*

23. *Correct answer is C.*

24. *Correct answer is C.*

25. *Correct answer is D.*

Participle clauses

Participle clauses are used in some tenses, but they also have another use – they can combine information into one sentence.

Participle clauses often express **condition**, **reason**, **cause**, **result** or **time**.

For example:

Jim walked past the old school. He got to the shop. > ***Walking past the old school***, Jim got to the shop.

The section ***in bold*** is participle clause.

There are three types of participle clause:

Present participle	<i>Walking</i> past the old school, Jim got to the shop.
Past participle	<i>Founded</i> in 1912, the club has a long history.
Perfect participle	After they <i>had finished</i> their homework, the boys went out to play.

Notes:

1. The participle clause and the main sentence must have either a cause/effect relationship or show a sequential relationship (one thing happened before the other).

Participle clause with a cause/effect relationship: Having studied hard, he passed the exam.

Participle clause with a sequential relationship: Locking the door, John walked to his car.

2. Both the clause and the main sentence normally need to have the same subject

Driving home, Mary thought about what she would cook for dinner (Mary was both driving and thinking about dinner)

Parts of speech

In order to improve your result in the IELTS test, both for speaking and writing, it is important to be aware of the 'parts' of speech that create sentences in English. It is commonly accepted that there are only 9* different parts of speech from which all sentences, phrases or utterances are made.

***Some schools believe that there are only 8 parts of speech, with articles being part of the adjective group.**

The different parts of speech are as follows:

- nouns
- verbs
- adverbs

- adjectives
- articles
- pronouns
- prepositions
- conjunctions
- interjections

Understanding which groups words are in can also help you to break down sentences, making the passive skills (reading and listening) easier.

Below is a table showing the different parts of speech and an example.

Part of speech	Common use	Example
Verb	to describe an action	He sat .
Noun	To describe a thing	He sat on the chair .
Adverb	To describe the verb	He slowly sat on the chair.
Adjective	To describe the noun	He slowly sat on the tall chair.
Pronoun	To talk about who	He slowly sat on the tall chair.
Preposition	To talk about where or when	He slowly sat on the tall chair.
Conjunction	Used to join ideas	He slowly sat on the tall chair but fell off.

Article	Used to give more information about the noun	He slowly sat on the tall chair but fell off.
Interjection	A short exclamation – not a full sentence	Ouch! He hit the floor.

Improving your knowledge of English

It is also useful to keep a vocabulary list and group words together that come from the same parts of speech.

For example:

adjectives – e.g. glamorous

You should try to also learn their antonyms and synonyms to build your vocabulary.

e.g. alluring, attractive (synonyms) – dowdy, plain (antonyms)

and think about their comparatives and superlatives e.g. – (adj) more glamorous (comparative)
the most glamorous (superlative)

nouns – e.g. accommodation

(check spelling and think about articles etc) – uncountable, no 'a' or 'an'

You should try to also learn their synonyms to build your vocabulary.

e.g. place of residence, dwelling, abode (synonyms)

verbs – e.g. drive

(and their past and participle forms);

drove, driven

prepositions – e.g. on

(with examples of their different uses),

e.g. on the sofa, but in an arm chair.

conjunctions – e.g. moreover

(with examples of use and punctuation)

Smoking is expensive; moreover, it is detrimental to health.

Complete the parts of speech exercises below to test your knowledge of the different parts of speech.

What parts of speech are the words in **red**?

1. I prefer writing with a **black** pen.
2. The children were sleeping so their parents **quietly** closed the door.
3. I like most sports, especially basketball **and** tennis.
4. **Woah!** You shouldn't drive so fast!
5. I have **a** dog called 'Genie'.
6. Most people these days have a **computer** at home.
7. David will be here **on** Tuesday.
8. **They** played well but didn't win the match.
9. My uncle **enjoys** all kinds of sports events.

10. **He** had always wanted to travel to Asia.
11. She wanted to get fit **so** she joined a gym.
12. She lives **beside** a lake.
13. It was an **extraordinary** evening.
14. I have **an** umbrella if you need it.
15. They play football so **skillfully**.
16. A sound **education** is very important.
17. He **knows** as much about art.
18. **Wow!** You look amazing!

Answers

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. adjective | 7. preposition | 13. adjective |
| 2. adverb | 8. pronoun | 14. article |
| 3. conjunction | 9. verb | 15. adverb |
| 4. interjection | 10. pronoun | 16. noun |
| 5. article | 11. conjunction | 17. verb |
| 6. noun | 12. preposition | 18. interjection |
-

Simple, compound and complex sentences

When writing in your IELTS test it is essential that you use a range of sentence structures, from simple to complex sentence forms. In order to write good sentences for IELTS means you will need how to form each type of sentence.

Start by looking at these examples:

SIMPLE SENTENCE:

- Smoking can cause cancer.

COMPOUND SENTENCE:

- Smoking can cause cancer, so should be banned.

COMPLEX SENTENCE:

A. Even though smoking can cause cancer, many people continue to buy cigarettes.

Now let's look at each type of sentence in more detail.

Simple sentences

As the name suggests, simple sentences are quite basic in structure. They need only a subject and a verb. Because they are the easiest form of sentence structure, it is important to make sure that your essay does not overly use this form of sentence structure.

Compound sentences

Compound sentences are formed when simple sentences are combined using a linking word (called a 'conjunction' word). There are seven conjunctions that can be used to combine simple sentences:

FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, OR, YET and SO (looking at the first letter of each of these conjunctions, you can spell '**FANBOYS**' – a useful way to help you remember!). In the example sentence used at the beginning of this page, **SO** has been used to combine **Smoking can cause cancer** **SO** **(smoking) should be banned**.

Complex sentences

These are the most important sentences for a good IELTS result – they are more difficult to accurately build, but are essential to make your writing 'academic'. Complex sentences are created from 2 or more phrases joined together with a conjunction, but not the conjunctions used in compound sentences (FANBOYS). Instead, there are considerably more conjunctions that can be used. Here are some examples: even if, so that, unless, even so.

Conditional sentences

This section of our website focuses on essential grammar for IELTS, with tips, hints and exercises that you can use both in the writing and the speaking test.

Conditional sentences are 'if' sentences. There are five types of conditional sentences:

- zero conditional sentences
- first conditional sentences
- second conditional sentences
- third conditional sentences
- mixed conditional sentences

*Mixed conditionals are created from two different conditional forms.

Look at the table that follows for examples of each of the different types of conditional sentences.

The zero conditional	If you heat ice, it melts.
The first conditional	If I learn better English, I will get a better job.
The second conditional	If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house.
The third conditional	If I had studied harder, I would have passed my exam.
Mixed conditionals	If I hadn't broken my leg, I would be skiing right now.

The zero conditional

Structure 1	If + present simple + comma (,) + present simple
Example	If you heat ice, it melts.
Structure 2	Present simple + if + present simple
Example	Ice melts if you heat it.

Use	<p>We use the zero conditional to talk about rules, laws or truths.</p> <p>Using the example above, we know that if you heat ice, it melts; it is a fact that if the first part happens, then the second action will also happen.</p>
-----	---

The first conditional

Structure 1	If + present simple + comma (,) + will + base verb
Example	If I learn better English, I will get a better job.
Structure 2	Will + base verb + if + present simple
Example	I will get a better job if I learn better English.
Use	<p>We use the first conditional to talk about results that are likely; if the first part happens, then the second action will probably / be likely to also happen.</p>

The second conditional

Structure 1	If + past simple + comma (,) + would + base verb
Example	If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house in the country.
Structure 2	Would + base verb + if + past simple
Example	I would buy a big house in the country if I won the lottery.
Use	<p>We use the second conditional to talk about a situation that is either not likely or even impossible; the speaker believes that they probably won't win the lottery.</p>

The third conditional

Structure 1	If + past perfect + comma (,) + would have + past participle
Example	If I had studied harder, I would have passed my exam.
Structure 2	Would have + past participle + if + past perfect
Example	I would have passed my exam if I had studied harder.
Use	We use the third conditional to talk unreal situations, often involving regret. The third conditional talks about a situation that did not happen, but what the result would have been if it had.

Mixed conditionals

Mixed conditional sentences talk about unreal situations, they can talk about the past, present or future. Study the table below to learn how mixed conditional sentences can be put together.

NB: There are many different forms of mixed conditional.

Type 1	If I hadn't broken my leg,	I would be skiing right now.
	Past condition	Present result
Type 2	If John hadn't forgotten to buy tickets,	I would be going to the concert tomorrow night.
	Past condition	Future result
Type 3	If I could use a computer,	I would have got that job yesterday.
	Present condition	Past result

Type 4	If you could speak better English,	you would be going on the business trip to London next week.
	Present condition	Future result

Complete the conditional sentences exercises below to test your knowledge of conditionals.

1st conditional example:

If he _____ (get) the job, he _____ (be) very happy .

If he **gets** the job, he **will be** very happy.

Conditional sentences exercises – zero conditional

Complete the conditional sentences exercises below using the zero conditional form.

