

phenomenon

593

× We still don't have explanations for such **phenomenons**.

✓ We still don't have explanations for such **phenomena**.

The plural form of **phenomenon** is **phenomena**.

phone/telephone

594

1

× I have to **phone to my parents to tell them where I am**.

✓ I have to **phone my parents to tell them where I am**.

We **phone/telephone** someone, NOT **to** someone: 'I'll **phone you** again on Tuesday.'

2

× My **telephone's** number is 343474.

✓ My **telephone** number is 343474.

⇒ 694.5

phrasal verbs

595

1

× The fan was very noisy and so I **turned off** it.

✓ The fan was very noisy and so I **turned it off**.

× Our parents **brought up us to respect** elderly people.

✓ Our parents **brought us up to respect** elderly people.

With many phrasal verbs, there is a choice of word order:

Pattern A I **turned off** the fan.
 She **put on** her shoes.

Pattern B I **turned** the fan **off**.
 She **put** her shoes **on**.

However, when the direct object is a pronoun, only Pattern B is possible:
'I **turned it off**.' 'She **put them on**.'

2

× The woman was **handing free samples of a new type of chocolate bar out**.

✓ The woman was **handing out free samples of a new type of chocolate bar**.

When there is a long direct object (e.g. 'free samples of a new type of chocolate bar'), the parts of a phrasal verb stay together, as in Pattern A. ⇒ .1 above

Note, however, that if a long direct object contains a movable qualifier (e.g. a relative clause), two patterns are possible: 'They have **brought out** a new battery which never needs recharging.' 'They have **brought** a new battery **out** which never needs recharging.'

In the second pattern, the adverb ('out') is placed immediately after the head of the direct object ('battery') and the qualifier comes last.

piano 596

! How long have you been playing piano?

✓ How long have you been playing the piano?

⇒ 783.6

piece 597

× The two pieces of cracked tiles were replaced.

✓ The two cracked tiles were replaced.

⇒ 823.4

pierce 598

× Fortunately, the dog's teeth were not sharp enough to pierce into my skin.

✓ Fortunately, the dog's teeth were not sharp enough to pierce my skin.

When a pointed object is pushed into something, it **pierces** it (WITHOUT **into**): 'A long nail had **pierced** one of the front tyres.'

pity 599

1 × Why do so few people feel a pity for the deaf?

✓ Why do so few people feel pity for the deaf?

When **pity** means 'a feeling of sympathy and sorrow', it is an uncountable noun and is not used with **a/an**: 'I feel **pity** for people who have no home of their own.' 'We should take **pity** on them.' ⇒ 2.1 Compare: 'It's **a pity** that you have to leave so soon.' (= it is unfortunate that) 'What **a pity**!'

2 × Seeing him in tears, I immediately took pity for him.

✓ Seeing him in tears, I immediately took pity on him.

We **feel pity for** someone but we **take pity on** someone: 'He hopes that you will **take pity on** him and forget the money you lent him.'

please

600

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | × Please I would like to know the exact dates of your trip. | ✓ Please let me know the exact dates of your trip.
✓ Please would you let me know the exact dates of your trip. |
|---|---|--|

Please is normally used in imperative clauses ('Please let ...') and interrogative clauses ('Please would you let ... ?').

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|---|--|---|
| 2 | × Please, when you have time, write to me again. | ✓ Please write to me again when you have time.
✓ When you have time, please write to me again. |
|---|--|---|

Please should not be separated from its verb.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 3 | × I shall be please to pay for the postage and packing. | ✓ I shall be pleased to pay for the postage and packing. |
|---|---|--|

⇒ 14.1

pleased

601

- | | |
|--|---|
| × I hope she is pleased about the present we gave her. | ✓ I hope she is pleased with the present we gave her. |
|--|---|

If we like a new possession (e.g. a gift or a purchase), we are **pleased with** it: 'George is very **pleased with** his new lawnmower.' Compare: 'We're both **pleased about/at** not having to sell our house after all.'

pleasure

602

- | | |
|--|--|
| × It gives me a great pleasure to send you this little gift. | ✓ It gives me great pleasure to send you this little gift. |
|--|--|

When **pleasure** means 'a feeling of happiness', it is an uncountable noun and is not used with **a/an**: 'Our children give us enormous **pleasure**.' ⇒ 2.1
 Compare: 'It's been **a pleasure** having you stay with us.' (= an enjoyable experience)

plural nouns

603

1

- × My new trouser was covered in white paint.
 × Trees help to create a peaceful surrounding.

