Basic English Usage

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Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this book
This is a practical guide to common problems in English grammar and usage. It is written for foreign students who would like to know more about English, and who want to avoid mistakes.

Level
The book is written especially for intermediate students, but more advanced learners may also find it useful. The explanations are made as simple as possible. Students who want more detailed and complete information should read my more advanced book *Practical English Usage*, also published by Oxford University Press.

Language
Explanations are mostly in ordinary everyday English. It has been necessary to use some grammatical terminology (for example, *adverb*, *subject*, *clause*, *modify*). These words are explained on pages 10–12.

The kind of English described
The book describes standard modern British English, and gives realistic examples of spoken and written language (both formal and informal). Incorrect forms are shown like this: '(NOT ~~I have seen him yesterday~~.)' There is some information about American usage, but the book is not a systematic guide to American English.

Organization
This is a dictionary of problems, not a grammar. Points are explained in short separate entries, so that you can find just the information you need about a particular problem — no more and no less. Entries are arranged alphabetically and numbered. A complete index at the back of the book shows where each point can be found. (There is also a list of all the entries on pages 5–9).

How to use the book

If you want an explanation of a particular point, look in the index. Problems are indexed under several different names, so it is usually easy to find what you want. For example, if you need information about the use of *I* and *me*, you can find this in the index under '**I**', '**me**', 'subject and object forms', 'personal pronouns' or 'pronouns'.

Exercises

Basic English Usage: Exercises, by Jennifer Seidl and Michael Swan, gives practice in the various points that are explained in *Basic English Usage*.

Thanks

I should like to thank the many people whose suggestions and criticisms have helped me with this book, especially Norman Coe, Stewart Melluish, Jennifer Seidl and Catherine Walter. I am also most grateful to all those — too many to name — who have sent me comments on my book *Practical English Usage*. Their suggestions have helped me to improve many of the explanations in this book.

Comments

I should be very glad to hear from students or teachers using this book who find mistakes or omissions, or who have comments or suggestions of any kind. Please write to me c/o ELT Department, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

5

List of entries

I

Words used in the explanations

active In *I paid the bill*, the verb *paid* is **active**. In *The bill was paid*, the verb *was paid* is **passive**, not **active**.

adjective a word like *green, hungry, impossible,* used to describe.

adverb a word like *tomorrow, here, badly, also*, which is used to say, for example, when, where or how something happens.

adverb(ial) particle a word like *up, out, off,* used as part of a verb like *get up, look out, put off.*

adverb(ial) phrase a group of words used like an adverb. Examples: *in this place, on Tuesday.*

affirmative *I was* is **affirmative**; *I was not* is **negative**.

auxiliary (verb) a verb like *be, have, do*, which is used with another verb to make tenses, questions etc. See also **modal auxiliary verbs**.

clause a structure with a subject and verb, and perhaps an object and adverbs. Examples: *I know that man. I came home last night.*
    A **sentence** is made of one or more **clauses.** See also **main clause**.

comparative a form like *older, faster, more intelligent.*

conditional *I should/would* + infinitive, etc. See 88.

conjunction a word that joins clauses. Examples: *and, so, if, when.*

consonant *b, c, d, f* and *g* are **consonants**; *a, e, i, o* and *u* are **vowels**.

contraction two words made into one. Examples: *don't, I'll.*

determiner a word like *the, my, this, every, more,* which can come at the beginning of a noun phrase. See 96.

direct object In *I gave my mother some money*, the **direct object** is *some money; my mother* is the **indirect object**.

direct speech reporting somebody's words without changing the grammar. In *She said 'I'm tired'*, the clause *I'm tired* is **direct speech.** In *She said that she was tired*, the structure is **indirect speech** or **reported speech.**

emphasize You **emphasize** something if you make it 'stronger'—for example, by saying it louder.

expression a group of words used together, like *in the morning.*

first person *I, me, we, us, our, am* are **first person** forms.

formal We use **formal** language when we wish to be polite or to show respect; we use more **informal** language when we talk to friends, for example. *Good morning* is more **formal** than *Hello; Hi* is very **informal**.

gerund an *-ing* form used like a noun. Example: **Smoking** *is dangerous.*

hyphen a line (-) that separates words. Example: *milk-bottle.*

imperative a form (like the infinitive) that is used to give orders, make suggestions, etc. Examples: **Come** *on;* **Wait** *a minute.* See 170.

indirect object see **direct object**.

indirect speech see **direct speech**.

infinitive In *I need to sleep* and *I must go*, the forms *to sleep* and *go* are **infinitives.** See 175.

informal see **formal**.

irregular see **regular**.

main clause Some sentences have a **main clause** and one or more **subordinate clauses**. Example: *When I got home I asked Mary what she thought.* The **main clause** is *I asked Mary;* the other two clauses are like parts of the main clause (the first is like an adverb, the other is like an object): they are **subordinate clauses**.

modal auxiliary verbs *can, could, may, might, must, will, shall, would, should, ought* and *need.*

noun a word like *oil, memory, thing,* which can be used with an article. **Nouns** are usually the names of people or things.

object See **direct object** and **subject**.

omission, omit leaving out words. In the sentence *I know (that) you don't like her,* we can **omit** *that.*

participle When we use the *-ing* form like an adjective or verb, we call it a **present participle.** Examples: *a **crying** child; I was **working**.* Forms like *broken, gone, heard, stopped* are **past participles**. See 234.

passive see **active**.

past participle see **participle**.

perfect a verb form made with *have.* Examples: *I have seen; They had forgotten; She will have arrived.*

phrasal verb verb + adverb particle. Examples: *stand up, write down.*

phrase a group of words that are used together. *Our old house* is a **noun phrase**; *has been sold* is a **verb phrase**.

plural a form used for more than one. *Books, they, many* are **plural**; *book, she, much* are **singular**.

preposition a word like *on, through, over, in, by, for.*

present participle see **participle**.

possessive a form like *my, mine, John's,* used to show possession.

progressive *I am going, I was going* are **progressive** verb forms; *I go, I went* are **simple** verb forms.

pronoun We use a **pronoun** instead of a more precise noun phrase. Examples: *I, it, yourself, their, one.*

proper noun, proper name a noun that is the name of a person, place etc. Examples: *Peter, Einstein, Birmingham.*

question tag a small question at the end of a sentence. Examples: *don't you? wasn't it?*

regular a **regular** form follows the same rules as most others. An **irregular** form does not. *Stopped* is a **regular** past tense; *went* is **irregular**. *Books* is a **regular** plural; *women* is **irregular**.

relative pronouns, relative clauses see 277–280.

reported speech see **direct speech**.

second person *you, yourselves, your* are **second person** forms.

sentence a complete 'piece of language'. In writing, a **sentence** begins with a capital (big) letter and ends with a full stop (.). A **sentence** is usually made of one or more **clauses**.

simple see **progressive**.

singular see **plural**.

stress When we speak, we pronounce some words and parts of words higher and louder: we **stress** them. Example: *There's a 'man in the 'garden.*

subject a noun or pronoun that comes before the verb in an affirmative sentence. It often says who or what does an action. Example: ***Helen** broke another glass today.* See also **direct object**.

subordinate clause see **main clause**.

superlative a form like *oldest, fastest, most intelligent.*

tense *am going, went, will go, have gone* are **tenses** of the verb *go.*

third person *he, him, his, they, goes* are **third person** forms.

verb a word like *ask, play, wake, be, can.* Many **verbs** refer to actions or states.

Phonetic alphabet

Vowels and diphthongs (double vowels)

iː	seat /siːt/, feel /fiːl/	ɜː	turn /tɜːn/, word /wɜːd/
ɪ	sit /sɪt/, in /ɪn/	ə	another /ə'nʌðə(r)/
e	set /set/, any /'enɪ/	eɪ	take /teɪk/, wait /weɪt/
æ	sat /sæt/, match /mætʃ/	aɪ	mine /maɪn/, light /laɪt/
ɑː	march /mɑːtʃ/, after /'ɑːftə(r)/	ɔɪ	oil /ɔɪl/, boy /bɔɪ/
ɒ	pot /pɒt/, gone /gɒn/	əʊ	no /nəʊ/, open /'əʊpən/
ɔː	port /pɔːt/, law /lɔː/	aʊ	house /haʊs/, now /naʊ/
ʊ	good /gʊd/, could /kʊd/	ɪə	hear /hɪə(r)/, deer /dɪə(r)/
uː	food /fuːd/, group /gruːp/	eə	where /weə(r)/, air /eə(r)/
ʌ	much /mʌtʃ/, front /frʌnt/	ʊə	tour /tʊə(r)/

Consonants

p	pull /pʊl/, cup /kʌp/	tʃ	cheap /tʃiːp/, catch /kætʃ/
b	bull /bʊl/, rob /rɒb/	dʒ	jail /dʒeɪl/, bridge /brɪdʒ/
f	ferry /'ferɪ/, cough /kɒf/	k	king /kɪŋ/, case /keɪs/
v	very /'verɪ/, live /lɪv/	g	go /gəʊ/, rug /rʌg/
θ	think /θɪŋk/, bath /bɑːθ/	m	my /maɪ/, come /kʌm/
ð	though /ðəʊ/, with /wɪð/	n	no /nəʊ/, on /ɒn/
t	take /teɪk/, set /set/	ŋ	sing /sɪŋ/, finger /'fɪŋgə(r)/
d	day /deɪ/, red /red/	l	love /lʌv/, hole /həʊl/
s	sing /sɪŋ/, rice /raɪs/	r	round /raʊnd/, carry /'kærɪ/
z	zoo /zuː/, days /deɪz/	w	well /wel/
ʃ	show /ʃəʊ/, wish /wɪʃ/	j	young /jʌŋ/
ʒ	pleasure /'pleʒə(r)/	h	house /haʊs/

' shows which part of a word is stressed. Example: /'lɪmɪt/.

1 abbreviations

1   We usually write abbreviations without full stops in British English.

Mr (NOT ~~Mr.~~) = *Mister*
Ltd = *Limited (company)*
kg = *kilogram*
the BBC = *the British Broadcasting Corporation*
the USA = *the United States of America*
NATO = *the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*
OPEC = *the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*

2   Some abbreviations are made from the first letters of several words. We usually pronounce these with the stress on the last letter.

the BBC /ðə biːbiːˈsiː/   the USA /ðə juːesˈeɪ/

Some of these abbreviations are pronounced like one word.
We do not usually use articles with these.

NATO /ˈneɪtəʊ/ (NOT ~~the NATO~~)
OPEC /ˈəʊpek/ (NOT ~~the OPEC~~)

2 about to

> *be + about + to*-infinitive

If you are **about to do something**, you are going to do it very soon.

*Don't go out now — we're **about to have supper**.*
*I was **about to go to bed** when the telephone rang.*

▷   For other ways of talking about the future, see 134–140.

3 above and over

1   *Above* and *over* can both mean 'higher than'.

A is **above/over** B.

*The snow came up **above/over** our knees.*
*There's a spider on the ceiling just **above/over** your head.*

2   We use *above* when one thing is not directly over another.
*We've got a little house **above** the lake.*
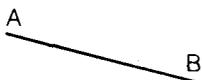
A is **above** B. (NOT ~~A is over B.~~)

3　We use *over* when one thing covers another.

　A is over B.

*There is cloud **over** the South of England.*

And we use *over* when one thing crosses another. (*Across* is also possible.)

　A is (moving) **over/across** *B.*
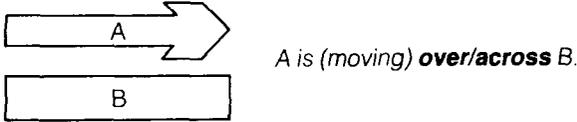
*Electricity cables stretch **over/across** the fields.*
*The plane was flying **over/across** the Channel.*

4　We usually use *over* to mean 'more than'.

　　*'How old are you?' '**Over** thirty.'*
　　*He's **over** two metres tall.*
　　*There were **over** fifty people at the party.*

But we use *above* in some expressions, particularly when we are thinking of a vertical scale.

Examples are: **above** *zero* (for temperatures); **above** *sea-level;* **above** *average.*

▷　For the difference between *over* and *across*, see 4.
　　For other meanings of *above* and *over*, see a good dictionary.

4　**across** and **over**

1　We use both *across* and *over* to mean 'on the other side of' or 'to the other side of'.

　　*His house is just **over/across** the road.*
　　*Try to jump **over/across** the stream.*

2　We prefer *over* to talk about a movement to the other side of something high.

　　*Why is that woman climbing **over the wall**?*
　　(NOT . . . ~~climbing **across the wall**?~~)
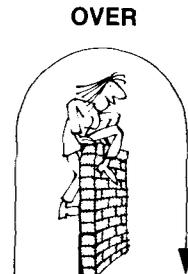
OVER

3 We prefer *across* to talk about a movement to the **ACROSS**
other side of a flat area.

> *It took him six weeks to walk **across the desert**.*
> *(NOT ... ~~to walk over the desert.~~)*
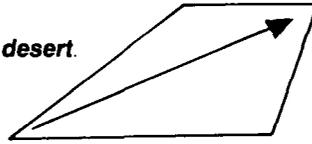
5 *across* and *through*

1 The difference between *across* and *through* is like the difference
between *on* and *in*. *Across* is used for a movement on a surface.
Through is used for a movement in a three-dimensional space, with
things on all sides. Compare:

> *We walked **across the ice**.*   *We drove **across the desert**.*
> *I walked **through the wood**.*   *We drove **through several towns**.*
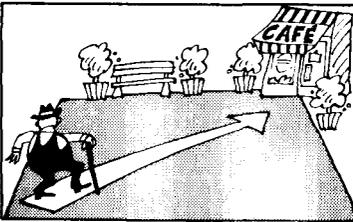
> *I walked **across the square***   *I walked **through the crowd***
> *to the café.*   *to the bar.*
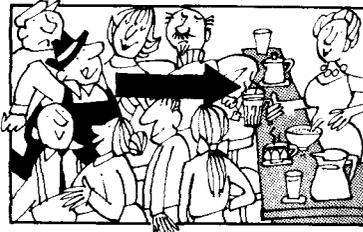
2 People swim, and ships move, *across* rivers, lakes etc.

> *The **river's** too wide to swim **across**.*

▷ For the difference between *across* and *over*, see 4.

6 active verb forms

This is a list of all the affirmative active forms of an English regular verb,
with their names. For passive forms, see 238. For questions, see 270.
For negatives, see 215. For irregular verbs, see 186.
For more information about the forms and their uses, see the entry for
each one. For details of auxiliary and modal auxiliary verbs, see the
entry for each one.

future *I will/shall work, you will work, he/she/it will work, we will/shall
work, they will work*

future progressive *I will/shall be working, you will be working,* etc

future perfect simple *I will/shall have worked, you will have worked,* etc

future perfect progressive *I will/shall have been working, you will have
been working,* etc

simple present *I work, you work, he/she/it works, we work, they work*

present progressive *I am working, you are working,* etc

present perfect simple *I have worked, you have worked, he/she/it has worked,* etc

present perfect progressive *I have been working, you have been working,* etc

simple past *I worked, you worked, he/she/it worked,* etc

past progressive *I was working, you were working,* etc

past perfect simple *I had worked, you had worked, he/she/it had worked,* etc

past perfect progressive *I had been working, you had been working,* etc

infinitives *(to) work; (to) be working; (to) have worked; (to) have been working*

participles *working; worked; having worked*

Note: Future tenses can be constructed with *going to* instead of *will* (for the difference, see 136.3).

I'm going to work; I'm going to be working; I'm going to have worked

7 actual(ly)

1 *Actual* means 'real'; *actually* means 'really' or 'in fact'.
We often use them to correct mistakes and misunderstandings, or when we say something unexpected or surprising.

*The book says he was 47 when he died, but his **actual** age was 43.*
*'Hello, John. Nice to see you again.' '**Actually**, my name's Andy.'*
*'Do you like opera?' 'Yes, I do.' '**Actually**, I've got two tickets . . .'*
*She was so angry that she **actually** tore up the letter.*

2 Note that *actual* and *actually* are 'false friends' for people who speak European languages. They do not mean the same as, for example, *actuel(lement), aktuell, attuale/attualmente.* To express these ideas, we say *present, current, up to date; at this moment, now, at present.*

*What's our **current** financial position?*
*A hundred years ago, the population of London was higher than it is **now**.* (NOT . . . ~~higher than it **actually** is.~~)

8 adjectives ending in -ly

1 Many adverbs end in *-ly* — for example *happily, nicely*. But some words that end in *-ly* are adjectives, not adverbs. The most important are *friendly, lovely, lonely, ugly, silly, cowardly, likely, unlikely.*

*She gave me a **friendly** smile.   Her singing was **lovely**.*

There are no adverbs *friendly* or *friendlily*, *lovely* or *lovelily*, etc. We have to use different structures.

> She smiled at me **in a friendly way**. (NOT ~~She smiled at me **friendly**~~.)
> He gave a silly laugh. (NOT ~~He laughed **silly**~~.)

2   *Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly*, and *early* are both adjectives and adverbs.

> It's a **daily** paper.   It comes out **daily**.
> an **early** train   I got up **early**.

9   adjectives: order

Before a noun, we put adjectives in a fixed order. The exact rules are very complicated (and not very well understood). Here are the most important rules:

1   Adjectives of colour, origin (where something comes from), material (what it is made of) and purpose (what it is for) go in that order.

colour	origin	material	purpose	noun
red	Spanish	leather	riding	boots

> a **Venetian glass** ashtray (NOT ~~a **glass Venetian** ashtray~~)
> a **brown German** beer-mug (NOT ~~a **German brown** beer-mug~~)

2   Other adjectives come before colour-adjectives etc.
Their exact order is too complicated to give rules.

> a **big black** cat (NOT ~~a **black big** cat~~)
> the **round glass** table (NOT ~~the **glass round** table~~)

3   *First, last* and *next* usually come before numbers.

> the **first three** days (NOT ~~the **three first** days~~)
> my **last two** jobs (NOT ~~my **two last** jobs~~)

▷   For *and* with adjectives, see 31.3.   For commas with adjectives, see 266.1.

10   adjectives: position

> adjective + noun
> subject + copula verb (*be, seem, look* etc) + adjective

1   Most adjectives can go in two places in a sentence:

a   before a noun

> The **new secretary** doesn't like me.
> She married a **rich businessman**.

b   after a 'copula verb' (*be*, *seem*, *look*, *appear*, *feel* and some other verbs — see 91)

   *That dress **is new**, isn't it?   He **looks rich**.*

2   A few adjectives can go before a noun, but not usually after a verb. Examples are *elder*, *eldest* (see 299.5) and *little* (see 309). After a verb we use *older*, *oldest* and *small*.

   *My **elder** brother lives in Newcastle. (Compare: He's three years **older** than me.)*
   *He's a funny **little** boy. (Compare: He looks very **small**.)*

3   Some adjectives can go after a verb, but not usually before a noun. The most common are *ill* (see 169), *well* (see 359) and *afraid*, *alive*, *alone*, *asleep*. Before nouns we use *sick*, *healthy*, *frightened*, *living*, *lone*, *sleeping*.

   *He looks **ill**. (Compare: He's a **sick** man.)*
   *Your mother's very **well**. (Compare: She's a very **healthy** woman.)*
   *She's **asleep**. (Compare: a **sleeping** baby)*

4   In expressions of measurement, the adjective comes after the measurement-noun.

   *two metres **high** (NOT ~~high two metres~~)*
   *ten years **old**   two miles **long***

11   adjectives without nouns

We cannot usually leave out a noun after an adjective.

   Poor little boy! (NOT ~~Poor little!~~)

But there are some exceptions:

1   We sometimes leave out a noun when we are talking about a choice between two or three different kinds (of car, milk, cigarette, bread, for example).

