

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. |
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Please should not be separated from its verb.

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| 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

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| × 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

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|--|---|
| <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
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|--|--|
| × 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
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| ! 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

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|---|--|
| × 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

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|--|---|
| × 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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|---|---|--|
| 1 | <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.

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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| 2 | <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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|---|--|---|
| 1 | <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. \Rightarrow 583.1-4

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|---|--|---|
| 2 | <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.

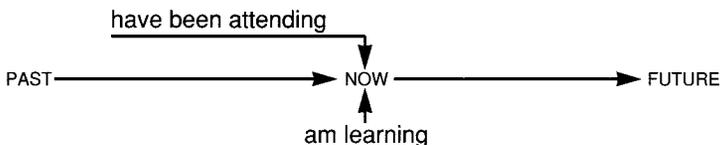
✓ I have been studying law since 1987.

× 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)*.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Every year she is making two trips to Singapore. × Some of my friends are not letting their children watch the television on their own. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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
- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × A lot of people in Southeast Asia are speaking three languages. × My parents are living at 64 Kalluaki Street, Athens. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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
- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × People who are not eating properly are often catching colds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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
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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × I am wondering whether you can mark my homework. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> × If anyone happen to find the watch, please contact Miss Goh. × It is not clear what the writer mean by 'stricter punishment'. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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.