



ESL English as a second language Verbs

Gerunds, Tenses, Conjugations, Modals, Irregular Verbs & more

ENGLISH VERBS

• Verbs are words that usually show *action*. Some examples are: **talk, walk, sit, eat, go, write**.
- She **eats** a banana.

Sometimes verbs do not show action; instead, some verbs connect the subject with an adjective.

Some examples are: **be, become, get, smell, sound, taste, feel, look, appear, seem**.
- The banana **tastes** sweet.

• Verbs also give information about *time*. Some **verb tenses** are: present, past, future.

today it **rains**, *yesterday* it **rained**, *next week* it **will** rain
- **Simple Tenses** tell about habits, single actions.

- **Continuous** or **Progressive Tenses** focus on action happening at the moment of speaking [continuous tenses always have a form of the verb "be" and "-ing" on the base form of the verb].

Simple	Continuous
It snows in December.	It is snowing now.
John smoked cigars.	John is smoking a cigar now.
Mary ate dinner an hour ago.	Mary was eating when I came.

Transitive verbs are followed by an object (in italics).

- People eat *food*.
- I enjoy *music*.
- John will need a *passport*.

Intransitive verbs are *not* followed by an object.

- Boys run. Fish swim. Children cry.

• Some verbs can be *both* transitive and intransitive.

- Transitive:**
- People **eat** food.
 - John **drives** a car.
 - They **are studying** English.

- Intransitive:**
- People **eat**.
 - John **drives**.
 - They **are studying**.

PAST TENSE OF REGULAR VERBS

• Most verbs are **regular verbs**:
- **ed** is added to make the *past tense* and the *past participle*.

Verbs have three principle parts:

<i>base form</i>	<i>past tense</i>	<i>past participle</i>
play	played	played
want	wanted	wanted
cook	cooked	cooked
study	studied	studied

THE GERUND

A gerund is the **-ing** form of a verb used as a noun
Verb + **ing**: sleeping, playing, walking

It is used in the same way as a noun:

As a subject:
S V
Walking is a good exercise.

THE GERUND

As an object:

S V O
We enjoy playing tennis.

Gerunds are used with certain verbs:

Verb + Gerund
He quits smoking.

Common verbs followed by gerunds:

appreciate	finish (get through)
avoid	keep (keep on)
consider (think about)	quit (give up)
discuss (talk about)	suggest
enjoy	

Go + Gerund

Go is followed by a gerund in certain idiomatic expressions, mostly relating to recreational activities:

They *go dancing* Saturday night.
go boating, go camping, go dancing, go swimming

Passive Forms of Gerund

Passive Gerund
Being + *Past participle*
I appreciate being invited to this event.

Past Gerund

Having + *Past participle*
I appreciate having had the opportunity to meet her.

Past-Passive Gerund

Having been + *Past participle*
I appreciate having been told the news.

VERB TENSES

Simple Present Tense

shows habit; indicates what a person does every day, (each year, every month, etc.).

I **eat**
you **eat**
he/she **eats**
it **eats**
we **eat**
they **eat**

Simple Past Tense

indicates an action which is finished or completed; (can be used with time signals such as ago, yesterday, last week, month, etc.).

I **looked**
you **looked**
he/she **looked**
it **looked**
we **looked**
they **looked**

Simple Future Tense

indicates a planned action to take place in the future; (tomorrow, next week, month, etc.).

Present Continuous Tense

shows action at the moment of speaking; indicates activity taking place while speaker is speaking.

I **am eating**
you **are eating**
he/she **is eating**
it **is eating**
we **are eating**
they **are eating**

Past Continuous Tense

shows action of a prolonged duration which is taking place in the past.

I **was looking**
you **were looking**
he/she **was looking**
it **was looking**
we **were looking**
they **were looking**

Future Continuous Tense

shows an action of some duration which will be taking place in the future.

