

4

- × These machines are using in many homes and offices.
- × The company's workforce is gradually reduced.

- ✓ These machines are being used in many homes and offices.
- ✓ The company's workforce is gradually being reduced.

To make the passive form of a progressive tense, we use **be + being + past participle**: 'Her car *is being repaired*.' 'The elephants *were being fed*.'

5

- × The prison has been escaped several times.
- × The summit was arrived at just before dawn.

- ✓ There have been several escapes from the prison.
- ✓ The summit was reached just before dawn.
- ✓ We arrived at the summit just before dawn.

An intransitive verb (or a verb that is used with an intransitive meaning) cannot be made passive.

past

576

- × Many years have past since we last met.
- × These customs are past from generation to generation.

- ✓ Many years have passed since we last met.
- ✓ These customs are passed from generation to generation.

Pass is a regular verb. To make the past simple tense and the past participle, we add **-ed**.

Past is used as an adjective ('the **past** six weeks'), adverb ('she ran **past**'), preposition ('driving **past** the museum') and noun ('thinking about the **past**').

⇒ 574

past participles

577

1

- × People who break the law should be punish.
- × Try to make the interviewee feel relax.

- ✓ People who break the law should be punished.
- ✓ Try to make the interviewee feel relaxed.

The past participle form of a regular verb ends in **-ed**. We use this form as a verb ('punished') and as an adjective ('relaxed').

2

- × The shops are usually opened from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- × Replacing such a politically matured leader will not be easy.

- ✓ The shops are usually open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ✓ Replacing such a politically mature leader will not be easy.

Sometimes we have to choose between an adjective (e.g. 'open'), and a past participle used as an adjective (e.g. 'opened'). To describe a state or quality, we normally use the adjective. We use the past participle when the meaning contains action: 'The shop *is opened* at 9 a.m.' (= somebody opens the shop at 9 a.m.)

past perfect tense: form

578

1

- × This type of thing had never happen before.

- ✓ This type of thing had never happened before.

The simple form of the past perfect tense is **had ('d)** + past participle:

After the rain *had stopped*, we went out.

I'd already *spoken* to him before the meeting.

Had you *seen* her before last night?

⇒ 626.1

2

- × The letter had sent to the wrong address.

- ✓ The letter had been sent to the wrong address.

The passive form of the past perfect simple is **had + been** + past participle: 'The car *had been moved* by the police.' 'While he was asleep, his wallet *had been stolen*.'

past perfect tense: use

579

1

- × My wife and I had come to England about six months ago.
- × In 1987 a number of new science subjects had been introduced.
- × How many trips to Europe had you made last year?

- ✓ My wife and I came to England about six months ago.
- ✓ In 1987 a number of new science subjects were introduced.
- ✓ How many trips to Europe did you make last year?

To refer to a completed action which happened at a particular time or during a particular period in the past (e.g. 'six months ago', 'in 1987', 'last year'), we use the past simple tense ('came'), NOT the past perfect ('had come').

We use the past perfect tense to refer to an action which happened before another action in the past or before a particular time in the past, e.g. 'By the time I arrived, the match *had* already *started*.' 'They *had finished* the job by 11 o'clock.'

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| <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Mr White, our sales manager, had worked for our company for 12 years. × For the last two years the room had been used as a laboratory. × We should focus our attention on the roads where accidents had already happened. × Most of the books on these shelves had been used for ten years or more. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mr White, our sales manager, has worked for our company for 12 years. ✓ For the last two years the room has been used as a laboratory. ✓ We should focus our attention on the roads where accidents have already happened. ✓ Most of the books on these shelves have been used for ten years or more. |
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To refer to an action or period which began in the past and which has continued up to *now* (the moment of speaking), we use the present perfect tense ('has worked'), NOT the past perfect ('had worked').