   *'Have you got any bread?' 'Do you want **white** or **brown**?'*
   *'A pound of butter, please.' 'I've only got **unsalted**.'*

2   We can use superlative adjectives without nouns, if the meaning is clear.

   *I'm **the tallest** in my family.   'Which one shall I get?' '**The cheapest**.'*

3   We can use some adjectives with *the* to talk about people in a particular condition.

   *He's collecting money for **the blind**.*

Note that this structure has a plural 'general' meaning: *the blind* means 'all blind people', not 'the blind person' or 'certain blind people'.
The most common expressions of this kind are:

the dead   the sick   the blind   the deaf   the rich
the poor   the unemployed   the young   the old
the handicapped   the mentally ill

(In informal speech, we usually say *old people, young people* etc
instead of *the old, the young.*)
These expressions cannot be used with a possessive *'s.*

the problems of the poor OR *poor people's problems*
(NOT ~~the poor's problems~~)

▷   For expressions like *the Irish, the French,* see 212.

12   adverbs of manner

1   Adverbs of manner say *how* something happens.
Examples: *happily, quickly, terribly, beautifully, badly, well, fast.*
Don't confuse these adverbs with adjectives (*happy, quick,* etc.) We use
adverbs, not adjectives, to modify verbs.

| verb + adverb |

She sang **beautifully**. (NOT ~~She sang **beautiful**~~.)
We'll have to think **quickly**. (NOT . . . ~~think **quick**~~.)
She danced **happily** into the room. (NOT ~~She danced **happy**~~ . . .)
I don't remember that evening very **well**. (NOT . . . ~~very **good**~~.)

2   Adverbs of manner can also modify adjectives, past participles, other
adverbs, and adverbial phrases.

| adverb + adjective | | adverb + past participle |

It's **terribly** cold today.   This steak is very **badly** cooked.
(NOT . . . ~~**terrible cold**~~ . . .)   (NOT . . . ~~**bad cooked**~~.)

| adverb + adverb | | adverb + adverbial phrase |

They're playing **unusually** fast.   He was **madly** in love with her.
(NOT . . . ~~**unusual fast**~~.)   (NOT . . . ~~**mad**~~ . . .)

3   Some adverbs of manner have the same form as adjectives.
Examples are *fast* (see 127), *slow* (see 308), *loud, wide* and *hard* (see
150).

▷   For the use of adjectives with 'copula verbs' like *look* or *seem,* see 91.
For adjectives ending in *-ly,* see 8. For the position of adverbs of manner, see
14.6. For spelling rules, see 327.

13 adverbs: position (general)

Different kinds of adverbs go in different positions in a clause. Here are some general rules: for more details, see 14. (Note: these rules apply both to one-word adverbs and to *adverb phrases* of two or more words.)

1 Verb and object

We do not usually put adverbs between a verb and its object.

> ... adverb + verb + object
>
> *I **very much** like my job.*
>
> verb + adverb + object
>
> (NOT *I like **very much** my job*.)

> ... verb + object + adverb
>
> *She speaks English **well**.*
>
> (NOT *She speaks **well** English*.)

2 Initial, mid and end position

There are three normal positions for adverbs:

a. initial position (at the beginning of a clause)
> ***Yesterday morning** something very strange happened.*

b. mid-position (with the verb — for the exact position see 14.2)
> *My brother **completely** forgot my birthday.*

c. end position (at the end of a clause)
> *What are you doing **tomorrow**?*

Most adverb phrases (adverbs of two or more words) cannot go in mid-position. Compare:
> *He got dressed **quickly**.*   *He **quickly** got dressed.*
> (*Quickly* can go in end or mid-position.)

> *He got dressed **in a hurry**.* (NOT *He **in a hurry** got dressed*.)
> (*In a hurry* cannot go in mid-position.)

3 What goes where?

a   initial position

Connecting adverbs (which join a clause to what came before). Time adverbs can also go here (see 14.8).
> ***However**, not everybody agreed.* (connecting adverb)
> ***Tomorrow** I've got a meeting in Cardiff.* (time adverb)

b   mid-position

Focusing adverbs (which emphasize one part of the clause); adverbs of certainty and completeness; adverbs of indefinite frequency; some adverbs of manner (see 14.6).
> *He's been everywhere — he's **even** been to Antarctica.* (focusing adverb)

*It will **probably** rain this evening.* (certainty)
*I've **almost** finished painting the house.* (completeness)
*My boss **often** travels to America.* (indefinite frequency)
*He **quickly** got dressed.* (manner)

c   end-position

Adverbs of manner (how), place (where) and time (when) most often go in end-position. (For details, see 14.9.)

*She brushed her hair **slowly**.* (manner)
*The children are playing **upstairs**.* (place)
*I phoned Alex **this morning**.* (time)

14   adverbs: position (details)

(Read section 13 before you read this.)

1   Connecting adverbs

These adverbs **join** a clause to what came before.
Examples: *however, then, next, besides, anyway*
Position: beginning of clause.

*Some of us wanted to change the system; **however**, not everybody agreed.*
*I worked without stopping until five o'clock. **Then** I went home.*
***Next**, I want to say something about the future.*

2   Indefinite frequency

These adverbs say **how often** something happens.
Examples: *always, ever, usually, normally, often, frequently,*
                sometimes, occasionally, rarely, seldom, never
Position: mid-position (after auxiliary verbs and *am, are, is, was* and *were*; before other verbs).

| auxiliary verb + adverb |

*I **have never** seen a whale.*
*You **can always** come and stay with us if you want to.*
***Have** you **ever** played American football?*

| be + adverb |

*My boss **is often** bad-tempered.*
*I'**m seldom** late for work.*

| adverb + other verb |

*We **usually go** to Scotland in August.*
*It **sometimes gets** very windy here.*

When there are two auxiliary verbs, these adverbs usually come after the first.

> We **have never been invited** to one of their parties.
> She **must sometimes have wanted** to run away.

Usually, normally, often, frequently, sometimes and occasionally can go at the beginning of a clause for emphasis. Always, never, rarely, seldom and ever cannot.

> **Sometimes** I think I'd like to live somewhere else.
> **Usually** I get up early.
> (NOT ~~Always I get up early~~. ~~Never I get up early~~.)

But always and never can come at the beginning of imperative clauses.

> **Always** look in your mirror before starting to drive.
> **Never** ask her about her marriage.

For the position of adverbs of definite frequency (for example daily, weekly), see 8 below.

3 Focusing adverbs

These adverbs '**point to**' or **emphasize** one part of the clause.
Examples: also, just, even, only, mainly, mostly, either, or, neither, nor
Position: mid-position (after auxiliary verbs and am, are, is, was and were; before other verbs).

| auxiliary verb + adverb |

> He's been everywhere—he**'s even** been to Antarctica.
> I**'m only** going for two days.

| be + adverb |

> She's my teacher, but she**'s also** my friend.
> The people at the meeting **were mainly** scientists.

| adverb + other verb |

> Your bicycle **just needs** some oil— that's all.
> She **neither said** thank-you **nor looked** at me.

Too and as well are focusing adverbs that go in end-position. (See 28.)
Either goes in end-position after not. (See 217.)

4 Adverbs of certainty

We use these adverbs to say **how sure** we are of something.
Examples: certainly, definitely, clearly, obviously, probably, really
Position: mid-position (after auxiliary verbs and am, are, is, was and were; before other verbs).

14

| auxiliary verb + adverb |

*It **will probably** rain this evening.*
*The train **has obviously** been delayed.*

| be + adverb |

*There **is clearly** something wrong.*
*She **is definitely** older than him.*

| adverb + other verb |

*He **probably thinks** you don't like him.*
*I **certainly feel** better today.*

Maybe and *perhaps* usually come at the beginning of a clause.

***Perhaps** her train is late.*
***Maybe** I'm right, and maybe I'm wrong.*

5 Adverbs of completeness

These adverbs say **how completely** something happens.
Examples: *completely, practically, almost, nearly, quite, rather. partly,*
            sort of, kind of, hardly, scarcely
Position: mid-position (after auxiliary verbs and *am, are, is, was* and
            were; before other verbs).

| auxiliary verb + adverb |

*I **have completely** forgotten your name.*
*Sally **can practically** read.*

| be + adverb |

*It **is almost** dark.*
*The house **is partly** ready.*

| adverb + other verb |

*I **kind of hope** she wins.*

6 Adverbs of manner

These adverbs say **how, in what way**, something happens or is done.
Examples: *angrily, happily, fast, slowly, suddenly, well, badly, nicely,*
            noisily, quietly, hard, softly
Position: most often at the end of a clause, especially if the adverb is
            emphasized. Adverbs in *-ly* can go in mid-position if the
            adverb is less important than the verb or object. Initial
            position is also possible.

end-position

*He drove off **angrily**.*
*You speak English **well**.*
*She read the letter **slowly**.*

mid-position

*She **angrily** tore up the letter.*
*I **slowly** began to feel better again.*

initial position

***Suddenly** I had an idea.*

In passive clauses, adverbs of manner often go before the past participle. This is very common with adverbs that say **how well** something is done (for example *well, badly*).

adverb + past participle

*Everything has been **carefully checked**.*
*I thought it was very **well written**.*
*The conference was **badly organized**.*

7   Adverbs of place

These adverbs say **where** something happens.
Examples: *upstairs, around, here, to bed, in London, out of the window*
Position: at the end of a clause. Initial position also possible, especially in literary writing.

*The children are playing **upstairs**.*
*Come and sit **here**.*
*Don't throw orange peel **out of the window**.*
*She's sitting **at the end of the garden**.*
***At the end of the garden** there was a very tall tree.*

Adverbs of direction (movement) come before adverbs of position.

*The children are running **around upstairs**.*

Here and *there* often begin clauses. Note the word order.

Here/There + verb + subject

***Here** comes your bus.* (NOT ~~Here your bus comes~~.)
***There**'s Alice.*

Pronoun subjects come directly after *here* and *there*.

*Here **it** comes* (NOT ~~Here comes it~~.)
*There **she** is.* (NOT ~~There is she~~.)

8   Adverbs of time

These adverbs say **when** something happens.
Examples: *today, afterwards, in June, last year. daily, weekly, every year, finally, before, eventually, already, soon, still, last*

14

Position: mostly in end-position; initial position also common. Some can go in mid-position (see below). Adverbs of indefinite frequency (*often, ever* etc) go in mid-position (see paragraph 2).

*I'm going to London **today**.*
***Today** I'm going to London.*

*She has a new hair style **every week**.*
***Every week** she has a new hair style.*

Time adverbs in -*ly* can also go in mid-position; so can *already, soon* and *last. Still* and *just* only go in mid-position.

*So you **finally** got here.*
*I've **already** paid the bill.*
*We'll **soon** be home.*
*When did you **last** see your father?*
*I **still** love you.*
*She's **just** gone out.*

9 Manner, place, time

At the end of a clause, adverbs usually come in the order **manner, place, time** (MPT).

$$\overset{P}{}\ \overset{T}{}$$
*I went **there at once**.* (NOT *I went at once there*.)

*Let's go **to bed early**.* (NOT . . . *early to bed*.)

*I worked **hard yesterday**.*

*She sang **beautifully in the town hall last night**.*

With verbs of movement, we often put adverbs of place before adverbs of manner.

*She went **home quickly**.*

10 Emphatic position

Mid-position adverbs go before emphasized auxiliary verbs or *be*. Compare:

*She **has certainly** made him angry.*
*She **certainly HAS** made him angry!*

*I'm **really** sorry.*
*I **really AM** sorry.*

*'Polite people **always say** thank-you.'*
*'I **always DO say** thank-you.'*

11   Other positions

Some adverbs can go directly with particular words or expressions that they modify. The most important are *just, almost, only, really, even, right, terribly.*

> I'll see you in the pub **just before eight o'clock**.
> I've read the book **almost to the end**.
> **Only you** could do a thing like that.   I feel **really tired**.
> He always wears a coat, **even in summer**.
> She walked **right past me**.   We all thought she sang **terribly badly**.

15   **after** (conjunction)

> clause + *after* + clause
> *after* + clause, + clause

1   We can use *after* to join two clauses.
We can either say: B happened **after** A happened
                OR **After** A happened, B happened.
The meaning is the same: A happened first.
Note the comma (,) in the second structure.

> I went to America **after** I left school.
> **After** I left school, I went to America.

> He did military service **after** he went to university.
> (= He went to university first.)
> **After** he did military service, he went to university.
> (= He did military service first.)

2   In a clause with *after*, we use a present tense if the meaning is future (see 343).

> I'll telephone you **after I arrive**. (NOT . . . ~~after I will arrive~~.)

3   In clauses with *after*, we often use perfect tenses. We can use the present perfect (*have* + past participle) instead of the present, and the past perfect (*had* + past participle) instead of the past.

> I'll telephone you **after I've arrived**.
> **After I had left** school, I went to America.

There is not usually much difference of meaning between the perfect tenses and the others in this case. Perfect tenses emphasize the idea that one thing was finished before another started.

4   In a formal style, we often use the structure   `after + -ing` .

> **After completing** this form, return it to the Director's office.
> He wrote his first book **after visiting** Mongolia.

16 after (preposition); afterwards (adverb)

After is a preposition: it can be followed by a noun or an -*ing* form.
> *We ate in a restaurant **after** the film.*
> ***After seeing** the film, we ate in a restaurant*

After is not an adverb: we do not use it with the same meaning as *afterwards, then* or *after that.*
> *We went to the cinema and **afterwards** (**then/after that**) we ate in a restaurant.*
> (NOT . . . ~~and **after** we ate in a restaurant~~.)

17 after all

1 *After all* gives the idea that one thing was expected, but the opposite happened. It means 'Although we expected something different'.
> *I'm sorry. I thought I could come and see you this evening, but I'm not free **after all**.*
> *I expected to fail the exam, but I passed **after all**.*

Position: usually at the end of the clause.

2 We can also use *after all* to mean 'We mustn't forget that . . . ' It is used to introduce a good reason or an important argument which people seem to have forgotten.
> *It's not surprising you're hungry. **After all**, you didn't have breakfast.*
> *I think we should go and see Granny. **After all**, she only lives ten miles away, and we haven't seen her for ages.*

Position: usually at the beginning of the clause.

18 afternoon, evening and night

1 *Afternoon* changes to *evening* when it starts getting dark, more or less. However, it depends on the time of year. In summer, we stop saying *afternoon* by six o'clock, even if it is still light. In winter we go on saying *afternoon* until at least five o'clock, even if it is dark.

2 *Evening* changes to *night* more or less at bedtime. Note that *Good evening* usually means 'Hello', and *Good night* means 'Goodbye' — it is never used to greet people.
> A: ***Good evening**. Terrible weather, isn't it?*
> B: *Yes, dreadful.*
> A: *Hasn't stopped raining for weeks. Well, I must be going. **Good night**.*
> B: ***Good night**.*

19 ages

1   We talk about people's ages with be + number

*He **is** thirty-five.*
*She **will be** twenty-one next year.*

or be + number + *years old* .

*He **is** thirty-five **years old**.*

To ask about somebody's age, say *How old are you?* (*What is your age?*
is correct but not usual.)

2   Note the structure *be + . . . age* (without preposition).

*When I **was your age**, I was already working.*
*The two boys **are the same age**.*
*She**'s the same age** as me.*

20 ago

1   **Position**

expression of time + *ago*

*I met her **six weeks ago**.* (NOT . . . ~~ago six weeks.~~)
*It all happened **a long time ago**.*
***How long ago** did you arrive?*

2   *Ago* is used with a past tense, not the present perfect.

*She **phoned** a few minutes ago.* (NOT ~~She has phoned~~ . . .)
*'Where's Mike?' 'He **was working** outside ten minutes ago.'*

3   **The difference between *ago* and *for***

Compare:

*I went to Spain **six weeks ago**.* (= six weeks before now)
*I went to Germany **for six weeks** this summer.* (= I spent six weeks
in Germany.)
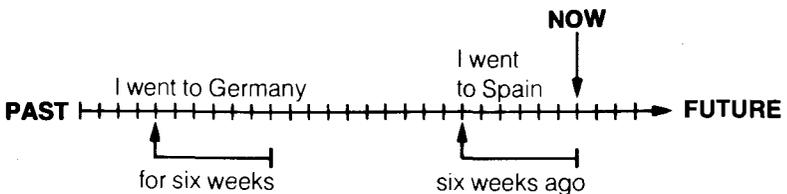
4 The difference between *ago* and *before*

two years ago = two years before now
two years before = two years before then (before a past time)
Compare:

Two years ago, I visited my home town, which I had left **two years before**.

left   visited   **NOW**

two years ago

two years before
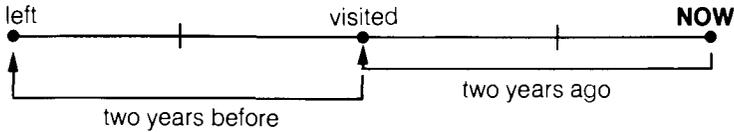
▷ For other uses of *before*, see 61–63.

21 all (of) with nouns and pronouns

1 We can put *all* (*of*) before nouns and pronouns.
Before a noun with a determiner (for example *the*, *my*, *this*), *all* and *all of* are both possible.

All (of) my friends like riding.
She's eaten **all (of) the** cake.

Before a noun with no determiner, we do not use *of*.

All children can be naughty sometimes. (NOT ~~All of children~~ ...)

Before a personal pronoun, we use *all of*.

All of them can come tomorrow.
Mary sends her love to **all of us**.

All we, all they are not possible.

2 We can put *all* after object pronouns.

I've invited **them all**.
Mary sends her love to **us all**.
I've made **you all** something to eat.

22 all with verbs

All can go with a verb, in 'mid-position', like some adverbs (see 13.2).

1 | auxiliary verb + *all* |
       | am/are/is/was/were + *all* |

We **can all** swim.
They **have all** finished.
We **are all** tired.

2 | *all* + other verb |

My family **all like** travelling.
You **all look** tired.

23   **all, everybody** and **everything**

1   We do not usually use *all* alone to mean 'everybody'.
Compare:

> **All the people** *stood up.*
> **Everybody** *stood up.* (NOT ~~All stood up.~~)

2   *All* can mean *everything,* but usually only in the structure *all* + relative
clause (= *all (that)* . . .). Compare:

> **All (that) I have** *is yours.* (OR **Everything** . . .)
> **Everything** *is yours.* (NOT ~~All is yours.~~)

> *She lost* **all she owned.** (OR . . . **everything** *she owned.*)
> *She lost* **everything.** (NOT ~~She lost all.~~)

This structure often has a rather negative meaning: 'nothing more' or 'the
only thing(s)'.

> *This is* **all I've got.**
> **All I want** *is a place to sleep.*

Note the expression *That's all* (= 'It's finished').

24   **all** and **every**

1   *All* and *every* have similar meanings. (*Every* means 'all without
exception'.)
They are used in different structures:

all + plural		*every* + singular

> **All children need** *love.*   **Every child needs** *love.*
> **All cities are** *noisy.*   **Every city is** *noisy.*

2   We can use *all,* but not *every,* before a determiner (for example *the, my,
this*).

all + determiner + plural		*every* + singular

> *Please switch off* **all the lights.**   *Please switch off* **every light.**
> *I've written to* **all my friends.**   *I've written to* **every friend** *I have.*
>   (NOT . . . ~~every my friend.~~)

3   We can use *all,* but not *every,* with uncountable nouns.

> *I like* **all** *music.* (NOT . . . ~~every music.~~)

We can use *all* with some singular countable nouns, to mean 'every part
of', 'the whole of'. Compare:

> *She was here* **all day.** (= from morning to night)
> *She was here* **every day.** (= Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday . . .)

4   At the beginning of negative sentences, we use these structures:

> Not all/every + noun + affirmative verb

Not all Scottish people drink whisky.
Not every student passed the exam.

