

Grammar Reference

Present Simple

We use the present simple:

1) to give factual information, to talk about things in general, for example:

*The company **sells** a wide variety of goods abroad.*

***Does it sell** these goods in this country?*

*It **doesn't sell** all the goods here.*

2) to talk about routine activities or habits:

*I usually **go** away at weekends.*

***Do you always go** alone?*

*I **don't go** alone.*

3) for actions and situations which are true in general:

*The earth **goes** round the sun.*

*Many people **prefer** good food.*

4) to talk about timetables, programmes or scheduled events:

*The train **leaves** at 12.45 and **arrives** at 16.50.*

*The conference **starts** on 23 December.*

Present Continuous

We use the present continuous:

1) to talk about things happening at the time of speaking:

*Will you please be quiet? He **is working**.*

***Is he working** on the project?*

*He **isn't working** on the project right now.*

2) to talk about things happening in a period around now, about ongoing situations:

*We **are testing** the new equipment this week.*

*Are you **working** with those engineers during this period?*

*They **aren't learning** English now.*

3) to describe trends or changes happening around:

*The number of homeless people **is growing**.*

***Is your English getting** better?*

*The economic situation **isn't improving**.*

4) to talk about personal arrangements and plans:

*I **am having** dinner with Sue on Friday.*

***Are you doing** anything on Saturday evening?*

*I **am not meeting** Tom tonight.*

Be going to do something

We use **I'm going to do something**:

1) to talk about something we intend to do or we have already decided to do:

*I **'m going to** buy a new car.*

*He's **going to** make us some coffee.*

*We **are going to** tell them about our plans.*

2) to say that «*something is going to happen*» in the future because the signs *now* make us believe this:

*Look at the economic situation these days. The prices **are going to** rise again.*

*Watch out! You **are going to** fall.*

Be going to vs. Will

1) We use **going to** to talk about what we intend to do while «will» is used for a spontaneous promise or offer to do something. Compare:

I haven't got enough money. – Don't worry. I'll lend you some.

*Jim hasn't got enough money so I'm **going to** lend him some.*

2) We use **will** to make a prediction based on our opinion or experience. We use «going to» to make a prediction based on some present evidence. Compare:

*Shall I invite Sandra? No, she **won't** want to come.*

*Are you all right? It looks like you **are going to** be sick.*

Future Simple (will/ shall)

We use **will**:

1) to offer to do something:

That report looks difficult. I'll give you a hand.

2) to agree to do something:

Could you check the information for me? Of course, I'll check it after lunch.

3) to promise to do something:

*I **won't** tell anyone what happened. I promise.*

4) to ask somebody to do something:

***Will you** help me with the presentation, please?*

***Will you** turn down the TV, please?*

5) to express probability, expectation, assurance, opinion, to show interest about the future:

*I'll **probably** work late tonight.*

*I **expect** our agent **will** call this morning.*

*I'm **sure** you'll pass your exam.*

*I **think** the boss **will** approve your project.*

*I **don't think** there **will** be a delay.*

*I **wonder** who **will** be appointed for this position.*

We use **shall** mostly in the questions «shall I ...?»/ «shall we ...?» to ask somebody's opinion (especially in offers or suggestions):

***Shall I** print this document?*

***Shall we** go? – Just a minute. I'm not ready yet.*

***Shall I** stay and help you?*

Past Simple

We use the past simple:

1) to talk about events that took place in the past:

*The Chinese **invented** printing.*

*Women **wore** long dresses in the past.*

Women **didn't wear** trousers.

2) with a time adverb to situate the event in finished past time:
*American lawmakers agreed on an economic recovery plan **in February 2009**.
The company made a good profit **a few years ago**.*

3) in annual reports to describe the company's performance over the last year:
*Last year **was** a profitable year for our group. Sales **rose** by more than 11% and we **made** sustainable gains in market share in Western Europe.*

Past Continuous

We use the past continuous:

1) to talk about actions that were not yet finished and continued over a period of time, i.e. somebody was in the middle of doing something at a certain time in the past:
*At that time, we **were still trying** to solve our recruitment problem.
They **were discussing** your offer from 9 until 12 yesterday.*

2) together with past simple to say that something *happened* in the middle of something else:
*She **had** an accident while she **was driving** to work.
I **was holding** a meeting when the telephone **rang**.*

3) to talk about two or more continuing actions that were taking place at the same time in the past:
*While we **were listening** to the news, our boss **was talking** on the phone.
I **was working** on my report while Dave **was analyzing** the prices at the housing market.*

4) But we use the past simple to say that one thing happened after another:
*I **worked** on my report and then Dave **analyzed** the prices at the housing market.*

Present Perfect

We use the present perfect:

1) to say that a finished past action has a result *now*:
*Is Mr Smith in? – No, he **has gone** out. (he is out **now**)
They **have developed** a new marketing strategy. (they have a strategy **now**)*

2) to talk about something that began in the past and still continues *now*:
*She **has been** at the meeting since 9 o'clock. (she is still at the meeting **now**)
Calvin Klein **has been** one of the leading fashion designers since the mid-1970s.*

3) to talk about our life experience:
*I've never **had** a car. (never in my life)
Have you ever **been** abroad?
She **has** once **met** a famous actor. (once in her life up to now)*

4) to give new information or to announce a recent happening:
*(from the news) Unemployment **has reached** seven and six-tenths percent, the highest rate since nineteen ninety-two.
Do you know the news? The CEO **has appointed** a new HR manager.*

5) to say *how long* something has happened:

How long have you worked here?

