A Complete Course in English Grammar

From Beginner to Very Advanced

A structured reference and workbook in four levels,
with worked examples, common-error analysis, and exercises

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How to Use This Book

This book is a complete course in English grammar, organized in four parts of increasing difficulty. It is designed to work both as a *course* you can read from start to finish and as a *reference* you can dip into when you need to check a specific point.

The four levels

Part I — Beginner: Foundations (Chapters 1–6)
: The essential building blocks: nouns, articles, pronouns, the verb *be*, the simple tenses, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and how to form questions and negatives. Corresponds roughly to CEFR A1–A2.

Part II — Intermediate: Building Fluency (Chapters 7–15)
: The full tense–aspect system, modal verbs, conditionals, the passive, verb patterns, relative clauses, reported speech, comparison, and phrasal verbs. Corresponds roughly to CEFR B1–B2.

Part III — Advanced: Precision and Range (Chapters 16–22)
: Subtleties of tense and aspect, mixed and inverted conditionals, the subjunctive, inversion and cleft sentences, participle clauses, nominalization, ellipsis, cohesion, and causatives. Corresponds roughly to CEFR C1.

Part IV — Very Advanced: Mastery (Chapters 23–29)
: The grammar of the expert user: syntactic analysis, information structure, agreement edge cases, hedging and academic register, punctuation mastery, structural ambiguity, and the great usage debates. Corresponds to CEFR C2 and beyond — much of this material is useful even to native speakers who write professionally.

Features

- **Key Point boxes** summarize the rule you must remember.
- **Common Error boxes** show typical mistakes (marked ✗) next to correct forms (marked ✓).
- **Usage Notes** cover differences between British and American English, formal and informal usage, and points where real usage is more flexible than school rules suggest.
- **Style & Register boxes** help you choose the right form for the right situation, especially in writing.
- **Exercises** appear at the end of every chapter, with a full **Answer Key** in Appendix C.
- Appendices provide a table of **irregular verbs** and a **glossary** of grammatical terms.

A note on "correctness"

Grammar books sometimes present English as a fixed set of rules. Real English is a living language: educated usage varies between regions, registers, and generations. Where usage genuinely varies, this book says so, and tells you what is safest in careful writing. Where a "rule" is really a superstition (for example, the ban on split infinitives), this book tells you that too — in Chapter 29.

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Part I

Beginner: Foundations

1

Nouns, Articles, and Plurals

Nouns name people, places, things, and ideas: *teacher*, *city*, *water*, *happiness*. Almost every English sentence is built around nouns, so we begin here.

1.1 Countable and uncountable nouns

English divides nouns into two great families, and this division controls which articles, determiners, and verb forms you can use with them.

Countable nouns name things you can count. They have a singular and a plural form: *one book, two books*; *a child, three children*.

Uncountable (mass) nouns name substances, materials, and abstract ideas that English treats as an undivided mass: *water, rice, music, information, advice, furniture*. They have no plural and take a singular verb: *This information* ***is*** *useful.*

Key Point

Uncountable nouns never take *a/an* and never add *-s*. To count them, use a measure word: *a glass of water*, *a piece of advice*, *two items of furniture*, *a slice of bread*.

Common Error

Some nouns that are countable in other languages are uncountable in English. Learn these as a set:

Wrong	Right
✗ *an advice, advices*	✓ *some advice, a piece of advice*
✗ *informations*	✓ *information, a piece of information*
✗ *furnitures*	✓ *furniture, items of furniture*
✗ *luggages / baggages*	✓ *luggage, a piece of luggage*
✗ *a news, newses*	✓ *news, an item of news*
✗ *evidences*	✓ *evidence, a piece of evidence*
✗ *researches (usually)*	✓ *research, research studies*
✗ *homeworks*	✓ *homework, homework assignments*

Usage Note

Many nouns can be *both* countable and uncountable with different meanings: *I'd like* ***a coffee*** (= a cup of coffee) vs. ***Coffee*** *is grown in Brazil* (= the substance); *a paper* (= a newspaper or an academic article) vs. *paper* (= the material); *an experience* (= an event) vs. *experience* (= accumulated knowledge).