1. If you _____ (heat) water to 100 degrees Celsius, it _____ (boil).

2. If I _____ (ask) my dog to sit, he _____ (obey) me.

3. You _____ (need) travel insurance if you _____ (go) on holiday overseas.

4. If people _____ (not exercise), they _____ (become) unfit.

5. I _____ (feel) better if I _____ (eat) well, .

Conditional sentences exercises – first conditional

Complete the conditional sentences exercises below using the first conditional form.

6. If I _____ (find) her phone number, I _____ (send) it to you.

7. He _____ (feel) ill if he _____ (eat) all those sweets!

8. If you _____ (talk) to him, he _____ (understand) your problem.

9. I _____ (visit) you if I _____ (come) to your hometown next year.

10. If she _____ (finish) work late, she _____ (meet) us at the restaurant.

Conditional sentences exercises – second conditional

Complete the conditional sentences exercises below using the second conditional form.

11. If I _____ (know) how to contact him, I _____ (tell) him the news.

12. If he _____ (ask) her to marry him, she _____ (say) 'yes'.

13. He _____ (not make) so many mistakes if he _____ (listen) to instructions.

14. I _____ (buy) a boat if I _____ (have) more money.

15. If he _____ (try) it, he _____ (like) it!

Conditional sentences exercises – third conditional

Complete the conditional sentences exercises below using the third conditional form.

16. If I _____ (see) him last week, I _____ (invite) him.

17. If I _____ (know) you were in trouble, I _____ (help) you.

18. I _____ (never met) you if _____ (not go) to that party!

19. If I _____ (take) my car for a service, it _____ (not break down) last night.

20. She _____ (not gone) there if I _____ (warn) her.

Answers

1. If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it boils.
 2. If I ask my dog to sit, he obeys me.
 3. You need travel insurance if you go on holiday overseas.
 4. If people don't exercise, they become unfit.
 5. I feel better if I eat well.
 6. If I find her phone number, I will send it to you.
 7. He will feel ill if he eats all those sweets!
 8. If you talk to him, he will understand your problem.
 9. I will visit you if I come to your hometown next year.
 10. If she finishes work late, she will meet us at the restaurant.
 11. If I knew how to contact him, I would tell him the news.
 12. If he asked her to marry him, she would say 'yes'.
 13. He would not make so many mistakes if he listened to instructions.
 14. I would buy a boat if I had more money.
 15. If he tried it, he would like it!
 16. If I had seen him last week, I would have invited him.
 17. If I had known you were in trouble, I would have helped you.
 18. I would never have met you if I hadn't gone to that party!
 19. If I had taken my car for a service, it would not have broken down last night.
 20. She wouldn't have gone there if I had warned her.
-

Irregular verbs list

Irregular verbs, as the name suggests, don't follow a pattern. You simply need to learn them. In this section you will find an irregular verbs list. We suggest you try to learn a few each each day.

But before we look at an irregular verbs list, we need to think about how to form regular verbs. English verbs often end in +ed or +d when used in the past tense or participle form.

For example:

work – worked / live – lived

These are regular verbs.

Below you will find an irregular verbs list. Don't try to learn them all at once! Go through the irregular verbs list until you get ten that you don't know, then practice.

Irregular verbs list

Verb	Simple Past	Past Participle
A		
arise	arose	arisen
awake	awakened / awoke	awakened / awoken
B		
be	was, were	been
bear	bore	born / borne
beat	beat	beaten / beat
become	became	become
begin	began	begun

bend	bent	bent
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
breed	bred	bred
bring	brought	brought
build	built	built
burn	burned / burnt	burned / burnt
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
C		

cast	cast	cast
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
D		
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
dive	dove / dived	dived
do	did	done

draw	drew	drawn
dream	dreamed / dreamt	dreamed / dreamt
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
dwell	dwelt / dwelled	dwelt / dwelled
E		
eat	ate	eaten
F		
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found

flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forecast	forecast	forecast
forego	forewent	foregone
foresee	foresaw	foreseen
foretell	foretold	foretold
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
G		

get	got	got / gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
H		
handwrite	handwrote	handwritten
hang	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hew	hewed	hewn / hewed
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit

hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
I		
inbreed	inbred	inbred
inlay	inlaid	inlaid
input	input / inputted	input / inputted
interbreed	interbred	interbred
interweave	interwove / interweaved	interwoven / interweaved
interwind	interwound	interwound
J		
K		
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt / kneeled	knelt / kneeled

knit	knitted / knit	knitted / knit
know	knew	known
L		
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lean	leaned / leant	leaned / leant
leap	leaped / leapt	leaped / leapt
learn	learned / learnt	learned / learnt
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie (ie 'to lie down')	lay	lain
lie (ie 'to tell a lie')	lied	lied

light	lit / lighted	lit / lighted
lose	lost	lost
M		
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
mow	mowed	mowed / mown
N		
O		
P		
partake	partook	partaken
pay	paid	paid
plead	pleaded / pled	pleaded / pled

proofread	proofread	proofread
prove	proved	proven / proved
put	put	put
Q		
quit	quit	quit
R		
read	read (pronounced red)	read (pronounced red)
rid	rid	rid
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
S		

saw	sawed	sawed / sawn
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
sew	sewed	sewn / sewed
shake	shook	shaken
shave	shaved	shaved / shaven
shear	sheared	sheared / shorn
shed	shed	shed
shine	shined / shone	shined / shone

shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown / showed
shrink	shrank / shrunk	shrunk
shut	shut	shut
sight-read	sight-read	sight-read
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank / sunk	sunk
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
sling	slung	slung
slink	slinked / slunk	slinked / slunk
slit	slit	slit

smell	smelled / smelt	smelled / smelt
sneak	sneaked / snuck	sneaked / snuck
sow	sowed	sown / sowed
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	sped	sped
spell	spelled / spelt	spelled / spelt
spend	spent	spent
spill	spilled / spilt	spilled / spilt
spin	spun	spun
spit	spat	spat
split	split	split
spoil	spoiled / spoilt	spoiled / spoilt
spread	spread	spread

spring	sprang / sprung	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stink	stunk / stank	stunk
strew	strewed	strewn
stride	strode	stridden
strike	struck	struck / stricken
strive	strove / strived	striven / strived
sunburn	sunburned / sunburnt	sunburned / sunburnt
swear	swore	sworn
sweat	sweat / sweated	sweat / sweated

sweep	swept	swept
swell	swelled	swollen / swelled
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
T		
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
thrust	thrust	thrust
tread	trod	trodden / trod

U		
understand	understood	understood
upset	upset	upset
V		
W		
wake	woke / waked	woken / waked
waylay	waylaid	waylaid
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
wed	wed	wed
weep	wept	wept
wet	wet	wet
win	won	won

wind	wound	wound
withdraw	withdrew	withdrawn
withhold	withheld	withheld
withstand	withstood	withstood
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written
X		
Y		
Z		

Make uncountable nouns countable

Nouns can be split into two different groups – countable and uncountable. Countable nouns, as the name suggests, can be counted. For example, you can have **1 pen** or **2 pens**, **a car** or **some** or **a lot of cars**.

However, uncountable nouns cannot be counted. For example, you cannot have **2 advices** or **some** or **a lot of advices**.

However, there are two ways to make an uncountable noun countable.

How to make an uncountable noun countable method 1

Add a countable 'container' for the uncountable noun.

For example, **milk** is uncountable but **bottles of milk** can be counted. You can say a bottle of milk, 2 bottles of milk etc.

How to make an uncountable noun countable method 2

Use a countable form of the word.

For example, **work** is uncountable, but **job** is countable.

The table below shows more examples of how to make uncountable nouns countable.

Uncountable	Countable
Advice	A piece of advice – pieces of advice
Luggage	A suitcase, a bag or a piece of luggage – suitcases, bags or pieces of luggage
money	a note, a coin – notes, coins
cake	a slice of cake, a piece of cake – slices or pieces of cake
furniture	a table, a chair, a piece of furniture – tables, chairs, pieces of furniture
bread	a slice of bread, a loaf of bread, a piece of bread – slices, loaves, pieces of bread
knowledge	a fact – facts
travel	a journey, a trip – journeys, trips

toothpaste	a tube of toothpaste – tubes of toothpaste
wine	a bottle of wine, a glass of wine – bottles of or glasses of wine
butter	a pat of butter – pats of butter
cheese	a slice of cheese, a chunk of cheese, a piece of cheese – slices, chunks or pieces of cheese
sugar	a sugarcube , a spoonful of sugar, a bowl of sugar – sugarcubes, spoonfuls of sugar, bowls of sugar
Petrol (gas)	a litre of petrol – litres of petrol.
Salt	a pinch of salt – pinches of salt
soap	a bar of soap – bars of soap
hair	a strand of hair – strands of hair
glass	a sheet of glass, a pane of glass – sheets or panes of glass

Modal verbs (modal auxiliary verbs)

Modal verbs (also called modal auxiliary verbs, or modals) are used with the infinitive form of the main verb (minus -to) to add additional layers of meaning to a sentence.

Modal verbs are also called *modal auxiliary verbs*, or *modals*.

Here are some examples:

- I **can** *play* the piano.

- She **may** *know* his name.
- I **must** *try* harder.

