

Grammar - Verbs and Tenses

Most **verbs** are **action words**. They tell you what people, animals or things are doing.

Examples:

knock
read

write
climb

cook
swim

The **simple present tense** expresses a general truth or a customary action. Examples:

Uncle Joe **wears** glasses.

Ducks **love** water.

The sun **rises** in the east.

The children **go** to school by bus.

You can also use the **simple present tense** to talk about things that are planned for the future.

Melanie **starts** school tomorrow.

We **move** to our new house next month.

We **fly** to London next Thursday.

My brother **leaves** work at four o'clock.

Exercise #1: Underline the verbs in the following sentences.

1. These toys belong to Cindy.
2. We never cross the street without looking.
3. Many stores close on Sunday.
4. Penguins live at the North Pole.

Exercise #2: Fill in the blanks with the simple present tense of the verbs in parentheses.

1. Winter _____ after Autumn. (come)
2. You _____ tired. (look)
3. Judy _____ English very well. (speak)
4. He _____ very fast. (type)
5. Everyone _____ mistakes. (make)
6. Kate always _____ sandwiches for lunch. (eat)

Am, Is and Are

The words **am**, **is** **are** are also verbs, but they are not action words. They are simple present tense of the verb **be**.

Use **am** with the pronoun **I**, and **is** with the pronouns **he**, **she** and **it**. Use **are** with the pronouns **you**, **we** and **they**.

It **is** very hot today. It **is** not very comfortable.

I **am** Peter. I **am** not Paul.

She **is** Mrs. Johnson. She **is** a doctor.

He **is** a firefighter.

We **are** in the same class, but we **are** not on the same team.

	Singular	Plural
First person	I am	we are
Second person	you are	you are
Third person	he is	they are
	she is	they are
	it is	they are

Contractions are shortened forms of multiple words:

I am	=	I'm	am not	=	aren't (only in questions)
you are	=	you're	is not	=	isn't
he is	=	he's	are not	=	aren't
she is	=	she's	they are	=	they're
it is	=	it's	we are	=	we're

In questions, use **aren't** as a contraction of **am not**. For example, you can say:

I'm taller than you, **aren't** I?

But in a statement you say:

I'm not as old as you.

Use the verb **is** with singular nouns and **are** with plural nouns. Examples:

The camel **is** a desert animal.

Vegetables and fruit **are** healthy foods.

They playground **is** full of people.

The balloons **are** colorful.

These people **are** very busy.

Use **is** and **are** with the word **there** to say what you can see and hear.

There is a castle on the hill.

There is a fence around that house.

Is there any food in the fridge?

There are a few sharks in the bay.

Learn this contraction:

there is = there's

Exercise #3: Fill in the blanks with **am**, **is** or **are**.

1. They _____ my good friends.
2. He _____ a soldier.
3. You _____ taller than Charlie.
4. She _____ very ill.
5. It _____ a sunny day.
6. I _____ angry with my parents.
7. You _____ welcome at my house.
8. We _____ very hungry.

Exercise #4: Fill in the blanks with **is** or **are**.

1. John's dog _____ not friendly.
2. Rosie _____ fourteen years old.
3. These flowers _____ quite colorful.
4. Those two schools _____ close to each other.
5. Math _____ a challenging subject for me.
6. All of the windows on the second floor _____ open.
7. Sue and Jane _____ neighbors.
8. His hair _____ curly.

Exercise #5: Fill in the blanks with **There is** or **There are**.

1. _____ a fence around the barn.
2. _____ trees along the road.
3. _____ a rainbow in the sky.
4. _____ lots of parks in our town.
5. _____ many different kinds of animals in the zoo.
6. _____ plenty of food on the table.
7. _____ a church on the hilltop.
8. _____ only a few customers in the shop.

Present Progressive Tense

The present progressive tense is used to talk about actions in the present, or things that are still going on or happening now. Examples:

Mom **is knitting** a sweater for Jacob.

I **am writing** a letter to Grandpa Joe.

The phone **is ringing**.

He **is riding** a horse in the meadow.

They **are swimming** in the pool.

He's **taking** a walk in the park.

They **are practicing** tai chi.

We **are rushing** to the airport to pick up Mary.

Here's how you form the present progressive tense:

am + present participle

is + present participle

are + present participle

The **present participle** is the form of a verb ending with -ing. For example:

show + ing = showing

come + ing = coming

You have to double the last letter of some verbs before you add **-ing**. For example:

get + ing = getting

nod + ing = nodding

jog + ing = jogging

stop + ing = stopping

Notice that the verbs above are all **short verbs** of just **one syllable**. They all end with a **consonant** such as **t,d,g, p** and have only **one vowel** before the consonant.