1.2 Regular and irregular plurals

1.2.1 Regular spelling rules

Rule	Examples	Notes
Add *-s*	*cat* → *cats*, *table* → *tables*	the default
After *-s*, *-ss*, *-sh*, *-ch*, *-x*, *-z*: add *-es*	*bus* → *buses*, *watch* → *watches*, *box* → *boxes*	adds a syllable: /ɪz/
Consonant + *-y*: change to *-ies*	*city* → *cities*, *baby* → *babies*	but vowel + *y*: *day* → *days*
Many nouns in *-f*/*-fe*: change to *-ves*	*leaf* → *leaves*, *knife* → *knives*, *wife* → *wives*	but *roofs*, *beliefs*, *chiefs*, *cliffs*
Some nouns in *-o*: add *-es*	*potato* → *potatoes*, *hero* → *heroes*	but *photos*, *pianos*, *radios*, *videos*

1.2.2 Irregular plurals

man → *men*	*woman* → *women*	*child* → *children*	*person* → *people*
foot → *feet*	*tooth* → *teeth*	*goose* → *geese*	*mouse* → *mice*
ox → *oxen*	*sheep* → *sheep*	*deer* → *deer*	*fish* → *fish*

Learned and borrowed words often keep foreign plurals, at least in formal writing: *analysis* → *analyses*, *crisis* → *crises*, *criterion* → *criteria*, *phenomenon* → *phenomena*, *datum* → *data*, *medium* → *media*, *stimulus* → *stimuli*, *appendix* → *appendices*.

Usage Note

Data is historically a plural (*the data **are** clear*), and formal scientific writing often keeps it plural. In general and business English, singular *data* (*the data **is** clear*) is now standard and unremarkable. Choose one pattern and be consistent.

1.3 The articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*

Articles are the most frequent words in English, and among the hardest to master. The system rests on two questions: Is the noun *specific and identifiable* to the listener? Is it *countable singular*?

1.3.1 The indefinite article *a/an*

Use *a/an* with singular countable nouns when the listener does not yet know which one you mean, or when which one does not matter:

- First mention: *I saw **a** dog in the park. **The** dog was chasing **a** ball.*
- Classifying / describing: *She is **a** doctor. This is **an** excellent idea.*
- Meaning "any one": *Could you pass me **a** pen?*
- In measurements: *twice **a** week, 60 km **an** hour, two dollars **a** kilo.*

Key Point

Choose *a* or *an* by *sound*, not spelling. Use *an* before a vowel *sound*: *an apple, an hour, an MBA, an honest man*. Use *a* before a consonant sound: *a house, a university, a European, a one-way street* (*university* begins with the sound /j/, *one* with /w/).

1.3.2 The definite article *the*

Use *the* when both speaker and listener can identify the exact referent:

- Already mentioned: *I bought a laptop and a phone. **The** laptop was expensive.*
- Unique in context: ***the** sun, **the** kitchen, **the** manager* (of our office), ***the** government*.
- Defined by a following phrase: ***the** book that you lent me, **the** capital of France*.
- With superlatives and ordinals: ***the** best, **the** first, **the** only one*.
- With some classes of proper names: rivers, seas, mountain ranges, deserts, and plural countries (*the Thames, the Pacific, the Alps, the Sahara, the Netherlands, the United States*), plus hotels, cinemas, newspapers (*the Hilton, the Times*).

1.3.3 Zero article

Use no article (the **zero article**) with:

- Plural and uncountable nouns used generally: *Dogs are loyal. Water boils at 100 °C. I love music.*
- Most proper names: *Maria lives in Tokyo, in Japan.*
- Meals, languages, academic subjects, sports: *have breakfast, speak French, study physics, play tennis.*
- Institutions used for their purpose: *go to school / to bed / to work / to hospital* (BrE), *be in prison, at church*. Compare: *The parents went to **the** school to meet the teacher* (the building, not the institution).