Examples of modal verbs

The following are all modal verbs:

- | | | |
|---------|----------|----------------|
| • can | • might | • will |
| • could | • must | • would |
| • may | • shall | • would rather |
| | • should | • ought to |

Modal verbs can refer to:

- ability – I **can** *drive* a car.
- probability – I **might** *go* to the party later.
- deduction – That **must** *be* the man she was talking about, he fits the description she gave me.
- obligation – I **have to** *go* to the meeting or my boss will be annoyed.
- necessity – I **must** *leave* early today.
- prohibition – You **cannot** *smoke* in here.
- permission – **May** I *leave* early?
- instructions and requests – **Could** you *help* me?
- suggestions – We **could** *go* to the cinema to see that new movie this evening.
- advice – You **ought to** *notify* them straight away and sort out the problem.
- recommendation – You **should** *watch* the film – it's fantastic!
- preference – I **would rather** *finish* this before we go.
- promise – I **will** definitely *call* you first thing in the morning. (see future simple lesson)
- prediction – You **will** *love* it there! (see future simple lesson)

Modal verbs – ability

can (positive), **can't** (negative), **could** (past positive) **couldn't** (past negative)

Example sentences using modal verbs for ability

- I **can** *sing*, but I **can't** *dance*.
- I **could** *swim* when I was six, but I **couldn't** *ride* a horse.

Modal verbs – probability (deduction)

You can use different modal verbs to talk about probability (deduction). The difference in meaning is how certain you are about what you are talking about.

- will (very certain)
- must (expressing opinion you are quite sure about)
- should (expressing opinion you are quite sure about)
- might (possible)
- could (possible)
- may (possible)
- can't (expressing opinion you are quite sure about)
- won't (very certain)

Example sentences using modal verbs for probability (deduction)

- A. She **will** *be* at work now, she never finishes before 6pm.
- B. He **must** *be* stuck in traffic, the road was so busy when I was coming home.
- C. I **should** *finish* this soon, I don't have too much left to do.
- D. He **might** *call* later if he remembers your birthday.
- E. He **could** *be* out with his friends, I'm not sure where he is.
- F. She **may** *come* later, I'm not sure what her plans are.
- G. It **can't** *be* John over there. It looks like him, but I'm sure John is overseas at the moment.

H. I **won't** *finish* the report today, there have been too many interruptions and I have to leave soon.

Modal verbs – obligation (necessity)

You can use the modal verbs '**have to**', '**must**' '**ought to**', '**should**' to talk about obligation.

Modal verbs '**have to**' and '**must**' talk about necessity / strong obligation.

Modal verbs '**ought to**' and '**should**' talk about lower level of obligation.

You use '**have to**' when the obligation comes from someone else – e.g. it's a law or a rule.

- In most countries you **have to** *wear* a seatbelt when travelling in a car.

COMPARE:

- Drivers **ought to** / **should** drive slower in wet weather.

Obligation is not as strong as the legal requirements is to drive to the speed limit but driving carefully is still a moral obligation for motorists on the road.

'**Must**' is used when the obligation comes from the person speaking.

- I **must** *stop* smoking.

You can use '**don't have to**' when there is no obligation.

- College students **don't have to** *wear* a uniform. (there is no rule for them to wear a uniform).

BE CAREFUL – you cannot use **must not** to show no obligation. This has a different meaning. It means 'cannot, not allowed to, no permission to'.

For example:

'You **mustn't** *interrupt* when someone is talking dear.' the mother told her son. (the child is not allowed to interrupt other people).

To talk about obligation in the past, use '**had to**'.

- My grandfather **had to** *walk* four miles to school everyday when he was a child.

Modal verbs – prohibition

Modal verbs '**must not**' (**mustn't**) and '**cannot**' (**can't**) are used to talk about prohibition.

Prohibition means something cannot happen, it is not allowed, there is no permission.

'**Must not**' – see example in the previous section. Mustn't is more commonly used when the prohibition comes from the speaker.

Another example is:

- "You **mustn't** *sit* on the desks in my classroom." said the teacher.

'**Cannot**' – more commonly used when the prohibition comes from someone else, e.g. a rule or a law.

Example:

- Employees **cannot** *use* Facebook during office hours.

To talk about prohibition in the past, use '**could not**'.

- Women **could not** *vote* in the USA until 1920.

Modal verbs – permission

Modal verbs '**can**', '**may**' and '**could**' are used to ask someone for, or to give permission (you want to be allowed to do something, or you are allowing someone to do something).

- **Can** I *go* home now?

- You **can** *borrow* my jacket if you're cold.
- **Could** I *ask* you a question?

Note: 'could' can be used to ask for permission. It is more formal / more polite than 'can'.

- **May** I *use* your telephone?
- You **may** *now* kiss the bride.

Note: 'may' can be used to ask for and to give permission. It is more formal / more polite than 'can'.

Modal verbs – instructions and requests

Modal verbs 'can', 'will', 'could' and 'would' are used to ask someone, or tell someone to do something.

1. **Can** you *make* me a coffee, please?
2. **Will** you *call* me a taxi, please?
3. **Could** you *take* this luggage to my room, please?
4. **Would** you *ask* him a question for me?

Note: 'would' and 'could' are more polite than 'can' or 'will'. When asking or instructing someone to do something, you should also say 'please'.

Modal verbs – suggestion, advice, recommendation

Modal verbs 'should' and 'ought to' are used to give suggestions, advice and recommendations.

1. We **should** *go out* for dinner next week. (suggestion)
2. We **ought to** *go out* for dinner next week. (suggestion)

- You **should** *inform* the boss straight away. (advice)
- You **ought to** *inform* the boss straight away. (advice)
- You **should** *stay* at the Apollo Hotel, it's amazing! (recommendation)
- You **ought to** *stay* at the Apollo Hotel, it's amazing! (recommendation)

'**Could**' is also used to make suggestions.

- We **could** *meet up* at 8pm, does that suit you? (suggestion)

We also use modal verbs '**will**' and '**would**' in conditional sentences to give advice.

A commonly used second conditional phrase is: "If I were you, I would....."

- If I were you, I **would** *tell* the boss straight away. (advice)

OR

- The boss **will** *help* you, if you tell him. (first conditional)
- The boss **would** *help* you, if you told him. (second conditional)

You can also use '**must**' to give advice. '**Must**' is stronger than '**should**' or '**ought to**'.

A speaker who uses '**must**' thinks what they are suggesting, advising or recommending is so important (it is like an obligation) for the person to do that.

For example:

- You **must** *get* those tyres on your car changed. They are so dangerous!

Modal verbs – preference

'**Would rather**' is used to talk about preference.

- I **would rather** work late tonight. I can have tomorrow morning off then.

If you are comparing options, you use '**would rather..... than....**'

- I **would rather** work late tonight, **than** have to work tomorrow morning.

Use **would rather not** (negative form) to talk about something you don't want to do.

- I **would rather not** work tomorrow morning.
-

Passive voice

The passive voice is a grammar form that can be used instead of writing active sentences.

Before we look at the passive voice, think about how you form an active sentence.

The easiest rule to help you build a simple active sentence is to use the Subject-Verb-Object formula. For example:

John **makes** boots.

In this sentence, there are 3 parts – the subject (John), the verb (makes), and the object (boots).

In a basic sentence*:

- the subject is the person who does the action
- the verb is the action
- the object is the receiver of the action

* This is a simple explanation, but like most languages, there are exceptions and other rules you need to consider.

In the passive voice, the order of the sentence changes. For example:

Sentence	Structure	Type
John has finished the painting.	S-V-O	This is an <i>active</i> sentence
The painting has been finished .	O-V	This is a <i>passive</i> sentence

There are two important points to note:

1. In a passive voice sentence, the form of the grammar changes and must always include a form of the auxiliary verb **be**. In the example above, see how 'has finished' changes to 'has **been** finished'
2. The subject of an active sentence can be completely left out of a passive voice sentence (or can added at the end of the sentence with 'by' – *The painting has been finished **by John***). In a passive sentence, the traditional 'subject' is often referred to as the 'agent'. For example:

John has finished the painting => John is the **subject** in an active sentence

The painting has been finished **by John** => John is the **agent** in a passive sentence.

When / why do we use the passive voice?

There are four common reasons for using a passive voice sentence rather than an active sentence.

Use	Example	Explanation
1. When we don't know the subject	My car has been stolen	We don't know the thief
2. When the subject is obvious	Taxes will be raised	It must be the government

3. We want to avoid stating the agent	The window was broken	I don't want to say who broke it
4. When we want to bring the important information to the front of the sentence	The criminal was seen by the security guard.	We are most interested in the criminal – not the security guard

All passive voice structures use a form of the verb 'to be'. See the table below for more detail:

Form	Active	Passive
Present simple	They make toys in that factory.	Toys are made in that factory.
Present continuous	He is repairing the computer.	The computer is being repaired .
Past simple	The lesson bored the students.	The students were bored by the lesson.
Past continuous	He was driving the car very badly.	The car was being driven very badly.
Present perfect	Someone has stolen my car!	My car has been stolen !
Future simple (will)	I will finish the project next month.	The project will be finished next month..
Future with 'going to'	They are going to sell the old factory.	The old factory is going to be sold .
Future perfect	They will have eaten all the food before we get there!	All of the food will have been eaten before we get there!

