

Quick English Grammar

A. TENSES

Present Simple: IN GENERAL

I usually play squash on Tuesdays.
 We don't eat toast for breakfast.
 Do you like watching soccer?
 He/she/it likes milk.
 He/she/it doesn't eat red meat.
 Does he/she/it sleep well?
 I am a Business English student.
 He/she/it isn't always happy.
 Are you/we/they from Australia?

Present Continuous: AROUND NOW

I am learning English at the moment.
 You/they/it aren't eating right now.
 Is he/she/it working today?

Past Simple: FINISHED TIME

I played squash last Tuesday.
 We didn't eat lunch yesterday.
Did he watch the soccer last night?

I was a good student at High School.
 I/he/she/it wasn't happy on Friday.
Was she at the party last Tuesday?

They were friendly when I met them.
 Yo weren't at my party last week.
Were you/we/they born in Australia?

Past Continuous: AT THE SAME TIME IN THE PAST

While I/he/she/it was going for a walk a car hit a tree nearby.
 I/he/she/it wasn't watching as you took the photo.
Was I/he/she/it playing with the ball when it got lost?

You/we/they were watching TV at eight o'clock last night.
 You/we/they weren't listening while I was giving the speech.
Were you/we/they looking for your baby when the police rang?

Key ideas:

general information / facts
 state verbs (know, like)

*** Do verbs ***

+ first form

- don't / doesn't + infinitive

? do / don't / doesn't + infinitive

*** he/she/it + -s ***

(except for can/could etc.)

*** Be verbs ***

Am/is/are + noun/adjective

Key ideas:

now or around now

verbs of change

*** Verb form ***

Verb to be (am/is/are) + main verb + -ing

! state verbs don't have a continuous form (-ing)

Key ideas:

finished actions in finished time (e.g. 1987, last May, 5 minutes ago)

finished/completed processes

*** Do verbs ***

+ second form

- didn't + infinitive

? did / didn't + infinitive

*** Be verbs ***

was/were + noun/adjective

! Use only Past Simple to say that one thing happened after another !

Key ideas:

something was happening around a point in time in the past
 something you were already doing when something else happened

*** Verb form ***

Verb to be (was/were) + main verb + -ing

! Use Past Simple and Past Continuous together to say that something happened in the middle of something else, e.g.:
 „Matt phoned while we were having dinner.“

Present Perfect Simple: BEFORE OR UP TO NOW

I/you/we/they have killed the cat.
 I/you/we/they have not been happy for some time.
 Have I/you/we/they ever seen a UFO?

He/she/it has finished the homework.
 He/she/it has never run a marathon.
 Has he/she/it ever eaten snails?

Present Perfect Continuous: UP TO NOW / RECENTLY

I/you/we/they have been playing golf for three years.
 I/you/we/they haven't been getting on very well with Peter recently.
 How long have you/we/they been living here?

He/she/it has been doing her homework for two hours.
 He/she/it has not been running well since last year.
 Has he/she/it been behaving today?

Past Perfect Simple: BEFORE OR UP TO THE PAST

He/she/it ate the kangaroo after we had killed it.
 He/she/it had never run a marathon before the one in Hamburg in 2002.
 Had I/you/we/they ever watched a video of a movie before it was shown in the cinema?

Past Perfect Continuous: UP TO THE PAST

I/you/we ... had been playing golf for years before I/you/we ... won a game.
 They hadn't been getting on very well before they split up.
 How long had I/you/he/she/it/we/they been living here before the move?

Key ideas:

unfinished open time: life experience (have you ever?)
 finished actions or states in unfinished time
 news / one time only / it's the 1st, 2nd, 10th time...
 once-only actions or states with a result now
 negative sentences

*** Verb form ***

Have/has + 3rd form (past participle)

! Take care of irregular verbs !

! Use Present Perfect for news, use it together with just/already/yet !

! Use Present Perfect when the situation has a connection to know !

Key ideas:

continuous of repeated actions or processes from the past up to now
 recent continuous actions or processes with a result now (finished or unfinished)

*** Verb form ***

Have been/Has been + main verb + -ing

Key ideas:

actions or processes that finished before another action in the past
 states (e.g. know, like)

*** Verb form ***

Had + 3rd form

Key ideas:

repeated or continuous actions or processes before or up to another action or time in the past
 repeated or continuous actions or processes (finished or unfinished) with a past result

*** Verb form ***

Had been + main verb + -ing

B. MODAL VERBS

- I. Some modal verb uses have both a present/future form (modal verb + infinitive) and a past form (past form of the modal verb + infinitive)

Present / Future: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Can ≠ can't = cannot: only for present simple or future

Possibility: We can see the lake from our hotel window.