> No + noun + affirmative verb
> None of + determiner + noun + affirmative verb

No Scottish people work in our office.
None of the students passed the exam.

For the use of no and none, see 221.

5   We do not usually use all and every alone without nouns. Instead, we say all of it/them and every one.

'She's eaten all the cakes.' 'What, **all of them**?' 'Yes, **every one**.'

▷   For the difference between all and whole, see 25.
For more rules about all, see 21–23.
For the difference between every and each, see 104.

25   **all** and **whole**

> all + determiner + noun
> determiner + whole + noun

1   Whole means 'complete', 'every part of'. All and whole can both be used with singular nouns. They have similar meanings, but the word order is different. Compare:

Julie spent **all the summer** at home.   **all my** life
Julie spent **the whole summer** at home.   **my whole** life

2   Whole is more common than all with singular countable nouns.

She wasted **the whole lesson**. (More common than . . . **all the lesson**.)

3   We usually use all, not whole, with uncountable nouns.

She's drunk **all the milk**. (NOT . . . ~~the whole milk.~~)

There are some exceptions: for example the whole time; the whole truth.

4   The whole of or all (of) is used before proper nouns, pronouns and determiners.

The whole of/All of Venice was under water. (NOT ~~Whole Venice~~ . . .)
I've just read **the whole of** 'War and Peace'.
(OR . . . **all of** 'War and Peace'.)
I didn't understand **the whole of/all of it**.

26 all right

We usually write *all right* as two separate words in British English.
(*Alright* is possible in American English).

> *Everything will be **all right**.*

27 **almost** and **nearly**

1 There is not usually much difference between *almost* and *nearly*, and we
can often use both with the same meaning.

> *I've **nearly** finished.   I've **almost** finished.*

Sometimes *almost* is a little 'nearer' than *nearly*.

2 We do not usually use *nearly* with negative words: *never, nobody, no-
one, nothing, nowhere, no* and *none*.
Instead, we use *almost*, or we use *hardly* with *ever, anybody*, etc. (See
150.2.)

> *almost never*(NOT ~~nearly never~~)   *hardly ever*
> *almost nobody*   *hardly anybody*
> *almost no money*   *hardly any money*

28 **also, as well** and **too**

clause + *as well*
clause + *too*
subject + *also* + verb . . .
subject + *be* + *also* + complement

1 *As well* and *too* usually come at the end of a clause. They mean the same.

> *She not only sings; she plays the piano **as well**.*
> *We all went to Brighton yesterday. John came **too**.*

As well and *too* can refer to ('point to') different parts of the sentence,
depending on the meaning. Consider the sentence: *We have meetings
on Sundays as well.* This can mean three different things:

a *(Other people have meetings on Sundays, and)*

> *we have meetings on Sundays as well.*

b *(We go for walks on Sundays, and)*

we have meetings on Sundays as well.

c *(We have meetings on Tuesdays, and)*

we have meetings on Sundays as well.

When we speak, we show the exact meaning by stressing the word that *as well* or *too* refers to.

'We have meetings on **Sundays** *as well.'*

2 *Too* and *as well* are often used in 'short answers'.

> *'She's nice.' 'I think so* **too**.'
> *'I've got a headache.' 'I have* **as well**.'

In very informal speech, we often use *Me too* as a short answer.

> *'I'm going home.'* '**Me too**.'

In a more formal style, we would say *I am too*, or *So am I* (see 312).

3 We usually put *also* before the verb (for the exact position when there are auxiliary verbs, see 14.3).

> *I don't like him. I* **also think** *he's dishonest.*
> *She sings. and she* **also plays** *the piano.*

Also comes after *am, is, are, was* and *were*.

> *I'm hungry, and I'm* **also** *very tired.*

Also can refer to any part of the sentence, like *as well* and *too*. We do not use *also* in short answers.

> *'I'm hungry.' 'I am too.' / 'So am I.' / 'Me too.' / 'I am as well.'*
> (NOT *I also.*)

4 | *Also* + comma (,) | can be used at the beginning of a sentence, to refer to the whole sentence.

> *It's a nice house, but it's very small.* **Also**, *it needs a lot of repairs.*

5 We do not usually use *also, as well* and *too* in negative sentences. Instead, we use structures with *not . . . either, neither* or *nor*. (See 217.) Compare:

> *He's there too.*— *He isn't there* **either**.
> *I like you as well.*— *I don't like you* **either**.
> *I do too.*— **Nor** *do I.*

▷ For the difference between *also* and *even*, see 114.3.
For *as well as*, see 51.

29 **although** and **though**

> *(al)though* + clause, + clause
> clause, + *(al)though* + clause
> clause + *though*

1 Both these words can be used as conjunctions. They mean the same. *Though* is informal.

> **(Al)though** *I don't agree with him, I think he's honest.*
> *She went on walking,* **(al)though** *she was terribly tired.*
> *I'll talk to him,* **(al)though** *I don't think it'll do any good.*

We use *even though* to emphasize a contrast. (*Even although* is not possible.)

> **Even though** *I didn't understand the words, I knew what he wanted.*

2 We can use *though* to mean 'however'. It usually comes at the end of a sentence in informal speech.

> *'Nice day.' 'Yes. Bit cold,* **though**.*'*

▷ For the difference between *even* and *even though*, see 114.4.
For *even though* and *even so*, see 114.4, 5.   For *as though*, see 49.

30 **among** and **between**

1 We say that somebody/something is *between* two or more clearly separate people or things.
We use *among* when somebody/something is in a group, a crowd or a mass of people or things, which we do not see separately. Compare:

> *She was standing* **between** *Alice and Mary.*
> *She was standing* **among** *a crowd of children.*
> *Our house is* **between** *the wood, the river and the village.*
> *His house is hidden* **among** *the trees.*

BETWEEN   **AMONG**

2 We use *between* to say that there are things (or groups of things) on two sides.

> *a little valley* **between** *high mountains*
> *I saw something* **between** *the wheels of the car.*

3 We say *divide between* and *share between* before singular nouns.
Before plural nouns, we can say *between* or *among*.

> He **divided** his money **between** his wife, his daughter and his sister.
> I **shared** the food **between/among** all my friends.

31 and

> A and B
> A, B and C
> A, B, C and D

1 When we join two or more expressions, we usually put *and* before the
last. (For rules about commas, see 266.1.)

> bread **and** cheese
> We drank, talked **and** danced.
> I wrote the letters, Peter addressed them, George bought the stamps
> **and** Alice posted them.

2 In two-word expressions, we often put the shortest word first.

> young and pretty   cup and saucer

Some common expressions with *and* have a fixed order which we
cannot change.

> hands and knees (NOT ~~knees and hands~~)
> knife and fork   bread and butter
> men, women and children   fish and chips

3 We do not usually use *and* with adjectives before a noun.

> Thanks for your **nice long** letter. (NOT . . . ~~your nice and long letter.~~)
> a **tall dark handsome** cowboy

But we use *and* when the adjectives refer to different parts of the same
thing.

> red **and** yellow socks   a metal **and** glass table

▷ Note: *and* is usually pronounced /ənd/, not /ænd/. (See 358.)
For ellipsis (leaving words out) with *and*, in expressions like *the bread and **(the)**
butter*, see 108.2.   For *and* after *try, wait, go, come* etc, see 32.

32 and after try, wait, go etc

1 We often use *try and* . . . instead of *try to* . . .
This is informal

> **Try and** eat something — you'll feel better if you do.
> I'll **try and** phone you tomorrow morning.

We only use this structure with the simple form *try*. It is not possible with *tries*, *tried*, or *trying*.
Compare:

>**Try and** eat something.
>I **tried to** eat something. (NOT ~~I tried and ate something.~~)

We usually say *wait and see*, not *wait to see*.

>'What's for lunch?' '**Wait and see**.'

2   We often say *come and, go and, run and, hurry up and, stay and*. This has the same meaning as *come, go* etc + infinitive of purpose (see 178).

>**Come and** have a drink.   **Stay and** have dinner.
>**Hurry up and** open the door.

We can use this structure with forms like *comes, came, going, went* etc.

>He often **comes and** spends the evening with us.
>She **stayed and** played with the children.

33   another

>another + singular noun
>another + few/number + plural noun

1   *Another* is one word.

>He's bought **another** car. (NOT . . . ~~an other car.~~)

2   Normally, we only use *another* with singular countable nouns. Compare:

>Would you like **another** potato?
>Would you like **some more** meat? (NOT . . . ~~another meat?~~)
>Would you like **some more** peas? (NOT . . . ~~another peas?~~)

3   But we can use *another* before a plural noun in expressions with *few* or a number.

>I'm staying for **another few weeks.**
>We need **another three chairs.**

▷   For information about *one another*, see 105.
For more information about *other*, see 231.

34   any (= 'it doesn't matter which')

Any can mean 'it doesn't matter which'; 'whichever you like'.

>'When shall I come?' '**Any** time.'
>'Could you pass me a knife?' 'Which one?' 'It doesn't matter. **Any** one.'

We can use *anybody, anyone, anything* and *anywhere* in the same way.

*She goes out with **anybody** who asks her.*
*'What would you like to eat?' 'It doesn't matter. **Anything** will do.'*
*'Where can we sit?' '**Anywhere** you like.'*

▷ For the use of *any* and *no* as adverbs, see 35.
For other uses of *any* (and *some*) see 314.

35 **any** and **no**: adverbs

> *any/no* + comparative
> *any/no* different
> *any/no* good/use

1 *Any* and *no* can modify (= change the meaning of) comparatives (see also 86.2).

*You don't look **any older** than your daughter.*
(= You don't look at all older . . .)
*I can't go **any further**.*
*I'm afraid the weather's **no better** than yesterday.*

2 We also use *any* and *no* with *different*.

*This school isn't **any different** from the last one.*
*'Is John any better?' '**No different**. Still very ill.'*

3 Note the expressions *any good/use* and *no good/use*.

*Was the film **any good**?   This watch is **no use**. It keeps stopping.*

36 **appear**

1 *Appear* can mean 'seem'. In this case, it is a 'copula verb' (see 91), and is followed by an adjective or a noun.
We often use the structure *appear to be*, especially before a noun.

> subject + *appear (to be)* + adjective

*He **appeared** very angry.* (NOT . . . ~~very angrily.~~)

> subject + *appear to be* + noun

*She **appears to be** a very religious person.*

2 Appear can also mean 'come into sight' or 'arrive'. In this case, it is not followed by an adjective or noun, but it can be used with adverbs.

> subject (+ adverb) + *appear* (+ adverb/adverb phrase)

*A face suddenly **appeared** at the window.*
*Mary **appeared** unexpectedly this morning and asked me for some money.*

▷ For *seem*, see 291.

37 (a)round and about

1 We usually use *round* for movement or position in a circle, or in a curve.

*We all sat **round** the table.*
*I walked **round** the car and looked at the wheels.*
*'Where do you live?' 'Just **round** the corner.'*
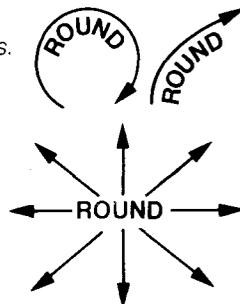
2 We also use *round* when we talk about going to all (or most) parts of a place, or giving things to everybody in a group.

*We walked **round** the old part of the town.*
*Can I look **round**?*
*Could you pass the cups **round**, please?*

3 We use *around* or *about* to express movements or positions that are not very clear or definite: 'here and there', 'in lots of places', 'in different parts of','somewhere near' and similar ideas.

*The children were running **around/about** everywhere.*
*Stop standing **around/about** and do some work.*
*'Where's John?' 'Somewhere **around/about**.'*

We also use these words to talk about time-wasting or silly activity.

*Stop **fooling around/about**. We're late.*

And *around/about* can mean 'approximately', 'not exactly'.

*There were **around/about** fifty people there.*
*'What time shall I come?' '**Around/about** eight.'*

▷ Note: In American English, *around* is generally used for all of these meanings.

38 articles: introduction

The correct use of the articles (*a/an* and *the*) is one of the most difficult points in English grammar. Fortunately, most article mistakes do not matter too much. Even if we leave all the articles out of a sentence, it is usually possible to understand it.

~~Please can you lend me pound of butter till end of week?~~

However, it is better to use the articles correctly if possible. Sections 39 to 45 give the most important rules and exceptions.
Most Western European languages have article systems very like English. You do not need to study sections 39 to 41 in detail if your language is one of these: French, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Romanian. If your language is not one of these, you should study all of the sections 39 to 45.
To understand the rules for the articles, you need to know about countable and uncountable nouns. Read 92 if you are not sure of this.

39 articles: **a/an**

1 A noun like *house, engineer, girl, name* refers to a whole class of people or things.
We use *a/an* with a noun to talk about just one member of that class. (*A/an* means 'one'.)

> *She lives in **a** nice big house.*
> *My father is **an** engineer.* (NOT *My father is engineer.*)
> ***A** girl phoned this morning.*   *Tanaka is **a** Japanese name.*

2 We use *a/an* when we define or describe people or things (when we say what class or kind they belong to).

> *He's **a** doctor.*   *She's **a** beautiful woman.*
> *'What's that?' 'It's **a** calculator.'*

3 We do not use *a/an* with a plural or uncountable noun (see 92), because *a/an* means 'one'.

> *My parents are **doctors**.* (NOT . . . *a doctors.*)
> *Would you like **some salt**?* (NOT . . . *a salt.*)

We do not use *a/an* with an adjective alone (without a noun). Compare:

> *She's **a** very good engineer.*
> *She's very good.* (NOT *She's a very good.*)

We do not use *a/an* together with another determiner (for example *my, your*).

> *He's **a friend** of mine.* (NOT *He's a my friend.*)

4 Note that we write *another* in one word.

> *Would you like **another** drink?* (NOT . . . *an other drink?*)

▷ For the exact difference between *a* and *an*, see 44.
For the difference between *a/an* and *the*, see 41.
For the use of *some* with plural and uncountable nouns, see 316.

40 articles: **the**

1 *The* means something like 'you know which one I mean'. It is used with uncountable (see 92), singular and plural nouns.

> ***the** water* (uncountable)   ***the** table* (singular countable)
> ***the** stars* (plural countable)

We use *the*:

a. to talk about people and things that we have already mentioned.

> *She's got two children: a girl and a boy. **The** boy's fourteen and **the** girl's eight.*

b. when we are saying which people or things we mean.

> *Who's **the** girl in **the** car over there with John?*

c. when it is clear from the situation which people or things we mean.

Could you close **the** *door?* (Only one door is open.)
'Where's Ann?' 'In **the** *kitchen.'   Could you pass* **the** *salt?*

2   We do not use *the* with other determiners (for example *my, this, some.*)

This is **my** *uncle.* (NOT . . . ~~**the my** uncle.~~)
I like **this** *beer.* (NOT . . . ~~**the this** beer.~~)

We do not usually use *the* with proper names (there are some exceptions — see 45.).

Mary lives in Switzerland. (NOT ~~**The** Mary lives in **the** Switzerland.~~)

We do not usually use *the* to talk about things in general — *the* does not mean 'all'. (See 42.)

Books are expensive. (NOT ~~**The** books are expensive.~~)

▷   For the pronunciation of *the,* see 44.

41   articles: the difference between **a/an** and **the**

Very simply:

a/an just means 'one of a class'
the means 'you know exactly which one'.

Compare:

A *doctor must like people.* (= *any doctor, any one of that profession*)
My brother's **a** *doctor.* (= *one of that profession*)
I'm going to see **the** *doctor.* (= *you know which one: my doctor*)

I live in **a** *small flat at* **the** *top of* **an** *old house near* **the** *town hall.*
*(**a** small flat:* there might be two or three at the top of the house — it could be any one of these.
an *old house:* there are lots near the town hall — it could be any one.
the *top:* we know which top: it's the top of the house where the person lives — a house only has one top.
the *town hall:* we know exactly which town hall is meant: there's only one in the town.)

42   articles: talking in general   .

1   We do not use *the* with uncountable or plural nouns (see 92) to talk about things in general — to talk about all books, all people or all life, for example. *The* never means 'all'. Compare:

Did you remember to buy **the books**? (= *particular books which I asked you to buy*)
Books *are expensive.* (NOT ~~**The books** are expensive.~~ We are talking about books in general — all books.)

*I'm studying **the life** of Beethoven. (= one particular life)*
***Life** is hard. (NOT ~~The life~~ .... This means 'all life'.)*

*'Where's **the cheese**?' 'I ate it.'*
***Cheese** is made from milk.*

*Could you put **the light** on?*
***Light** travels at 300,000 km a second.*

2   Sometimes we talk about things in general by using a singular noun as an example. We use *a/an* with the noun (meaning 'any').

> ***A baby deer** can stand as soon as it is born.*
> ***A child** needs plenty of love.*

We can also use *the* with a singular countable noun in generalizations (but not with plural or uncountable nouns — see 1 above). This is common with the names of scientific instruments and inventions, and musical instruments.

> *Life would be quieter without **the telephone.***
> ***The violin** is more difficult than **the piano.***

3   *These common expressions have a general meaning: the town, the country, the sea, the seaside, the mountains, the rain, the wind, the sun(shine).*

> *I prefer **the mountains** to **the sea**.   I hate **the rain**.*
> *Would you rather live in **the town** or **the country**?*
> *We usually go to **the seaside** for our holidays.*
> *I like lying in **the sun(shine)**.   I like the noise of **the wind**.*

43   articles: countable and uncountable nouns

A singular countable noun (see 92) normally has an article or other determiner with it. We can say *a cat, the cat, my cat, this cat, any cat, either cat* or *every cat*, but not just *cat*. (There are one or two exceptions — see 45.) Plural and uncountable nouns can be used without an article or determiner, or with *the*. They cannot be used with *a* (because it means 'one'.)

	a/an	*the*	no article
singular countable *cat*	a cat	the cat	▨
plural countable *cats*	▨	the cats	cats
uncountable *water*	▨	the water	water

▷ See diagram overleaf

Which article do you use with a noun 'X'?

```
        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ Are we talking about │─────────────────┤ YES │
        │ all X or all X's?    │
        └──────────────────────┘
                  │ NO │
        ┌──────────────────────┐
│ YES │─│ Does the hearer know │
        │ exactly which X or X's│
        │ we are talking about?│
        └──────────────────────┘
                  │ NO │
        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ Is X a countable noun?│──┤ NO │
        └──────────────────────┘
                  │ YES │
        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ Is X a plural noun?  │──┤ YES │
        └──────────────────────┘
                  │ NO │

│ THE X or X's │   │ A/AN X │   │ SOME X or X's │   │ X or X's (no article) │
```
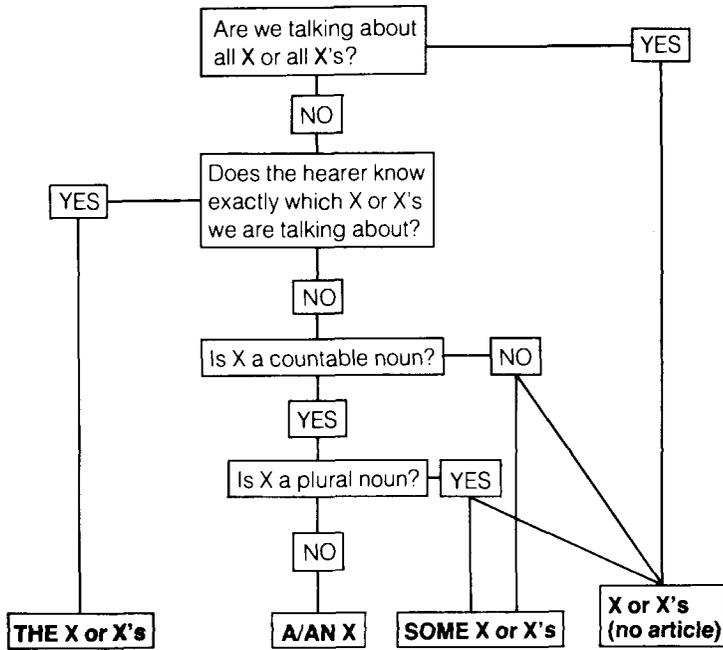
▷   For the difference between X and *some X*, see 316.
For exceptions, see 45.