Past perfect	They had already eaten most of the food when we got there.	Most of the food had already been eaten when we got there.
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Note that intransitive verbs are not generally used in the passive voice.

Complete the passive voice exercises below to test your knowledge.

Passive voice exercises practice

Complete the passive voice exercises by changing the active sentences to the passive voice form.

• They sell magazines in the mall.	
• The chef bakes all bread on the premises.	
• The garage is fixing my car at the moment.	
• Someone has handed in my lost wallet.	
• The teacher has graded all of our assignments.	
• The local newspaper reported the story	
• The truck damaged my car in the accident.	
• His auntie was looking after him while his parents were away.	
9. They had already sold all the tickets when I tried to buy some.	
10. They will make a decision tomorrow.	
11. They are going to make four people redundant.	
12. They will have finished all the work by the time we get there.	

Answers

1. *Magazines are sold in the mall. Note: 'by them' is not necessary – the key point is where the magazines are sold (in the mall).*
2. *All bread is baked on the premises. Note: 'by the chef' is not necessary (it is obvious) – the key point is that bread is made on the premises.*
3. *My car is being fixed by the garage at the moment. Note: 'by the garage' could be left out – the key point is probably that the car is not available at the moment.*
4. *My lost wallet has been handed in. Note: 'by someone' is not necessary – the key point is that the wallet has been handed in.*
5. *All of our assignments have been graded by the teacher. Note: 'by the teacher' could be left out – it is obvious and the key point is that the assignments have been graded.*
6. *The story was reported by the local newspaper. Note: 'by the local newspaper' adds specific information about which newspaper reported the story.*
7. *My car was damaged by the truck in the accident. Note: 'by the truck' adds specific information about which vehicle damaged the car – it could be left out if the speaker is mainly concerned about the damaged car and not what caused the damage.*
8. *He was being looked after by his auntie while his parents were away. Note: 'by his auntie' adds specific information about who looked after him.*
9. *All the tickets had already been sold when I tried to buy some. Note: 'by them' is not necessary – the key point is the fact that there were no tickets left.*
10. *A decision will be made tomorrow. Note: 'by them' is not necessary – the key point is the fact that a decision will be made.*
11. *Four people are going to be made redundant. Note: 'by them' is not necessary – the key point is the fact that four people are going to lose their jobs.*
12. *All the work will have been finished by the time we get there. Note: 'by them' is not necessary – the key point is the fact that all the work will have been finished.*

Prepositions of place (1)

Prepositions of place (like all prepositions) can be one of the hardest parts of English to use correctly because the rules are often quite difficult and there are lots of exceptions.

In this lesson, we are looking at the following prepositions of place:

- **at**
- **in**
- **on**

Here are some example sentences using prepositions of place:

- There is a fly **on** the table!
- She lives **in** France.
- John is **at** school right now.

Here are a few rules that will help you use prepositions of place correctly:

Prepositions of place rule #1:

We generally use **at** to talk about a point or position.

For example:

at the window – She sat **at** the window, waiting for him to arrive.

at the door – There is someone **at** the door.

at the end – There is a shop **at** the end of the street.

at the beginning – We met him **at** the beginning of the night.

Prepositions of place rule #2:

We generally use **in** to talk about when something that has three sides or is enclosed.

For example:

in a box – There are some pens **in** that box over there.

in the house – She is **in** the house, go in!

in New Zealand – I live **in** New Zealand.

in a tent – We will be sleeping **in** a tent all weekend.

Prepositions of place rule #3:

We generally use **on** to talk about a surface or position on a line.

For example:

on the floor – The dog was asleep **on** the floor.

on the ceiling – There is a beautiful mural **on** the ceiling.

on the screen – He couldn't see clearly because there was dust **on** his computer screen.

on the page – All the information you need is **on** page 42.

Example exceptions to prepositions of place rules

Here are some common phrases in English that use prepositions of place but that don't really fit any rule:

We say **on** a bus but **in** a taxi

We say **in** the armchair but **on** the settee (sofa)

We say **on** the left but **in** the middle

Prepositions of place (and all prepositions) can be one of the hardest parts of English to use correctly because the rules are often quite difficult, and like most rules for a language, there are lots of exceptions.

Prepositions of place examples of use

AGAINST: having contact with something, touching.

- *'He put the bike **against** the wall.'*
- *'The dog leaned **against** its owner.'*

ALONGSIDE: in parallel, like train tracks

- *'The horses worked **alongside** each other to pull the cart.'*
- *'It is a beautiful drive as the road runs **alongside** the coast.'*

BESIDE: at the side of, not necessarily touching.

- *'He put the book **beside** his bed.'*
- *'She sat **beside** an elderly man on the train.'*

BY: in the area of

- *'I live **by** some shops and a library.'*
- *'If you go that way, you will drive **by** a park.'*

TOWARDS: getting closer, aiming at each other

- *'The cars drove **towards** each other and only turned away at the last minute.'*
- *'He waved as he walked **towards** me.'*

Complete the prepositions of place exercises below to test your knowledge.

Prepositions of place exercises practice

Complete the prepositions of place exercises by choosing the correct option (a), (b) or (c) to complete each of the sentences with *'at', 'on', 'in', 'alongside', 'against', 'by', 'beside'* or *'towards'*.

1. My dog always waits _____ the door for me to come home.

(a) towards (b) at (c) on

2. I am from London but I live _____ Manchester.

(a) at (b) on (c) in

3. There is an interesting article _____ page 3 of this newspaper.

(a) in (b) on (c) by

4. Please pick up all those clothes you have left _____ the floor.

(a) on (b) at (c) against

5. I chatted to the passenger next to me _____ the train.

(a) in (b) on (c) towards

6. We were _____ the middle of a conversation when she arrived.

(a) beside (b) by (c) in

7. I have worked _____ John for 10 years.

(a) alongside (b) towards (c) at

8. There was a surprising twist to the story _____ the end of the book.

(a) at (b) in (c) against

9. A river runs _____ our garden – it's beautiful!

(a) against (b) alongside (c) at

10. We sat down _____ the armchairs in the hotel reception.

(a) in (b) on (c) at

11. I left the brush _____ the garage door.

(a) in (b) towards (c) against

12. You can sit _____ me there is plenty of room.

(a) beside (b) against (c) towards

13. Look _____ the cupboard there should be plenty of glasses there.

(a) at (b) on (c) in

14. I live _____ a gym so I go most evenings after work.

(a) on (b) by (c) towards

15. I can see him; he's driving _____ us now.

(a) at (b) against (c) towards

Answers

1. *Correct answer is B.*

2. *Correct answer is C.*

3. *Correct answer is B.*

4. *Correct answer is A.*

5. *Correct answer is B.*

6. *Correct answer is C.*

7. *Correct answer is A.*

8. *Correct answer is A.*

9. *Correct answer is B.*

10. *Correct answer is A.*

11. *Correct answer is C.*

12. *Correct answer is A.*

13. *Correct answer is C.*

14. *Correct answer is B.*

15. *Correct answer is C.*

Prepositions of time (1)

Prepositions of time (like all prepositions) can be one of the hardest parts of English to use correctly.

This is because the rules are often quite difficult and there are lots of exceptions!

In this lesson, we are looking at the following prepositions of time:

- at
- in
- on

Here are some example sentences using prepositions of time:

- I'm going camping **at** the weekend.
- They will be here **in** 5 minutes
- School starts **on** the Monday.

Prepositions of time – 'at'

Here are the rules for using the preposition '**at**'.

Rule #1:

For a clock time (**at** 5 p.m., **at** quarter to 12)

Example: I finish work **at** 5.30 p.m.

Rule #2:

For a particular time (**at** lunch time, **at** sunset)

We will be having dinner on the deck **at** sunset. How romantic!

Rule #3:

For a collection of days (**at** the weekend [the weekend includes Saturday and Sunday], **at** Christmas [Christmas period includes Christmas day, Christmas Eve etc])

Most games are held **at** the weekend.

Prepositions of time – ‘in’

Here are the rules for using the preposition ‘**in**’.

Rule #1:

For months of the year (**in** February, **in** April)

They are getting married **in** March.

Rule #2:

For years (**in** 1990, **in** 2015)

I started working at the school **in** 2010.

Rule #3:

For part of a day (**in** the morning, **in** the afternoon, **in** the evening) EXCEPTION: **at** night

I can concentrate better **in** the morning.

I love listening to the owls **at** night.

Rule #4:

For longer lengths of time: (*in* the summer, *in* the Middle Ages)

He always goes skiing *in* the winter.

Prepositions of time – ‘on’

Here are the rules for using the preposition ‘*on*’.

Rule #1:

For days of the week (*on* Monday, *on* Tuesday etc)

I am seeing him *on* Wednesday.

Rule #2:

For dates (*on* the 4th of May, *on* the 26th February)

They got married *on* the 12th June.

Rule #3:

For specific single days (*on* my birthday, *on* New Years Eve, *on* Labour Day)

I am going to a party *on* New Years Eve.