VERB TENSES

I will live

you **will live**
he/she **will live**
it **will live**
we **will live**
they **will live**

Present Perfect Tense

indicates an action which started at some indefinite time in the past and is NOT completed; the importance of the action continues to the present and may even happen in the future; some words that signal the present perfect or present perfect continuous are *since* and *for, already* and *yet*.

I have studied

you **have studied**
he/she **has studied**
it **has studied**
we **have studied**
they **have studied**

Past Perfect Tense

used when there are TWO verbs in the past to indicate which ACTION happened first; that first action is in the past perfect; the second action is in the simple past.

I had talked

you **had talked**
he/she **had talked**
it **had talked**
we **had talked**
they **had talked**

Future Perfect Tense

used when there are TWO verbs in the future to indicate the completion of one action before the second action; the verb that is completed first is in the future perfect.

I will have worked

you **will have worked**
he/she **will have worked**
it **will have worked**
we **will have worked**
they **will have worked**

I will be living

you **will be living**
he/she **will be living**
it **will be living**
we **will live**
they **will be living**

Present Perfect Continuous Tense

has the same intent as simple present perfect but with emphasis on ACTION/DURATION of an action.

I have been studying

you **have been studying**
he/she **has been studying**
it **has been studying**
we **have been studying**
they **have been studying**

Past Perfect Continuous Tense

has the same purpose as simple past perfect but with emphasis on ACTION/DURATION of an action.

I had been talking

you **had been talking**
he/she **had been talking**
it **had been talking**
we **had been talking**
they **had been talking**

Future Perfect Continuous Tense

has the same purpose as future perfect but with emphasis on ACTION/DURATION of an action.

I will have been working

you **will have been working**
he/she **will have been working**
it **will have been working**
we **will have been working**
they **will have been working**

CONJUGATION OF: TO BE, TO HAVE, TO DO, ETC...

• VERB- BE

The verb **be** is a *linking verb*. It connects a subject with a complement. A complement can be a NOUN, an ADJECTIVE or a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE.

 a doctor.
Mary **is** { intelligent.
 in the library.

 hard-working.
John and Bob **are** { teachers.
 at home.

<i>Present Tense</i>	<i>Past Tense</i>	<i>Future Tense</i>
I am	I was	I will be
you are	you were	you will be
he is	he was	he will be
she is	she was	she will be
it is	it was	it will be
we are	we were	we will be
they are	they were	they will be
<i>Present Perfect</i>	<i>Past Perfect</i>	<i>Future Perfect</i>
I have been	I had been	I will have been
you have been	you had been	you will have been
he has been	he had been	he will have been
she has been	she had been	she will have been
it has been	it had been	it will have been
we have been	we had been	we will have been
they have been	they had been	they will have been

• THERE IS/THERE ARE

Sometimes, the subject of the sentence is NOT in the subject position. Instead, it is at the end of the sentence:

- There **is** a picture on the wall. = A picture **is** on the wall.

"A picture" is the subject; the verb "be" is singular because the subject is singular.

USED TO

- **Used to + verb base form** signals a *past* activity that doesn't happen any more.
- **Subject used to + verb** [base form]
 - I **used to** play with toy trains. [I no longer do that.]
 - She **used to** cook dinner. [She no longer does that.]

BE USED TO

- Be careful not to confuse **be used to** [habit] with **used to** [past activity no longer done].
- **Be used to + Verb + ing** signals a habit that the speaker no longer has.
 - I got a new job last year. I **had to** get up at 5 a.m. every workday. At first, getting up was difficult for me, but now I **am used to getting** up at 5 a.m.
 - Eating dinner at 5 p.m. is no problem. I **am used to eating** dinner early.