'Mr White *had worked* (or *worked*) for our company for 12 years' means that Mr White is no longer with the company. 'Mr White *has worked* for our company for 12 years' means that Mr White continues to work for the company.

past progressive tense: form

580

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| <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × When I first met Paul, he working as a chef in London. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When I first met Paul, he was working as a chef in London. |
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To make the past progressive tense, we use **was/were + -ing**: 'While I *was waiting* to see the dentist, I read an interesting article on child adoption.' 'What *were you doing* last night just before all the lights went out?'

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| <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × While my car was repairing, I had to use my bicycle. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ While my car was being repaired, I had to use my bicycle. |
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The passive form of the past progressive tense is **was/were + being + past participle**: 'When we last stayed at the hotel, some of the rooms *were being renovated*.' 'Water *was being sprayed* onto the logs to keep them wet.'

past progressive tense: use

581

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| <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × When he was a boy, my father was attending a boarding school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When he was a boy, my father attended a boarding school. |
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When we mention past actions and situations that last a long time, we normally use the past simple tense. We use the past progressive for shorter, temporary situations. Compare: 'In those days the people *lived* in small caves in the mountainside.' 'For the first two weeks we *were living* in rented accommodation.'

We also use the past progressive to give background information: 'While I *was attending* the course, I made several new friends.'

2

× We were visiting the museum every morning.

✓ We visited the museum every morning.

For a repeated action in the past, we normally use the past simple tense: 'The elephant **roared** three times and then collapsed.'

We use the past progressive when we want to say what was happening at a particular moment in the past: 'When I opened the door, the two children **were jumping** up and down on the bed.'

past simple tense: form

582

1

× The science teacher seem to think we were lazy.

✓ The science teacher seemed to think we were lazy.

× In 1956 the school change its name.

✓ In 1956 the school changed its name.

The past simple form of a verb is nearly always different from its base form. Regular verbs take **-d** or **-ed**.

2

× He swore that he had not taken the money.

✓ He swore that he had not taken the money.

× I ringed the bell three times but nobody came.

✓ I rang the bell three times but nobody came.

The past simple tense of most irregular verbs is not formed with **-d** or **-ed**.

⇒ 419

3

× I tried to apologize but she refused to listen.

✓ I tried to apologize but she refused to listen.

If the verb ends in **-ly**, **-ry**, **-dy**, **-fy**, etc (consonant + **y**), we change the **-y** to **-ied**: 'We **studied** the map very carefully.' 'The baby **cried** all night.'

4

× I payed a lot of money for the camera and I expect it to work.

✓ I paid a lot of money for the camera and I expect it to work.

× Every year the doves layed eggs on the verandah.

✓ Every year the doves laid eggs on the verandah.

If a regular verb ends in **-ay**, **-ey**, **-oy**, etc (vowel + **y**), we add **-ed**: 'The children **played** in the garden.' 'We **delayed** our departure until the following morning.' However, **pay**, **lay** and **say** are irregular: **paid**, **laid**, **said**.

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| 5 | × We not wanted to listen to him any longer. | ✓ We did not want to listen to him any longer. |
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⇒ 512.1

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| 6 | × She did not paid any attention to us.
× They didn't sold any cars last month. | ✓ She did not pay any attention to us.
✓ They didn't sell any cars last month. |
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⇒ 512.2

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| 7 | × They asked you when you can begin? | ✓ Did they ask you when you can begin? |
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⇒ 642.2

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| 8 | × What did she told you about me? | ✓ What did she tell you about me? |
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⇒ 642.4

past simple tense: use

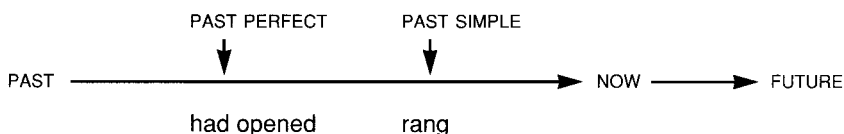
583

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| 1 | ! I can't hire a car because I didn't pass my driving test.
! We're not going to the art gallery because we already went there. | ✓ I can't hire a car because I haven't passed my driving test.
✓ We're not going to the art gallery because we've already been there. |
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We often mention a past action because of the effect that it has *now* (at the moment of speaking). In British English, when we are talking more about the present than about the past, we use the present perfect, **NOT** the past simple. In informal American English, either tense may be used.