More advanced prepositions of time


Prepositions of time – within

WITHIN: We try to answer all emails *within* 24 hours.

‘Within’ is commonly used to express that something will be done inside or not later than the period of time stated.

Note: time given must be an **amount of time**, NOT a specific time in the future.

For example:

We try to answer all emails *within* 24 hours. 

~~We try to answer all emails *within* the following day.~~ 

Other uses could be: *within* the next few minutes, *within* the next week, *within* the next six months, *within* this financial year etc.

Prepositions of time – before

BEFORE: The repairs will be completed *before* Friday.

Before is also used to express that something will be done inside or not later than the time stated.

Note: the time given must be a **specific future time**. For example:

The repairs will be completed *before* Friday. 

~~We try to answer all emails *before* 24 hours.~~ 

Other uses could be: *before* 1pm, *before* next week, *before* July, *before* the start of the next financial year etc.

Prepositions of time exercises practice

Complete the prepositions of time exercises by choosing the correct option (a), (b) or (c) to complete each of the sentences with 'at', 'on', 'in', 'within' or 'before'.

1. I start work _____ 9am.

(a) within (b) on (c) at

2. I'll give you a call _____ lunchtime.

(a) in (b) at (c) within

3. I start my new job _____ Monday.

(a) on (b) at (c) in

4. I will finish the report _____ the end of the week.

(a) within (b) before (c) on

5. We always have a family gathering _____ Christmas.

(a) at (b) within (c) on

6. The weather is warm in New Zealand _____ February.

(a) at (b) within (c) in

7. He never goes out _____ night.

(a) on (b) in (c) at

8. I always exercise _____ the morning.

(a) on (b) in (c) at

9. I need to make a decision _____ the next 24 hours.

(a) before (b) within (c) on

10. They celebrate their wedding anniversary _____ July 22nd.

(a) on (b) within (c) at

11. I was born _____ 1990.

(a) at (b) within (c) in

12. We are going out to dinner _____ my birthday.

(a) on (b) at (c) in

13. They said they would let me know _____ the next week.

(a) before (b) within (c) on

14. I told her to see me _____ lunchtime.

(a) before (b) within (c) on

15. I need to finish my studies _____ the next twelve months.

(a) before (b) at (c) within

Answers

1. Correct answer is C.
2. Correct answer is B.
3. Correct answer is A.
4. Correct answer is B.
5. Correct answer is A.
6. Correct answer is C.
7. Correct answer is C.
8. Correct answer is B.

9. Correct answer is B.
10. Correct answer is A.
11. Correct answer is C.
12. Correct answer is A.
13. Correct answer is B.
14. Correct answer is A.
15. Correct answer is C.

Dependent prepositions with verbs, adjectives and nouns

Dependent prepositions (with verbs, adjectives and nouns)

Certain verbs, adjectives and nouns naturally take certain prepositions when placed in a sentence – these are called dependent prepositions.

For example, you can *object to* (something), *participate in* (something), *complain about* (something).

Unfortunately there are no fixed rules that can help you decide which dependent prepositions should be placed with which words, you really just need to learn them.

Remember that sometimes usage of different dependent prepositions change the meaning.

Dependent prepositions example 1:

He is *angry with* us. (angry **with** 'someone')

He is *angry about* the problem. (angry **about** 'a situation')

Dependent prepositions example 2:

He is *good at* football (meaning he has skill / ability in something – he *is good at (playing) football*).

She is *good with* children (meaning she has a positive relationship with / has an affinity with...).

A teacher for example, might be *good at* teaching English and may be *good with* their students.

The best way to learn more about dependent prepositions is to make a list of your own, and then find sentences that use the structure. Google can be very useful for that. For example, if

you were trying to remember that complain is generally followed by about, simply type in “complain about” in Google and see the results.

NOTE: It is important to use the speech marks (” “) around the phrase you are searching for so that only results with that phrase will come up.

<i>Verbs and dependent prepositions</i>	<i>Adjectives and dependent prepositions</i>	<i>Nouns and dependent prepositions</i>
abide by	according to	in agreement
abstain from	accustomed to	attack on
accuse (somebody) of	afraid of	attitude towards
add to	annoyed with/about/at	on behalf of
adhere to	anxious about	comparison between
agree with	ashamed of	on condition (that)
aim at/for	astonished at	connection between
allow for	attached to	cruelty towards
apologise to someone for something	aware of	decrease in
apply for	delighted at/about	delay in
approve of	different from	difference between/of
argue with/about	dissatisfied with	difficulty in/with
arrest (somebody) for	doubtful about	disadvantage of

ask for	enthusiastic about	in doubt
attend to	envious of	under guarantee
believe in	excited about	increase in
belong to	famous for	information about
blame (somebody) for	fed up with	intention of
boast about	fond of	knowledge of
borrow (something) from (somebody)	frightened of	need for
call for	friendly with	notice of
care for	good at	in order
choose between	guilty of	pleasure in
comment on	incapable of	in power
compare with	interested in	in practice
complain about	jealous of	preference for
concentrate on	keen on	protection from
conform to	kind to	reaction to
congratulate on	mad at/about	reason for
consent to	opposed to	reduction in
consist of	pleased with	report on
deal with	popular with	result of

decide on	proud of	rise in
excel at/in	puzzled by/about	at risk
excuse (somebody) for	safe from	room for
face up to	satisfied with	solution to
forgive (somebody) for	sensitive to(wards)	on strike
hear of/about	serious about	on suspicion of
hope for	sick of	under suspicion
insist on	similar to	in theory
interfere with/in	sorry for/about	in trouble
joke about	suspicious of	trouble with
laugh at	sympathetic to(wards)	
lend (something) to (somebody)	tired of	
listen to	typical of	
long for	unaware of	
mistake (somebody) for	used to	
object to		
pay for		
praise (somebody) for		
prepare for		

present (somebody) with		
prevent (somebody) from		
protest about		
provide (somebody) with		
punish (somebody) for		
refer to		
rely on		
run for		
save (somebody) from		
sentence (somebody) to		
smile at		
succeed in		
suffer from		
stand for		
talk to (somebody) about (something)		
thank (somebody) for		
think of/about		
volunteer to		
wait for		

warn (somebody) about		
worry about		

Dependent prepositions exercises

Complete the dependent prepositions exercises below to test your knowledge.

Dependent prepositions exercises practice – verbs

Complete the dependent prepositions exercises by choosing the correct option (a) or (b) to complete each of the sentences.

1. Visitors are asked to abstain _____ smoking on the premises.

(a) from (b) on

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

2. She is unavailable at the moment as she is attending _____ an urgent issue.

(a) on (b) to

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

3. I believe _____ him – he is such a talented and hard-working artist.

(a) with (b) in

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

4. She took some time off work to care _____ her sick son.

(a) for (b) of

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

5. I totally agree _____ your opinion – everything you say about this is true!

(a) with (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

6. The schoolboy was blamed _____ the broken window.

(a) about (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

7. He annoys me because he is always boasting _____ his achievements!

(a) about (b) with

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

8. I had to choose _____ going to the cinema or out to dinner as I couldn't afford to do both.

(a) between (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

9. The management team is meeting this afternoon to decide _____ the best solution.

(a) on (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

10. He forgave me _____ my mistake.

(a) about (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

Dependent prepositions exercises practice – adjectives

Complete the dependent prepositions exercises by choosing the correct option (a) or (b) to complete each of the sentences.

11. I am so excited _____ the upcoming concert!

(a) about (b) with

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

12. Take no notice of what she says she is just envious _____ you!

(a) with (b) of

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

13. I am doubtful _____ the likely success of this project.

(a) with (b) about

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

14. He is so ashamed _____ what he did and sends his apologies!

(a) of (b) in

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

15. The company is aware _____ the problem and is working hard to fix it soon.

(a) of (b) in

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

16. We were so dissatisfied _____ the service, we won't eat at that restaurant again.

(a) with (b) at

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

17. It is good that the whole team is so enthusiastic _____ the changes.

(a) to (b) about

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

18. He is so good _____ public speaking.

(a) at (b) of

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

19. She was so kind _____ me when I was having problems.

(a) to (b) with

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

20. I am so tired _____ my job, I need a change I think.

(a) of (b) about

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

Dependent prepositions exercises practice – nouns

Complete the dependent prepositions exercises by choosing the correct option (a) or (b) to complete each of the sentences.

21. It was an unjustified attack _____ an innocent party.

(a) of (b) on

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

22. His attitude _____ the subject is very narrow-minded.

(a) in (b) towards

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

23. The manager thanked the staff on behalf _____ the directors.

(a) of (b) on

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

24. There is no need _____ violence in any circumstances.

(a) of (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

25. The reason _____ the accident is still to be established.

(a) of (b) for

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

26. Conditions are much better but there is still room _____ further improvement.

(a) for (b) in

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

27. The rise _____ crime levels has been attributed to lower employment opportunities.

(a) in (b) of

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

28. There was a public outcry in reaction _____ the government's proposals.

(a) with (b) to

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

29. He has extensive knowledge _____ the subject.

(a) of (b) with

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is A.

