



GRAMMAR

VERBS

Verbs can show:

Mood - which tells whether the speaker regards an action as *a fact, a command, or a condition*.

Tense - which tells whether the subject is involved in *a present, past, or future action*.

Voice - which tells whether the subject *performs an action or is the object of the action*.

MOOD

The mood (or mode) of a verb shows the manner in which a statement is made. There are three moods: **Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive**.

The Indicative Mood is the mood of *fact*. It is a statement presented as a fact, or a question of a fact.

"Rum **is** an alcoholic liquor".

"**Is** rum an alcoholic liquor"?

The Imperative Mood is the mood of *command or request*.

"**Close** the door". (command)

"Please **be** here on time". (request)

The Subjunctive Mood is the mood of *doubt, condition, wish, imagination, and the like*.

"I wish you **were** here". (But you are not)

"If I **were** you, I would take the chance". (But I'm not you)

INDICATIVE MOOD - TENSES

There are *six tenses* in the indicative mood - three simple and three perfect - to show the time of an action - past, present or future.

SIMPLE TENSES

PRESENT:

Shows that an action takes place now:

"He **opens** the umbrella and **goes** out in the rain".

Expresses a timeless truth:

"The sun **rises** in the east and **sets** in the west."

Expresses a habitual action:

"He **drives** to work every day".

PAST:

Shows that an action took place at some previous time:

"He **opened** the umbrella and **went** out in the rain".

FUTURE:

Shows that an action will take place in the time to come. It is formed by the auxiliary *Shall/Will* + the *infinitive form of the verb*:

"He **will open** the umbrella and **go** out in the rain".



PERFECT TENSES

The Perfect Tenses denote that an action is completed at the present, at some past time, or at some future time. They are formed by the auxiliary *HAVE/HAS, HAD, or SHALL/WILL HAVE + the PAST PARTICIPLE*.

PRESENT PERFECT

Shows that an action is completed at the present. The action indicated began in the past and extends to the present, or influences the present:

"We **have lived** in São José for ten years now." (São José is where we're living now.)

Expresses an action that occurred at an indefinite time in the past or which occurred at least up to the present moment. The time, as well as the number of times the event took place, is unspecified:

"I **have been** to that theater before."

"**Have** you ever **been** to the States?"

"They **have** all **had** the chicken pox already."

Expresses a habitual or customary activity in a period of time leading to the present, or indicates a repeated action in the recent or indefinite past. An adverbial expression of frequency is usually used:

"I've **seen** quite a few movies lately." (recent past)

"He **has** always **walked** to work." (customary activity)

"They **have been** to Rio several times." (indefinite past)

Finally, the present perfect tense implies that the result of a past event is still true or operative in the present. No adverbial expression is necessary:

"The taxi **has arrived**." (It's here now.)

"He **has lost** his glasses" (He hasn't found them yet)

PAST PERFECT

Shows that an action was completed before another action in the past, or completed before a definite time in the past; that is, the past perfect tense presupposes some relationship with an action or condition expressed in the past or present perfect tenses, or with a definite point of time already in the past.

"When I saw him I remembered that we **had met** before."

"The package **had arrived** on April 15th."

"**Had** you **been** to the States before?"

FUTURE PERFECT

Shows that an action will be completed before another action in the future, or before a given time in the future:

'By the time you arrive, I will have finished my lunch."

"I hope that by next week you will have done all your work."

OTHER FORMS OF THE INDICATIVE MOOD:

THE PROGRESSIVE FORM AND THE EMPHATIC FORM

A meaning somewhat different from any indicated by the tenses/forms described above can be achieved by employing the Progressive or the Emphatic forms of the verb.

THE PROGRESSIVE FORM of the verb shows that an action is still continuing. They consist of some part of the verb **BE** followed by the **Present Participle** (*verb + ing*). A synopsis in the third person singular follows:

PRESENT He **is talking**. (now)

PAST He **was talking**. (when I saw him.)

FUTURE He **will be talking**. (when you get there)

PRESENT PERFECT He **has been talking**. (for two hours now.)



PAST PERFECT He **had been** talking. (for two hours when the bell rang.)

FUTURE PERFECT He **will have been** talking. (for two hours when the bell rings.)

THE EMPHATIC FORMS of the verb are used for emphasis or stress. They consist of **DO** or **DID** followed by the infinitive *without to*. The emphatic forms are used only in the *Present* and *Past* Tenses.

PRESENT I **do** talk.

PAST I **did** talk.

IMPERATIVE MOOD - TENSE

The Imperative mood has only *one* tense - the **Present**.

Open the book.

Join the army.

Come and **bring** your friends.

Note: You is understood, but usually not expressed in the Imperative.

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD - TENSE

The Subjunctive mood implies future time, consequently, requiring no future forms, the Subjunctive includes only *four* tenses: **Present, Past, Present Perfect, Past Perfect**.

Note: I, although not a part of the Subjunctive, usually precedes each form, because the Subjunctive most often appears in *if* constructions.

Contrary to the Indicative Mood, the Subjunctive **does not** change form for the *third* person singular. Except for that, the verb forms of the Subjunctive are identical to the Indicative. The exception is the verb to *BE* which has two distinct forms:

Be for all persons of the Present tense

Were for all persons of the Past tense

Subjunctive forms in current English have disappeared or are disappearing in favor of more commonly used Indicative forms. However, the subjunctive is still used in some cases:

a) Use the Subjunctive **WERE** to express condition that is hypothetical, improbable, or impossible:

"If they **were** rich, we would buy a big house."

"If he **were** intelligent, he would have passed the test."