BE GOING TO: FUTURE TIME

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| I am going to + base | we are going to + base |
| you are going to + base | you are going to + base |
| he is going to + base | they are going to + base |
| she is going to + base | |
| it is going to + base | |
- Both **be going to** and **will** express future time. Sometimes, however, there are slight differences in meaning and usage.
 - To predict something about the future, use either **be going to** or **will**.
 - It **is going to** rain tomorrow.
 - It **will** rain tomorrow.
 - To express an action that was planned before [in the past], use **be going to**; this is an *intention*, something previously planned.
 - I **am going to** make you dinner. [I've already planned to do this.]
 - He **is not going to** attend class. [He has made plans to be absent.]

QuickStudy

- To express that a speaker wants to do something, such as to volunteer or to help out, use **will**: Someone is knocking at the door. there is NO prediction or previous plan.
 - I **have** a question.
 - I **will** help you!
 - I **will** get it!

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

- There are three main conditional sentences.
- Each sentence has two parts - the **conditional** clause and the **result** clause.
- *The conditional clause* is sometimes called the "if" clause. The conditional sentence is based on what is "true or possible" and what is "not true or impossible." We talk about these conditions in either the present/future or the past.
 - **Present Real** [Possible]

<i>If</i> [present tense]	<i>[future tense/modal]</i>
<i>If</i> I study hard,	I will succeed.
<i>If</i> she comes early,	she can find a good seat.
<i>If</i> they have time,	they will visit their friends.
 - **All these results are possible IF the conditions happen.**
 - **Present Unreal** [Impossible; can never happen]

<i>If</i> [past tense],	[would/could + Simple Verb Form]
<i>If</i> I had a car [now],	I could drive to New York.
[But I <i>don't</i> have a car,	so I <i>can't</i> drive there.]
<i>If</i> Bob weren't sick,	he would go to the party
tonight.	[But Bob <i>is</i> sick,
	so he won't go tonight.]
<i>If</i> she had a TV,	she could watch the game.
[But she <i>doesn't</i>	so she <i>can't</i> watch
have a TV,	the game.]

- In this conditional type, the "past" tense grammar means that the action is **present** and **not possible**. Note the verb "be" in this conditional is always the "were" form for all persons.
 - **Past Unreal** [Impossible to change; did NOT happen]

<i>If</i> [past perfect],	[would/could/might have + past participle]
[I did <i>not</i> study;	therefore, I got a bad grade.]
 - **This past action and result are impossible to change.**

<i>If</i> I had studied,	I would have gotten a good grade.
[Mary woke up late;	she missed her bus
and her boss got	and arrived late.
angry with her.]	
 - **This past action and results are impossible to change.**

If *Mary had gotten up early, she wouldn't have missed the bus and wouldn't have arrived late. Also, the boss wouldn't have gotten angry with her.*

 - Mixed conditions depend on the "truth" or "reality" of a situation.

Truth/Reality	Consequence/Reason
I didn't do my homework.	I am in trouble now.
<i>If</i> I had done it,	I wouldn't be in trouble now.
He is fat.	He ate a lot of candy.
He wouldn't be fat [now]	<i>If</i> he hadn't eaten so much.
- *When the conditional sentence begins with If, then a comma is used between the conditional clause and the result. The conditional sentence can also begin with the result; in that case, no comma is required.*

She could watch the game **if she had a TV.**
I will succeed **if I study hard.**
I would have gotten a good grade **if I had studied.**

SUBJUNCTIVE

- Sentences with special verbs or adjectives that stress importance or necessity in the main clause.
- **Always** use the simple base form of the verb in the **noun** clause.

Verbs: advise, ask, demand, propose, recommend, command, request, desire, insist, prefer, require, suggest

Adjectives: advisable, best, better, essential, good, imperative, desirable, necessary, required, important, urgent
- Regardless of the tense of the main verb, the verb in the noun clause is always simple base form; in the negative, only add "not" to the base form.
 - The doctor advised [that] she go into the hospital.
 - It was important [that] John come early.
 - I prefer [that] they not arrive early.
 - It will be best for all of us [that] he be absent tomorrow.
 - Did he insist [that] we not be noisy?