30. The teacher let them finish class early _____ condition that they arrived early the next day.

(a) in (b) on

[click here to see the answer](#)

Correct answer is B.

Transitive and intransitive verbs

Transitive and intransitive verbs have different rules when you use them to make sentences. Read the two sentences that follow. They contain examples of transitive and intransitive verbs.

Do you know which sentence contains a transitive verb and which one contains an intransitive verb?

Examples of transitive and intransitive verbs in sentences.

1. The boss **surprised** *his workteam*.
2. The boss **smiled**.

Answers to the examples of transitive and intransitive verbs in sentences.



1. is a transitive verb. 2. is an intransitive verb.

Can you see the important difference in sentence structure when using transitive and intransitive verbs? Think about the sentence structure NOT the meaning.....

Read the rest of this post to learn about the differences.

Transitive verbs

A **transitive verb** needs a direct object to make a complete sentence.

Nouns or pronouns can act as direct objects.

For example:

~~She likes.~~ ❌

She **likes** *ice cream*. ✅

~~I have invited.~~ ❌

I **have invited** *him*. ✅

The verb '**like**' needs a direct object – in these examples '*ice cream*' (noun) and '*him*' (pronoun) to make sense and to form a complete sentence.

The direct object of an transitive verb is something that 'receives the action' of that verb.

Intransitive verbs

An **intransitive** verb does not take a direct object. For example:

He arrived. ✅

You can add more information to the sentence above.

For example: 'He arrived *half an hour late*'.

'*half an hour late*' is NOT the direct object of '*arrived*' though. It is a noun phrase that acts as an adverb. It doesn't 'receive the action', it adds extra information by describing when the man arrived.

More information about transitive and intransitive verbs

Some verbs can act as both transitive and intransitive verbs.

For example:

The All Blacks **won**. ✓ (this sentence is grammatically complete)

The All Blacks **won** *the Rugby World Cup*. ✓ (the Rugby World Cup is the object of the verb 'won')

Some transitive verbs can be followed by two objects (one direct and one indirect object).

For example:

Sam **bought** *Jane* *some chocolates*.

Send *me the report* when you've finished it.

So and such (for emphasis)

'So' and 'such' are often used incorrectly in English.

Both so and such are used to 'give emphasis' – this means to show that something is 'extreme' or 'more than'. For example –

The concert was **so** good! It was **such** a good concert!

In both cases, it wasn't simply a 'good' concert, it was more than that.

So and such rule #1:

The main difference between so and such is that you do not use a noun *after* 'so'.

- The concert was **so** good! ✓ This is correct

~~It was so a good concert~~ ✗ You cannot say this



So and such rule #2:

After such, you need a noun.

- It was **such** a good concert ✓ This is correct

~~It was such good~~ ✗ You cannot say this

So and such rule # 3:

The two rules for so and such above can be combined with 'that' to talk about the *results* of something.

FACT = The concert was **so** loud. RESULT = our ears hurt.

- The concert was **so** loud *that* our ears hurt. ✓ This is correct

~~The concert was such loud that our ears hurt.~~ ✗ You cannot say this

- It was **such** a loud concert *that* our ears hurt. ✓ This is correct

~~It was so a loud concert that our ears hurt.~~ ❌ You cannot say this

So and such rule #4:

So can also be followed by an adverb. NOTE: This is used to make a short comment or exclamation about something.

- He eats so quickly! ✅ This is correct

~~He eats such quickly!~~ ❌ You cannot say this

- She sings so beautifully! ✅ This is correct

~~She sings such beautifully!~~ ❌ You cannot say this

- He speaks so eloquently. ✅ This is correct

~~He speaks such eloquently.~~ ❌ You cannot say this

Question tags (tag questions)

Question tags (also called tag questions) are common structures used in spoken English.

An example of a question tag is: 'You like studying English, **don't you?**'

The first part of a question tag sentence is the statement ('You like studying English') followed by the question form ('don't you?')

It is important to note that question tags are generally not questions at all – they are used for the following purposes:



1. To confirm information you are think you know (e.g. 'Your birthday is in May, **isn't it?**' = I think your birthday is in May, but can you confirm that)
2. To act as a conversation starter (e.g. 'You bought their new album, **didn't you?** What did you think of it?')
3. To ask for agreement with something (e.g. 'You believe me, **don't you?**')

When question tags are used as real questions, we often begin with the negative. Compare:

<i>Not a real question</i>	<i>A real question</i>
It's a lovely day, isn't it? You've been here before, haven't you?	'You haven't seen my keys, have you?' 'You don't know where the bank is, do you?'

Another important difference between question tags used as real questions versus question tags that are not real questions is the sound of your voice.

For example:

REAL QUESTION: You haven't seen my keys, have you? (the tag has a rising intonation – the sound of your voice goes up)

NOT A REAL QUESTION: It was an exciting game, wasn't it? (the tag has a falling intonation – the sound of your voice goes down)

Forming question tags

The 'tag' part of the structure comes from copying the auxiliary verb in the main statement. For example: You haven't seen my keys, have you? You are from New Zealand, aren't you?

If there is no auxiliary verb, then the verb 'do' is used: You like ice cream, don't you? The table below shows the formation of most question tags.

Subject	Auxiliary verb	Main verb	(Additional info) + comma	Auxiliary	Match subject	Question mark
He	is	studying	hard,	isn't	he	?
They	have	missed	the bus,	haven't	they	?
They	–	have	a car,	don't	they	?
She	will	come	to the party,	won't	she	?
John	could	meet	us,	couldn't	he	?
The doctor	should	be able	to help,	shouldn't	she	?
You	can	speak	French,	can't	you	?

Question tags – Exceptions Some question tags are unique in that they don't fit into the table above. Here are some of the more unusual tags that are exceptions to the rules:

- Let's go, shall we?
- I am late, aren't I?
- Nobody telephoned you this morning, did they? (tag is positive when statement has 'nobody', 'nothing')

Be careful when answering a tag question! Consider the following:

~~A: London isn't in Spain, is it? B: Yes (meaning 'I agree with what you said')~~ ❌

You cannot say this

A: London isn't in Spain, is it. B: No (Meaning 'London is not in Spain') ✓

This is correct

Relative clauses – defining and non defining

Parts of a sentence that identify people, things or add some additional information are called relative clauses.

Compare the sentences below. Which one is better?

a The International English Language Testing System is a globally recognised exam. It was first developed in the early 1960s.

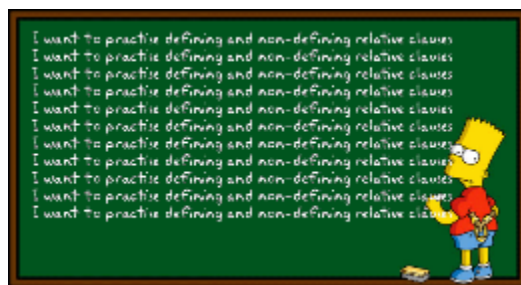
b The International English Language Testing System, which was first developed in the early 1960s, is a globally recognised exam.

Hopefully you choose sentence B, which combines two sentences in a more formal, academic manner using relative clauses.

They often begin with either a question word (who, what, where, which etc) or 'that'. They can also start with pronouns; e.g. whose).

Examples of relative clauses:

- He is the man *who lives next door to me*.
- The journalist, *whose work involves a huge amount of international travel*, is currently in South America.
- My house, *which is in the country*, is not very big.
- Here's the book *that you wanted me to get*.



Notice how the clause immediately follows the noun it relates to.

The **game** *that they are playing* originated from Southern Europe.

NOT: ~~The game originated from Southern Europe that they are playing.~~

There are two common types of relative clause:

1. Defining relative clauses (also called 'restricting relative clauses' or 'identifying relative clauses')
2. Non-defining relative clauses (also called 'non-restricting relative clauses' or 'non-identifying relative clauses')

1. Defining relative clauses

A defining relative clause is one in which the clause is required for the understanding / grammar of the sentence.

Example:

She is the teacher *who helped me with my homework*.

If we remove the relative clause '*who helped me with my homework*', we are left with 'She is the teacher' which is not a complete sentence.

With defining relative clauses, we can change the question word for 'that':

She is the teacher *that helped me with my homework*.

2. Non-defining relative clauses

A non-defining relative clause is one in which the clause is NOT required for the understanding / grammar of the sentence. A non-defining relative clause adds extra information, but we can remove it and the sentence will still make sense.

Example:

My friend, *who comes from Australia*, loves surfing.

If we remove the relative clause, we are left with 'My friend loves surfing.', This a grammatically complete sentence.

NOTE: In non-defining relative clauses, we CANNOT change the question word for 'that'.

Example:

My friend, ~~that~~ comes from Australia, loves surfing. We MUST use 'who'.

In addition to not using 'that', non-defining relative clauses differ from defining relative clauses in that they use commas to show that the clause is not essential to the grammar of the sentence. Defining relative clauses do not use commas.

Compare:

She is the teacher *that helped me with my homework*.

~~She is the teacher, that helped me with my homework.~~

My friend, *who comes from Australia*, loves surfing.

~~My friend who comes from Australia loves surfing.~~

TEST YOURSELF: Are the following sentences **defining** or **non-defining**?