Common Error

- ✗ *The life is short.* → ✓ *Life is short.* (general abstract nouns take no article)
- ✗ *I like the dogs.* (meaning dogs in general) → ✓ *I like dogs.*
- ✗ *She is teacher.* → ✓ *She is a teacher.* (professions need *a/an*)
- ✗ *He is in the hospital since Monday.* (BrE, as a patient) → ✓ *He has been in hospital since Monday.* (AmE keeps *the*: *in the hospital*)

1.4 Possession: *'s* and *of*

- Add *'s* to singular nouns and irregular plurals: *the girl's bike, the children's room, James's office* (or *James' office* — both are acceptable; be consistent).
- Add only an apostrophe to regular plurals: *the girls' bikes, my parents' house*.
- Prefer *'s* for people, animals, organizations, and time expressions: *Anna's idea, the company's results, today's news, two weeks' holiday*.
- Prefer *of* for things and abstract relations: *the leg of the table, the end of the film, the cost of living*.

Exercises

Exercise 1.1 Countable or uncountable?

Decide whether the noun in bold is used countably (C) or uncountably (U).

1. Could I have two **coffees**, please?
2. **Experience** is the best teacher.

3. She gave me some excellent **advice**.
4. We need to buy new **furniture**.
5. I read an interesting **paper** on climate change.
6. There isn't much **news** today.

Exercise 1.2 Articles

Fill each gap with *a*, *an*, *the*, or — (no article).

1. My sister is _____ engineer; she works for _____ European company.
2. _____ honesty is _____ best policy.
3. We flew over _____ Alps on our way to _____ Italy.
4. I had _____ breakfast at _____ hotel near _____ station.
5. _____ water in this bottle tastes strange.
6. He goes to _____ work by _____ bus.

Exercise 1.3 Plurals and possessives

Correct the error in each sentence.

1. The childrens' toys were all over the floor.
2. I have three sister-in-laws.
3. These phenomenons are difficult to explain.
4. We bought two breads and some milks.
5. My parent's house is near the sea. (both parents)

2

Pronouns and Determiners

Pronouns stand in for nouns so that we do not have to repeat them: *Maria lost **her** keys, but **she** found **them** later.* Determiners (*this, some, every, my* . . .) come before nouns and specify which or how many.

2.1 Personal pronouns

	Subject	Object	Possessive adj.	Possessive pron.
1st sg.	I	me	my	mine
2nd sg./pl.	you	you	your	yours
3rd sg. masc.	he	him	his	his
3rd sg. fem.	she	her	her	hers
3rd sg. neut.	it	it	its	—
1st pl.	we	us	our	ours
3rd pl.	they	them	their	theirs

- Subject pronouns perform the action: ***She** called **him**.*
- Object pronouns receive the action or follow prepositions: *Come with **me**. Give it to **us**.*
- Possessive adjectives modify a noun (***my** car*); possessive pronouns replace one (*that car is **mine***).

Common Error

- ✗ *Me and John went to the cinema.* → ✓ *John and I went to the cinema.* (subject position)
- ✗ *They invited my wife and I.* → ✓ *They invited my wife and me.* (object position — this hypercorrection is extremely common; test by dropping the other person: *they invited **me***, not **they invited I*)
- ✗ *Its a beautiful day.* → ✓ *It's a beautiful day.* (*it's* = *it is*; *its* = possessive)
- ✗ *The dog wagged it's tail.* → ✓ *. . . its tail.*

Usage Note

Singular *they* is now standard for a person of unknown or unspecified gender: *Someone left **their** umbrella — I hope **they** come back for it.* This usage is centuries old (Shakespeare, Austen) and is accepted by all major style guides.

2.2 Reflexive and reciprocal pronouns

myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves

- Use a reflexive when subject and object are the same person: *She taught **herself** Italian. I cut **myself**.*
- Use it for emphasis: *The director **himself** apologized.*
- *by + reflexive* = alone / without help: *He built the shed **by himself**.*
- Reciprocal pronouns express two-way action: *They love **each other**. The teammates trust **one another**.*

Common Error

Do not use a reflexive as a polite substitute for *I/me*: ✗ *Please contact myself or my colleague.* → ✓ *Please contact me or my colleague.*