EXPRESSING PREFERENCE

Would rather...

• PRESENT TIME

- How old are you?
- I would rather not tell you. [It's my choice to tell you or not.]
- Do you want chicken or beef?
- I'd [I would] rather have chicken. I had beef last night. I'd rather have chicken than beef.
- How is this class?
- I'd rather be sleeping than sitting here.

• PAST TIME

- How was the movie?
- It was okay, but I'd rather have stayed at home.
- How was New York City?
- Very busy and expensive. I'd rather have gone to Washington.

NOTE: In speaking, people usually use the contraction "*I'd*" instead of saying "*I would.*"

POLITE REQUESTS

In all requests, the word "please" makes your request even more polite.

USING "I"

- May I [please] speak with you?
- Could I [please] speak with you?
both have the same polite meaning;
- Can I [please] speak with you?
is also polite, but less formal and acceptable.

Possible replies:

- Of course.
- Yes.
- Certainly.
- **Would you mind if I...**
"Would you mind if" has the meaning of "Is this a problem for you? Is it all right with you?" The **verb** is always in the past tense.
 - Would you mind if I **opened** the window?
 - Would you mind if I **shut** off the light?
 - Would you mind if I **turned** off the TV?
 - Would you mind if I **borrowed** your pen?

POLITE REQUESTS cont.

- Possible replies:

- No, not at all. - No, of course not.
- No, that would be fine.

USING [YOU]

- Would you [please] pass the salt?
- Will you [please] pass the salt?
- Could you [please] pass the salt?
- Can you [please] pass the salt?

Possible replies:

- Yes, I'd be happy to.
- Yes, of course.
- Yes, I'd be glad to.
- Sure. Of course.

•Would you mind

"Would you mind" has the meaning of "Is this a problem for you? Is it all right with you?" Here, use "-ing" with the verb.

- Would you mind **opening** the window?
- Would you mind **shutting** off the light?
- Would you mind **turning** off the TV?
- Would you mind **lending** me your pen?

Possible replies:

- No, I'd be happy to.
- Not at all.
- I'd be glad to.

Using [you]-IMPERATIVE

- Sometimes a simple command [imperative] is sufficient to request that someone do something.
- Adding "please" will make the request more polite.

- Use the simple base form of the verb; for negatives, use "don't." You may say "please" before the verb or at the end of the sentence.

[Please,] Open the door.

Be quiet, [please].

[Please,] Don't close the window.

Don't shout at me, [please].

Possible replies:

- Sure, I'd be glad to.
- Sure, I'm sorry.
- Okay, I didn't mean to.
- No, I can't; I'm busy.

•Making suggestions:

Let's... Why don't/doesn't... Shall...

- Let's (means "let us") eat. (includes the speaker)

Let's not. Let's go for a walk first.

- Why don't we eat?

No, why don't we go for a walk first.

- Shall we eat?

No, let's not. Let's go for a walk first.

An informal expression which includes the speaker is "how about [verb+ing]?"

- How about eating?

No, how about going for a walk first?

MAKING SUGGESTIONS: COULD/SHOULD

- When someone asks for help or advice, you can give suggestions by using two modals:

- **could**, meaning this is a possibility

- or **should**, meaning you think this is a good suggestion.

- I'm having problems in math. Can you help me?

-Well, you **could** find a tutor. [possibility]

-You **could** work with a friend. [possibility]

-Or you **could** use a computer program. [possibility]

-I think you **should** go to your teacher for help. [good idea]

ACTIVE FORM / PASSIVE FORM

- To form the passive: *Be + Past Participle*.
- In the passive, the object of the verb becomes the subject, but the *meaning* stays the *same*.

	Subject	Verb	Object
Active:	Susan	helps	the girl.
Passive:	The girl	is helped	by Susan.

- Only transitive verbs (verbs followed by an object) are used in the passive.