I have known Mike **for 15 years**.

They have had this problem **since Monday**.

Past Perfect

We use the past perfect:

1) to talk about a complete action that had finished *by* a specific time in the past or *before* another past action:

I had received the information by 8 o'clock on Friday.

I realized that **I had made** a serious mistake.

Had you met him before you saw him at the party?

2) as an equivalent of present perfect in the past. Compare:

Present perfect: Who's that woman? **I have never seen** her before. (*before now*)

Past perfect: I didn't know who she was. **I had never seen** her before. (*before that time in the past*)

Have and Have Got

1) We use **have got** or **have** to talk about possessions, relationships, illnesses and some other states:

We have got (we've got) a new car. or **We have** a new car.

Have you got a new car? or **Do you have** a new car?

We haven't got a new car. or **We don't have** a new car.

She's got two brothers.

He's got a toothache.

Have you got the time?

The house **hasn't got** a garage.

2) We use **have** (but *not have got*) to talk about actions and experiences:

Have breakfast/ lunch/ a meal, etc.	I had steak but Ann just had a salad.
Have a drink/ a cup of tea/ a cigarette	Let's have a drink before dinner.
Have a bath/ a shower/ a swim/ a rest/a holiday	I have a shower every morning.
Have a party	I'm having a party on Friday.
Have a baby (= give birth to a baby)	Mary had a baby a few weeks ago.
Have an accident/ an experience/ a dream	He had an accident on his way home.
Have a look (= read or examine)	Could I have a look at your notes?
	The doctor had a careful look at my shoulder. (= examined it)
	We had a great time in Italy.
Have a nice/ great/ terrible/ etc. time	They had an argument about the new plan.
Have an argument (= angry discussion)	Could I have a word with you?
Have a word with sb (= speak to sb)	Could we have the bill , please?
Have the bill (= receive it in a restaurant)	I'm having a problem with this assignment.
Have a problem + (with) or (-ing)	Mary had a problem working the video.

Used to do and Be/ get used to doing

1) We use **used to do** to talk about habits and states that happened in the past, and which usually do *not* happen now:

We used to have long lunch breaks but now we have short breaks.

Did you use to eat a lot of sweets when you were a child?
I didn't use to smoke when I was a student.

2) We use **be used to doing** or **be used to something** to talk about things which are not new or strange for us:

I'm used to living alone. (I live alone and I don't find it strange or new)
Tom isn't used to eating so much so he feels very full after that meal.
Are you used to the weather in this country?

3) We use **get used to doing** or **get used to something** when an action or a thing becomes not so strange or new for a person, but it is still not habitual.

I am getting used to the noise outside. (= I'm not used to it yet)
At first I wasn't used to getting up so early. Then I got used to it, and now it's OK. I am used to getting up early.

Did you get used to your new boss quickly? - Not very quickly. I was getting used to him for a couple of months. But now it's all right - I am used to his style.

When I do and If I do (future)

1) In «**when**» or «**if**» subordinate clauses we normally use the *present simple* for the future:

If I get a better job, we will have more money.
When I finish work, I'll give you a call.

2) We can also use *while*, *before*, *after*, *as soon as*, *until* or *till* instead of *when* in the subordinate clause:

I'll come as soon as I finish.
We'll see you before we leave.
You'll feel better after you have a rest.
We'll talk about it while I'm here.
They won't start the meeting until you come.

Conditionals and «I wish» Sentences

1) We use the **first conditional** for likely or possible situations or events, now or in the future:

If I find it, I'll tell you.
Will you send this e-mail today if you have time?
I'll stay and help you if you like.

2) We use the **second conditional** for unlikely or improbable situations or events, now or in the future:

If I didn't go to their presentation, they would be offended.
We would sign the contract if you guaranteed prices for the next eighteen months.
If the government created more jobs, the employment situation would be better.

3) We use «**I wish it happened/ I did**» to say that we regret something, that something is not as we would like it to be, now or in the future:

I wish I knew Paul's phone number. (= I don't know it and I regret this)
I wish it were (was) possible. (= It's impossible)
I wish you came tomorrow. (= you are not going to come)

4) We use the **third conditional** for unreal or hypothetical situations or events in the past:

*If we **had signed** the deal a week earlier, we **would have saved** some costs.*

*If you **had told** me sooner, we **would have avoided** this problem.*

*I **would have gone** out if I **hadn't been** so tired.*

5) We use «**I wish it had happened/ I had done**» to say that we are sorry that something didn't happen in the past:

*I **wish I hadn't eaten** so much at the party. (= I ate too much)*

*I **wish it had been** warmer when we were on holiday. (= it was cold)*

*I **wish I had studied** management instead of chemistry. (= I studied chemistry)*