1. The IELTS interviewer that I had for my speaking test was very friendly.
2. The Academic IELTS test, which is used for university entrance, is more difficult than the General Training modules.
3. The teaching methods that some schools favour require students to learn new vocabulary every week.
4. Any listening test which has four sections is bound to be difficult.
5. My friend, who is Scottish, is an IELTS examiner.

Answers:

1. **This is a defining relative clause**
2. **This is a non-defining relative clause**
3. **This is a defining relative clause**
4. **This is a defining relative clause**
5. **This is a non-defining relative clause**

TEST YOURSELF #2: All of the following sentences are **incorrect**. Can you identify the error?

a. America which is one of the world's most developed countries gives millions of dollars in aid to developing nations every year.

Show answer **This sentence needs to have commas – America, which is one of the world's most developed countries, gives millions of dollars in aid to developing nations every year.**

b. Students communicate with their classmates in English often become considerably more fluent and confident.

Show answer **This needs ‘who’ adding to the sentence – ‘Students who communicate with their classmates in English often become considerably more fluent and confident.’**

c. We should, of course, punish those which break the law.

Show answer **‘who’ should be used instead of which – ‘We should, of course, punish those which break the law.’**

d. The population is increasing, that is putting strain on both the environment and our supply of natural resources.

Show answer **Because this is a non-defining relative clause, ‘that’ should be changed to ‘which’ – ‘The population is increasing, that is putting strain on both the environment and our supply of natural resources.’**

Inversion

To emphasise a particular part of a sentence, or to make your writing more literary (such as in a poem or novel), you can *invert* the traditional order of a sentence. For example:

Standard order – *He didn’t realise he had been tricked until the following day.*

Inverted order – *Not until the following day did he realise he had been tricked.*

It is common to invert sentence using negative, ‘restrictive’ words such as those in the list below:

hardly ever	Hardly ever had there been such a shortage of water.
never	Never had the President had to make such a difficult decision.
little	Little did she know time was running out.

scarcely ever	Scarcely ever have they had to wait for anything.
only by	Only by learning to type will he improve in his job.
under no circumstances	Under no circumstances is the prisoner to have visitors.
only in this way	Only in this way can we be sure to avoid repeating the problem in the future.
on no account	On no account is John to be given any money.
scarcely	Scarcely has they left the building when the bomb went off.
not only	Not only had he broken the law but he was also unrepentant.
seldom	Seldom have I seen such wealth.
nowhere	Nowhere else is there such an abundance of natural resources.
not until	Not until the following day did he realise he had been tricked.

Causative verbs

Causative verbs, as the name suggests, are used when we want to talk about somebody **causing** something to take place but not actually performing the action.

In sentences including causative verbs, the subject does not perform the action.

Compare the causative to active and passive sentences:

Example	Meaning	Type of sentence
<i>I had my car repaired</i>	<i>I asked a mechanic to do the repairs</i>	<i>Causative</i>
I repaired my car.	I did the repairs.	Active
My car was repaired.	Someone did the repairs (we don't know who and the speaker is not saying that they requested the repairs).	Passive

There are four causative verbs that are commonly used in English sentences.

Causative verbs 1/4 – **have**

Using the causative verb 'have' means that the subject of the sentence ***gives someone the responsibility to do something***. There are two possible structures for the causative verb 'have'.

Structure 1: Subject + form of have + person + base verb	I will have my secretary send you the details.
Structure 2: Subject + form of have + object + past participle verb	I had my car repaired

NOTE: sometimes using the causative verb 'have' can mean that something is done **to** the subject. For example:

John had his car stolen.

In this example, John didn't give someone the responsibility for stealing the car.

Causative verbs 2/4 – ***make***

Using the causative verb ‘make’ means that the subject of the sentence forces someone to do something.

Structure: Subject + make + person + base verb

The teacher made us do our homework.

Causative verbs 3/4 – ***let***

Using the causative verb ‘let’ means that the subject of the sentence allows someone to do something.

Structure: Subject + let + person + base verb
--

The boss let us go home early

Causative verbs 4/4 – ***get***

Using the causative verb ‘get’ means that the subject of the sentence persuades or manipulates someone into doing something. NOTE: the structure of this sentence is different in that it requires the word ‘to’

Structure: Subject + get + person + to + base verb
--

He got me to agree with him even though I think he’s wrong!
--

Causative verbs exercises

Complete the causative verbs exercises below to test your knowledge.

Complete the causative verbs exercises by choosing the correct option (a), (b), (c) or (d) to complete each of the sentences.

1. My parents always make me _____ my homework before I can watch any television.

(a) to finish (b) finishing (c) finish (d) finished

2. My Mum lets me _____ later at the weekend.

(a) stay up (b) stayed up (c) staying up (d) to stay up

3. I had the computer technician at work _____ my lap top. It works well now.

(a) fixed (b) to fix (c) fixing (d) fix

4. I _____ my hair cut at that new hairdressing salon the other day, they're really good!

(a) have (b) made (c) had (d) let

5. My flatmate got me _____ dinner for him last night as he said he was too tired.

(a) to cook (b) cook (c) cooked (d) make

6. Why don't you let me _____ that for you. I'm happy to help!

(a) do (b) to do (c) did (d) done

7. I _____ my house broken into last night. I'm so upset!

(a) let (b) made (c) had (d) make

8. I always have my car _____ at that garage. They provide a really good service.

(a) repair (b) was repaired (c) repaired (d) to repair

9. Did his boss make him _____ late again last night?

(a) work (b) to work (c) worked (d) works

10. Did her teacher get her _____ the visitors to the school?

(a) welcome (b) to welcome (c) welcomes (d) welcomed

11. He got me _____ that parcel for him as I was going to the post office anyway.

(a) posted (b) post (c) posts (d) to post

12. My parents didn't make me _____ with housework when I was very young, but they do now.

(a) to help (b) help (c) helped (d) was help

Answers

1. Correct answer is A.

2. Correct answer is D.

3. Correct answer is C.

4. Correct answer is A.

5. Correct answer is A.

6. Correct answer is C.

7. Correct answer is C.

8. Correct answer is A.

9. Correct answer is A.

10. Correct answer is B.

11. Correct answer is D.

12. Correct answer is B.

Reported speech

Reported speech, also called indirect speech, is what happens when we are telling someone about what another person said.

Here is an example of direct and reported speech:

Direct speech: I don't like this party.

Reported or indirect speech: He said (that) he didn't like the party.



When changing direct speech into reported speech, there are four points to consider:

Reported speech point #1: changing pronouns

If the speaker uses a pronoun that does not work if reported by you, it needs to be changed.

For example:

Direct speech

"I don't like homework," he said.

"My mum told me to study," she said.

Reported or indirect speech

He said (that) he didn't like homework.

She said (that) her mum told her to study.

Reported speech point #2: changing locations

A change of place between when the conversation was held and when it was reported may mean that the 'place' words need changing.

Direct speech > Reported or indirect speech

For example:

"I don't like it **here**," he said. – reported from somewhere else – He said (that) he didn't like it **there**.

"**This** party is boring," he said. – reported from somewhere else – He said (that) **the** party was boring.

"My mum told me to **come** home," she said. > She said (that) her mum told her to **go** home.

"You should spend the weekend **here**," he said. > He said (that) I should spend the weekend **there**.

Reported speech point #3: changing timing

NOTE: imagine that the speech below is being reported one month later than the direct speech.

Direct speech >> Reported or indirect speech

"I met her this morning," she said. >> She said (that) she met her that morning.

"I can see you now," the teacher said. >> The teacher said (that) he could see me then.

"I changed jobs a month ago," John said. >> John said (that) he had changed jobs the month before.

"I'll see you next week," the doctor said. >> The doctor said (that) she would see me the following week.

"We'll tell you tomorrow," they said. >> They said (that) they would tell me the following / the next day.

Reported speech point #4: changing the tense

Often you will need to change the tense from the direct speech. The table below shows the common changes between tenses.

For more information on the tenses, see the main grammar menu.

Direct speech – Reported speech

Present simple changes to past simple: "It is lovely!" she said. – She said (that) it was lovely.

Present continuous changes to past continuous: "I am studying," she said. – She said (that) she was studying.

Present perfect changes to past perfect: “I have finished,” she said. – She said (that) she had finished.

Present perfect continuous changes to past perfect continuous: “I’ve been cooking,” she said. – She said (that) she had been cooking.

Past simple changes to the past perfect: “I saw Jim at work,” she said. – She said (that) she had seen Jim at work.

Past perfect doesn’t change: “I had already missed the bus,” she said. – She said (that) she had already missed the bus.

Past perfect continuous doesn’t change: “I had been waiting for 10 minutes,” she said. – She said (that) she had been waiting for 10 minutes.

Will changes to would: “I will see you later,” she said. – She said (that) she would see me later.

Can changes to could: “I can help,” she said. – She said (that) she could play help.

Must changes to had to: “I must go,” she said. – She said (that) she had to go.

Shall changes to should: “What shall we do today?” she said. – She asked what we should do that day.