2.3 Demonstratives: *this, that, these, those*

	Near (here, now)	Far (there, then)
Singular	this	that
Plural	these	those

***This** coffee (in my hand) is cold. **That** house (across the street) is for sale. **These** days people work from home. Do you remember **those** summers at the lake?*

Demonstratives also point within a conversation: *He resigned without notice — **that** surprised everyone.*

2.4 Quantifying determiners

2.4.1 *some* and *any*

- *some*: positive statements, offers, and requests — *We have **some** milk. Would you like **some** tea? Could I have **some** water?*
- *any*: negatives and open questions — *We don't have **any** milk. Is there **any** coffee?*
- *any* in positives means "it doesn't matter which": *Take **any** seat you like.*

2.4.2 *much, many, a lot of, (a) few, (a) little*

	With countable plurals	With uncountables
Large quantity	many, a lot of, lots of	much, a lot of, lots of
Small quantity (positive: "some")	a few (*a few friends*)	a little (*a little time*)
Small quantity (negative: "almost none")	few (*few friends*)	little (*little time*)

Key Point

A few and *a little* are positive (= some, enough); *few* and *little* without *a* are negative (= not enough). Compare: *She has **a few** friends here, so she's happy.* vs. *She has **few** friends here, so she's lonely.*

Usage Note

In everyday affirmative sentences, *a lot of* is more natural than *much/many*: *We got **a lot of** rain* rather than *We got much rain*. *Much* and *many* are most at home in questions, negatives, and formal writing.

2.4.3 *each, every, all, both, either, neither*

- *every* + singular noun, singular verb: ***Every** student **has** a locker.*
- *each* emphasizes individuals one by one: ***Each** answer is worth two points. Each of the answers **is** worth two points.*
- *all* + plural/uncountable: ***All** children need sleep. **All** (of) the money was spent.*
- *both* = the two together; *either* = one of the two; *neither* = not one and not the other: ***Both** answers are correct. **Either** road leads to town. **Neither** option appeals to me.*

2.5 Indefinite pronouns

somebody/someone, something, anybody/anyone, anything, everybody/ everyone, everything, nobody/no one, nothing

Key Point

Indefinite pronouns take a *singular* verb, even *everybody*: *Everybody **was** there. Nothing **happens** here. Someone **has** taken my seat.* (But follow-up pronouns are commonly plural: *Everybody enjoyed **themselves**.*)

Common Error

Avoid double negatives with negative pronouns: ✗ *I didn't see nothing.* → ✓ *I didn't see anything.* / ✓ *I saw nothing.*

Exercises

Exercise 2.1 Choose the pronoun

Choose the correct form.

1. Between you and (I / me), the plan won't work.
2. My brother and (I / me) grew up in Leeds.
3. The committee gave the award to Sarah and (he / him).
4. Everyone must bring (his or her / their) own laptop.
5. The cat licked (its / it's) paws.

Exercise 2.2 some/any, few/little

Fill the gap with *some, any, a few, few, a little,* or *little*.

1. Hurry — we have very _____ time before the train leaves.
2. Could you lend me _____ money until Friday?
3. There aren't _____ tickets left for tonight.
4. Don't worry, we still have _____ minutes to spare.

5. _____ people ever read the terms and conditions, which is a pity.

Exercise 2.3 Error correction

Each sentence contains one error. Correct it.

1. Neither of the answers were correct.
2. Please send the report to myself by Friday.
3. Every employees must complete the training.
4. This shoes are too small for me.
5. If anyone calls, tell him I'm in a meeting. (make it neutral and natural)

3

Be, *Have*, and the Present Tenses

3.1 The verb *be*

Be is the most irregular — and most important — verb in English.

	Present	Past	Contractions
I	am	was	I'm, I'm not
you / we / they	are	were	you're, they aren't
he / she / it	is	was	she's, it isn't

Be makes questions and negatives *without do*:

- Statement: *She is tired.*
- Negative: *She is not (isn't) tired.*
- Question: *Is she tired?* — *Yes, she is. / No, she isn't.*

Common Error

- ✗ *She is agree with you.* → ✓ *She agrees with you.* (*agree* is a verb, not an adjective)
- ✗ *I am boring in this class.* → ✓ *I am bored in this class.* (*-ed* = how you feel; *-ing* = what causes the feeling: *the class is boring*)
- ✗ *He has 25 years.* → ✓ *He is 25 (years old).* (age uses *be*, not *have*)
- ✗ *They are cold the soups.* There is / there are: ✓ *There are two soups on the menu.* Use *there is/are* to say that something exists.