44   articles: **a** and **an**; pronunciation of **the**

1   We do not usually pronounce /ə/ before a vowel (*a, e, i, o, u*). So before a vowel, the article *a* (/ə/) changes to *an*, and *the* changes its pronunciation from /ðə/ to /ði:/. Compare:

    a *rabbit*   **an** *elephant*   **the** *sea* /ðə 'si:/   **the** *air* /ði: 'eə/

2   We use *an* and *the* /ði:/ before a vowel *sound* — a pronounced **vowel** — even if it is written as a consonant.

    an hour /ən 'aʊə/   *the hour* /ði: 'aʊə/
    (the *h* in *hour* is not pronounced)

    an MP /ən em'pi:/   *the MP* /ði: em'pi:/
    (the name of the letter *M* is pronounced /em/)

We use *a* and *the* /ðə/ before a consonant *sound*, even if it is written as a vowel.

    a university /ə ju:nɪ'vɜ:səti/   *the university* /ðə ju:nɪ'vɜ:səti/
    a one-pound note

45 articles: special rules and exceptions

1 Common expressions without articles

Articles are not used in these expressions:

to school   at school   from school   to/at/from university/college
to/at/in/into/from church   to/in/into/out of bed/prison/hospital
to/at/from work   to/at sea   to/in/from town   at/from home
for/at/to breakfast/lunch/dinner/supper   at night
by car/bus/bicycle/plane/train/tube/ boat
on foot   go to sleep   watch television (TV)   on TV

2 Possessives

A noun that is used after a possessive (like *John's*, *America's*), has no article.

John's coat (NOT ~~*the John's coat*~~)
America's economic problems
(NOT ~~*the America's economic problems*~~)

3 Musical instruments

We usually use the article *the* when we talk in general about a musical instrument. (See 42.2.)

*I'd like to learn **the** piano.*

But *the* is not used when we talk about jazz or pop music.

*This recording was made with Miles Davis **on trumpet**.*

4 *all* and *both*

We sometimes leave out *the* after *both*, and after *all* when there is a number.

***Both (the) children** are good at maths.*
***All (the) eight** students passed the exam.*

We can say *all day, all night, all week, all summer/winter, all year*, without *the*.

*I've been waiting for you **all day**.*

5 Seasons

We can say *in spring* or *in the spring, in summer* or *in the summer*, etc. There is little difference.

6 Jobs and positions

We use the article with the names of jobs.

*My sister is **a doctor**.* (NOT ~~*My sister is **doctor**.*~~)

But *the* is not used in titles like *Queen Elizabeth, President Lincoln*.

7   Exclamations

We use a/an in exclamations after *what*, with singular countable nouns.

What a *lovely dress!* (NOT ~~**What** lovely dress!~~)

8   Nature

We often use *the* with the words *town, country, sea, seaside* and *mountains*, even when we are talking in general. The same happens with *wind, rain, snow* and *sun(shine)*. (See 42.3.)

*Do you prefer **the town** or **the country**?*
*I love **the mountains**.*
*I like the noise of **the wind**.*
*She spends her time lying in **the sun**.*

9   Place-names

We usually use *the* with these kinds of place-names:

seas (**the** *Atlantic*)
mountain groups (**the** *Himalayas*)
island groups (**the** *West Indies*)
rivers (**the** *Rhine*)
deserts (**the** *Sahara*)
hotels (**the** *Grand Hotel*)
cinemas and theatres (**the** *Odeon,* **the** *Playhouse*)
museums and art galleries (**the** *British Museum,* **the** *Tate*)

We usually use no article with:

continents, countries, states, counties, departments etc
(*Africa, Brazil, Texas, Berkshire, Westphalia*)
towns (*Oxford*)
streets (*New Street*)
lakes (*Lake Michigan*)

Exceptions: countries whose name contains a common noun like *republic, state(s), union* (**the** *People's* **Republic** *of China,* **the** *USA,* **the** *USSR*). Note also **the** *Netherlands*, and its seat of government **the** *Hague*.

We do not usually use *the* with the names of the principal buildings of a town.

Oxford University (NOT ~~**the** Oxford University~~)
Oxford Station (NOT ~~**the** Oxford Station~~)
Salisbury Cathedral
Birmingham Airport
Bristol Zoo

Names of single mountains vary — some have articles, some do not (*Everest,* **the** *Matterhorn*).

10 Newspapers

The names of newspapers usually have *the*.

The *Times*   **The** *Washington Post*

Most names of magazines do not have *the*.

Punch   New Scientist

11 Special styles

We leave out articles in some special ways of writing.

newspaper headlines	*MAN KILLED ON MOUNTAIN*
notices, posters etc	*SUPER CINEMA, RITZ HOTEL*
telegrams	*WIFE ILL MUST CANCEL HOLIDAY*
instructions	*Open packet at other end*
dictionary entries	**palm** *inner surface of hand between wrist and fingers*
lists	*take car to garage; buy buttons; pay phone bill*
notes	*J. thinks company needs new office*

▷   For the use of articles with abbreviations (*NATO*, **the** *USA*), see 1.
For the use of *the* in double comparatives (**the** *more*, **the** *better*), see 85.4.
For *a* with *few* and *little*, see 129.
For *a* with *hundred*, *thousand* etc, see 227.8.

46 as . . . as . . .

as + adjective + *as*   *as* + adverb + *as*   + noun/pronoun/clause

1   We use *as . . . as . . .* to say that two things are the same in some way.

> *She's **as** tall **as** her brother.*
> *Can a man run **as** fast **as** a horse?*
> *It's not **as** good **as** I expected.*

2   We can use object pronouns (*me*, *him* etc) after *as*, especially in an informal style. (See 331.4.)

> *She doesn't sing as well **as me**.*

In a formal style, we use subject + verb.

> *She doesn't sing as well **as I do**.*

3   After *not*, we can use *as . . . as . . .* or *so . . . as . . .*

> *She's **not as/so pretty as** her sister.*

4   Note the structure *half as . . . as . . .*; *twice as . . . as . . .*; *three times as . . . as . . .*; etc.

> *The green one isn't **half as good as** the blue one.*
> *A colour TV is **twice as expensive as** a black and white.*

▷   For *as much/many as . . .*, see 50.
For *as soon as . . .*, see 343.1.
For *as well as . . .*, see 51.

47   as, because and since (reason)

| as/because/since + clause + clause |
| clause + as/because/since + clause |

1   *Because* is used when we give the reason for something.

> ***Because I was ill** for six months I lost my job.*

If the reason is the most important idea, we put it at the end of the sentence.

> *Why am I leaving? I'm leaving **because I'm fed up**!*

2   *As* and *since* are used when the reason is not the most important idea in the sentence, or when it is already known. *Since* is more formal.
As- and *since*-clauses often come at the beginning of the sentence.

> ***As it's raining again**, we shall have to stay at home.*
> ***Since he had not paid his bill**, his electricity was cut off.*

48   as and like

1   Similarity

We can use *like* or *as* to say that things are similar.

a   *Like* is a preposition. We use *like* before a noun or pronoun.

| *like* + noun/pronoun |

> *You look **like your sister**. (NOT . . . ~~as your sister.~~)*
> *He ran **like the wind**.   It's **like a dream**.*
> *She's dressed just **like me**.*

We use *like* to give examples.

> *He's good at some subjects, **like mathematics**.*
> *(NOT . . . ~~as mathematics.~~)*
> *In mountainous countries, **like Switzerland**, . . .*

b   *As* is a conjunction. We use *as* before a clause, and before an
     expression beginning with a preposition.

> *as* + clause
> *as* + preposition phrase

*Nobody knows her **as I do**.*
*We often drink tea with the meal, **as they do** in China.*
*In 1939, **as in 1914**, everybody wanted war.*
*On Friday, **as on Tuesday**, the meeting will be at 8.30.*

In informal English *like* is often used instead of *as*.
This is very common in American English.

> *Nobody loves you **like I do**.*

For *like* = *as if*, see 49.3.
For *as . . . as*, see 46. For *the same as*, see 288.

2   **Function**

We use *as*, not *like*, to say what function a person or thing has — what
jobs people do, what things are used for, etc.

> *He worked **as a waiter** for two years.* (NOT . . . ~~like a waiter.~~)
> *Please don't use your plate **as an ashtray**.*

49   **as if** and **as though**

> *as if/though* + subject + present/past verb
> *as if/though* + subject + past verb with present meaning

1   *As if* and *as though* mean the same.
     We use them to say what a situation seems like.

> *It looks **as if/though** it's going to rain.*
> *I felt **as if/though** I was dying.*

2   We can use a past tense with a present meaning after *as if/though*. This
     means that the idea is 'unreal'.
     Compare:

> *He looks as if **he's** rich.* (Perhaps he is rich.)
> *She talks as if **she was** rich.* (But she isn't.)

We can use *were* instead of *was* when we express 'unreal' ideas after
as if/though. This is common in a formal style.

> *She talks as if **she were** rich.*

3   *Like* is often used instead of *as if/though*, especially in American English.
     This is very informal.

> *It looks **like** it's going to rain.*

50   as much/many . . . as . . .

We use *as much* . . . *as* . . . with a singular (uncountable) noun, and *as many* . . . *as* . . . with a plural. Compare:

> We need **as much** time **as** possible.
> We need **as many** cars **as** possible.

As much/many can be used without a following noun.

> I ate **as much** as I wanted.   Rest **as much** as possible.
> 'Can I borrow some books?' 'Yes, **as many** as you like.'

51   as well as

> noun/adjective/adverb + *as well as* + noun/adjective/adverb
> clause + *as well as -ing* . . .
> *As well as -ing* . . . + clause

1   *As well as* has a similar meaning to 'not only . . . but also'.

> He's got a car **as well as** a motorbike.
> She's clever **as well as** beautiful.

2   When we put a verb after *as well as*, we use the *-ing* form.

> Smoking is dangerous, **as well as making** you smell bad.
> **As well as breaking** his leg, he hurt his arm.
> (NOT ~~As well as he broke his leg~~ . . .)

Note the difference between:

> She sings **as well as playing** the piano. (= She not only plays, but also sings.)
> She sings **as well as she plays** the piano. (= Her singing is as good as her playing.)

52   as, when and while (things happening at the same time)

1
> As/When/While A was happening, B happened.
> B happened as/when/while A was happening.

As/When/While A was happening

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA (B) AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

B happened.

52

We can use *as, when,* or *while* to say that a longer action or event was going on when something else happened.

We usually use the past progressive tense (*was/were +* . . . *-ing*) for the longer action or event (see 242).

As I was walking down the street I saw Joe driving a Porsche.

The telephone rang **when I was having** a bath.

While they were playing cards, somebody broke into the house.

As, when and *while* can be used in the same way with present tenses.

Please don't interrupt me **when I'm speaking**.

I often get good ideas **while I'm shaving**.

2

> While A was happening, B was happening.
> While A happened, B happened.

While A was happening/happened

```
                    |
 ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
 │ AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA      │
 │ BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBB      │
 └─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    |
```

B was happening/happened.
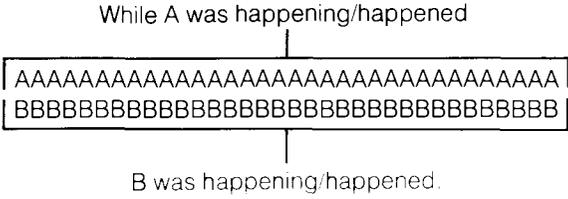
We usually use *while* to say that two long actions or events went on at the same time.

We can use the past progressive or the simple past.

While you were reading the paper, I **was working.**

John **cooked** supper **while I watched** TV.

Present tenses are also possible.

After supper, I **wash up while** Mary **puts** the children to bed.

3

> As A happened, B happened.
> B happened, as A happened.

As A happened

```
      |
      A
 ─────────────
      B
      |
```
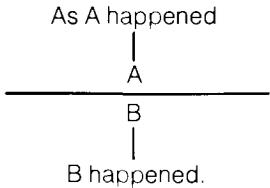
B happened.

We can use *as* to say that two short actions or events happened at the same time.

As I opened my eyes I heard a strange voice.

The doorbell rang just **as** I picked up the phone.

53 ask

1

> *Ask for*: ask somebody to give something
> *Ask* without *for*: ask somebody to tell something

Don't **ask** me **for** money. (NOT *Don't ask me money.*)
Don't **ask** me my name. (NOT *Don't ask me for my name.*)

Ask for the menu.
Ask the price.

2 When there are two objects, the indirect object (the person) comes first, without a preposition.

I'll ask **that man** the time.
(NOT *I'll ask the time to that man.*)

3 We can use *ask* with just one object (direct or indirect).

Ask **him**.   Ask **his name**.

4 We can use infinitive structures after *ask*.

> *ask* + infinitive

I asked **to go** home. (= I said I wanted to go home.)

> *ask* + object + infinitive

I asked **John to go** home. (= I said I wanted John to go home.)

> *ask* + *for* + noun/pronoun + passive infinitive

I asked **for the parcel to be sent** to my home address.

54 at, in, and on (place)

1 *At* is used to talk about position at a point.

It's very hot **at** the centre of the earth.
Turn right **at** the next traffic-lights.
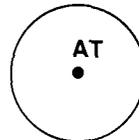
Sometimes we use *at* with a larger place, if we just *think* of it as a point: a point on a journey, a meeting place, or the place where something happens.

You have to change trains **at** Didcot.
The plane stops for an hour **at** Frankfurt.
Let's meet **at** the station.
There's a good film **at** the cinema in Market Street.

2   *On* is used to talk about position on a line.   **ON**

His house is **on** the way from Aberdeen to Dundee.
Stratford is **on** the River Avon.
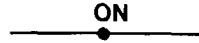
On is also used for position on a surface.

Come on — supper's **on** the table!
I'd prefer that picture **on** the other wall.
There's a big spider **on** the ceiling.
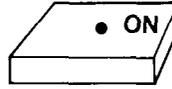
3   *In* is used for position in a three-dimensional space (when something is surrounded on all sides).

I don't think he's **in** his office.
Let's go for a walk **in** the woods.
I last saw her **in** the car park.
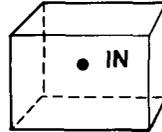
4   We say *on* (and *off*) for buses, planes and trains.

He's arriving **on** the 3.15 train.
There's no room **on** the bus; let's get off again.

5   In addresses, we use *at* if we give the house number.

She lives **at** 73 Albert Street.

We use *in* if we just give the name of the street.

She lives **in** Albert Street.

We use *on* for the number of the floor.

She lives in a flat **on** the third floor.

6   Learn these expressions:

in a picture   **in** the sky   **on** a page
in bed/hospital/prison/church
at home/school/work/university/college

▷   Note that *at* is usually pronounced /ət/, not /æt/. (See 358.)

55   **at, in** and **on** (time)

---
at + exact time
in + part of day
on + particular day
at + weekend, public holiday
in + longer period
---

1   **Exact times**

I usually get up **at six o'clock**.   I'll meet you **at 4.15**.
Phone me **at lunch time**.

In informal English, we say *What time . . . ?*
(**At** *what time . . . ?* is correct, but unusual.)

> **What time** *does your train leave?*

2 Parts of the day

> *I work best* **in the morning.**
> *three o'clock* **in the afternoon**
> *We usually go out* **in the evening.**

Exception: **at** *night.*
We use *on* if we say which morning/afternoon/etc we are talking about,
or if we describe the morning/afternoon/etc.

> *See you* **on Monday morning.**
> *It was* **on a cold afternoon** *in early spring, . . .*

3 Days

> *I'll phone you* **on Tuesday.**
> *My birthday's* **on March 21st.**
> *They're having a party* **on Christmas Day.**

In informal speech we sometimes leave out *on.* (This is very common in
American English.)

> *I'm seeing her* **Sunday morning.**

Note the use of plurals (*Sundays, Mondays* etc) when we talk about
repeated actions.

> *We usually go to see Granny* **on Sundays.**

4 Weekends and public holidays

We use *at* to talk about the whole of the holidays at Christmas, New
Year, Easter and Thanksgiving (US).

> *Are you going away* **at Easter?**

We use *on* to talk about one day of the holiday.

> *It happened* **on Easter Monday.**

British people say *at the weekend*; Americans use *on.*

> *What did you do* **at the weekend?**

5 Longer periods

> *It happened* **in the week** *after Christmas.*
> *I was born* **in March.**
> *Kent is beautiful* **in spring.**
> *He died* **in 1616.**
> *Our house was built* **in the 15th Century.**

6   Expressions without preposition

Prepositions are not used in expressions of time before *next, last, this, one, any, each, every, some, all.*

> See you **next week**.   Are you free **this morning**?
> Let's meet **one day**.   Come **any time**.
> I'm at home **every evening**.   We stayed **all day**.

Prepositions are not used before *yesterday, the day before yesterday, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow.*

> What are you doing **the day after tomorrow**?

▷   Note that *at* is usually pronounced /ət/, not /æt / (see 358).

56   at all

1   We often use *at all* to emphasize a negative.

> I **don't** like her **at all**. (= I don't like her even a little.)
> This restaurant is **not at all** expensive.

2   We also use *at all* with *hardly* ; in questions; and after *if*.

> She **hardly** eats anything **at all**.
> Do you sing **at all**? (= . . . even a little?)
> I'll come in the morning **if** I come **at all**. (= Perhaps I won't come.)

3   We can say *Not at all* as a polite answer to *Thank you*. (See 249.4.)

57   **be** with auxiliary **do**

> *do* + *be* + adjective/noun
> *don't* + *be* + adjective/noun

1   *Don't be* . . . is used to give people advice or orders.

> **Don't be** afraid.   **Don't be** a fool!

In affirmative sentences, we usually just use *Be* . . .

> **Be** careful!

But *Do be* . . . is used for emphasis.

> **Do be** careful, please!!!
> **Do be** quiet, for God's sake!

2   In other cases, we do not use *do* with *be*.

> I am not often lonely. (NOT ~~I do not often be lonely.~~)

58   **be** + infinitive

> *I am to . . .   you are to . . .   etc*

1   We use this structure in a formal style to talk about plans and arrangements, especially when they are official.

> *The President **is to visit** Nigeria next month.*
> *We **are to get** a 10 per cent wage rise in June.*

2   We also use the structure to give orders. Parents often use it to children.

> *You **are to eat** all your supper before you watch TV.*
> *She can go to the party, but she**'s not to be** back late.*

3   You can often see *be* + passive infinitive in notices and instructions.

> (noun + *is*) + passive infinitive (= *to be* + past participle)

> *(This form is) **to be filled in** in ink.*

Sometimes *be* is omitted.

> ***To be taken** three times a day after meals.* (on a medicine bottle)

▷   For other ways of talking about the future, see 134–140

59   **be**: progressive tenses

> *I am being / you are being* etc + adjective/noun

We can use this structure to talk about what people are/were doing, but not usually to say how they are/were feeling. Compare:

> *You're **being** stupid.* (= *You're doing stupid things.*)
> *I **was being** very careful.* (= *I was doing something carefully.*)

> *I'm **happy** just now.* (NOT ~~I'm being happy just now.~~)
> *I **was** very depressed when you phoned.*
> (NOT ~~I was being very depressed~~ . . .)

▷   For the use of *am being* etc in passive verb forms, see 238.

60   **because** and **because of**

> clause + *because* + clause
> *because* + clause, + clause
> *because of* + noun/pronoun

Because is a conjunction. It joins two clauses together.