- ✓ My new trousers were covered in white paint.
 ✓ Trees help to create peaceful surroundings.

Even when we are talking about just one pair of trousers, we say **trousers**, NOT 'trouser'. **Trousers** is a plural noun and does not have a singular form.

The following list contains nouns which are always plural and nouns which are plural when used in a particular meaning.

arms (weapons), *arrears*, *belongings*, *binoculars*, *braces*, *briefs* (underpants or knickers), *clothes*, *clergy*, *congratulations*, *contents*, *costs* (money that the loser of a legal action has to pay), *credentials*, *customs* (e.g. at an airport), *damages* (compensation awarded to the winner of a legal action), *directions* (instructions), *dregs*, *earnings*, *essentials*, *expenses* (money that people spend while doing their work), *glasses* (spectacles), *goods*, *greens* (vegetables), *grounds*, *headquarters*, *jeans*, *knickers*, *lodgings*, *looks* (appearance), *manners* (behaviour), *morals*, *odds*, *outskirts*, *overalls*, *pains* (effort), *panties*, *pants*, *particulars* (details), *people*, *pincers*, *police*, *pliers*, *premises* (a building), *proceeds*, *prospects*, *provisions* (food supplies), *pyjamas*, *qualifications*, *qualms*, *quarters* (lodgings), *refreshments*, *regards* (good wishes), *remains*, *scales* (as in 'bathroom scales'), *scissors*, *shears*, *shortcomings* (faults or weaknesses), *shorts*, *slacks*, *spectacles*, *sunglasses*, *supplies*, *surroundings*, *talks*, *thanks*, *tights*, *travels*, *the tropics* (the hottest part of the world), *trousers*, *trunks* (as in 'swimming trunks'), *tweezers*, *underpants*, *valuables*, *whereabouts*.

2

- × All you need is plenty of paper and a sharp scissors.

- ✓ All you need is plenty of paper and some sharp scissors.

A plural noun (e.g. 'scissors') cannot be used with determiners which have a singular meaning, e.g. *a/an*, *another*, *each*, *either*, *every*, *this*, *that*.

3

- × I bought three jeans for just \$60.

- ✓ I bought three pairs of jeans for just \$60.

A number cannot come immediately in front of **jeans**, **scissors**, **sunglasses**, etc. Instead, we normally use a construction with *pair/s*:

NUMBER	+	PAIR/S	+	OF-PHRASE
two		pairs		of binoculars
four		pairs		of tennis shorts

⇒ 567

4

- × The jails are so crowded that the police does not arrest people for minor offences.

- ✓ The jails are so crowded that the police do not arrest people for minor offences.

A plural noun ('police') always takes a plural verb ('do').

5

× Her husband is a typical English.

✓ Her husband is typically English.
 ✓ Her husband is a typical Englishman.

⇒ 504

poetry

604

× I didn't know that Shakespeare wrote *poetries* too.

✓ I didn't know that Shakespeare wrote poetry too.

Poetry is an uncountable noun and does not have a plural form. Compare: 'I didn't know that Shakespeare wrote *poems* too.'

point

605

1

× I grabbed the gun and pointed it to him.

✓ I grabbed the gun and pointed it at him.

We **point** an object (e.g. a gun or camera) **at** someone or something (NOT **to**). Compare: 'She **pointed to** the NO SMOKING sign.'

2

× Some people do not see the point to learn a foreign language.

✓ Some people do not see the point of learning a foreign language.

If we understand the purpose of doing something, we **see the point of** doing it.

3

× It's no point asking Philip to help you.

✓ There's no point in asking Philip to help you.

× There was little point to take the car back to the same garage.

✓ There was little point in taking the car back to the same garage.

If an action has no useful purpose, we say that there is **no point in** doing it.