3.2 *There is / there are*

Use *there* + *be* to introduce the existence of something: ***There is*** *a problem.* ***There are*** *three emails for you.* ***Is there*** *any coffee?* ***There isn't*** *any time.* The verb agrees with the noun that follows: *there* ***is*** *a chair, there* ***are*** *chairs.*

3.3 *Have* and *have got*

Have expresses possession, relationships, and characteristics: *I have two brothers. She has blue eyes. We have a meeting at ten.*

Usage Note

British English often uses *have got* in speech: *I've got two brothers. Have you got a minute?* American English prefers plain *have* with *do*-support: *Do you have a minute? I don't have time.* Both are correct; *have got* is informal and has no infinitive or progressive forms.

3.4 The present simple

3.4.1 Form

Base verb for all persons, with *-s* in the third person singular:

Statement	Negative	Question
I/you/we/they *work*	*don't work*	*Do you work?*
he/she/it *works*	*doesn't work*	*Does she work?*

Spelling of the *-s* form follows the plural rules of Chapter 1: *watch* → *watches*, *study* → *studies*, *go* → *goes*, *have* → *has*.

3.4.2 Uses

1. **Habits and routines:** *I **get up** at six. She **plays** tennis on Fridays.* Often with adverbs of frequency: *always, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, never* (placed before the main verb but after *be*: *He **is always** late; he **always arrives** at 9:15*).
2. **General truths:** *Water **boils** at 100 °C. The Earth **orbits** the Sun.*
3. **Permanent situations:** *She **lives** in Madrid. He **works** for a bank.*
4. **Timetables and schedules (future):** *The train **leaves** at 8:40 tomorrow.*
5. **Narration, commentary, headlines:** *Messi **passes** to Suárez. . . / Government **announces** new policy.*

Common Error

The third-person *-s* is the most frequently dropped ending in learner English. Check every present-simple verb with a he/she/it subject: ✗ *She work in London and go home at five.* → ✓ *She works in London and goes home at five.* Also, do not double-mark questions and negatives: ✗ *Does she works here?* → ✓ *Does she work here?* ✗ *He doesn't likes fish.* → ✓ *He doesn't like fish.*

3.5 The present progressive (continuous)

3.5.1 Form

am / is / are + verb-*ing*: *I am working, she is working, they are working.* Spelling: *make* → *making* (drop silent *-e*); *run* → *running*, *sit* → *sitting* (double a final single consonant after a stressed short vowel); *lie* → *lying*.

3.5.2 Uses

1. **Actions happening now:** *Be quiet — the baby **is sleeping**.*
2. **Temporary situations:** *She usually works in Paris, but this month she **is working** in Rome.*
3. **Changing and developing situations:** *Prices **are rising**. Your English **is getting** better.*
4. **Fixed personal arrangements (future):** *We **are meeting** the clients on Tuesday.*
5. **With *always*, for irritating habits:** *He **is always losing** his keys!*

3.6 Present simple vs. present progressive

Present simple	Present progressive
permanent, repeated, general	temporary, in progress, changing
She teaches French. (her job)	*She is teaching French this term.* (temporary)
I live in Seoul. (home)	*I'm living with friends until I find a flat.*
What do you do? (= your job)	*What are you doing?* (= right now)

3.6.1 Stative verbs

Verbs describing states rather than actions are not normally used in the progressive:

- Thinking and knowing: *know, believe, understand, remember, mean, doubt*
- Emotions: *love, hate, like, prefer, want, need*
- Senses and appearance: *see, hear, seem, appear, look (= seem), sound*
- Possession and relations: *have (= own), own, belong, contain, consist, depend*

✗ *I am knowing the answer.* → ✓ *I know the answer.*
✗ *She is wanting a coffee.* → ✓ *She wants a coffee.*

Usage Note

Many of these verbs have an *active* sense that does allow the progressive: *I **think** you're right* (opinion — state) vs. *I'**m thinking** about the offer* (mental activity); *She **has** a car* (possession) vs. *She'**s having** lunch* (activity); *The soup **tastes** good* vs. *The chef **is tasting** the soup*. Advertising has also normalized *I'm loving it*-type usage in very informal registers.