> *I was worried **because** Mary was late.*
> ***Because** I was tired, I went home.*

Because of is a preposition (used before a noun or a pronoun).

> *I was late **because of** the rain.*

61 before (adverb)

1 We can use *before* to mean 'at any time before now'. We use it with a present perfect tense (*have* + past participle).

> **Have** you **seen** this film **before**?
> I **'ve** never **been** here **before**.

Before can also mean 'before then', 'before the past time that we are talking about'. We use a past perfect tense (*had* + past participle).

> She realized that she **had seen** him **before**.

2 In expressions like *three days before, a year before, a long time before*, the meaning is 'before then'. We use a past perfect tense. (See 20.4 for an explanation of the difference between *before* and *ago* in these expressions.)

> When I went back to the school that I **had left eight years before**, everything was different.

62 before (conjunction)

> clause + *before* + clause
> *before* + clause, + clause

1 We can use *before* to join two clauses.
We can either say: A happened **before** B happened
> OR **Before** B happened, A happened.

The meaning is the same: A happened first.
Note the comma (,) in the second structure.

> I bought a lot of new clothes **before** I went to America.
> **Before** I went to America, I bought a lot of new clothes.

> He did military service **before** he went to university.
> (= He did military service first.)
> **Before** he did military service, he went to university.
> (= He went to university first.)

2 In a clause with *before*, we use a present tense if the meaning is future. (See 343.)

> I'll telephone you **before** you **leave**.
> (NOT . . . **before you will leave.**)

3 In a formal style, we often use the structure *before* + *-ing*.

> Please put out all lights **before leaving** the office.
> **Before beginning** the book, he spent five years on research.

63 before (preposition) and in front of

before: time
in front of: place

Compare:

*I must move my car **before nine o'clock.***
*It's parked **in front of the post office.***
(NOT . . . **before** the post office.)

We do not use *in front of* for things
which are on opposite sides of a
road, river, room etc. Use
opposite or *facing*.

*There's a pub **opposite** my house.*
(NOT . . . in front of my house.)

*We stood **facing** each other*
across the train.
(NOT . . . in front of each other.)
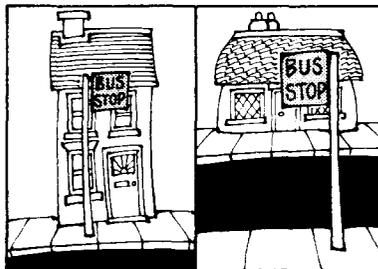
in front of   opposite

64 begin and start

1   There is not usually any difference between **begin** and **start**.

*I **started/began** teaching when I was twenty-four.*
*If John doesn't come soon, let's **start/begin** without him.*

We prefer *start* when we talk about an activity that happens regularly,
with 'stops and starts'.

*It's **starting** to rain.*
*What time do you **start** teaching tomorrow morning?*

We prefer *begin* when we talk about long, slow activities, and when we
are using a more formal style.

*Very slowly, I **began** to realize that there was something wrong.*
*We will **begin** the meeting with a message from the President.*

2   *Start* (but not *begin*) is used to mean:

a   'start a journey'

*I think we ought to **start** at six, while the roads are empty.*

b   'start working' (for machines)

*The car won't **start**.*

c   'make (machines) start'

*How do you **start** the washing machine?*

▷   For the use of the infinitive and the *-ing* form after *begin* and *start*, see 182.11.

65   big, large, great and tall

1   We use *big* mostly in an informal style.

> *We've got a **big** new house.*
> *Get your **big** feet off my flowers.*
> *That's a really **big** improvement.*
> *You're making a **big** mistake.*

In a more formal style, we prefer *large* or *great*.
Large is used with concrete nouns (the names of things you can see, touch, etc).
Great is used with abstract nouns (the names of ideas etc).

> *It was a **large house**, situated near the river.*
> *I'm afraid my daughter has rather **large feet**.*
> *Her work showed **a great improvement** last year.*

With uncountable nouns, only *great* is possible.

> *There was **great confusion** about the dates.*
> (NOT . . . ~~big confusion~~ . . .)
> *I felt **great excitement** as the meeting came nearer.*

2   *Tall* is used to talk about vertical height (from top to bottom). It is mostly used for people; sometimes for buildings and trees. (See also 339: **tall** and **high**.)

> *'How **tall** are you?' 'One metre ninety-one.'*

a tall man   a big man

3   We also use *great* to mean 'famous' or 'important'.

> *Do you think Napoleon was really a **great** man?*
> *Newton was probably the **greatest** scientist who ever lived.*

4   We sometimes use *great* to mean 'wonderful' (very informal).

> *I've had a **great** idea!*
> *'How's the new job?' **'Great.'***
> *It's a **great** car.*

5   Note that *large* is a 'false friend' for people who speak some European languages. It does not mean the same as *wide*.

> *The river is a hundred metres **wide**.* (NOT . . . ~~metres large~~.)

66   born

To be born is passive.

Hundreds of children **are born** deaf every year.

To talk about somebody's date or place of birth, use the simple past tense was/were born.

I **was born** in 1936. (NOT ~~I am born in 1936.~~)
My parents **were** both **born** in Scotland.

67   borrow and lend

| borrow something from somebody |
| lend something to somebody |
| lend somebody something |

Borrow is like take. You borrow something from somebody.

I **borrowed** a pound **from** my son.   Can I **borrow** your bicycle?

Lend is like give. You lend something to somebody, or lend somebody something (the meaning is the same).

I **lent** my coat **to** a friend of my brother's, and I never saw it again.
Lend me your comb for a minute, will you?

▷ For lend in passive structures, see 356.4.

68   both (of) with nouns and pronouns

1 We can put both (of) before nouns and pronouns.
Before a noun with a determiner (for example: the, my, these), both and both of are both possible.

Both (of) my parents like riding.   She's eaten **both (of) the** chops.

We can also use both without a determiner.

She's eaten **both** chops. (= . . . **both of the** chops.)

Only both of is possible before a personal pronoun (us, you, them).

Both of them can come tomorrow.
Mary sends her love to **both of us**.

2 We can put both after object pronouns.

I've invited **them both**.   Mary sends **us both** her love.
I've made **you both** something to eat.

3 Note: we do not put the before both.

both children (NOT ~~the both children~~)

69 **both** with verbs

Both can go with a verb, in 'mid-position', like some adverbs (see 13.2).

1
| auxiliary verb + *both* |
| am/are/is/was/were + *both* |

We **can both** swim.
They **have both** finished.
We **are both** tired.

2
| *both* + other verb |

My parents **both like** travelling.
You **both look** tired.

70 **both ... and ...**

| *both* + adjective + *and* + adjective |
| *both* + noun + *and* + noun |
| *both* + clause + *and* + clause |

We usually put the same kind of words after *both* and *and*.

She's both **pretty** and **clever**. (adjectives)
I spoke to both **the Director** and **his secretary**. (nouns)
(NOT ~~I both spoke to the Director and his secretary.~~)
She both **plays** the piano and **sings**. (verbs)
(NOT ~~She both plays the piano and she sings.~~) (verb, clause)

▷ See also *either ... or* (107) and *neither ... nor* (218).

71 **bring** and **take**

1 We use *bring* for movements to the place where the speaker or hearer is.
We use *take* for movements to other places.
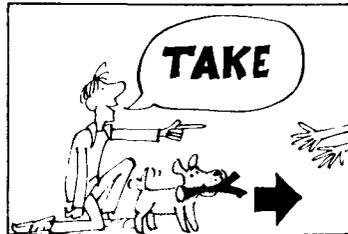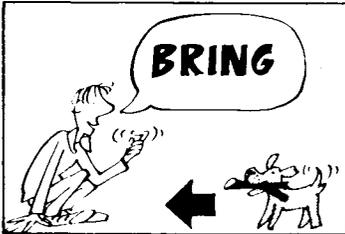
Compare:
This is a nice restaura.... ...ks for **bringing** me here.
(NOT ... ~~Thanks for **taking** me here.~~)
Let's have another drink, and then I'll **take** you home.
(NOT ... ~~and then I'll **bring** you home.~~)
(on the phone) Can we come and see you next weekend? We'll **bring** a picnic.
Let's go and see the Robinsons next weekend. We can **take** a picnic.

2 We can use *bring* for a movement to a place where the speaker or listener was or will be. Compare:

> *'Where are those papers I asked for?' 'I **brought** them to you when you were in Mr Allen's office. Don't you remember?'*
> *I **took** the papers to John's office.*

> *Can you **bring** the car to my house tomorrow?*
> *Can you **take** the car to the garage tomorrow?*

▷ The difference between *come* and *go* is similar. (See 83.)
For other uses of *take*, see 337; 338.

72 (Great) Britain, the United Kingdom, the British Isles and England

Britain (or *Great Britain*) and *the United Kingdom* (or *the UK*) include England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. (*Sometimes Britain* or *Great Britain* is used just for the island which includes England, Scotland and Wales, without Northern Ireland.)
The British Isles is the name for England, Scotland, Wales, the whole of Ireland, and all the islands round about.
Note that *England* is only one part of Britain. Scotland and Wales are not in England, and Scottish and Welsh people do not like to be called 'English'.

NORTHERN
IRELAND
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
ENGLAND
WALES
GREAT BRITAIN OR THE UNITED KINGDOM

THE BRITISH ISLES
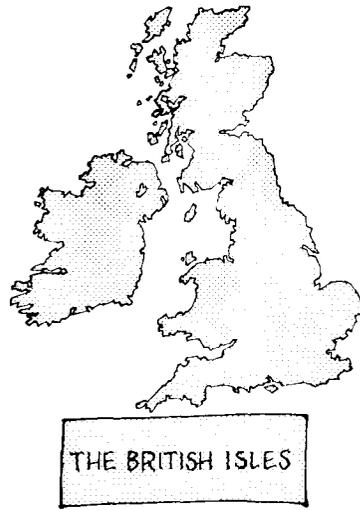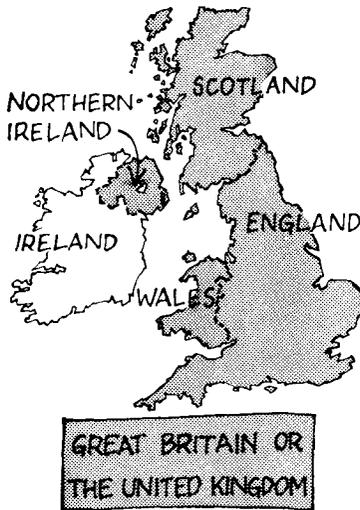
73 British and American English

These two kinds of English are very similar. There are a few differences of grammar and spelling, and rather more differences of vocabulary. Pronunciation is sometimes very different, but most British and American speakers can understand each other.

1 Grammar

US	GB
He just **went** home.	**He's** just **gone** home. (See 243.)
Do you have a problem?	**Have you got** a problem?(See 153.2.)
I've never really **gotten** to know him.	I've never really **got** to know him.
It's important that he **be** told.	It's important that he **should be** told. (See 332.1.)
(on the telephone) Hello, is **this** Harold?	Hello, is **that** Harold?(See 341.4.)
It looks **like** it's going to rain.	It looks **as if** it's going to rain. (See 49.3.)
He looked at me **real strange.** (informal)	He looked at me **really** strangely. (See 275.)

2 Vocabulary

There are very many differences. Sometimes the same word has different meanings (GB *mad* = 'crazy'; US *mad* = 'angry'). Often different words are used for the same idea (GB *lorry* ; US *truck*). Here are a few examples:

US	GB	US	GB
apartment	flat	second floor	first floor
cab	taxi	french fries	chips
can	tin	garbage *or* trash	rubbish
candy	sweets		
check	bill (*in a restaurant*)	gas(oline)	petrol
closet *or* cabinet	cupboard	highway	main road
		intersection	crossroads
cookie	biscuit	mad	angry
corn	maize	mail	post
crazy	mad	motor	engine
elevator	lift	movie	film
fall	autumn	one-way	single (ticket)
first floor	ground floor	pants	trousers

US	GB	US	GB
pavement	road surface	store	shop
potato chips	crisps	subway	underground
railroad	railway	truck	lorry
round-trip	return (ticket)	vacation	holiday(s)
sidewalk	pavement	zipper	zip

Expressions with prepositions and particles:

US	GB
check something **out**	check something
do something **over**	do something **again**
fill **in/out** a form	fill **in** a form
meet **with** somebody	meet somebody
visit **with** somebody	visit somebody
Monday **through** Friday	Monday **to** Friday
home	**at** home
Mondays	**on** Mondays

3 Spelling

US	GB	US	GB
alumin**um**	alumin**ium**	jewel**ry**	jewel**lery**
analy**ze**	analy**se**	lab**or**	lab**our**
catalog	catalog**ue**	pa**j**amas	py**j**amas
cent**er**	cent**re**	practi**ce**	practi**se** (*verb*)
che**ck**	che**que** (*from a bank*)	program	program**me**
col**or**	col**our**	theat**er**	theat**re**
defen**se**	defen**ce**	t**i**re	t**y**re (*on a car*)
hon**or**	hon**our**	traveler	travel**l**er

Many verbs end in *-ize* in American English, but in *-ise* or *-ize* in British
English. For example: US *realize* / GB *realise* or *realize*.

74 broad and wide

Wide is used for the physical distance from one side of something to the
other.

> *We live in a very **wide** street.   The car's too **wide** for the garage.*

Broad is mostly used in abstract expressions. Some examples:

> **broad** agreement (= agreement on most points)
> **broad**-minded (= tolerant)   **broad** daylight (= full, bright daylight)

Broad is also used in the expression **broad** *shoulders* (= wide strong shoulders), and in descriptions of landscape in a formal style.

*Across the **broad** valley, the mountains rose blue and mysterious.*

75 but = except

1 We use *but* to mean 'except' after *all, none, every, any, no* (and *everything, everybody, nothing, nobody, anywhere* etc).

> *He eats **nothing but** hamburgers.*
> ***Everybody**'s here **but** George.*
> *I've finished **all** the jobs **but** one.*

We usually use object pronouns (*me, him* etc) after *but*.

> *Nobody **but her** would do a thing like that.*

2 We use the infinitive without *to* after *but*.

> *That child does nothing **but watch** TV.*
> (NOT . . . ~~nothing **but watching** TV.~~)

3 Note the expressions *next but one, last but two* etc.

> *My friend Jackie lives **next door but one**.* (= *two houses from me.*)
> *Liverpool are **last but one** in the football league.*

▷ For *except*, see 118; 119.

76 by: time

By can mean 'not later than'.

> *I'll be home **by** five o'clock.* (= *at or before five*)
> *'Can I borrow your car?' 'Yes, but I must have it back **by** tonight.'*
> (= *tonight or before*)
> *I'll send you the price list **by** Thursday.*

▷ For the difference between *by* and *until*, see 351.

77 can and could: forms

1 *Can* is a 'modal auxiliary verb' (see 202).
There is no *-s* in the third person singular.

> *She **can** swim very well.* (NOT ~~She cans~~ . . .)

Questions and negatives are made without *do.*

> ***Can you** swim?* (NOT ~~Do you can swim?~~)
> *I **can't** swim.* (NOT ~~I don't can swim.~~)

After *can*, we use the infinitive without *to*.

> *I **can speak** a little English.* (NOT ~~I can to speak~~ . . .)

2 *Can* has no infinitive or participles. When necessary, we use other words.

> *I'd like **to be able** to stay here.* (NOT . . . ~~to can stay~~ . . .)
> *You'll **be able** to walk soon.* (NOT ~~You'll can~~ . . .)
> *I've always **been able** to play games well.* (NOT ~~I've always could~~ . . .)
> *I've always **been allowed** to do what I liked.*
> (NOT ~~I've always could~~ . . .)

3 *Could* is the 'past tense' of *can*. But we use *could* to talk about the past, present or future (see 78–80).

> *I **could** read when I was four.*   *You **could** be right.*
> ***Could** I see you tomorrow evening?*

Could also has a conditional use.

> *I **could** marry him if I wanted to.*
> (= *It would be possible for me to marry him* . . .)

4 Contracted negative forms (see 90) are *can't* (/kɑːnt/) and *couldn't* (/'kʊdnt/).
Cannot is written as one word.
For 'weak' and 'strong' pronunciations of *can*, see 358.

5 *Can* and *could* are used in several ways. The main uses are:

a   to talk about ability

b   to talk about possibility

c   to ask, give and talk about permission

d   to make offers and requests, and to tell people what to do.

For details, see the following sections.

78 **can** and **could**: ability

1 **Present**

We use *can* to talk about present or 'general' ability.

> *Look! I **can** do it! I **can** do it!*   *I **can** read Italian, but I **can't** speak it.*

2 **Future**

We use *will be able to* to talk about future ability.

> *I'**ll be able to** speak good English in a few months.*
> *One day people **will be able to** go to the moon on holiday.*

We use *can* if we are deciding now about the future.

> *I haven't got time today, but I **can** see you tomorrow.*
> ***Can** you come to a party on Saturday?*

3 Past

We use *could* for 'general ability' — to say that we could do something at any time, whenever we wanted. (*Was/were able to* is also possible.)

> *She **could** read when she was four.* (OR *She was able to* . . .)
> *My father **could** speak ten languages.*

We do not use *could* to say that we did something on one occasion. We use *managed to, succeeded in* . . . *-ing,* or *was able to.*

> *How many eggs **were you able to** get?*
> (NOT . . . ~~**could** you get?~~)
> *I **managed to** find a really nice dress in the sale yesterday.*
> (NOT ~~I **could** find~~ . . .)
> *After six hours' climbing we **succeeded in** getting to the top of the mountain.* (NOT . . . ~~we **could** get to the top~~ . . .)

But we can use *couldn't* to say that we did *not* succeed in doing something on one occasion.

> *I **managed to** find the street, but I **couldn't** find her house.*

4 Conditional

We can use *could* to mean 'would be able to'.

> *You **could** get a better job if you spoke a foreign language.*

5 *could have* . . .

We use a special structure to say that we had the ability to do something, but did not try to do it.

> | *could have* + past participle |

> *I **could have married** anybody I wanted to.*
> *I was so angry I **could have killed** her!*
> *You **could have helped** me — why didn't you?*

79 can: possibility and probability

1 Possibility

We use *can* to say that situations and events are possible.

> *Scotland **can** be very warm in September.*
> *'Who **can** join the club?' 'Anybody who wants to.'*
> *There are three possibilities: we **can** go to the police, we **can** talk to a lawyer, or we **can** forget all about it.*
> *'There's the doorbell.' 'Who **can** it be?' 'Well, it **can't** be your mother. She's in Edinburgh.'*

We use *could* to talk about past possibility.

> *It **could** be quite frightening if you were alone in our big old house.*

2   Probability

We do not usually use *can* when we are talking about the chances that something is true, or that something will happen. For this idea (probability), we prefer *could, may* or *might* (see 199).

> *'Where's Sarah?' 'She **may/could** be at Joe's place.'*
> (NOT *~~She can be~~* . . . ')
> *We **may** go camping this summer.* (NOT *~~We can go~~* . . .)

3   *could have . . .*

We use a special structure to say that something was possible, but did not happen.

> | *could have* + past participle |

> *That was a bad place to go skiing — you **could have broken** your leg.*
> *Why did you throw the bottle out of the window? It **could have hit** somebody.*

80   *can*: permission, offers, requests and orders

1   Permission

We use *can* to ask for and give permission.

> *'**Can** I ask you something?' 'Yes, of course you **can**.'*
> ***Can** I have some more tea?   You **can** go now if you want to.*

We also use *could* to ask for permission. This is more polite or formal.

> ***Could** I ask you something, if you're not too busy?*

May and *might* are also possible in formal and polite requests for permission. (See 200.)

> ***May** I have some more tea?*

2   Past permission

We use *could* to say that we had 'general' permission to do something at any time.

> *When I was a child, I **could** watch TV whenever I wanted to.*

But we don't use *could* to talk about permission for one particular past action.