Ability: She can run 100 metres in 11 seconds.

Permission: We can stay up late.

(be) able to (=can): (for all tenses)

can be used in any tense

I have been able to drive for 25 years.

We will be able to visit Canada next year.

Have to: only for present simple or future

Obligation (lack of choice): I have to work until 7.30.

must: only for present simple or future

In laws: The law says all workers must pay tax.

Strong recommendation: You must read that book.

Important to do: Ouch! I must go to the dentist.

Mustn't

Important not to do: You must not play with fire.

Don't had to = don't need to = needn't

Free choice: We don't have to go. It's up to us.

You don't need to say sorry = you needn't say sorry.

Will ≠ won't

Promise: I will finish the report by Monday.

Refusal: She won't agree to marry me

Past: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Could(n't) (past of can): only for general past, possibility/ability/permission

Possibility: We could see the lake from our hotel window.

Ability: She could run 100 metres in 11 seconds.

Permission: We could stay up late

Was/were able to = could: general possibility/ability

Possibility: We were able to see the lake from our hotel.

Ability: She could run 100 metres in 11 seconds.

Was/were able to = managed to: specific situation

We were able to save everyone from the fire.

We managed to stay awake until the end of the party.

Couldn't: all negative situations

We couldn't save everyone from the fire.

We couldn't stay up late.

Had to

Obligation (lack of choice): I had to work until 7.30.

Had to

In laws: The law said all workers had to pay tax.

Strong recommendation: She told me I (just) had to read that book.

Important: My tooth hurt so much I had to go to the dentist.

Wasn't/Weren't allowed to (passive form)

I was not allowed to play with fire.

Didn't have to = didn't need to

(free choice): We didn't have to go. It was up to us.

You didn't need to go to the lecture.

Would(n't)

Promise: She said she would finish the report by Monday.

Refusal: She wouldn't agree to marry me.

- II. Some modal verb uses only have a past form (modal verb + infinitive)

Present

./.

Past: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Would (special use) = used to ≠ didn't use to

Old habit one no longer has: I used to go to bed far too late.

When I lived in Thailand I would often work all night.

- III. Some modal verb uses only have a present/future form (modal verb + infinitive)

Present/Future: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Shall ≠ shan't

Making or asking for a suggestion (with „I“ and „we“):

A: Shall we go to the ball, Queen Lizzy?

B: No, we shan't

Shall I carry that bag for you?

Past

./.

IV. Can: Some modal verb uses only have a present/future form (modal verb + infinitive)

Present

Can / could / may

Asking for permission: Can/Could/May I borrow your pen/book/car?

Can / could / would / will

Offer: Can/Could I offer you a lift to the party?

Offer: Would you like a lift to the party?

Request: Can/Could/Would/Will you pass the salt please?

Had better (not)

You should do something or there will be a problem (specific situation only):

You had better tell her that you are not a man.

Past

./.

V. Some modal verb uses have a present/future form (modal verb + infinitive) and a past form (modal verb + have + 3rd form)

[Talk about fantasy and therefore special past form with „have“ here]

Present / Future: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Could: Possible actions

We could go to the party.

Fantasy: I could stay here forever.

Fantasy: I wish I could stay here forever.

Must ≠ can't = couldn't

Certainly: He must/can't be the thief.

May(n't) = might(n't) = could

50/50: His story may/might/could be true.

Might(n't)

Fantasy: George Bush might be a zombie.

Should(n't) = ought to / ought not to

Right thing: You're tired. You should go to bed.

With „I think ...“, „Do you think ...“, „I don't think ...“:

I think I should tell her about the snake in the loo!

Expectations: They should be here by 7 p.m..

Something's wrong: This should cost EUR 10, not EUR 1,000!

Would(n't)

Fantasy: I would live in Thailand if I had the chance.

Past: Modal Verb + have + 3rd form

Could have (done): possible actions that didn't happen

Possible actions: Actions (finished or unfinished) that didn't happen:

We could have gone to the party (but we didn't).

Fantasy: I could have stayed here forever.

Fantasy: I wish I could have stay a little longer.