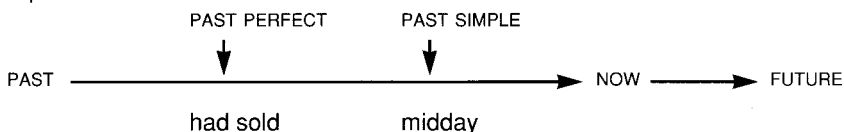
Note that we do not use the present perfect if the time of a past action is stated. With definite times, e.g. 'at two o'clock', 'yesterday', 'on Monday', 'last March', 'in 1987', 'two days ago', we use the past simple tense: 'I **passed** my driving test **last December**.'

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| 2 | ! Since getting married, she was much happier.
! In the last three years more and more people stopped smoking.
! This is the third time I visited London and so I know it quite well. | ✓ Since getting married, she has been much happier.
✓ In the last three years more and more people have stopped smoking.
✓ This is the third time I have visited London and so I know it quite well. |
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| <p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × By midday we sold more than 75 tickets. × I did not meet his wife before the night of the party and I was very impressed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By midday we had sold more than 75 tickets. ✓ I had not met his wife before the night of the party and I was very impressed. |
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When we refer to a period of time which ends at a time in the past, we use the past perfect tense.



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| <p>7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × I made the dinner when the telephone rang. × She didn't hear me because she played the guitar. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I was making the dinner when the telephone rang. ✓ She didn't hear me because she was playing the guitar. |
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To describe what was happening at a particular time in the past (or when something else happened), we use the past progressive tense: 'While I **was opening** the tin, I cut my finger.'

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| <p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Gianni returned to Italy on Friday but now he cannot go. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gianni was returning to Italy on Friday but now he cannot go. |
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When we mention a previous plan or intention, we use the past progressive tense. Compare: 'I **am going** shopping this afternoon.' (= this **is** my intention) 'I **was going** shopping this afternoon.' (= this **was** my intention)

patience

584

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × To teach young children, you need a great patience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To teach young children, you need great patience. |
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Patience is an uncountable noun and is not used with **a/an**.

⇒ 2.1



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| 3 | × Her husband is the most boring people I've ever met. | ✓ Her husband is the most boring person I've ever met. |
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The singular form of **people** is **person**.

⇒ 589

per cent

587

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| × Fifty per cent of the machinery have to be replaced. | ✓ Fifty per cent of the machinery has to be replaced. |
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⇒ 44.10

permission

588

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| × You cannot leave the country without a special permission. | ✓ You cannot leave the country without special permission. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

Permission is an uncountable noun and is not used with **a/an**.

⇒ 2.1

person

589

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| × We all know persons who have gone to live abroad. | ✓ We all know people who have gone to live abroad. |
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Nowadays, the plural form of **person** is nearly always **people**. **Persons** is used mainly in legal texts and public notices, eg 'Capacity – **6 persons**'.

personal pronouns: use

590

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| 1 | × This report looks at teaching aids and how it helps teachers.
× The jewellery was given to Mary, who sold them for \$6,000. | ✓ This report looks at teaching aids and how they help teachers.
✓ The jewellery was given to Mary, who sold it for \$6,000. |
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⇒ 42.1–2

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| 2 | × I took Martin and a friend of him to Teotihuacan. | ✓ I took Martin and a friend of his to Teotihuacan. |
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If a double genitive ends with a pronoun, we use **mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs** (possessive pronouns), NOT **me, you, him, her, us, them**: 'These old shoes **of mine** are very comfortable.' 'Is he a friend **of yours**?'