⇒ 833.3

point of view

606

× We should also consider this matter in the child's point of view.

✓ We should also consider this matter from the child's point of view.

The phrase is **from** a particular **point of view** (NOT **in**): '**From** a practical **point of view**, the first proposal has several advantages.' Compare: '**In my opinion**, the first proposal has several advantages.'

police

607

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| <p>1</p> <p>× The jails are so crowded that the police does not arrest people for minor offences.</p> | <p>✓ The jails are so crowded that the police do not arrest people for minor offences.</p> |
|---|--|

Police is a plural noun and takes a plural verb.

⇒ 603

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| <p>2</p> <p>× A police was standing outside the bank.</p> | <p>✓ A police officer was standing outside the bank.</p> |
|---|--|

Police is a plural noun. To refer to a member of the police force, we use **policeman**, **policewoman** or **police officer**.

pollution

608

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|---|--|
| <p>× Should we let our children inherit a world full of pollutions?</p> | <p>✓ Should we let our children inherit a world full of pollution?</p> |
|---|--|

Pollution is an uncountable noun and does not have a plural form.

poor

609

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>× She has spent most of her life helping the poors.</p> | <p>✓ She has spent most of her life helping the poor.</p> |
|--|---|

⇒ 19.1

possessive determiners

610

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| <p>1</p> <p>× Pupils sometimes suffer in a test when the questions are written in a language which is not his mother tongue.</p> <p>× I visited the local library with her collection of rare books.</p> | <p>✓ Pupils sometimes suffer in a test when the questions are written in a language which is not their mother tongue.</p> <p>✓ I visited the local library with its collection of rare books.</p> |
|--|---|

⇒ 42

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|---|---|
| <p>2</p> <p>× Thank you for all your help that you have given me with my studies.</p> | <p>✓ Thank you for all the help that you have given me with my studies.</p> |
|---|---|

⇒ 667.2

3

× Why does she keep hitting herself on her head?

✓ Why does she keep hitting herself on the head?

When we refer to a part of someone's body, we normally use **his**, **her**, etc.:

She had cuts all over **her** hands.

His nose was bleeding.

I've hurt **my** back again.

However, when the person is the object of the clause and the part of the body follows in a prepositional phrase, we use **the**:

	OBJECT	+	PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
I tapped	the woman		on the shoulder.
I grabbed	the boy		by the arm.
The ball hit	him		in the stomach.

We also use **the** in related passive structures: 'He had been punched on **the** nose by an angry housewife.' 'All of a sudden, I was grabbed by **the** arm.'

4

! I would never treat my relative like that.

✓ I would never treat a relative (of mine) like that.

✓ I would never treat one of my relatives like that.

If we say 'my relative', we suggest that we have just one relative. Compare: 'Is he **your friend**?' 'Is he **a friend of yours**?' \Rightarrow 694.3

5

× A student may not understand a lecturer if his English is weak.

✓ A student whose English is weak may not understand a lecturer.

✓ A student may not understand a lecturer whose English is weak.

A reader should never have to guess the word or phrase that a determiner refers to. In the first sentence above, we cannot tell whether 'his' refers to 'student' or 'lecturer'. \Rightarrow 590.10

possibility

611

× We are currently considering the possibility to buy our own house.

✓ We are currently considering the possibility of buying our own house.

We talk about the **possibility of doing** something: 'The company is looking into the **possibility of employing** more staff.' Compare: 'Will it be **possible to employ** more staff?'

poverty

612

× The government's primary goal is to reduce the poverty.

✓ The government's primary goal is to reduce poverty.

⇒ 782.3

prefer

613

1 × Does he really prefer sausages than meat?

✓ Does he really prefer sausages to meat?

We **prefer** one thing **to** another thing, NOT **than**. Compare: 'Does he really *like* sausages *more than* meat?'

2 × I'd prefer going in my own car, if you don't mind.

✓ I'd prefer to go in my own car, if you don't mind.

⇒ 839.6

3 × She is preferring to type the letter herself.

✓ She prefers to type the letter herself.

Prefer is not used in progressive tenses.

⇒ 627.3

prepositions: general

614

1 × In spite of the driver didn't stop, we managed to get the number of the car.