If a verb ends in **e**, you usually have to drop the **e** before you add **-ing**. For example:

chase + ing = chasing

cycle + ing = cycling

drive + ing = driving

smile + ing = smiling

Use the present progressive tense to talk about things you have planned to do, or things that are going to happen in the future. To form the present progressive tense, use **am**, **is** and **are** as **helping verbs** or **auxiliary verbs**.

When **are** you **taking** me to the zoo?

We **are having** a barbecue later this evening.
We **are going** camping tomorrow.
I'm **starting** piano lessons soon.
Who's **bringing** salad to the cookout?
My favorite television show **is starting** in a few minutes.
I **am visiting** my cousin next month.

Exercise #6: Write the present participle of these verbs.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. come _____ | 6. go _____ |
| 2. run _____ | 7. bring _____ |
| 3. sleep _____ | 8. write _____ |
| 4. fall _____ | 9. climb _____ |
| 5. jump _____ | 10. ask _____ |

Exercise #7: Fill in the blanks with **the progressive tense of the verbs in parentheses**.

1. They _____ the roller-coaster ride. (enjoy)
2. Jill _____ her hair. (wash)
3. It _____ dark. (get)
4. The dentist _____ Sue's teeth. (examine)
5. The train _____ through the tunnel. (pass)
6. The men _____ very hard in the sun. (work)
7. What _____ the theater _____ today? (show)
8. We _____ a snowman. (make)
9. The plane _____ above the clouds. (fly)
10. The teachers _____ a meeting. (have)

Have and Has

The verbs **have** and **has** are used to say what people own or possess. They are also used to talk about things that people do or get, such as illnesses. These words are the simple present tense of the verb **have**. Examples:

We **have** breakfast at 7:00 A.M.
Peter **has** a sore knee.
Monkeys **have** long tails.
Mom **has** a cold.
She **has** long hair.
Jenny often **has** sandwiches for lunch.

Use **has** with he, she, it, and with singular nouns. Use **have** with I, you, we, they, and with plural nouns. Here's a table to help you remember the rules:

	Singular	Plural
First person	I have	we have
Second person	you have	you have
Third person	he has	they have
	she has	they have
	it has	they have

Learn these contractions:

I have	=	I've	we have	=	we've
you have	=	you've	they have	=	they've
he has	=	he's	have not	=	haven't
she has	=	she's	has not	=	hasn't
it has	=	it's			

Exercise #8: Fill in the blanks with **have** or **has**.

1. We _____ a new neighbor.
2. He _____ a bad temper.
3. I often _____ quite colorful.
4. Those two schools _____ fruit for dessert.
5. You _____ a good chance of winning the prize.
6. She always _____ oatmeal for breakfast.
7. The broom _____ a blue handle.
8. They never _____ any problems when traveling into the city
9. The children _____ a new swingset.
10. Chicago _____ a very big airport.
11. All the passengers _____ their tickets.

Present Perfect Tense

Use the **present perfect tense** to talk about happenings in the past that explain or affect the present. The verbs **have** and **has** are used as “helping” or auxiliary verbs to form the present perfect tense. Examples:

It's **been** very wet today.

Sam's **cut** her finger.

Kim **has scored** two goals.

The Lees **have moved** to Ohio.

They **have opened** a new shop.

To form the present perfect tense join have or has to the past participle of the verb:

have + past participle

has + past participle

The **past participle** of a regular verb usually ends in **-ed**, just like the simple past tense. But the past participles of irregular verbs don't follow this rule.

Exercise #9: Write the past participle of these verbs.

Verb	Simple Past Tense	Past Participle	Present Perfect Tense
break	broke	broken	has broken have broken
drink	drank	drunk	has drunk have drunk
sing	sang	sung	has sung have sung
buy			
do			
hear			
know			

Exercise #10: Fill in the blanks with **the present perfect tense of the verbs in parentheses.** (has/have + past participle)

1. Mario _____ his car key. (lose)
2. All the guests _____. (arrive)
3. Janie _____ a soccer goal. (score)
4. Peter _____ in the tent several times. (sleep)
5. I _____ this movie. (see)
6. Dad and I _____ a big fish. (catch)
7. It _____ not _____ for two months. (rain)
8. The plane _____ at the airport. (land)

Simple Past Tense

Use the **simple past tense** to talk about things that happened in the past. Examples:

- Mary **gave** her mother a red apple.
 Will **grew** three inches over the summer.
 Dinosaurs **lived** millions of years ago.
 I **bought** a new camera last week.
 Dad **took** me to the carnival yesterday.
 Jack and Jill **went** up the hill.
 The hikers **found** an old camping site.

Regular and Irregular Verbs

The simple past tense of most verbs ends in -ed. These verbs are called regular verbs.