> *I **was allowed** to see her yesterday evening.* (NOT *~~I could see~~* . . .)

(This is like the difference between *could* and *was able to*. See 78.3.)

3   Offers

We use *can* when we offer to do things for people.

> *'**Can** I carry your bag?' 'Oh, thanks very much.'*
> *'**I can** baby-sit for you this evening if you like.' 'No, it's all right, thanks.'*

4 Requests

We can ask people to do things by saying *Can you* . . . *?* or *Could you* . . . *?* (more polite); or *Do you think you could* . . . *?*

'*Can you* put the children to bed?' 'Yes, all right.'
'*Could you* lend me five pounds until tomorrow?' 'Yes, of course.'
'*Do you think you could* help me for a few minutes?' 'Sorry, I'm afraid I'm busy.'

5 Orders

We can use *you can/could* to tell people to do things.

When you've finished the washing up **you can** clean the kitchen. Then **you could** iron the clothes, if you like.

81 **can** with **remember, understand, speak, play, see, hear, feel, taste** and **smell**

1 *remember, understand, speak, play*

These verbs usually mean the same with or without *can*.

*I **(can) remember** London during the war.*
*She **can speak** Greek / She **speaks** Greek.*
*I **can't/don't understand.***
***Can/Do you play** the piano?*

2 *see, hear, feel, smell, taste*

We do not use these verbs in progressive tenses when they refer to perception (receiving information through the eyes, ears etc). To talk about seeing, hearing etc at a particular moment, we often use *can see, can hear* etc.

*I **can see** Susan coming.* (NOT ~~I'm seeing~~ . . .)
*I **can hear** somebody coming up the stairs.*
*What did you put in the stew? I **can taste** something funny.*

82 **close** and **shut**

1 *Close* and *shut* can often be used with the same meaning.

*Open your mouth and **close/shut** your eyes.*
*I can't **close/shut** the window. Can you help me?*

The past participles *closed* and *shut* can be used as adjectives.

*The post office is **closed/shut** on Saturday afternoon.*

Shut is not usually used before a noun.

*a **closed** door* (NOT ~~a shut door~~)
***closed** eyes* (NOT ~~shut eyes~~)

2   We prefer *close* for slow movements (like flowers closing at night), and *close* is more common in a formal style. Compare:

> *As we watched, he **closed** his eyes for the last time.*
> ***Shut** your mouth!*

3   We *close* roads, railways etc (channels of communication).
We *close* (= *end*) letters, bank accounts, meetings etc.

83   come and go

1   We use *come* for movements to the place where the speaker or hearer is.
We use *go* for movements to other places.
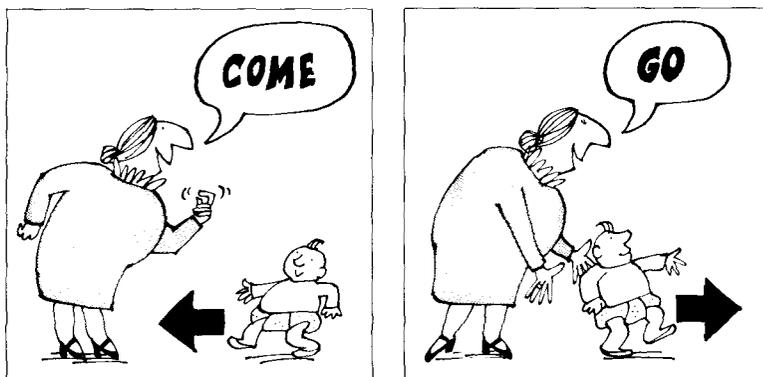
> *'Maria, would you **come** here, please?' 'I'm **coming**.'*
> (NOT . . . ~~'I'm **going**.'~~)
> *When did you **come** to live here?*
> *Can I **come** and sit on your lap?*
>
> *I want to **go** and live in Greece.*
> *Let's **go** and see Peter and Diane.*
> *In 1577, he **went** to study in Rome.*

2   We can use *come* for a movement to a place where the speaker or listener was or will be. Compare:

> *What time did I **come** to see you in the office yesterday? About ten, was it?*
> *I **went** to your office yesterday, but you weren't in.*
>
> *Will you **come** and visit me in hospital?*
> *He's **going** into hospital next week.*

▷   The difference between *bring* and *take* is similar. (See 71.)

84 comparison: comparative and superlative adjectives

1 Short adjectives

(adjectives with one syllable; adjectives with two syllables ending in -y)

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE	
old	older	oldest	Most adjectives:
tall	taller	tallest	+ -er, -est.
cheap	cheaper	cheapest	
late	later	latest	Adjectives ending
nice	nicer	nicest	in -e: + -r, -st.
fat	fatter	fattest	One vowel +
big	bigger	biggest	one consonant:
thin	thinner	thinnest	double consonant.
happy	happier	happiest	Change y to i.
easy	easier	easiest	

Note the pronunciation of:

younger /ˈjʌŋgə(r)/   *longer* /ˈlɒŋgə(r)/   *stronger* /ˈstrɒŋgə(r)/
youngest /ˈjʌŋgɪst/   *longest* /ˈlɒŋgɪst/   *strongest* /ˈstrɒŋgɪst/

2 Irregular comparatives and superlatives

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
far	farther/further	farthest/furthest *(see 126)*
old	older/elder	oldest/eldest (see 299.5)

The determiners *little* and *much/many* have
irregular comparatives and superlatives:

little	less	least
much/many	more	most

3 Longer adjectives

(adjectives with two syllables not ending in -y; adjectives with three or
more syllables)

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
tiring	**more** tiring	**most** tiring
cheerful	**more** cheerful	**most** cheerful
handsome	**more** handsome	**most** handsome
intelligent	**more** intelligent	**most** intelligent
practical	**more** practical	**most** practical

Some two-syllable adjectives have two comparatives and superlatives: for example *commoner/more common*; *politest/most polite*. We usually prefer the forms with *more* and *most*.

▷ For information about how to use comparatives and superlatives, see 85.

How to make Comparative Adjectives

```
START    ┌─────────────┐  ┌────┐  ┌─────────────┐  ┌────┐
HERE  →  │Has the      │→ │ No │→ │Has the      │→ │ No │
         │adjective got│  └────┘  │adjective got│  └────┘
         │one syllable?│          │two syllables?│
         └─────────────┘          └─────────────┘
                │                         │
            ┌───────┐                ┌───────┐
            │ Yes   │                │ Yes   │
            └───────┘                └───────┘
                │                         │
         ┌─────────────┐         ┌─────────────┐  ┌────┐
 ┌─────┐ │Does the     │         │Does the     │→ │ No │
 │ Yes │←│adjective    │         │adjective    │  └────┘
 └─────┘ │end in -e ?  │         │end in -y ?  │
         └─────────────┘         └─────────────┘
                │                        │
            ┌─────┐                  ┌───────┐
            │ No  │                  │ Yes   │
            └─────┘                  └───────┘
                │                        │
         ┌─────────────┐          ┌─────────────┐
         │Has the      │→ ┌─────┐ │Change y to i│
         │adjective got│  │ Yes │ └─────────────┘
         │two vowels?  │  └─────┘
         └─────────────┘
                │
            ┌─────┐
            │ No  │
            └─────┘
                │
         ┌─────────────┐
         │Does the     │→ ┌─────┐
         │adjective    │  │ Yes │
         │end in two   │  └─────┘
         │consonants?  │
         └─────────────┘
                │
            ┌─────┐
            │ No  │
            └─────┘
                │
         ┌─────────────┐
         │Double the   │
         │last letter  │
         └─────────────┘

┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────┐
│ADD -R    │  │ADD -ER TO THE        │  │PUT MORE  │
│TO THE    │  │ADJECTIVE             │← │BEFORE THE│
│ADJECTIVE │  └──────────────────────┘  │ADJECTIVE │
└──────────┘                            └──────────┘
```
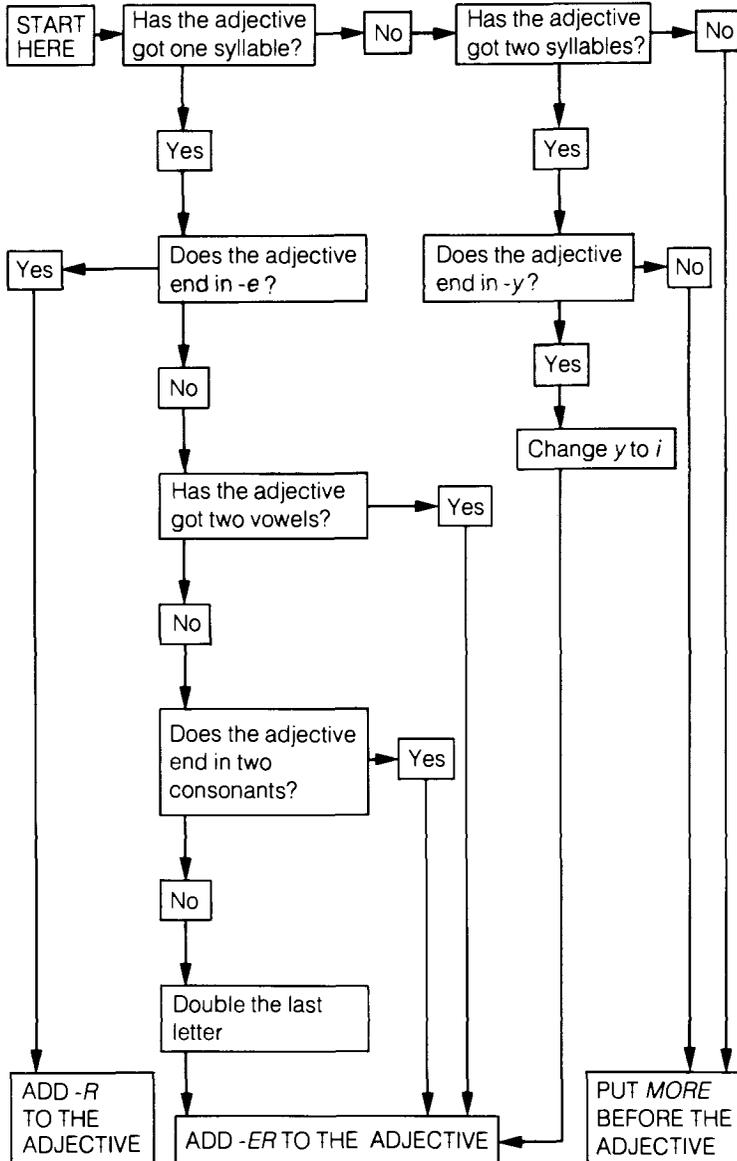
85 comparison: using comparatives and superlatives

1 The difference between comparatives and superlatives

We use the comparative to compare one person or thing with (an)other person(s) or thing(s).
We use the superlative to compare one person or thing with his/her/its whole group.
Compare:

*Mary's **taller** than her three sisters.*
*Mary's **the tallest** of the four girls.*

*Your accent is **worse** than mine.*
*Your accent is **the worst** in the class.*

*Paul is **older** than Charles. Sally is **younger** than Paul. Albert is **older** than Sally. Charles is **younger** than Sally. Paul is **younger** than Eric. Eric is **older** than Albert. Who is **the oldest**? Who is **the youngest**?*

Mary's taller than her three sisters.   Mary's the tallest of the four girls.

older than   older than   older than

the oldest   the youngest

2 We use *than* after comparatives.

*The weather's better **than** yesterday.*
(NOT . . . ~~better as yesterday~~ OR ~~better that yesterday~~)
*You sing better **than** me.* (OR . . . **than** *I do.*)
(For *I* and *me* etc after *than*, see 331.4.)

3   We can use double comparatives to say that something is changing.

> adjective + -er and adjective + -er
> more and more + adjective/adverb

I'm getting **fatter and fatter**.
We're going **more and more slowly.**
(NOT . . . ~~more slowly and more slowly.~~)

4   We can use comparatives with the . . . the . . . to say that two things change or vary together.

> the + comparative + subject + verb,
>   the + comparative + subject + verb

The older I get, **the happier** I am. (NOT ~~Older I get~~ . . .)
The more dangerous it is, **the more** I like it.
(NOT ~~The more it is dangerous,~~ . . .)
The more I study, **the less** I learn.

5   After superlatives, we do not usually use of to refer to a place.
I'm the happiest man **in** the world. (NOT . . . ~~of the world.~~)

6   Don't leave out the with superlatives.
It's **the best** book I've ever read. (NOT ~~It's best book~~ . . .)

7   We can use superlatives without nouns (see 11.2).
You're **the nicest** of all.
Which one do you think is **the best**?

86   comparison: **much, far** etc with comparatives

1   We cannot use very with comparatives. Instead, we use much or far.
My boyfriend is **much/far older** than me.
(NOT . . . ~~very older than me.~~)
Russian is **much/far more difficult** than Spanish.

2   We can also modify comparatives with very much, a lot, lots, any, no, rather, a little, a bit.

very much nicer
a lot happier
rather more quickly
a little less expensive
a bit easier
Is your mother **any** better?
She looks **no** older than her daughter.

87   comparison: comparative and superlative adverbs

Most comparative and superlative adverbs are made with *more* and *most*.

> *Could you talk **more quietly**?* (NOT . . . ~~quietlier?~~)

A few adverbs have comparatives and superlatives with *-er* and *-est*. The most common are: *fast, soon, early, late, hard, long, well* (*better, best*), *far* (*farther/further, farthest/furthest*, see 126), *near* ; and in informal English *slow, loud* and *quick*.

> *Can't you drive any **faster**?*
> *Can you come **earlier**?*
> *She sings **better** than you do.*
> *Talk **louder**.*

88   conditional

I **would/should**	
you **would**	
he/she/it **would**	+ infinitive without *to*
we **would/should**	
you **would**	
they **would**	

Contractions: *I'd, you'd, he'd* etc; *wouldn't/shouldn't*

1   Structures

> *would/should* + infinitive without *to*
>
> *I **would like** a drink.*

> *would/should* + *be* + *-ing*   (progressive conditional)
>
> *If I was at home now I **would be watching** TV.*

> *would/should* + *have* + past participle   (perfect conditional)
>
> *If it hadn't been so expensive I **would have bought** it.*

> *would/should* + *be* + past participle   (passive conditional)
>
> *I knew that the letter **would be opened** by his secretary.*

We can use *would* or *should* after *I* and *we*. They mean the same in conditional structures. After *you, he, she, it* and *they*, and nouns, we only use *would*. Compare:

> *I **would/should** buy it if I had enough money.*
> *John **would** buy it if he had enough money.*

2   Use

a   In sentences with *if*, and similar words (see 165).

    *I **wouldn't go** there if I didn't have to.*
    *Suppose there was a war, what **would you do**?*

b   In reported speech (see 283.3), to show that somebody said *shall* or *will*.

    *I said that I **should need** help. ('I **shall need** help.')*
    *He told me everything **would be** all right.*

c   For 'future in the past'.

    *I was late. I **would have** to run to catch the train.*

d   With *like, prefer* etc, in polite requests and offers.

    *I **would like** some tea.*   ***Would you prefer** meat or fish?*

3   After some conjunctions we use a past tense instead of a conditional. (See 343).

    *If I was rich I would do **what I liked**.* (NOT . . . ~~what I would like.~~)

4   Note that the word *conditional* can have another meaning. It is used not only for the structure *would/should* + infinitive (as here), but also for a kind of clause or sentence with *if* (see 164–165).

▷   For other uses of *should*, see 294. For other uses of *would*, see 369.

9   conjunctions

```
clause + conjunction + clause
conjunction + clause, + clause
```

1   A conjunction joins two clauses.

    *I'm tired **and** I want to go to bed.*
    *I tried hard **but** I couldn't understand.*
    *His father died, **so** he had to stop his studies.*
    *I know **that** you don't like her.*
    *I'll sell it to you cheap **because** you're a friend of mine.*
    *She married him **although** she didn't love him.*
    *We'll start at eight o'clock **so that** we can finish early.*
    *I'd tell you **if** I knew.*

And, but, so and *that* go between two clauses.
Most other conjunctions can also go at the beginning of a sentence.

    ***Because** you're a friend of mine, I'll sell it to you cheap.*
    ***Although** she didn't love him, she married him.*
    ***So that** we can finish early, we'll start at eight o'clock.*
    ***If** I knew, I'd tell you.*

When a conjunction begins a sentence, there is usually a comma (,) between the two clauses.

2 We do not usually write the two clauses separately, with a full stop (.) between them.

*It was late **when** I got home.* (NOT ~~It was late. When I got home.~~)

But we can sometimes separate the two clauses in order to emphasize the second, especially with *and, but, so, because* and *although.*

*James hated Mondays. **And** this Monday was worse than usual.*

And we separate clauses in conversation (when two different people say them).

*'John's late.' '**Because** he was doing your shopping.'*

3 One conjunction is enough to join two clauses. Don't use two.

Although *she was tired, she went to work.*
*She was tired, **but** she went to work.*
(NOT ~~**Although** she was tired, **but** she went to work.~~)

Because *I liked him, I tried to help him.*
*I liked him, **so** I tried to help him.*
(NOT ~~**Because** I liked him, **so** I tried to help him.~~)

As *you know, I work very hard.*
*You know **that** I work very hard.*
(NOT ~~**As** you know, **that** I work very hard.~~)

4 Relative pronouns (*who, which* and *that* — see 277) join clauses like conjunctions.

*There's the girl **who** works with my sister.*

A relative pronoun is the subject or object of the verb that comes after it. So we do not need another subject or object.

*I've got a friend **who** works in a pub.* (NOT . . . ~~**who** he works~~ . . .)
*The man (**that**) she married was an old friend of mine.*
(NOT ~~The man (**that**) she married **him**~~ . . .)
*She always says thank-you for the money (**that**) I give her.*
(NOT . . . ~~for the money (**that**) I give **it** her.~~)

90 contractions

1 Sometimes we make two words into one: for example
I've /aɪv/ (= *I have*); *don't* /dəʊnt/ (= *do not*).
These forms are called 'contractions'. There are two kinds:

pronoun + auxiliary verb	auxiliary verb + *not*
I've you'll he'd	*aren't isn't hadn't*
we're they've it's	*don't won't* (= *will not*)

The forms *'ve, 'll, 'd,* and *'re* are only written after pronouns, but we write *'s* (= *is/has*) after nouns and question-words as well.

*My **father's** a gardener.*   ***Where's** the toilet?*

The apostrophe (') goes in the same place as the letters that we leave out: *has not = hasn't* (NOT ~~ha'snt~~).
Contractions are common in informal speech and writing; they are not used in a formal style.

2   Sometimes an expression can have two possible contractions. For *she had not*, we can say *she'd not* or *she hadn't*; for *he will not*, we can say *he'll not* and *he won't*.
In Southern British English, the forms with *n't* are more common in most cases (for example *she hadn't; he won't*).
We do not use double contractions: ~~she'sn't~~ is impossible.

3   Contractions are unstressed. When an auxiliary verb is stressed (for example, at the end of a clause), a contraction is not possible. Compare:

You're late. Yes, **you are**. (NOT ~~Yes, you're.~~)
I've forgotten. Yes, **I have**. (NOT ~~Yes, I've.~~)

However, negative contractions are stressed, and we can use them at the ends of clauses.