3.7 The imperative

Use the base verb, with no subject, for instructions, invitations, and warnings: ***Sit** down. **Take** the second left. **Have** a biscuit. **Don't touch** that!* Soften commands with *please* or question forms (*Could you. . . ?*).

Exercises

Exercise 3.1 Present simple or progressive?

Put the verb into the correct present form.

1. Water _____ (freeze) at 0 °C.
2. Don't call now — they _____ (have) dinner.
3. She normally _____ (drive) to work, but this week she _____ (cycle).
4. I _____ (not/understand) this exercise.
5. Look! It _____ (snow).
6. The 7:15 train _____ (arrive) at platform 3 tomorrow.

Exercise 3.2 Make questions and negatives

Rewrite as indicated.

1. She speaks Portuguese. (question)
2. They are ready. (negative)
3. He has got a driving licence. (question, BrE)
4. The children like broccoli. (negative)
5. There are some messages for me. (question)

Exercise 3.3 Error correction

Correct one error in each sentence.

1. He don't work on Saturdays.
2. I'm not believing this story.
3. She have two children.
4. Does he plays the piano?
5. I am agree with the proposal.
6. Always she drinks tea in the morning.

4

The Past Simple and Talking About the Future

4.1 The past simple

4.1.1 Form

Regular verbs add *-ed*: *work* → *worked*, *play* → *played*. Spelling: *stop* → *stopped* (double the consonant), *study* → *studied* (*-y* → *-ied*), *live* → *lived* (just *-d*). Irregular verbs must be learned individually — see Appendix A: *go* → *went*, *see* → *saw*, *buy* → *bought*, *take* → *took*.

Negatives and questions use *did* + base verb, for *all* persons:

Statement	Negative	Question
She arrived late.	*She didn't arrive late.*	*Did she arrive late?*
They went home.	*They didn't go home.*	*Did they go home?*

Common Error

After *did/didn't*, use the *base* verb, never the past form: ✗ *Did you went to the party?* → ✓ *Did you go to the party?* ✗ *She didn't bought anything.* → ✓ *She didn't buy anything.*

4.1.2 Pronunciation of *-ed*

- /t/ after voiceless sounds: *worked*, *stopped*, *washed*
- /d/ after voiced sounds: *played*, *lived*, *cleaned*
- /ɪd/ (extra syllable) only after /t/ or /d/: *wanted*, *needed*, *decided*

4.1.3 Uses

1. **Completed actions at a finished time:** *I **saw** her yesterday. They **moved** here in 2015.*
2. **Sequences in stories:** *She **opened** the door, **switched** on the light, and **screamed**.*
3. **Past habits and states:** *We **walked** to school every day. He **lived** alone.*

Typical time markers: *yesterday, last week, in 2010, two years ago, when I was a child*.

4.2 *Used to* and *would* for past habits

- *used to* + base verb: past habits and states that are no longer true — *I **used to smoke**. There **used to be** a cinema here.*
- Negative and question: *didn't use to*, *Did you use to. . . ?*

- *would* + base verb: repeated past *actions* in nostalgic narrative (not states) — *Every summer we **would swim** in the river. ✗ We would live in a small village. → ✓ We used to live in a small village.*

Common Error

Do not confuse *used to do* (past habit) with *be/get used to doing* (= be/become accustomed to): *I **used to drive** on the left* (past habit) vs. *I **am used to driving** on the left* (it is normal for me now).