Base Form	Simple Past
bake	baked
open	opened
pull	pulled
shout	
work	

- Examples:
 We **visited** our uncle last week.
 Dad **closed** the front door.

The **simple past tense** is usually formed by adding -ed to the verb. For example:

jump + ed = jumped
laugh + ed = laughed
look + ed = looked

If the verb ends with -e, just add -d. For example:

agree + d = agreed
die + d = died
live + d = lived

Remember these spelling rules: You must double the last letter of some verbs before adding **-ed**

For example:

grab + ed = grabbed
rip + ed = ripped
slam + ed = slammed

Notice that the verbs above are all **short verbs** of just **one syllable**. They all end with a **consonant** such as **b,d,m,p** and have only one **single vowel** before the consonant.

With verbs that end in -y, change the -y to i before adding -ed. For example:

bury + ed = buried
carry + ed = carried
cry + ed = cried
try + ed = tried

The simple past form of some verbs does not end in **-ed**. Such verbs are called **irregular verbs**. The simple past tense of some irregular verbs does not change at all.

Base Form	Simple Past	Base Form	Simple Past
cost	cost	put	put
cut	cut	read	read
hit	hit	split	split
hurt	hurt	shut	shut

Most irregular verbs, however, take a different form in the simple past tense. Examples:

Sam **bent** the stick.

Tom **shot** and scored a goal.

A bird **flew** into the house.

Base Form	Simple Past	Base Form	Simple Past
bend	bent	fall	fell
break	broke	fly	flew
bring	brought	get	got
buy	bought	sleep	slept

Write the **simple past tense** of these verbs:

Verb	Simple Past Tense	Verb	Simple Past Tense
take		tell	
walk		write	
rain		sit	
shut		read	
cry		close	
open		cook	

Exercise #11: Fill in the blanks with **the simple past tense of the verbs in parentheses.**

Mario _____ home alone. (go)

1. She _____. (arrive)
2. The wind _____ throughout the night. (blow)
3. An apple _____ on his head. (drop)
4. Mr. Jones _____ down the stairs. (fall)
5. A frog _____ into the pond. (jump)
6. Jack _____ the highest grade on the test. (get)
7. The party _____ at 8:00 P.M. (begin)
8. He _____ his old car. (sell)
9. Teddy _____ up the ladder carefully. (climb)
10. Who _____ all the windows? (shut)

Was and Were

The verbs **was** and **were** are also forms of the verb **be**. **Was** is the simple past tense of **am** and **is**. Use **was** with the pronouns **I, he, she and it**, and with **singular nouns**.

Examples:

Thomas Edison **was** a famous inventor.

Sue **was** at the library this morning.

It **was** very wet on Monday.

Last year he **wasn't** tall enough to reach the highest shelf.

Were is the simple past tense of **are**. Use **were** with the pronouns **you, we, they** and with **plural nouns**.

Examples:

The Romans **were** brave soldiers.

Those **were** my favorite clothes.

There **weren't** any clouds in the sky.

We **were** on the same team.

	Singular	Plural
First person	I was	we were
Second person	you were	you were
Third person	he was	they were
	she was	they were
	it was	they were

Here's a table to show you the different forms of the verb **be**:

	Simple Present	Simple Past
First person singular	am	was
Second person singular	are	were
Third person singular	is	was
First person plural	are	were
Second person plural	are	were
Third person plural	are	were

Learn these **contractions**:

was + not = wasn't
were + not = weren't

Past Progressive Tense

Use the **past progressive tense** to talk about actions that were going on at a certain moment in the past. Examples:

Ms. Charles **was cleaning** the whiteboard.
Sally **was packing** her books into her backpack.
The twins **were fighting** in the corner.
Dad **was cooking** our supper when I came home.

You form the past progressive tense like this:

was + present participle
were + present participle

In the examples above, **was** and **were** are called **helping verbs** or **auxiliary verbs**. They help form the past progressive tense when you join them to the present participle (the form of verbs ending in **-ing**). For example:

Ben **was doing** his homework.
Peter **was making** a model of a bridge.
Veronica **was playing** with her friends.

Exercise #12: Fill in the blanks with **was** or **were**

1. We _____ the champions last year.
2. Mom and dad _____ on vacation last week.
3. The weather _____ fine this morning.
4. There _____ a lot of people at our party Saturday night.
5. He _____ sick yesterday so he stayed home from school.
6. There _____ a small lake here many years ago.

Future Tense

Use the future tense for things that have not happened yet, but are going to happen. Use the verbs **shall** and **will** as **helping verbs** or **auxiliary verbs** to form the future tense. Examples:
They **will finish** the job next week.
I **shall be** eight years old next year.
The weatherman says it **will rain** this afternoon.