- In the passive, it is *not* possible to use verbs such as happen, sleep, come and seem as they are intransitive verbs (verbs not followed by an object).

	Subject	Verb	Object
Active:	An accident	happened	(none).
	Marie	sleeps	(none).

Passive: NO PASSIVE FORM POSSIBLE

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE FORM

Simple Present:

- Active:** Susan helps Peter.
- Passive:** Peter is helped by Susan.

Present Progressive:

- Active:** Susan is helping Peter.
- Passive:** Peter is being helped by Susan.

Present Perfect:

- Active:** Susan has helped Peter.
- Passive:** Peter has been helped by Susan.

Simple Past:

- Active** Susan helped Peter.
- Passive** Peter was helped by Susan.

Past Progressive:

- Active** Susan was helping Peter.
- Passive** Peter was being helped by Susan.

Past Perfect:

- Active** Susan had helped Peter.
- Passive** Peter had been helped by Susan.

Simple Future:

- Active** Susan will help Peter.
- Passive** Peter will be helped by Susan.

Be Going To:

- Active** Susan is going to help Peter.
- Passive** Peter is going to be helped by Susan.

Future Perfect:

- Active** Susan will have helped Peter.
- Passive** Peter will have been helped by Susan.

THE PASSIVE FORM OF MODALS

Subject	Modal +	Be + Past Participle
Marie	will	be invited to the dance.
The door	can't	be opened by the child.
This letter	should	be sent today.
The student	may	be removed from the class.
The report	had better	be written before Friday.
The project	ought to	be finished next week.
Her brother	has to	be told about the trip.

THE PAST-PASSIVE FORM OF MODALS

Subject	Modal + Have been+	Past Participle
The letter	should have been	sent yesterday.
The castle	must have been	built 300 years ago.
Susan	ought to have been	invited to the meeting.

MODALS

- **Modals** (also known as **Modal Auxiliaries**) express a special meaning and add that meaning to the main verb.

-He can swim. = He has the ability to swim; he knows how to.

-He may smoke. = He has permission to smoke.

-He might go. = He is not sure about going.

-He will come. = He is going to come. [future]

-He should study = It is very advisable for him to study.

-He must leave. = It is very necessary for him to leave.

- Modals **do not** have an *s* for he, she, it.

- Main verbs **do not** have an *s* when a modal is used.

- Modals are **not** followed by *to + Verb*.

- Modals work the same way as other auxiliaries do in grammar, especially in questions and negatives.

MODAL SUMMARY

Modal	Meanings	Example
may	request permission <50% uncertainty	May I leave? You may leave. He may come.
might	<50% uncertainty	He might come.
should	good advice/idea >70% certainty	I should study tonight. We should have no difficulty.
ought to	good advice/idea >70% certainty	I ought to study tonight. We ought to have no difficulty.
had better	good advice with threat of bad result	You had better study [or else you are going to fail!].
be supposed to	expectation	A doctor is supposed to help.
must	necessity prohibition [negative] >90% certainty	You must get a visa to travel. You must not smoke in here. He isn't here, he must be sick
have to	necessity	You have to get a visa to travel.
will	100% certainty willing to volunteer request	I will be there. I need some help. I'll help you, sir. Will you help me, please?
be going to	100% certainty a plan	I am going to be there. I'm going to move next year.
can	ability/possibility permission request impossibility [negative]	I can swim. Can I go now? [informal] Can I borrow your pen? He can't be here; he's away.
could	past ability request suggestion <50% possibility impossibility [negative]	He could run fast when younger. Could you help me, please? Well, you could call a doctor. He could be sick. He couldn't be here; he's away.
be able to	ability	He is able to help you anytime.
would	request preference	Would you shut the door? Would you mind shutting it? I would rather have tea.
used to	habitual action in the past	I used to drive to work; now I take the train.
shall	suggestion	Shall I open the door?