*No, you **aren't**.*   *No, you **haven't**.*

Contractions: pronunciation and meaning

I'm	/aɪm/	I am
I've	/aɪv/	I have
I'll	/aɪl/	I will/shall
I'd	/aɪd/	I had/would/should
you're	/jɔ:(r)/	you are
you've	/ju:v/	you have
you'll	/ju:l/	you will
you'd	/ju:d/	you had/would
he's	/hi:z/	he is/has
he'll	/hi:l/	he will
he'd	/hi:d/	he had/would
she's	/ʃi:z/	she is/has
she'll	/ʃi:l/	she will
she'd	/ʃi:d/	she had/would
it's	/ɪts/	it is/has
it'll	/ɪtl/	it will
it'd	/ɪtəd/	it had/would (not often written)
we're	/wɪə(r)/	we are
we've	/wi:v/	we have
we'll	/wi:l/	we will/shall
we'd	/wi:d/	we had/would
they're	/ðeə(r)/	they are
they've	/ðeɪv/	they have
they'll	/ðeɪl/	they will
they'd	/ðeɪd/	they had/would

aren't	/ɑːnt/	are not
can't	/kɑːnt/	cannot
couldn't	/ˈkʊdnt/	could not
daren't	/deənt/	dare not
didn't	/ˈdɪdnt/	did not
doesn't	/ˈdʌznt/	does not
don't	/dəʊnt/	do not
hasn't	/ˈhæznt/	has not
haven't	/ˈhævnt/	have not
hadn't	/ˈhædnt/	had not
isn't	/ˈɪznt/	is not
mightn't	/ˈmaɪtnt/	might not
mustn't	/ˈmʌsnt/	must not
needn't	/ˈniːdnt/	need not
oughtn't	/ˈɔːtnt/	ought not
shan't	/ʃɑːnt/	shall not
shouldn't	/ˈʃʊdnt/	should not
wasn't	/ˈwɒznt/	was not
weren't	/wɜːnt/	were not
won't	/wəʊnt/	will not
wouldn't	/ˈwʊdnt/	would not

Notes

a   *Am not* is contracted to *aren't* (/ɑːnt/) in questions.

     I'm late, **aren't** *I?*

b   In non-standard English, *ain't* is used as a contraction of *am not, are not, is not, have not* and *has not.*

c   Do not confuse *it's* and *its*. (See 299.8.)

d   For the contraction *let's*, see 191.

91   'copula' verbs

We use some verbs to join an adjective to the subject. These can be called 'copulas' or 'copula verbs'.
Compare:

     The car went fast. (*Fast* is an adverb. It tells you about the movement.)

     The car **looks** *fast.* (*Fast* is an adjective. It tells you about the car itself — rather like saying *The car* **is** *fast. Look* is a copula verb.)

Common copula verbs are:

be	*look*	*seem*	*appear*	*sound*	*smell*	*taste*	*feel*

She **is** *nice.*   *She* **looks** *nice.*   *She* **seems** *nice.*   *Her perfume* **smells** *nice.*   *Her voice* **sounds** *nice.*   *Her skin* **feels** *nice.*

Some copula verbs are used to talk about change. The most common are *become*, *get*, *grow*, *go* and *turn*.

> It's **becoming** colder.   It's **getting** colder. (informal)
> It's **growing** colder. (literary)
> The leaves are **turning** brown. (formal)
> The leaves are **going** brown. (informal — see 146)

Other copula verbs are used to say that things do not change. The most common are *stay*, *remain* and *keep*.

> How does she **stay** so young?
> I hope you will always **remain** so charming.
> **Keep** calm.

92 countable and uncountable nouns

1 Countable nouns are the names of separate objects, people, ideas etc which we can count.
We can use numbers and *a/an* with countable nouns; they have plurals.

> a cat   three cats   a newspaper   two newspapers

Uncountable nouns are the names of materials, liquids, and other things which we do not see as separate objects. We cannot use *a/an* or numbers with uncountable nouns; they have no plurals.

> water(NOT ~~a water; two waters~~)
> wool(NOT ~~a wool; two wools~~)
> weather(NOT ~~a weather; two weathers~~)

countable   uncountable

2 We cannot usually put *a/an* with an uncountable noun even when there is an adjective.

> My father enjoys very good **health**. (NOT . . . ~~a very good health~~.)
> We're having terrible **weather**. (NOT . . . ~~a terrible weather~~.)
> He speaks good **English**. (NOT . . . ~~a good English~~.)

3 Usually it is easy to see if a noun is countable or uncountable. Obviously *house* is a countable noun, and *air* is not. But sometimes things are not so clear. For instance, *travel* and *journey* have very similar meanings, but *travel* is uncountable (it means 'travelling in general') and *journey* is countable (it means 'one movement from one place to another').
Also, different languages see the world in different ways. For example *hair* is uncountable in English, but plural countable in many languages; *grapes* are plural countable in English, but uncountable in some languages.
Here are some more nouns which are uncountable in English, but countable in some other languages, together with related singular countable expressions.

Uncountable	**Countable**
accommodation	a place to live or stay (NOT ~~an accommodation~~)
advice	a piece of advice (NOT ~~an advice~~)
bread	a loaf; a roll
furniture	a piece of furniture
grass	a blade of grass; a lawn
information	a piece of information
knowledge	a fact
lightning	a flash of lightning
luggage	a piece of luggage; a case; a trunk
money	a note; a coin; a sum
news	a piece of news
progress	a step forward
research	a piece of research; an experiment
rubbish	a piece of rubbish
spaghetti	a piece of spaghetti
thunder	a clap of thunder
toothache	an aching tooth
travel	a journey; a trip
work	a job; a piece of work

Note: *A headache* is countable.

4   Many nouns have both countable and uncountable uses.
Compare:

*I'd like some white **paper**.* (uncountable)
*I'm going out to buy **a paper**.* (= *a newspaper* — countable)

*The window's made of unbreakable **glass**.* (uncountable)
*Would you like **a glass** of water?* (countable)

*Could I have some **coffee**?* (uncountable)
*Could we have **two coffees**, please?* (= *cups of coffee* — countable)

*She's got red **hair**.*
(uncountable)

*I've got two white **hairs**.*
(countable)

▷   For more information about particular nouns, look in a good dictionary.

93 country

1   *Country* (countable) = 'nation', 'land'.

> *Scotland is a cold **country**.*
> *France is the **country** I know best.*
> *How many **countries** are there in Europe?*

2   *The country* (uncountable) = 'open land without many buildings' (the opposite of *the town*).
With this meaning, we cannot say *a country* or *countries* (see 92 for the use of uncountable nouns).

> *My parents live in **the country** near Edinburgh.*
> *Would you rather live in the town or **the country**?*

94 dare

1   *Dare* is used in two ways:

a   as an ordinary verb, followed by the infinitive with *to*.

> *He **dares to** say what he thinks.*
> *She **didn't dare to** tell him.*

b   as a modal auxiliary verb (see 202)

> **Dare** *she tell him?* ⎤ (question and negative without *do*;
> *I **daren't** say what I think.* ⎬ third person without *-s*;
>   ⎦ following infinitive without *to*.)

2   In modern English, we usually use *dare* as an ordinary verb. It is most common in negative sentences.

> *She **doesn't dare to** go out at night.*
> *They **didn't dare to** open the door.*

We can use the modal auxiliary form *daren't* to say that somebody is afraid to do something at the moment of speaking.

> *I **daren't** look.*

3   *I dare say* = 'I think probably', 'I suppose'.

> ***I dare say*** *it'll rain tomorrow.*
> ***I dare say*** *you're ready for a drink.*

95 dates

1   **Writing**

A common way to write the day's date is like this:

> *30 March 1983   27 July 1984*

There are other possibilities:

30th March, 1983   March 30(th) 1983   March 30(th), 1983   30.3.83
British and American people write 'all-figure' dates differently: British
people put the day first, Americans put the month first.

6.4.77 = 6 April in Britain, June 4 in the USA.

For the position of dates in letters, see 192.

2   Speaking

30 March 1983 = (British) *'March the thirtieth, nineteen eighty-three'* OR
'The thirtieth of March, nineteen eighty-three'

(American) *'March thirtieth, nineteen eighty-three'*

▷   For the use of prepositions in dates, see 55; 256.2, 3.

96   determiners

1   Determiners are words like *the, my, this, some, either, every, enough,
several.*
Determiners come at the beginning of noun phrases, but they are not
adjectives.

the *moon*   **a** *nice day*   **my** *fat old cat*   **this** *house*
every *week*   **several** *young students*

We cannot usually put two determiners together. We can say **the** *house,*
my *house* or **this** *house*, but not ~~**the my** house~~ or ~~**the this** house~~ or ~~**this
my** house~~.

2   There are two groups of determiners:

Group A

a/an   the
my   your   his   her   its   our   your   their   one's   whose
this   these   that   those

Group B

some   any   no
each   every   either   neither
much   many   more   most   little   less   least
few   fewer   fewest   enough   several
all   both   half
what   whatever   which   whichever

· **3** If we want to put a group B determiner before a group A determiner, we have to use *of*.

> | group B determiner + *of* + group A determiner |

some of *the people*
each of *my children*
neither of *these doors*
most of *the time*
which of *your records*
enough of *those remarks*

Before *of* we use *none*, not *no*, and *every one*, not *every*.

none of *my friends*   **every one** *of these books*

We can leave out *of* after *all*, *both* and *half*.

all (of) *his ideas*   **both (of)** *my parents*

4 We can use group B determiners alone (without nouns). We can also use them with *of* before pronouns.

> *'Do you know Orwell's books?' 'Yes, I've read* **several.***'*
> *'Would you like some water?' 'I've got* **some**, *thanks.'*

neither of *them*   **most of** *us*   **which of** *you*

▷ The index will tell you where to find more information about particular determiners.

97 discourse markers

Discourse means 'pieces of language longer than a sentence'. Some words and expressions are used to show how discourse is constructed. They can show the connection between something we have said and something we are going to say; or they can show the connection between what somebody else has said and what we are saying; or they can show what we think about what we are saying; or why we are talking. Here are some common examples of these 'discourse markers'.

1 *by the way*

We use *by the way* to introduce a new subject of conversation.

> *'Nice day.' 'Yes, isn't it?* **By the way**, *have you heard from Peter?'*

2 *talking about . . .*

We use this to join one piece of conversation to another.

> *'I played tennis with Mary yesterday.' 'Oh, yes.* **Talking about Mary**, *do you know she's going to get married?'*

3 *firstly, secondly, thirdly; first of all; to start with*

We use these to show the structure of what we are saying.

Firstly, we need somewhere to live. *Secondly*, we need to find work. And *thirdly*, . . .
'What are you going to do?' 'Well, *to start with* I'm going to buy a newspaper.'

4   all the same, yet, still, on the other hand, however

These show a contrast with something that was said before.

'She's not working very well.' '*All the same*, she's trying hard.'
He says he's a socialist, and *yet* he's got two houses and a Rolls Royce.
It's not much of a flat. *Still*, it's home.
'Shall we go by car or train?' 'Well, it's quicker by train. *On the other hand*, it's cheaper by car.'
Jane fell down the stairs yesterday. *However*, she didn't really hurt herself.

5   anyway, anyhow, at any rate

These can mean 'what was said before is not important — the main point is: . . .'

I'm not sure what time I'll arrive: maybe half past seven or a quarter to eight. *Anyway*, I'll be there before eight.

What a terrible experience! *Anyhow*, you're all right — that's the main thing.

6   mind you

To introduce an exception to what was said before.

I don't like the job at all, really, *Mind you*, the money's good.

7   I mean

We say this when we are going to make things clearer, or give more details.

It was a terrible evening. *I mean*, they all sat round and talked politics for hours.

8   kind of, sort of

To show that we are not speaking very exactly.

I *sort of* think we ought to start going home, perhaps, really.

9   let me see, well

To give the speaker time to think.

'How much are you selling it for?' '*Well, let me see*, . . . '

10 well

To make agreement or disagreement 'softer', less strong.

*'Do you like it?' '**Well**, yes, it's all right.'*
*'Can I borrow your car?' '**Well**, no, I'm afraid you can't.'*

11 I suppose

To make a polite enquiry.

*I **suppose** you're not free this evening?*

To show unwilling agreement.

*'Can you help me?' '**I suppose** so.'*

12 I'm afraid

To say that one is sorry to give bad news.

*'Do you speak German?' '**I'm afraid** I don't.'*

▷ Most of these expressions have more than one meaning.
For full details, see a good dictionary. For *after all*, see 17. For *actually*, see 7.

98 do: auxiliary verb

The auxiliary verb *do* is used in a lot of ways.

1 We use *do* to make questions with ordinary verbs, but not with auxiliary verbs. (See 270.) Compare:

Do you like football? (NOT ~~Like you football?~~)
Can you play football? (NOT ~~Do you can play football?~~)

2 We use *do* to make negative sentences with ordinary verbs, but not with auxiliary verbs. (See 214.) Compare:

*I **don't like** football.* (NOT ~~I like not football.~~)
*I **can't** play football.* (NOT ~~I don't can play football.~~)

3 We use *do* instead of repeating a complete verb or clause. (See 108.3.)

*She doesn't like dancing, but I **do**. (= ... but I like dancing.)*
*Ann thinks there's something wrong with Bill, and so **do** I.*
*You play bridge, **don't** you?*

4 We use *do* in an affirmative clause for emphasis. (See 110.1.)

*Do sit down.   She thinks I don't love her, but I **do** love her.*

5 We can use the auxiliary verb *do* together with the ordinary verb *do* — so that we have *do* twice in the same verb phrase.

*What **do** you **do** in the evenings?*
*'My name is Robinson.' 'How **do** you **do**?'*

99 do + -ing

We often use *do* with -*ing* to talk about activities that take some time, or that are repeated.
There is usually a 'determiner' (see 96) before the *ing* form — for example *the, my, some, much.*

> I **do my shopping** at weekends.   Have you **done the washing up**?
> I **did a lot of running** when I was younger.
> I think I'll stay at home and **do some reading** tonight.

▷ For *go -ing*, see 147.

100 do and make

These words are very similar, but there are some differences.

1 We use *do* when we do not say exactly what activity we are talking about
— for example with *something, nothing, anything, everything, what.*

> **Do** something!   I like **doing** nothing.
> What shall we **do**?   Then he **did** a very strange thing.

2 We use *do* when we talk about work, and in the structure *do -ing* (see 99).

> I'm not going to **do** any work today. I'm going to **do** some reading.
> I dislike **doing** housework. I hate **doing** the cooking and shopping.
> Would you like to **do** my job?

3 We often use *make* to talk about constructing, building, creating, etc.

> . I've just **made** a cake.   Let's **make** a plan.
> My father and I once **made** a boat.

4 Learn these expressions:

> **do** good/harm/business/one's best/a favour
> **make** an offer/arrangements/a suggestion/a decision/
> an attempt/an effort/an excuse/an exception/a mistake/a noise/
> a journey/a phone call/money/a profit/love/peace/war/a bed

▷ For other expressions, look in a dictionary to see if *do* or *make* is used.

101 during and for

During says *when* something happens; *for* says *how long* it lasts.
Compare:

> My father was in hospital **during** the summer.
> My father was in hospital **for** six weeks.(NOT . . . **during six weeks.**)
> It rained **during** the night **for** two or three hours.
> I'll call in and see you **for** a few minutes **during** the afternoon.

102 during and in

1 We use both *during* and *in* to say that something happens inside a particular period of time.

> *We'll be on holiday **during/in** August.*
> *I woke up **during/in** the night.*

2 We prefer *during* when we stress that we are talking about the whole of the period.

> *The shop's closed **during the whole of August**.*
> (NOT . . . ~~in the whole of August.~~)

3 We use *during*, not *in*, when we say that something happens between the beginning and end of an *activity* (not a period of time).

> *He had some strange experiences **during** his military service.*
> (NOT . . . ~~in his military service.~~).
> *I'll try to phone you **during** the meeting.* (NOT . . . ~~in the meeting.~~)

103 each: grammar

1 We use *each* before a singular noun.

> | *each* + singular noun |

> ***Each** new **day** is different.*

2 We use *each of* before a pronoun or a determiner (for example *the, my, these*). The pronoun or noun is plural.

> | *each of* us/you/them |
> | *each of* + determiner + plural noun |

> *She bought a different present for **each of us**.*
> *I write to **each of my children** once a week.*

After *each of* . . . a verb is usually singular, but it can be plural in an informal style.

> *Each of them **has** his own way of doing things.*
> (More informal: *Each of them **have** their own way* . . .)

3 *Each* can come after an indirect object (but not usually a direct object).

> | indirect object + *each* |

> *I bought **the girls each** an ice-cream.*
> *She sent **them each** a present.*

4 We can use *each* without a noun, but *each one* is more common.

> *I've got five brothers, and **each (one)** is quite different from the others.*

5 *Each* can go with a verb, in 'mid-position', like some adverbs (see 13.2).

> auxiliary verb + *each*
> *be* + *each*

They **have each** *got their own rooms.*
We **are each** *going on a separate holiday this year.*
You **are each** *right in a different way.*

> *each* + other verb

We **each think** *the same.*
They **each want** *to talk all the time.*

▷

104 **each** and **every**

1 We use *each* to talk about two or more people or things.
We use *every* to talk about three or more. (Instead of 'every two' we say *both*).

2 We say *each* when we are thinking of people or things separately, one at a time.
We say *every* when we are thinking of people or things together, in a group. (*Every* is closer to *all*.)
Compare:

> *We want* **each** *child to develop in his or her own way.*
> *We want* **every** *child to be happy.*

> **Each** *person in turn went to see the doctor.*
> *He gave* **every** *patient the same medicine.*
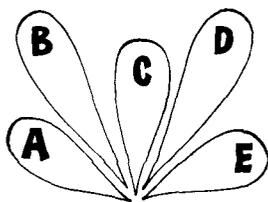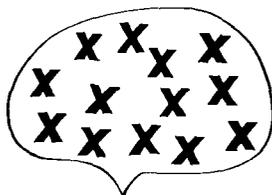
EACH   **EVERY**

The difference is not always very great, and often both **words are** possible.

> *You look more beautiful* **each/every** *time I see you.*

▷

105   **each other** and **one another**

1   *Each other* and *one another* mean the same.

> *Mary and I write to **each other/one another** every day.*
> *They sat without looking at **each other/one another**.*

2   There is a possessive *each other's/one another's*.

> *We often borrow **each other's** clothes.*
> *They stood looking into **one another's** eyes.*

Each other/one another are not used as subjects.

> *We must each listen carefully to what the other says.*
> (NOT ~~We must listen carefully to what **each other** say.~~)

3   Note the difference between *each other/one another* and *ourselves/ yourselves/themselves*. Compare:

> *They were looking at **each other**.*
> (= *Each person was looking at the other*.) |A ⇄ B| each other
> *They were looking at **themselves**.*
> (= *Each person was looking at him-* |A ⟸
B ⟸| themselves
> *or herself*.)
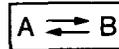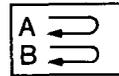
106   **either**: determiner

1   We use *either* before a singular noun to mean 'one or the other'.

> | *either* + singular noun |

> *Come on Tuesday or Thursday. **Either day** is OK.*

Sometimes *either* can mean 'both' (especially before *side* and *end*). The noun is singular.

> *There are roses on **either side** of the door.*

2   We use *either of* before a pronoun or a determiner (for example *the, my, these*). The pronoun or noun is plural.

> | *either of* us/you/them
either of + determiner + plural noun |

> *I don't like **either of them**.*
> *I don't like **either of my maths teachers**.*

3   We can use *either* without a noun.

> *'Would you like tea or coffee?' 'I don't mind. **Either**.'*

4   *Either* is pronounced /ˈaɪðə(r)/ or /ˈiːðə(r)/ (in American English usually /ˈiːðər/).

▷   For *either . . . or . . .* see 107. For *not either, neither* and *nor*, see 217.

107 either . . . or . . .

We use *either . . . or . . .* to talk about a choice between two possibilities (and sometimes more than two).

> *You can **either** have tea **or** coffee.*
> *I don't speak **either** French **or** German.*
> *You can **either** come with me now **or** walk home.*
> **Either** *you leave this house **or** I'll call the police.*
> *If you want ice-cream, you can have **either** lemon, coffee **or** vanilla.*

▷ For pronunciation see 106. For *either* as a determiner (with a noun) see 106.
For *not either, neither* or *nor*, see 217.