✓ Although the driver didn't stop, we managed to get the number of the car.

✓ In spite of the driver not stopping, we managed to get the number of the car.

⇒ 882.7

2 × I told to the policeman everything I had seen.

✓ I told the policeman everything I had seen.

⇒ 387.3

3 × I drove to the hotel where she was staying at.

✓ I drove to the hotel where she was staying.

⇒ 668

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| 4 | × Besides to like children, a good teacher has to have a lot of patience. | ✓ Besides liking children, a good teacher has to have a lot of patience. |
|---|---|--|

When a verb follows a preposition, we use the *-ing* form.

⇒ 837

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|---|---|--|
| 5 | × It is one of the most popular cars of the world.
× For my surprise, the box was empty.
× In the whole, the pupils seem to like their teacher. | ✓ It is one of the most popular cars in the world.
✓ To my surprise, the box was empty.
✓ On the whole, the pupils seem to like their teacher. |
|---|---|--|

Many fixed expressions begin with a preposition, e.g. *in the world*, *to my surprise*, *on the whole*, *under investigation*, *at great expense*. Unfortunately, there are no general rules to help us choose the correct preposition for a particular expression and each phrase has to be learned separately. Fixed phrases in common use can be found in a good dictionary at the entry for the noun (e.g. *in the world* will be found at *world*).

For more information about the use of prepositions, ⇒ 21, 535, 841

present

615

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | × The football was a present of my grandfather. | ✓ The football was a present from my grandfather. |
|---|---|---|

A **present** (noun) is **from** the person who gives it to us, NOT **of**.

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|---|--|---|
| 2 | × The editor presented the winner of the competition a cheque for \$100. | ✓ The editor presented the winner of the competition with a cheque for \$100. |
|---|--|---|

We **present** (verb) someone **with** something: 'At her retirement party, Judy was **presented with** a black leather handbag.'

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| 3 | × I had never been present to such an important event before. | ✓ I had never been present at such an important event before. |
|---|---|---|

A person is **present** (adjective) **at** an event, NOT **to**.

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|---|---|---|
| 4 | × During the meeting several of the present teachers said that more money should be spent on books. | ✓ During the meeting several of the teachers present said that more money should be spent on books. |
|---|---|---|

⇒ 16.3

present perfect tense: form

616

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| <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × The company has open a new shop on Jalan Sultan. × For the last two decades my country's economy has been base on agriculture. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The company has opened a new shop on Jalan Sultan. ✓ For the last two decades my country's economy has been based on agriculture. |
|--|--|

The present perfect simple always ends with a past participle.

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|--------------------------------------|---------|
| They <i>have opened</i> a new shop. | ACTIVE |
| A new shop <i>has been opened</i> . | PASSIVE |
| Someone <i>has stolen</i> his watch. | ACTIVE |
| His watch <i>has been stolen</i> . | PASSIVE |

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|--|--|
| <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × For the past two years I have working as a teacher. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For the past two years I have been working as a teacher. |
|--|--|

The form of the present perfect progressive is **have/has + been + -ing**: 'I *have been waiting* here for nearly an hour.' 'How long *have you been living* here?'

present perfect tense: use

617

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| <p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × I have seen the film in London last week. × In France the death penalty has been abolished in 1981. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ I saw the film in London last week. ✓ In France the death penalty was abolished in 1981. |
|---|---|

When we mention something which took place at a particular time in the past (e.g. 'last week', 'in 1981', 'yesterday', 'two months ago'), we use the past simple tense, NOT the present perfect.

⇒ 583.1–4

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|---|---|
| <p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × By the time we reached the classroom, the first lesson has almost ended. × Unfortunately, the car has been sold before I arrived. × In New York I took the subway by myself although I have been told that it was dangerous. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By the time we reached the classroom, the first lesson had almost ended. ✓ Unfortunately, the car had been sold before I arrived. ✓ In New York I took the subway by myself although I had been told that it was dangerous. |
|---|---|

When two things happen at different times in the past, we use the past perfect tense for the one which happens first: 'After we *had painted* the ceiling, we *painted* the walls.' 'Once I *had eaten* something, I *began* to feel better.'