PHRASAL VERBS

Phrasal verbs refer to a *verb + preposition* which together have a special meaning.

They are common in informal English:

put + off = postpone

Mary puts off doing her work.

Sometimes they consist of three parts:

put + up + with = tolerate

Mary puts up with her boss.

Phrasal verbs are also called *two-word verbs* or *three-word verbs*.

Ask out	ask someone to go on a date
Bring about, bring on	cause
Bring up	(1) rear children; (2) mention or introduce a topic
Call back	return a telephone call
Call off	cancel
Call on	(1) ask to speak in class; (2) visit
Catch up (with)	reach the same position or level
Check in, check into	register at the hotel
Check out	(1) investigate; (2) take a book from the library
Check out (of)	leave a hotel
Cheer up	make (someone) feel happier
Clean up	make clean and orderly
Come across	meet by chance
Cross out	draw a line through
Cut out	stop; remove
Drop by, drop in (on)	visit informally
Drop off	leave something or someone at a place
Drop out (of)	stop going to school, to a class, etc.
Figure out	find the answer
Fill out	write the completions of a questionnaire or form
Find out	information
Get along (with)	be in harmony with
Get out of	(1) leave a car; (2) avoid something
Get over	recover
Get through	finish
Get up	arise from bed; a chair
Give back	return something
Give up	stop trying
Go over	review or check carefully
Hand in	submit an assignment
Hang up	(1) put clothes on a hanger or a hook; (2) conclude a telephone conversation
Keep up (with)	stay at the same position or level
Kick out (of)	force (someone) to leave
Look out (for)	be careful
Look over	review or check carefully
Look up	look for information in a reference book
Make up	(1) invent; (2) do past work
Pass away	die
Pass out	(1) distribute; (2) lose consciousness
Pick out	select
Pick up	(1) take; (2) go to get someone
Point out	call attention to
Put off	(1) postpone; (2) repel
Put on	put clothes on one's body
Put up with	tolerate
Run out (of)	finish a supply of something
Show up	appear, come
Take after	resemble
Take over	take control
Take up	begin a new activity or topic
Take down	disassemble
Tear down	demolish
Tear up	tear into many little pieces
Think over	consider carefully
Turn down	decrease volume or intensity
Turn in	(1) submit an assignment; (2) go to bed
Turn off	stop a machine, light, faucet
Turn on	begin a machine, light, faucet
Turn out	extinguish a light
Turn up	increase volume or intensity

WISHES

• Wishes are used when a speaker wants to make reality different than it is.

REALITY

Future

Mary will not come.

Joe cannot come.

Present

I don't know Spanish.

It is snowing.

Past

She didn't study.

Bob couldn't understand.

• The verb "wish" is followed by a noun clause; the word "that" is optional.

WISHES

I wish [that] Mary would come.

I wish [that] he could come.

She wishes [that] I knew Spanish.

I wish [that] it weren't snowing.

She wishes [that] she had studied.

He wishes [that] he could have understood.

SOME IRREGULAR VERBS

• Past tense does not add *-ed*; instead, their irregular forms need to be memorized.

• Some examples:

SIMPLE FORM	SIMPLE PAST	PAST PARTICIPLE
arise	arose	arisen
be	was, were	been
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast
build	built	built
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
forsake	forsook	forsaken
get	got	gotten
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hold	held	held
keep	kept	kept
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lit/lighted	lit/lighted
lose	lost	lost

make	made	made
meet	met	met
mistake	mistook	mistaken
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
quit	quit	quit
read	read	read
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown/showed
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
speak	spoke	spoken
spin	spun	spun
spit	spit/spat	spit/spat
split	split	split
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang/sprung	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
strike	struck	struck/stricken
swear	swore	sworn
sweep	swept	swept
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke/waked	woken/waked
wind	wound	wound
write	wrote	written

CREDITS

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NOTE TO STUDENTS

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