May changes to might: “I may have a day off today,” she said. – She said (that) she might have a day off that day.

Additional notes about reported speech

1. Using ‘that’ in reported speech

When reporting speech, you can add 'that' so the sentence. However, if you use common reporting verbs like 'say' or 'think' it is not essential. For example:

Direct speech: "I will see you later," she said.

Reported speech: She said she would see me later OR She said that she would see me later.

Note: with some verbs like 'reply' or 'shout' you can't drop the 'that'.

e.g. She shouted that she would be there in a minute. NOT ~~She shouted she would be there in a minute.~~

e.g. He replied that he was tired. NOT ~~He replied he was tired.~~

2. Reporting questions in reported speech

When reporting a yes / no question (where the answer can be yes or no), the reported speech changes to use the word 'if' or 'whether'. For example:

Direct speech: "Do you like coffee?" she said.

Reported speech: She asked me if I liked coffee. OR She asked me whether I liked coffee.

3. Different reporting verbs used in reported speech

'Said' is only one of the many reporting verbs.

To expand your vocabulary and make what you are saying more interesting, it is important to learn more reporting verbs. Here are some of the most common reporting verbs:

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| • said | • advised | • offered |
| • told | • explained | • ordered |
| • asked | • thought | • promised |
| • accused | • implied | • replied |
| • admitted | • invited | • suggested |

- denied
- alleged
- agreed
- apologised
- begged
- boasted
- complained

Complete the reported speech exercises below to test your knowledge.

Practice: reported speech exercises

Do the sentences below show correct use of reported speech? If not, what corrections need to be made?

1. "I go swimming every day," he said.

Is this reported speech correct? He said that he went swimming every day.

2. "My daughter is starting university soon," she said.

Is this reported speech correct? She said my daughter was starting university soon.

3. "Will you have time to meet me for coffee?" he asked.

Is this reported speech correct? He asked me would I have time to meet him for coffee?

4. "Have you locked the door?" he asked.

Is this reported speech correct? He asked me if I have locked the door.

5. 'There are two important issues here: time and money,' the boss advised.

Is this reported speech correct? The boss advised that there were two main issues there: time and money.

6. "I can help you if I finish my own work in time," Sara promised.

Is this reported speech correct? Sara suggested that she can help me if she finished her own work in time.

7. "I was driving home when I saw the crash," Jason explained.

Is this reported speech correct? Jason explained that he had been driving home when he had seen the crash.

8. "I'm sorry, I must go now as I am running late!" Geoff said.

Is this reported speech correct? Geoff said that he must go then as he was running late.

9. "I'll give you all the information you need tomorrow," the teacher told the students.

Is this reported speech correct (reported three days later)? The teacher told the students she would give them all the information they needed tomorrow.

10. "What have you been doing this afternoon?" Tom asked Jenna. "I've been studying," she said.

Is this reported speech correct (reported three days later)? Tom asked Jenna what she had been doing that afternoon; she said she had been studying.

Answers:

1. *This is correct.*
2. *This is incorrect – the pronoun needs to change – it should be as follows: She said her daughter was starting university soon.*

3. *This is incorrect – there are two errors. This is reporting a yes / no question so we need to use 'if'. We do not need the (?) in a reported question. It should be as follows: He asked me if I would have time to meet him for coffee.*
4. *This is incorrect – the tense needs to change from present perfect to past perfect – it should be as follows: He asked me if I had locked the door.*
5. *This sentence is correct.*
6. *This is incorrect – the tense has changed from present simple to past simple but 'can' also needs to change to 'could' – it should be as follows: Sarah suggested that she could help me if she finished her own work in time.*
7. *This sentence is correct.*
8. *This is incorrect – the tense has changed from present continuous to past continuous but 'must' also needs to change to 'had to' – it should be as follows: Geoff said that he had to go then as he was running late.*
9. *This is incorrect – 'will' has been changed to 'would', tense and pronoun changes are also correct but the time also needs to change- it should be as follows: The teacher told the students she would give them all the information they needed the next day (or the following day).*
10. *This sentence is correct.*

Stative and dynamic verbs

Verbs can be divided into two types: stative and dynamic verbs.

Stative verbs are also known as *state* verbs and dynamic verbs are also known as *action* verbs.

Do you know the difference between stative and dynamic verbs?

Do you know about an important grammar rule that applies to stative and dynamic verbs?

Read the information below and see if your ideas are correct!



Differences between stative and dynamic verbs

- **Dynamic** verbs describe **actions**.

For example: to run, to work, to sleep, to eat etc.

- **Stative** verbs describe things that are not actions.

For example: stative verbs describe feelings, emotions, senses, thoughts, opinions etc. They often refer to things you cannot actually see people doing.

Examples of stative verbs

Thoughts and opinions:

to agree; to know; to realise; to suppose; to understand; to believe; to remember; to think

Feelings and emotions:

to like; to love; to hate; to dislike; to envy; to mind; to want; to need; to desire;

Senses:

to taste; to smell; to hear; to see

States:

to seem; to belong; to own

Grammar difference between stative and dynamic verbs

Dynamic verbs can be used in *continuous tenses*.

Stative (or 'state') verbs are generally not used in continuous tenses.

For example:

~~I am knowing John.~~ ❌

I know John. ✅

~~I am understanding what the teacher is saying.~~ ❌

I understand what the teacher is saying. ✅

Even when we are talking about temporary situations happening now, we generally do not use stative verbs in the continuous form.

For example:

This meat tastes delicious! ✅

NOT

~~This meat is tasting delicious!~~ ❌

Verbs that can be used as stative and dynamic verbs

It is important to note that some verbs can act as both stative and dynamic verbs, depending on their use.

Remember that if you use a stative verb in continuous form, the meaning of what you say will be different!

Here are some examples:

- This bread **tastes** good

In this sentence, 'taste' is used as a stative verb (opinion of the food / the sense of taste).

- The chef **is tasting** the dinner

In this sentence, 'taste' is used as a dynamic verb; it is describing the action of the chef checking the quality of the food.

- I **see** John! Look there he is!

In this sentence, 'see' is used as a stative verb (the sense of sight).

- I **am seeing** Sue tomorrow.

In this sentence, 'see' is used as an active verb (speaker is using present continuous for a future plan).

Superlative adjectives

We use superlative adjectives when we are comparing one adjective against **more** than one other adjective. Examples of superlative adjectives:

- Of all animals, the cheetah is **the fastest**.
- Some people think that English is **the most difficult language** in the world.
- In my house, I have to get up **the earliest** because my job starts at 5 a.m.



Syllables and superlative adjectives

To understand the rules for using superlative adjectives, you will need to know the meaning of a **syllable**.

A syllable is a single sound. For example, 'goodbye' has two syllables – 'good' and 'bye'.

Here are some more examples:

1 syllable words:	hot, cold, dry
2 syllable words:	happy, tired
3 syllable words:	excited, exhausted

When making superlative adjectives, there are 6 rules you need to remember:

Superlative adjectives rule 1 of 6:

With adjectives with one syllable, simply add the+est

For example:

tall > the tallest

fast > the fastest

high > the highest

Superlative adjectives rule 2 of 6:

BUT if the adjective ends in +y, remove the +y and add the ...+iest

For example:

happy > the happiest

angry > the angriest

busy > the busiest

Superlative adjectives rule 3 of 6:

NOTE: Adjectives that already end in +e only have the ...+st added.

For example:

nice > the nicest

safe > the safest

late > the latest

Superlative adjectives rule 4 of 6:

We add *the most...* to words with 3 syllables or more.

For example:

intelligent > the most intelligent

beautiful > the most beautiful

interesting > the most interesting

Superlative adjectives rule 5 of 6:

Some 2 syllable adjectives have the +est than and some have the most....

Some 2 syllable adjectives can also be used both ways.

NOTE: 2 syllable adjectives that end in -y, -le, and -er often form the superlative by adding +est.

For example:

honest > the most honest

clever > the most clever OR the cleverest

modern > the most modern

Superlative adjectives rule 6 of 6:

Adjectives that end with a consonant, then a vowel, then a consonant need the consonant doubled.

For example:

big > the biggest (not *the biggest*)

hot > the hottest (not *the hottest*)

fat > the fattest (not *the fattest*)

The subjunctive



The subjunctive is a grammar form that has no plural form or past form. It is generally used when something is considered important or desirable. It is part of a highly formal style of English often referred to as 'The Queen's English'.

For example:

- It is essential that every child **have** educational opportunities.
- It has been suggested that the company **invest** in new machinery.
- The judge recommended that the prisoner **stay** in prison for at least 10 years.

Note that 'do' is not used in the negative form:

- It is essential that every child **not have** to pay for educational opportunities.
- It has been suggested that the company **not invest** in new machinery until next year.
- The judge recommended that the prisoner **not stay** in prison any longer

The verb be is slightly different to other verbs in the subjunctive, because there is a different past tense form.

- It is important that both parties **be** available to sign the documents
- I wish it **were** the weekend!

There are also some fixed phrases that use the subjunctive form:

- God **save** the the Queen (not *saves*)

- Long live the King! (not *lives*)
 - God bless us all (not blesses)
 - Be that as it may...
-