108 ellipsis (leaving words out)

We often leave words out when the meaning is clear without them.

1 At the beginning of a sentence

In an informal style, we often leave out articles (*the, a/an*) possessives (*my, your* etc), personal pronouns (*I, you* etc) and auxiliary verbs (*am, have* etc) at the beginning of a sentence.

> *Car's running badly.* (= **The** *car's . . .*)
> *Wife's on holiday.* (= **My** *wife's . . .*)
> *Couldn't understand a word.* (= **I** *couldn't understand . . .*)
> *Seen Joe?* (= **Have you** *seen Joe?*)

2 With *and, but* and *or*

If the same word comes in two expressions that are joined by *and, but* or *or*, we can usually leave out the word once.

> *He sang and (he) played the guitar.*
> *Would you like some tea or (some) coffee?*
> *young boys and (young) girls*
> *in France and (in) Germany*
> *He opened his eyes once, but (he) didn't wake up.*

We can leave out more than one word.

> *She washed (her jeans) and ironed her jeans.*
> *You could have come and (you could have) told me.*

3 After auxiliary verbs

We can use an auxiliary verb instead of a complete verb, or even instead of a whole clause, if the meaning is clear. The auxiliary verb usually has a 'strong' pronunciation (see 358).

> *'Get up.' 'I **am** /æm/.'* (= *'I am getting up.'*)
> *He said he'd write, but he **hasn't**.* (= *. . . hasn't written*)
> *I can't see you today, but I **can** tomorrow.*

*'You're getting better at tennis.' 'Yes, I **am**.'*
*'I've forgotten the address.' 'So **have** I.'*
*'You wouldn't have won if I hadn't helped you.' 'Yes I **would**.'*

In clauses without an auxiliary verb, we can use *do* instead of repeating a verb or clause.

*She likes walking in the mountains, and I **do** too.*

4 After *as* and *than*

We can leave out words after *as* and *than*, if the meaning is clear.

*The weather isn't as good **as** last year. (= . . . as good as it **was** . . .)*
*I found more blackberries **than** you. (= . . . than you found.)*

5 Infinitives

We can use *to* instead of repeating a whole infinitive.

*'Are you and Gillian getting married?' 'We hope **to**.*
*I don't dance much now, but I used **to** a lot.* ·

To is not necessary after | conjunction + *want/like* | .

Come when you want. I'll do what I like. Stay as long as you like.

109 **else**

1 *Else* means 'other'.

*If you can't help me I'll ask somebody **else**. (= . . . some other person.)*
We use *else* after:
somebody, someone, something, somewhere; anybody, anyone etc;
everybody, everyone etc; *nobody, no-one* etc;
who, what, where, how, why;
little and *(not) much.*

*Would you like **anything else**?*
*'Harry gave me some perfume for Christmas.' 'Oh, lovely. **What else** did you get?'*
***Where else** did you go besides Madrid?*
*We know when Shakespeare was born, and when he died, but we don't know **much else** about his life.*

2 *Else* has a possessive *else's*.

*You're wearing somebody **else's** coat.*
There is no plural structure with *else*. The plural of *somebody else* is *(some) other people.*

3 *Or else* means 'otherwise', 'if not'.

*Let's go, **or else** we'll miss the train.*

110 emphasis

We can emphasize an idea (make it seem more important) in several ways.

1 We can pronounce some words louder and with a higher intonation. In writing, we can show this by using CAPITAL LETTERS or by underlining. In printing, *italics* or **bold type** are used.

Mary, I'm IN LOVE! Please don't tell anybody.

This is the *last* opportunity.
He lived in **France**, not Spain.

Changes in emphasis can change the meaning. Compare:

> ***Jane*** *phoned me yesterday.* (*Not somebody else.*)
> *Jane* ***phoned*** *me yesterday.* (*She didn't come to see me.*)
> *Jane phoned* ***me*** *yesterday.* (*She didn't phone you.*)
> *Jane phoned me* ***yesterday***. (*Not today.*)

We often emphasize auxiliary verbs. This makes the sentence 'stronger', or it expresses a contrast. When we stress auxiliary verbs, they change their pronunciation (see 358).

> *It* ***was*** *a nice party!*
> *You* ***have*** *grown!*
> *I* ***am*** *telling the truth — you* ***must*** *believe me!*

In sentences without auxiliary verbs, we can add *do* for emphasis.

> ***Do*** *sit down.*
> *You're wrong — she* ***does*** *like you.*

When auxiliary verbs are stressed, the word order can change (see 14.10). Compare:

> *You have certainly grown.*
> *You certainly* ***have*** *grown!* (emphatic)

2 We can use special words to show emphasis; for example *so*, *such*, *really*.

> *Thank you* ***so*** *much. It was* ***such*** *a lovely party. I* ***really*** *enjoyed myself.*

3 We can also use special structures, including repetition, to make some parts of the sentence more important.

> ***That film*** *— what did you think of it?*
> ***Asleep***, *then, were you?*
> *It was* ***John*** *who paid for the drinks.*
> ***What*** *I need is* ***a drink***.
> *She looks* ***much, much*** *older.*

For details of some of these structures, see 111.

111 emphatic structures with **it** and **what**

We can use structures with *it* and *what* to 'point out' or emphasize particular ideas.

1 | *It is/was . . . that . . .* |

Compare:

My secretary sent the bill to Mr Harding yesterday.
It was my secretary *that sent the bill to Mr Harding yesterday.*
(not somebody else)
It was the bill *that my secretary sent to Mr Harding yesterday.*
(not something else)
It was Mr Harding *that my secretary sent the bill to yesterday.*
(not to somebody else)
It was yesterday *that my secretary sent the bill to Mr Harding.*
(not another day)

2 | *What (+ subject) + verb + be . . .* |

Compare:

My left leg hurts.
*What hurts is **my left leg**.*

I like her sense of humour.
*What I like is **her sense of humour**.*

3 We can emphasize a verb by using *what* with *do* and an infinitive. Compare:

She screamed.
What she did was (to) scream.

112 enjoy

| *enjoy + noun*
| *enjoy + pronoun*
| *enjoy . . . -ing*

Enjoy always has an object. When we talk about having a good time, we can use *enjoy myself/yourself* etc.

*'Did you **enjoy** the party?' 'Yes, I **enjoyed it** very much.'*
*I really **enjoyed myself** when I went to Rome.*
*(NOT I really **enjoyed** when I went . . .)*

Enjoy can be followed by . . . *-ing*.

*I don't **enjoy looking after** children.* (NOT . . . **enjoy to look** . . .)

113 enough

1   *Enough* comes after adjectives (without nouns) and adverbs.

> adjective/adverb + *enough*

Is it **warm enough** *for you?* (NOT . . . ~~enough warm~~ . . .)
You're not driving **fast enough**.

2   *Enough* comes before nouns.

> *enough* (+ adjective) + noun

Have you got **enough milk**? (NOT . . . ~~enough of milk.~~)
There isn't **enough blue paint** *left.*

We use *enough of* before pronouns and determiners (for example *the, my, this*).

> *enough of* + pronoun

We didn't buy **enough of them**.

> *enough of* + determiner (+ adjective) + noun

The exam was bad. I couldn't answer **enough of the questions**.
Have we got **enough of those new potatoes**?

3   We can use an infinitive structure after *enough*.

> *. . . enough . . .* + infinitive

She's old **enough to do** *what she wants.*
I haven't got **enough** *money* **to buy** *a car.*

> *. . . enough . . .* + *for* + object + infinitive

It's late **enough for us to stop** *work.*

114 even

1   We can use *even* to talk about surprising extremes — when people 'go too far', or do more than we expect, for example. *Even* usually goes in 'mid-position' (see 13.2).

> auxiliary verb + *even*
> *be* + *even*

She has lost half her clothes. She **has even** *lost two pairs of shoes.*
(NOT . . . ~~Even she has lost~~ . . .)
She is rude to everybody. She **is even** *rude to the police.*
(NOT ~~Even she is rude~~ . . .)

> *even* + other verb

They do everything together. They **even brush** *their teeth together.*
He speaks lots of languages. He **even speaks** *Eskimo.*

Even can go in other positions when we want to emphasize a particular expression.

> *Anybody can do this.* **Even a child** *can do it.*
> *He eats anything —* **even raw potatoes**.
> *I work every day,* **even on Sundays**.

2 We use *not even* to say that we are surprised because something has not happened, is not there, etc.

> *He* **can't even** *write his own name.*
> *I haven't written to anybody for months —* **not even** *my parents.*
> *She did***n't even** *offer me a cup of tea.*

3 *Also* is not used to talk about surprising extremes.

> *Everybody got up early.* **Even George**. (NOT ~~Also George.~~)

4 *Even* is not used as a conjunction, but we can use *even* before *if* and *though*.

> **Even if** *I become a millionaire, I shall always be a socialist.*
> (NOT ~~Even I become~~ . . .)
> **Even though** *I didn't know anybody at the party, I had a good time.*

5 *Even so* means 'however'.

> *He seems nice.* **Even so**, *I don't really like him.*

115 eventual(ly)

Eventual and *eventually* mean 'final(ly)', 'in the end'. We use them when we say that something happened after a long time, or a lot of work.

> *The chess game lasted for three days. Androv was the* **eventual** *winner.*
> *The car didn't want to start, but* **eventually** *I got it going.*

Eventual(ly) is a 'false friend' for students who speak some European languages. We do not use it to talk about possibilities — things that might happen. For this meaning, use *possible, perhaps, if, may, might* etc.

> *In our new house, I'd like to have a spare bedroom for* **possible** *visitors.* (NOT . . . **~~eventual visitors.~~**)
> *I'm not sure what I'll do next year. I* **might** *go to America if I can find a job.* (NOT . . . **~~Eventually I'll go to America~~** . . .)

116 ever

1 *Ever* means 'at any time'. Compare:

> *Do you* **ever** *go to Ireland on holiday?* (= 'at any time')
> *We* **always** *go to Ireland on holiday.* (= 'every time')
> *We* **never** *have holidays in England.* (= 'at no time')

2 *Ever* is used mostly in questions. We also use *ever* in affirmative sentences after *if*, and with words that express a negative idea (like *nobody, hardly* or *stop*).

> **Do you ever** *go to pop concerts?*
> *I* **hardly ever** *see my sister.*
> *Come and see us* **if** *you are* **ever** *in Manchester.*
> **Nobody ever** *visits them.*
> *I'm going to* **stop** *her* **ever** *doing that again.*

3 When *ever* is used with the present perfect tense (see 243.4) it means 'at any time up to now'. Compare:

> **Have you ever** *been to Greece?*
> **Did you ever** *go to Naples when you were in Italy?*
> (= at a particular time in the past)

4 Note the structure │ comparative + *than ever* │ .

> *You're looking* **lovelier than ever.**

5 In *forever* (or *for ever*) and *ever since, ever* means 'always'.

> *I shall love you* **forever.**   *I've loved you* **ever since** *I met you.*

6 Don't confuse *ever* with *yet* and *already*.
Yet and *already* are used for things which happen around the present — events which are expected.

> *Has Aunt Mary come* **yet**?
> *Good heavens! Have you finished the washing up* **already**?

Ever means 'at any time in the past'.

> *Have you* **ever** *been to Africa?*

▷ For *who ever, what ever* etc, see 364. For *whoever, whatever* etc, see 365.

117 **every** and **every one**

1 We use *every* before a singular noun.

│ *every* + singular noun │

> *I see her* **every day.** (NOT . . . ~~every days~~.)
> **Every room** *is being used.*

2 We use *every one of* before a pronoun or determiner (for example *the, my, these*). The pronoun or noun is plural.

│ *every one of us/you/them* │
│ *every one of* + determiner + plural noun │

> *His books are wonderful. I've read* **every one** *of them.*
> **Every one** *of the plates is broken.*

3   We can use *every one* without a noun.

    Every one is broken.
    I've read **every one**.

4   *Every* is used with a plural noun in expressions like *every three days,*
    every six weeks.

    I go to Italy **every six weeks**.

5   *Everybody, everyone* and *everything* are used with singular verbs, like
    every.

    Everybody has gone home.
    (NOT ~~**Everybody have**~~ . . .)
    Everything is ready.

▷   For *he or she* etc or *they* etc after *every, everybody*, see 307.
    For *each* and *every* (meaning), see 104.

118   except

> *except* + infinitive without *to*
> *except* + *me/him* etc

1   When we put a verb after *except*, we usually use the infinitive without *to*.

    We can't do anything **except wait**.
    He does nothing **except eat** all day.

2   After *except*, we put object pronouns (*me, him* etc), not subject
    pronouns.

    Everybody understands **except me**.
    We're all ready **except her**.

▷   *But* (meaning 'except') is used in the same way. See 75.
    For the difference between *except* and *except for*, see 119.

119   except and except for

1   We can use *except* or *except for* after *all, any, every, no, anything/body/*
    one/where, everything/body/one/where, nothing/body/one/where, and
    whole — that is to say, words which suggest the idea of a *total*.
    In other cases we usually use *except for*, but not *except*.
    Compare:

    He ate **everything** on his plate **except (for)** the beans.
    He ate the **whole** meal **except (for)** the beans.
    He ate the meal **except for** the beans.
    (NOT . . . **except** ~~the beans~~.)

*I've cleaned all the rooms **except (for)** the bathroom.*
*I've cleaned the whole house **except (for)** the bathroom.*
*I've cleaned the house **except for** the bathroom.*
(NOT . . . **except** ~~the bathroom.~~)

*We're all here **except (for)** John and Mary.*
***Except for** John and Mary, we're all here.*
(NOT **Except** ~~John and Mary,~~ . . .)

2 We use *except*, not *except for*, before prepositions and conjunctions.

*It's the same everywhere **except in** Scotland.*
*She's beautiful **except when** she smiles.*

120 exclamations

1 With *how* (rather formal)

> *how* + adjective

*Strawberries! **How nice**!*

> *how* + adjective/adverb + subject + verb

***How cold** it is!* (NOT **How** ~~it is cold!~~)
***How beautifully** you sing!* (NOT **How** ~~you sing beautifully!~~)

> *how* + subject + verb

***How** you've grown!*

2 With *what*

> *what a/an* (+ adjective) + singular countable noun

***What a** rude man!* (NOT **What** ~~rude man!~~)
***What a** nice dress!* (NOT **What** ~~nice dress!~~)
***What a** surprise!*

> *what* (+ adjective) + uncountable/plural noun

***What** beautiful weather!* (NOT **What a** ~~beautiful weather!~~)
***What** lovely flowers!*

3 Negative questions

***Isn't** the weather nice!*
***Hasn't** she grown!*

In American English, ordinary (non-negative) question forms are often used in exclamations.

***Am I** hungry!   **Did she** make a mistake!*

121   excuse me, pardon and sorry

1   We usually say *excuse me* before we interrupt or disturb somebody; we say *sorry* after we disturb or trouble somebody. Compare:

> **Excuse me**, could I get past? . . . Oh, **sorry**, did I step on your foot?
> **Excuse me**, could you tell me the way to the station?
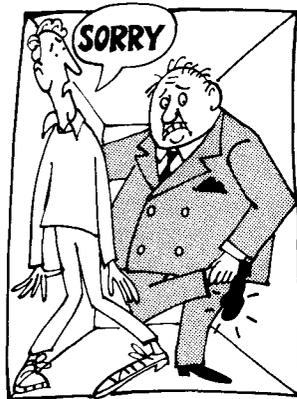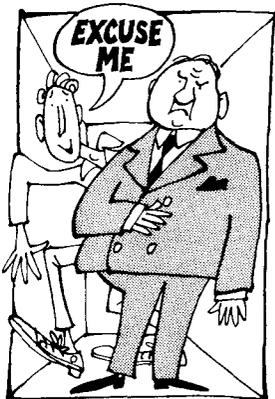
I beg your pardon is a more formal way of saying sorry.

> **I beg your pardon**. I'm afraid I didn't realize this was your seat.

2   If we do not hear or understand what people say, we usually say *Sorry?* *What?* (informal) or *(I beg your) pardon?*
Americans also say *Pardon me?*

> 'Mike's on the phone.' '**Sorry?**' 'I said, "Mike's on the phone." '
> 'See you tomorrow.' '**What?**' 'I said, "See you tomorrow." '
> 'You're going deaf.' '**I beg your pardon?**'

122   expect, hope, look forward, wait, want and wish

1   **Meaning**

expect
Expecting is a kind of thinking: it is not an emotion. If I *expect* something, I have good reason to think that it will happen.

> We **expect** to leave here in three years.
> I'm **expecting** a phone call from John today .

hope
Hoping is more emotional. If I *hope* for something, I want it to happen, but I am not sure that it will happen, and I can do nothing about it.

> I **hope** she writes to me soon.
> I **hope** they find that poor woman's child.
> I **hope** we don't have a war.

look forward

Looking forward is an emotion about something that is certain to happen. If I *look forward* to something, I know it will happen, I feel happy about it, and I would like the time to pass quickly so that it will happen soon.

He's **looking forward** to his birthday.

I'm **really looking forward** to going to Morocco in June.

I **look forward** to hearing from you.(common formula at the end of a letter)

wait

Waiting happens when something is late, or when you are early for something. I *wait* for something that will probably happen soon; I am conscious of the time passing (perhaps not quickly enough); I may be angry or impatient.

I hate **waiting** for buses.

It's difficult **to wait** for things when you're three years old.

'What's for supper?' '**Wait** and see.'

want

Wanting is emotional, like *hoping*. But if I *want* something to happen, I may be able to do something about it.

What do you **want** to do when you leave school?

I'm going to start saving money. I **want** a better car.

wish

Wishing is wanting something that is impossible, or that doesn't seem probable — being sorry that things are not different.

I **wish** I could fly.

I **wish** I had more money.

I **wish** she would stop singing.

Wish + infinitive can also be used like *want* (but *wish* is more formal).

I **wish** to see the manager.

2   Some comparisons

I'm **expecting** a phone call from Mary.

I've been **waiting** all day for Mary to phone — what does she think she's doing?

I **expect** it will stop raining soon. (= I think it will stop.)

I **hope** it stops raining soon.(= It may stop or it may not; I would like it to stop.)

I **wish** it would stop raining.(= It doesn't look as if it's going to stop; I feel sorry about that.)

I **hope** you have a good time in Ireland.(I can't do anything about it.)

I **want** you to have a good time while you're staying with us.(I'll do what I can to make things nice for you.)

I **expected** her at ten, but she was late.

I **waited** for her until eleven, and then I went home.

3 Structures

> expect + object
> expect (+ object) + infinitive
> expect + that-clause
> expect so

I'm expecting a phone call.
I expect to see her on Sunday.
I'm expecting him to arrive soon.
I expect (that) he'll be here soon.
'Is Lucy coming?' 'I expect so.' (See 311.1.)

> hope for + object
> hope + infinitive
> hope + that-clause
> hope so

I'm hoping for a letter from Eric.
I hope to go to America next month.
I hope that they get here soon. (See 162.)
'Are the shops open tomorrow?' 'I hope so.' (See 311.1.)

> look forward to + object
> look forward to . . . -ing

I'm looking forward to the holidays.
I look forward to hearing from you. (See 181.)

> wait
> wait and . . .
> wait for + object
> wait + infinitive
> wait for + object + infinitive

'Can I go now?' 'Wait.'
'What's for supper?' 'Wait and see.'
I'm waiting for a phone call.
I'm waiting to hear from John.
I'm waiting for John to phone.

> want + object
> want (+ object) + infinitive

I want a new car.
I want to go home.
I want him to go home.

> wish (+ object) + infinitive
> wish + clause

I wish to see the manager. (formal)
I wish him to look at this. (formal)
I wish I had more money. (See 367.)