Modals Verbs

Can, Could and Be able to

1) We use **can/ could** to express possibility, ability or permission to do something:

*We **can see** the lake from our hotel room window.*

***Can** you **speak** Italian?*

*I **can come** and see you tomorrow if you like.*

*You **can't enter** this area without a special permission.*

*He **could play** the violin when he was five.*

*We were completely free. We **could do** what we wanted.*

***Could** she **play** tennis when she was younger?*

2) We use **was/ were able to** talk about what happened in a particular situation, and not for general ability:

*They didn't want to come with us at first but we **were able to persuade** them. (= we managed to persuade them)*

***But:** When he was younger, he **could persuade** anyone in anything. (= he had a general ability to do it)*

3) We use **be able to** as an equivalent of **can** to refer to the future or the perfect tenses:

*We've just **been able to contact** our partners.*

*I'll **be able not to work** when I become a millionaire.*

Must and Have to

1) We use **must** when something is a necessity or an obligation:

*You **must switch** your phone **off** during the meeting.*

*She **must work** harder if she wants to pass her test.*

2) We use **must** when the obligation comes from the person speaking or writing. **Must** is personal. We use **have to** to show that the obligation comes from another person or institution, or the situation. **Have to** is impersonal. Compare:

*I haven't met Ann for ages. I **must meet** her. (= I think it's necessary)*

*My eyesight isn't very good. I **have to wear** glasses for reading. (= because of my poor eyesight, and **not** because I think it's necessary)*

*You **have to renew** your residence permit after three months. (This is the law)*

*I **must get up** early tomorrow.*

3) We use **mustn't** to say that something is prohibited, it is not allowed:

*You **mustn't smoke** in here.*

4) We use **don't (doesn't) have to** when there is no need or obligation to do something:

*You **don't have to** study law to be a scientist.*

*She **doesn't have to** make a decision at once. She can have a think for a few weeks.*

We can also use **needn't** with the same meaning:

*You **don't have to (needn't)** come to work so early.*

*They **needn't** wait for their order. They can collect it now.*

*You **don't have to** use your mobile phone – use my office phone. (= you **needn't** use ...)*

5) We use **have to** as an equivalent of **must** to refer to the *future* or the *perfect* tenses:

*They'll **have to** get used to driving on the left.*

*We've just **had to** cancel the meeting.*

Should

1) We use **should** and **shouldn't** to give or ask for advice or to give an opinion:

*You **should** always learn something about a country before visiting it.*

***Should** I invite them out to dinner after the meeting?*

2) We also use **should** when something is not right or what we expect:

*I wonder why Jim isn't here yet. He **should** be here by now.*

*They **shouldn't** be having coffee at this time. They **should** be working.*

3) We use **should have done** when we didn't do something but it would have been the right thing to do:

*I wonder why they are so late. They **should have been** here an hour ago.*

*It was a great party last night. You **should have come**. Why didn't you?*

Passive Voice

We use a passive structure:

1) when we want to focus on the object of an active sentence. We do this by putting the object at the beginning of the sentence. Compare:

*The company employs **two hundred people**. (Active sentence)*

***Two hundred people** are employed by the company. (Passive sentence)*

2) when we are not interested in *who* carries out an action or it is not necessary to know:

*The house **was built** in 1945.*

*A new strategy **is being developed** at the moment.*

*Some improvements **have been made** to the plan.*

3) with **by** if we want to mention who performs the action:

*He **was personally invited by** Mike.*

*You **will be met** at the airport **by** a company driver.*

4) to describe processes and procedures:

*First of all market research **is carried out** and the drug **is developed** in the labs. Then the trials **are approved** by the Ethics committee and the drug **is tested** on animals. The results of the trials **are published** and a licence **is applied for**. Then approval **is granted** by the authorities, and the drug **is tested** on humans. Finally, the drug representatives **are trained**.*

- 5) in a formal or impersonal style:
*Company procedures **must be respected** at all times.*
*It **has been agreed** that the design **will be modified**.*
*It **was felt** that our department **should be restructured**.*

Reported Speech

- 1) We use reported speech to say what someone else said at a different time or place. The tense used depends on the time when the report is made:

*I've just seen Kevin and he **says he wants** to change his job. (The situation is **present**, therefore the verb is **in the present**)*

*I saw Kevin last week and he **said he wanted** to change his job. (The situation is **past**, therefore the verb is **in the past**)*

- 2) There are no *absolute* rules for moving the verb one tense back:

*He says, «I **am going** to move to London».*

*He **said he is going** to move to London. (This is still his intention)*

*Or: He **said he was going** to move to London. (This may still be his intention but he may have changed his mind)*

- 3) In reported speech **will** becomes **would**, but **could**, **might** and **should** do *not* change:

*He said he **would** be on time.*

*She said you **should** try to persuade them.*

- 4) Yes/ no questions are reported using **if** or **whether**:

«Do you agree on their prices?»

*He asked me **if** I agreed on their prices.*

- 5) The word order in reported questions is different. Compare:

When do you think you can start?

*He asked me **when I thought I could start**.*

What do you do?

*He asked me **what I did**.*