	Singular	Plural
First person	I shall I will	we shall we will
Second person	you will	you will
Third person	he will	they will
	she will	they will
	it will	they will

Learn these **contractions**:

I shall	=	I'll	we shall	=	we'll
I will	=	I'll	we will =		we'll
she will	=	you'll	they will	=	they'll
he will	=	he'll	will not	=	won't
it will	=	it'll			

There are other ways of talking about future actions and happenings. You can use **going to**.

Examples:

We **are going to bake** a cake this afternoon.

They **are going to wash** the car for Dad.

It **is going to get** dark very soon.

You can also use the **simple present tense** to talk about things that have been arranged for the future. Examples:

The new supermarket **opens** tomorrow.

Kate **moves** to the second grade next year.

We **have** a history test next week.

The bus **leaves** in ten minutes.

Can and Could

The verbs **can** and **could** are both **helping or auxiliary verbs**. Use **can** and **could** to talk about people's ability to do things. **Can** and **could** are used with the pronouns **I, you, he, she, it, we and they**, and with **singular or plural nouns**. **Could** is the past tense of **can**. Examples:

He **can run** faster than Arthur.

I knew you **could do** it if you tried.

She **could not come** because she was not feeling well.

People often use **can** when they are asking for permission to do something. For example:

Can I use your pen? Yes, here it is.

I am so full - I **can't eat** anymore.

When you put **not** after **can**, you write it as one word: **cannot**

Learn these contractions:

cannot = can't

could not = couldn't

May and Might

May and **might** are **helping or auxiliary verbs**.

Use **may** to ask if you are allowed to do something, or to give someone permission to do something. Examples:

May I watch television now?

May I borrow your pen?

May is also used to talk about things that are likely to happen. Examples:

If it continues to rain, there **may be** a flood.

I **may go** to Sue's birthday party.

Might is used as the past tense of **may**. Examples:
 He realized that he **might catch** the earlier train if he hurried.
 I knew my coach **might find** out.

You can also use **might** to talk about things that are possible. For example:
 Put your purse away or it **might get** stolen.
 You **might slip**, so hold on to the railing.

Do, Does and Did

Use **do**, **does** and **did** to talk about actions.
 Use **do** with the pronouns **I, you, we and they**, and with **plural nouns**. Use **does** with the pronouns **he, she and it** and with **singular nouns**.

Did is the **simple past tense** of **do** and **does**.

Examples: He **does** such interesting work.
 Dad **does** the dishes.
 You **did** well on the test.

They **do** amazing tricks.
 They **did** the dusting and cleaning.

Here's a table to remind you about the use of do and does :			Here's a table to remind you about the use of the verb did :		
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
First person	I do	we do	First person	I did	we did
Second person	you do	you do	Second person	you did	you did
Third person	he does	they do	Third person	he did	they did
	she does	they do		she did	they did
	it does	they do		it did	they did

Learn these contractions:
 do not = don't
 does not = doesn't
 did not = didn't

You can also use **do**, **does**, and **did** as helping verbs to ask and answer questions. Examples:

Where **did** you find the wallet?
Do you **like** ice cream? Yes I **do**.
Did it **snow** last night? No, it **didn't**.

Why **did** he **leave** so suddenly?
Does everyone **have** a dictionary?

Use **do not**, **does not** and **did not** to make other verbs **negative**. Examples:
The baby **does not look** very happy.
Dad **did not catch** his train.
Cats **do not like** water.

Exercise #13: Fill in the blanks with **do**, **does** or **did**.

1. Jack _____ not do well on the exam last week.
2. Where _____ eggs come from?
3. What _____ this word mean?
4. _____ he drink coffee?
5. Where _____ you buy that luggage?

Would and Should

The verb **would** is another **helping or auxiliary verb**. Use **would** as the past tense of will. It is polite to use would like when you are offering people things, or asking for something yourself.
Examples:

Peter said he **would come**.

John and Sue said they **would meet** me at the airport.

Would you **like** a cup of coffee?

Would you **like** a chocolate? Yes, please, I would love one.

Should is a helping or auxiliary verb. Use should to talk about necessary actions or things that people ought to do. Examples:

Children **should not play** in traffic.

I **should drink** more water.

You **should** always **say** thank you.

Learn these contractions:

I would	=	I'd	we would	=	we'd
you would	=	you'd	they would	=	they'd
he would	=	he'd	should not	=	shouldn't
she would	=	she'd	would not	=	wouldn't

Exercise #14: Fill in the blanks with **would** or **should**.

1. Every student _____ have a calculator.
2. _____ you like some coffee?
3. We _____ all exercise thirty minutes per day.
4. _____ you like to play a game with me?
5. Children _____ not watch too much television.