4.3 The past progressive

Form: *was/were + -ing*. It sets the scene and describes actions in progress at a past moment:

- *At eight o'clock we **were having** dinner.*
- Interrupted action: *I **was taking** a shower when the phone **rang**.* (long background action in progressive; short interrupting action in past simple)
- Parallel actions: *While I **was cooking**, he **was setting** the table.*

Key Point

Past simple = completed events that move the story forward. Past progressive = the background scenery around those events. *The sun **was shining** and the birds **were singing** when suddenly a stranger **knocked** at the door.*

4.4 Talking about the future

English has no single future tense; it chooses among several forms according to meaning.

4.4.1 *will* + base verb

1. Predictions and beliefs: *It **will rain** tomorrow. I think they'**ll win**.*
2. Instant decisions made at the moment of speaking: *The phone's ringing — I'**ll get** it.*
3. Promises, offers, threats: *I'**ll help** you. We **won't forget** this.*
4. Facts about the future: *She **will be** forty in May.*

4.4.2 *be going to* + base verb

1. Prior intentions and plans: *We'**re going to redecorate** the kitchen this spring.*
2. Predictions based on present evidence: *Look at those clouds — it'**s going to rain**.*

4.4.3 Present progressive and present simple for the future

- Present progressive: fixed arrangements, typically with a time and other people involved — *I'**m seeing** the dentist at four.*
- Present simple: timetables and schedules — *The flight **departs** at 6:55.*

Key Point

Decision made *now* → *will*. Decision made *before now* → *going to* or present progressive. *"We've run out of milk." "Really? I'**ll buy** some."* vs. *"Why are you putting on your coat?" "I'**m going to buy** some milk."*

Usage Note

Shall survives mainly in offers and suggestions with *I/we* in British English: ***Shall** I open a window?* ***Shall** we start?* As a plain future (*I shall return*) it now sounds formal or old-fashioned.

Exercises

Exercise 4.1 Past simple forms

Give the past simple of: *buy, catch, come, drink, fall, feel, fly, forget, hold, leave, lose, pay, run, teach, think, throw, wear, win, write, begin.*

Exercise 4.2 Past simple or past progressive?

Choose the correct form.

1. When the fire alarm (rang / was ringing), everyone (left / was leaving) the building calmly.
2. I (found / was finding) this wallet while I (walked / was walking) the dog.
3. She (didn't hear / wasn't hearing) the doorbell because she (listened / was listening) to music.
4. What (did you do / were you doing) at 10 p.m. last night?

Exercise 4.3 Future forms

Choose the most natural form: *will*, *going to*, present progressive, or present simple.

1. "There's no sugar left." "Oh, I _____ (get) some from the shop."
2. Watch out! You _____ (drop) that tray!
3. We _____ (fly) to Osaka on the 14th — the tickets are booked.
4. The conference _____ (begin) at 9 a.m. sharp, according to the programme.
5. I'm sure you _____ (pass) the exam.

Exercise 4.4 used to

Rewrite using *used to* or *be used to* as appropriate.

1. In the past, I drank coffee every morning; now I don't.
2. Night shifts are normal for her; they don't bother her.
3. There was a bakery on this corner years ago.

5

Adjectives, Adverbs, and Prepositions

5.1 Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns. In English they are invariable — no agreement for number or gender: *a tall man, tall women, a tall building*.

5.1.1 Position

- **Attributive** (before the noun): *a **red** car, an **interesting** idea*.
- **Predicative** (after linking verbs *be, seem, look, become, feel, taste, sound*): *The car is **red**. That sounds **interesting***.
- A few adjectives are predicative only: *afraid, alone, asleep, awake, alive, glad*. ✗ *an asleep child* → ✓ *a sleeping child / The child is asleep.*

5.1.2 Order of adjectives

When several adjectives stack up before a noun, native speakers follow a fairly fixed order:

opinion	size	age	shape	colour	origin	material	purpose
lovely	big	old	round	brown	Italian	wooden	dining

a lovely big old round brown Italian wooden dining table (extreme, but grammatical). Realistic examples: *a beautiful old French mirror*, *comfortable black leather shoes*, *a small rectangular metal box*.

5.1.3 *-ed* vs. *-ing* adjectives

Key Point

-ing adjectives describe the *source* of a feeling; *-ed* adjectives describe the *person who feels* it. *The lecture was **boring**, so the students were **bored**. The news is **surprising**; we are **surprised**.* Pairs to know: *interesting/interested, exciting/excited, tiring/tired, confusing/confused, embarrassing/embarrassed, disappointing/disappointed*.