3

- × I often ask me why I work so hard.
- × Although we worked very hard, we enjoyed us.

- ✓ I often ask myself why I work so hard.
- ✓ Although we worked very hard, we enjoyed ourselves.

When the subject and object refer to the same person or thing, we use a reflexive pronoun, **myself, herself**, etc. (NOT **me, her**, etc.).

Note that this is also the case even when the subject is not actually mentioned: 'There is no time (for us) to relax and enjoy **ourselves**.' 'Help **yourself** to some cake.'

4

- × The majority of viewers are children and it is them who are exposed to such scenes of violence.

- ✓ The majority of viewers are children and it is they who are exposed to such scenes of violence.

Nowadays, even in formal styles, most people normally use the object forms **me, him, her, us, them** after the verb **be**: 'Look! It's **her** again.' (NOT **she**) 'I didn't realize it was **them**.' (NOT **they**)

However, there is one occasion when **be** is followed by the subject forms **I, he, she, we, they**. These forms are used in formal styles when the personal pronoun is followed by a relative clause beginning with a subject pronoun: 'The workers idolized her, since it was **she who** had given them hope.'

5

- ! Nowadays, anybody can use a computer if he or she really wants to.
- ! Each subscriber was told that he would receive a refund.

- ✓ Nowadays, anybody who really wants to use a computer can do so.
- ✓ All subscribers were told that they would receive a refund.

⇒ 42.4

6

- × Nobody is allowed to use the computer but I.

- ✓ Nobody is allowed to use the computer but me.

After a preposition we normally use **me, her, him, us, them** (object pronouns), NOT **I, she, he, we, they** (subject pronouns). ⇒ .7 below

7

- × My sister plays the piano much better than I.

- ✓ My sister plays the piano much better than me.
- ✓ My sister plays the piano much better than I do.

After **than** or **as**, we normally use **me, her, him, us, them** (object pronouns), especially in informal styles. In formal styles, we normally use **I, she, he, we, they** (subject pronouns) + verb.

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| <p>8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! We have no objection to you paying a deposit now and the balance later. ! I fully understand him not wanting to pursue the matter. × These errors are the result of they trying to translate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We have no objection to your paying a deposit now and the balance later. ✓ I fully understand his not wanting to pursue the matter. ✓ These errors are the result of their trying to translate. |
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In formal styles, we normally use a possessive determiner (e.g. **my, our, their**) before an **-ing** form. In informal styles, however, an object pronoun (e.g. **me, you, them**) is very common. A subject pronoun (e.g. **I, we, they**) is always incorrect.

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| <p>9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Rape is a very serious crime and they should be sent to prison. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rape is a very serious crime and rapists should be sent to prison. |
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We cannot use a pronoun ('they') unless the person or thing that it refers to is mentioned somewhere in the context.

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| <p>10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × My friends lent me some books. They were very helpful. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ My friends lent me some books, which were very helpful. ✓ My friends were very helpful and lent me some books. |
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In the error sentence above, it is not clear whether the pronoun 'They' refers to 'some books' or to 'My friends'. A reader should not have to guess the word or phrase that a pronoun refers to. ➡ 610.5

personal pronouns: wrongly included

591

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| <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × The people without their own shops they were selling their things on the pavement. × The research it will investigate some major traffic problems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The people without their own shops were selling their things on the pavement. ✓ The research will investigate some major traffic problems. |
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We cannot use a pronoun as the subject of a verb if the verb has a subject already. A verb can have only one subject. This type of error often occurs when the head of the subject ('people') is a long way from the verb ('were selling').

➡ 669.1

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| <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × The second group Spitzer calls it 'social dynamite'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The second group Spitzer calls 'social dynamite'. |
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To emphasize a direct object, we sometimes move it to the beginning of a clause. Compare: 'I found **her first book** very interesting.' '**Her first book** I found very interesting.'