Note that the past perfect tense is formed with **had + past participle**, NOT **have/has**.

3

× Everything has been fine until yesterday.

✓ Everything had been fine until yesterday.

To refer to a situation that no longer exists, we use the past tense or the past perfect tense. Compare: 'She **looked** much happier **last week**.' 'She **had looked** much happier **until last week**.'

We use the present perfect if the situation still exists: 'She **has looked** much happier **since last week**.' (= she still looks happy)

present progressive tense: form

618

× I already looking forward to your next visit.

✓ I am already looking forward to your next visit.

× They still waiting for you to reply.

✓ They are still waiting for you to reply.

The form of the present progressive tense is **am/are/is + -ing**:

I **am** (I'm) **going** out tonight.

You **are** (You're) **listening** to the BBC World Service.

Are you **writing** to George?

She **is** (She's) **leaving** tomorrow.

They **are** (They're) not **coming** back until next Wednesday.

present progressive tense: use

619

1

× I am studying law since 1987.

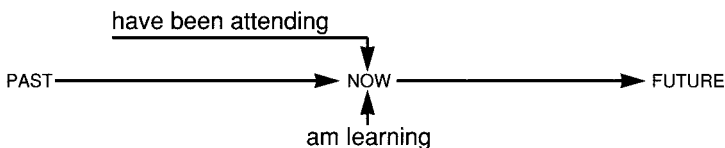
✓ I have been studying law since 1987.

× He is working here for almost 12 years.

✓ He has been working here for almost 12 years.

When we mention an action or situation which began in the past and which is still continuing **now** (at the moment of speaking), we use the present perfect progressive tense. Compare: 'I **am learning** English at the Bell School.' 'I **have been attending** the Bell School for the last two years.'

The first sentence focuses on what is happening **now**; there is no link with the past. The second sentence also tells us what is happening **now**, but the focus is on a period of time which links **now** with the past.



If the verb is not normally used in progressive tenses (→ 627.3), we use the present perfect simple: 'I **have known** Hilary since she was a child.'

The present perfect tense is very common with time adverbials that connect **now** with the past. These include: **since, already, yet, ever, still, so far, recently, to date, during/for/in/over the last/past (six weeks)**.

2

- × Every year she is making two trips to Singapore.
- × Some of my friends are not letting their children watch the television on their own.

- ✓ Every year she makes two trips to Singapore.
- ✓ Some of my friends do not let their children watch the television on their own.

When we mention something which happens repeatedly or habitually, we normally use the present simple tense: 'We normally *spend* our holidays in France.' 'Babies always *cry* when they are hungry.'

3

- × A lot of people in Southeast Asia are speaking three languages.
- × My parents are living at 64 Kalluaki Street, Athens.

- ✓ A lot of people in Southeast Asia speak three languages.
- ✓ My parents live at 64 Kalluaki Street, Athens.

When we use the present progressive tense ('are living'), we suggest that the situation is temporary: 'At the moment we *are living* in rented accommodation, but next month we'll be moving into our new house.'

When we are talking about a situation that is permanent, we use the present simple ('live').

4

- × People who are not eating properly are often catching colds.

- ✓ People who do not eat properly often catch colds.

When we make a statement that is always true, we use the simple form of the present tense, not the progressive form. Compare: 'It *takes* a long time to learn a foreign language.' 'It *is taking* them a long time to answer our letter.'

5

- × I am wondering whether you can mark my homework.

- ✓ I was wondering whether you could mark my homework.

In enquiries and requests, we often use past tense forms in places where present tense forms might be expected. Past tense forms sound more tentative and polite: 'We *were hoping* that you *might agree* to sponsor us.'

present simple tense: form

620

1

- × If anyone happen to find the watch, please contact Miss Goh.
- × It is not clear what the writer mean by 'stricter punishment'.

- ✓ If anyone happens to find the watch, please contact Miss Goh.
- ✓ It is not clear what the writer means by 'stricter punishment'.

After a third person singular subject (e.g. *he, Mrs Jones, anyone, the writer, the girl you spoke to yesterday*), we use the -s form of the verb.