Must have (done) ≠ can't have (done) = couldn't have (done)

Certainly: He must/can't have been the thief.

May(n't) have (done) = might(n't) have (done) = could have (done)

50/50: His story may/might/could have been true.

Might(n't) have (done)

Fantasy: George Bush might have been a zombie in 1975.

Needn't have (done)

Wasn't necessary but did it:

I needn't have taken the umbrella because it didn't rain.

Should(n't) have (done) = ought to / ought not to have (done)

Right thing: You were tired. You should have gone to bed.

With „I think ...“, „Do you think ...“, „I don't think ...“:

I think I should have told her about the snake in the loo!

Expectations: They should have been here by 7 p.m..

Something was wrong: It should have cost EUR 10, not EUR 1,000!

Would(n't) have (done)

Fantasy: I would have stayed in Thailand if I'd had the chance.

Present / Future: Modal Verb + Infinitive

Will ≠ won't

Spontaneous: „The phone's ringing. I'll answer it.“

Prediction: „St. Pauli will win next Saturday.“

Fact: „In 2006 my birthday will be on a Thursday.“

Past: Modal Verb + have + 3rd form

Will ≠ won't have (done)

To say what is: „John will have answered the phone by now.“

Sure to have: „ St. Pauli will have already won by now.“

Finished: „Lara's birthday party will have finished.“

- VI. Some passive verbs work a little like modal verbs, and have a present/future form (passive verb + to + infinitive) as well as a past form (passive verb + to + have + 3rd form):

[Talk about fantasy and therefore special past form with „have“ here]

Present

She is said to be a very successful businesswoman.

He is reported to be hiding somewhere in Hamburg.

She is expected to pay the salaries next week.

Past

She is said to have been married six times.

He is reported to have been hiding somewhere in Hamburg.

She was expected to have paid the salaries last week.

C. CONDITIONALS & WISH

Zero Conditional

(every event, every time result)

If I leave home at 7.45 a.m., I get to school at 8.00 a.m.

When I play squash, I am always sore the next morning.

First Conditional

(real possibility in future, future result)

If the sun doesn't shine soon, I will buy air tickets to Mallorca.

If Helen goes to the party, I can get a lift with her.

Second Conditional

(present/future fantasy, present/future result)

If i were you, I would study over the weekend. *(but I am not you!)*If Helen went to the party, I would get a lift with her. *(but she isn't going to the party!)*

Wish

(present/future fantasy)

I wish I were on a beach in Thailand. *(but I am not on a beach in ...)*I wish I had more money in my pocket. *(but I don't have more money in ...)*I wish I could/would make some more friends. *(complaint)*I wish the economy would improve. *(complaint)*I wish you wouldn't interrupt me all the time. *(complaint)*

IN GENERAL

*** when/if + first form (Present Simple), Present Simple ***

REAL FUTURE POSSIBILITY

*** if + first form (present simple), will/can/going to ... + infinitive ***

*** also with when, as soon as, before, after, till, until & while when talking about the future, but only „if ...“ is called the first conditional ***

UNREALISTIC PRESENT/FUTURE SITUATION

*** if + second form (Past Simple), would/could/might + infinitive ***

*** wish + someone + could/would(n't) + action verb ***

Third conditional

(past fantasy, present/past fantasy result)

If I had studied harder, I would be rich today. (*I didn't study harder and I am not rich today!*)

If Helen had gone to the party, I could have got a lift with her. (*Helen didn't to to the party and didn't give me a lift!*)

Wish

(past fantasy/regrets/complaints about the past)

I wish I had studied harder at school. (*but I didn't*)

I wish I hadn't said what I said. (*but I did*)

I wish I had made more friends at high school. (*but I didn't*)

I wish you hadn't interrupted me all the time. (*but you did*)

Wish vs. Hope

(real possibilities not fantasy)

I wish you all the luck in the world.

I hope you have all the luck in the world.

I hope you win the grammar award tomorrow.

PAST FANTASY WITH PAST OR PRESENT RESULT

*** if + Past Perfect, would/could/might + infinitive (present result) ***

*** if + Past Perfect, would/could/might + Present Perfect (past result) ***

*** wish + someone + Past Perfect ***

*** wish + someone + noun ***

*** hope + someone + verb ***

D. PASSIVES (VERB „TO BE“ + THIRD FORM)

The active sentence's object is ...

The verb is always active !!!

He drinks a lot of milk.