(They are not rich. He is not intelligent. Hence, the statements in these examples are hypothetical, or contrary to fact.)

b) Use the Subjunctive **WERE** after *as though* and *as if* to express doubt or uncertainty:

"He acts *as if* he **were** the only intelligent person in the group."

"She looked *as though* she **were** completely exhausted."

c) Use the Subjunctive in "*that*" clauses expressing necessity or a parliamentary motion and after verbs or adjectives which denote asking, agreeing, demanding, determining, directing, enacting, insisting, ordering, proposing, recommending, suggesting.

"He moved *that* the president **be appointed** by the committee."

"It is necessary *that* justice **be done**."

"I suggest *that* the topic **be considered** at our next meeting."

"The principal recommended *that* the student **finish** his assignment."



d) The Subjunctive persists, too, in many idioms, formulas, and expressions handed down from father to son:

"Far be it from me"

"Peace be with you"

"Come what may"

"Heaven forbid." - and others.

CONJUGATION OF THE FOUR TENSES OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

Present Tense I, you, he, we, you, they **be, have, do**

Past Tense I, you, he, we, you, they **were, had, did**

Present Perfect I, you, he, we, you, they **have been, have had, have done**

Past Perfect I, you, he, we, you, they **had been, had had, had done**

VOICE

The Voice of a verb shows whether the subject is **active** or **passive**. The verb is active if the subject *performs* an action, and passive if the subject *receives* an action.

"**A misinformed electorate put** him into office." (active)

"**He was put** into office by a misinformed electorate." (passive)

(In the first sentence the subject *misinformed electorate acts*; in the second, the subject *he receives* the action.)

"**One woman ran** the firm." (active)

"**The firm was run** by one woman." (passive)

(In the first sentence the subject *one woman acts*; in the second the subject *the firm receives* the action.)

The actual performer of the active verb becomes the object of the passive verb. Since transitive verbs have objects, *only transitive verbs have a passive voice*.

The passive voice is made by adding the **past participle** to some form of the verb **BE**. The following table gives the conjugation of **drink** in the passive voice for the third person singular, indicative mood:

Present Tense It is drunk.

Past Tense It was drunk.

Future It will be drunk.

Present Perfect It has been drunk.

Past Perfect It had been drunk.

Future Perfect It will have been drunk.

PROGRESSIVE FORMS

Present It is being drunk.

Past It was being drunk.

USES OF PASSIVE

It is usually better to use the active voice because active verbs are more direct and more forceful than the passive. There are, however, circumstances in which the passive voice is preferred:

1. When you want to emphasize the receiver of an action:

"**The fuse** was ignited by someone"

(Here, the fuse, not the igniter, is the center of interest)

"**The accident** was caused by pilot error".

(Here again, the accident, not who caused it, is the center of interest)

2. When you want to give your writing an objective and impersonal tone by omitting the agent:



"The fuse was ignited."

"Much has been written and much has been said, but nothing has been done."

(The doers of the action are irrelevant here - Passive Voice preferred.)

THE AGENT IN PASSIVE SENTENCES

The agent in passive sentences answers the question **by whom** or **by what** the action is performed.

A passive sentence can be written in two ways: *with* the agent or *without* the agent.

1. **The agent is named** if it is important or necessary to complete the meaning or understanding of the sentence.

"The woman was murdered **by her husband**."

"The accident was caused **by pilot error**."

(The woman was murdered by whom?) By the agent

(The accident was caused by what?) By the agent

2. **The agent is not named** under certain conditions:

a) When the identity of the agent *is understood*:

"The governor has been reelected to another term." (by the voters)

b) When the identity of the agent *is not important*:

"Much has been written (by someone) and much has been said (by someone), but nothing has been done (by someone)."

c) When the identity of the agent *is unknown*:

"My car was stolen last night." (by someone)

"An error has been made in this calculation." (by someone)

EXERCISE

VERBS

Underline the verbs that appear in the wrong tense and write the correct form.

- 1- After Cortez subdued the Aztecs, all Mexico will be quickly explored by the Spaniards.
- 2- By the time the new hay crop was ready, the barns are almost empty.
- 3- After we went half a dozen miles, we ran out of gas.
- 4- If you had a bit of common sense, Tony, you will stay off roller skates.
- 5- A straight and narrow path is one that had no primroses on it.
- 6- This is my parents' anniversary; they had been married for 24 years.
- 7- Charles sometimes wondered if Joan were pulling his leg.
- 8- The regulations require that an athlete in training is in bed by 10 o' clock.
- 9- How my little sister wishes she was a sky diver.
- 10- Gladys feared that the dog were only a step behind.
- 11- The committee insisted that she told the whole story.
- 12- He talked as though the world was coming to an end.



ANSWER KEY
VERBS

Underline the verbs that appear in the wrong tense and write the correct form.

- 13- After Cortez, subdued the Aztecs, all Mexico **WAS** quickly explored by the Spaniards.
- 14- By the time the new hay crop **IS** ready, the barns **WILL BE** almost empty.
- 15- After we **HAD GONE** half a dozen miles, we ran out of gas.
- 16- If you had a bit of common sense, Tony, you **WOULD** stay off roller skates.
- 17- A straight and narrow path is one that **HAS** no primroses on it.
- 18- This is my parents' anniversary; they **HAVE** been married for 24 years.
- 19- Charles sometimes **WONDERS** if Joan **IS** pulling his leg.
- 20- The regulations require *that* an athlete in training **BE** in bed by 10 o' clock.
- 21- How my little sister wishes she **WERE** a sky diver.
- 22- Gladys feared that the dog **WAS** only a step behind.
- 23- The committee *insisted* that she **TELL** the whole story.
- 24- He talked *as though* the world **WERE** coming to an end.