I am teaching English right now.

My boss paid me yesterday.

While I was drinking a beer, an old friend waved to me.

I have looked after that cat for several days now.

I had never seen the movie before.

I will build a big, blue house.

My boss is going to give me a pay rise.

Mario must have knocked down the door.

The subject in the passive sentence.

Always verb „to be“ + third form

A lot of milk is drunk by him.

English is being taught by me right now.

I was paid by my boss yesterday.

While a beer was being drunk by me, I was waved to by an old friend.

That cat has been looked after by me for several days now.

The movie had never been seen by me before.

A big, blue house will be built by me.

I am going to be given a pay rise by my boss.

The door must have been knocked down by Mario.

E. PREPOSITIONS

I work...	for a company	at a place	in a room	on the 2nd floor
with colleagues	from 8 a.m. To 5 p.m.	until 5 p.m.	for 8 hours a day	in a specific industry
I was born...	at 8.30 a.m.	on the 14 th of April	in 1964	in the morning
at night	on Christmas Day	before my twin sister	after my twin brother	in April

The photo is...	up the stairs down the hall	Flying over Hamburg	on the table on the wall	under the table
on the right on the left	inside in the kitchen	outside on the grass	behind the flowers	in front of the lamp
on top of the name card	underneath the book	above the heater	below the painting	in between the two paintings

I'm head of finance	Responsible for in charge of	I invest money in	I spend money on	I'm at work/ on holiday
I come to work on time	I was late but in time	Reduce by 10%	Increase from 5% to 8%	An order for two Ferraris

F. REPORTED SPEECH

Direct Speech

John: „I don't play soccer on Fridays, but I sometimes play on Mondays. „

Otmar: „I can work on Saturday.“

Anne: „He is sleeping at the moment.“

Bill: „I have never been to the Netherlands.“

Fred: „I didn't see you when you were visiting last week.“

Tim: „I will go to the party.“

Sally: „I am going to watch a play next week.“

Val: „I have been planning to see that film for the past three weeks.“

Direct Speech

Mary: „Don't come to the party.“

Chris: „(Don't) do your homework!“

Lara: „Could you please finish up to exercise two?“

Shirley: „I hadn't met John before he got married to Betty.“

Direct Questions

Max: „Where are you going?“
(Question/Helper/Subject/Verb)

Jenny: „Do you play tennis?“

Reported Speech: (one tense back)

John said (that) he didn't play soccer on Fridays, but (that) he sometimes played on Mondays.

Otmar said (that) he could work on Saturday.

Anne said (that) he was sleeping at that time.

Bill said (that) he had never been to the Netherlands.

Fred said he hadn't seen me when I was visiting the week before. (no change for Past Continuous here)

Tim said he would go to the party.

Sally said (that) she was going to watch a play the following week.

Val said (that) she had been planning to see that film for the past three weeks.

Reported Speech: Said, Told and Asked (don't go one tense back)

Mary said not to come to the party.

(said (not) to do something)

Chris told them (not) to do their homework.

(tell someone (not) to do something)

Lara asked (told) the students to finish up to exercise two.

(ask/tell someone (not) to do something)

Shirley said (that) she hadn't met John before he (had) got married to Betty.

Reported Questions

Max asked where they (we, I was) were going.

(change the Helper with the Subject and the direct question)

Jenny asked if/whether I played tennis.

(use „if“ or „whether“ in yes/no questions)

G. ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Adjectives describe nouns:

A bad teacher
A quick thinker
A beautiful dancer
(article/adjective/noun)

A talented horse rider
(article/adjective/noun)

The famous Mona Lisa,
(article/adjective/noun)

Adverbs describe verbs, adjectives and other adverbs:

teaches badly.
thinks quickly.
dances beautifully
(verb/adverb)

on an incredibly quick horse ...
(article/adverb/adjective/noun)

very beautifully painted by ...
(adverb/adverb/verb)

To change most adjectives into adverbs, just add "-ly":

slow	slowly
tired	tiredly
sad	sadly

To change adjectives ending in "-y" into adverbs, change the "-y" to "-ily":

happy	happily
funny	funnily

Some adjectives end in "-ly":

lovely	-
silly	-
lively	-

Some adjectives and adverbs are irregular:

good	well
fantastic	fantastically
hard	hard
well (=fine)	-
late	late
recent	recently (=lately)
fast	fast
incredible	incredibly
beautiful	beautifully