5.2 Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or whole sentences: *She sings **beautifully**. It's **extremely** hot. **Fortunately**, nobody was hurt.*

5.2.1 Formation

Most adverbs of manner add *-ly* to an adjective: *quick* → *quickly*, *careful* → *carefully*, *happy* → *happily*, *terrible* → *terribly*. Irregular: *good* → ***well***, and some words are the same as adjectives: *fast*, *hard*, *late*, *early*, *high*, *low*, *straight*.

Common Error

- *hardly* is not the adverb of *hard*: *He works* ***hard*** (= with effort) vs. *He* ***hardly*** *works* (= almost never).
- *lately* is not the adverb of *late*: *He arrived* ***late*** vs. *Have you seen her* ***lately***? (= recently).
- After linking verbs, use an adjective, not an adverb: ✗ *The soup tastes deliciously.* → ✓ *The soup tastes delicious.* ✓ *I feel bad about it* (not *badly*, in careful usage).

5.2.2 Position of adverbs

- **Manner, place, time** usually come at the end, in that order: *She sang* ***beautifully at the concert last night***.
- **Frequency adverbs** (*always*, *often*, *never*. . .) go before the main verb, after *be*, and after the first auxiliary: *He* ***often*** *travels. He is* ***often*** *away. He has* ***often*** *been to Japan.*
- Never place an adverb between verb and direct object: ✗ *She speaks fluently English.* → ✓ *She speaks English fluently.*

5.3 Comparatives and superlatives

5.3.1 Formation

Type	Comparative	Superlative
one syllable	*older, taller, nicer*	*the oldest, the tallest*
one syllable, CVC	*bigger, hotter, thinner*	*the biggest, the hottest*
two syllables in *-y*	*happier, easier*	*the happiest, the easiest*
longer adjectives	*more modern, more expensive*	*the most modern, the most expensive*
irregular	*better, worse, further/farther, less, more*	*the best, the worst, the furthest, the least, the most*

5.3.2 Patterns

- *than* after comparatives: *She is taller* ***than*** *her brother.*
- *as . . . as* for equality: *He is* ***as*** *tall* ***as*** *his father. It's not* ***as*** *easy* ***as*** *it looks.*
- Softening or strengthening: ***a bit*** *colder,* ***much/far*** *better,* ***slightly*** *more expensive.*
- Repeated comparative = continuing change: *The queue got* ***longer and longer***.
- *the . . . the*: ***The more*** *you practise,* ***the easier*** *it gets.*

Common Error

✗ *more better, more easier* → ✓ *better, easier* (never combine *more* with an *-er* form). ✗ *She is taller than me think.* — after *than*, use object pronouns informally (*taller than me*) or a full clause formally (*taller than I am*).

5.4 Prepositions

5.4.1 Prepositions of place: *in, on, at*

	Idea	Examples
in	inside a 3-D space or area	*in the box, in the kitchen, in London, in Brazil, in the car*
on	touching a surface or line	*on the table, on the wall, on the floor, on the coast, on the bus/train/plane*
at	at a point; at an event	*at the door, at the bus stop, at the airport, at a party, at work, at home*

5.4.2 Prepositions of time: *in, on, at*

	Used for	Examples
in	months, years, seasons, parts of the day, periods	*in May, in 2024, in winter, in the morning, in ten minutes*
on	days and dates	*on Monday, on 4 July, on Friday morning, on my birthday*
at	clock times, points, holidays as periods	*at six o'clock, at noon, at night, at the weekend (BrE), at Christmas*

Key Point

No preposition before *last, next, this, every, yesterday, tomorrow*: ✗ *on last Monday* → ✓ *last Monday*; ✗ *in this morning* → ✓ *this morning*.

5.4.3 Movement and other common prepositions

to (direction: *go to school* — but *go home*, no *to*); *into/out of* (entering/leaving); *from . . . to*; *through* (a tunnel), *across* (a road), *along* (a river), *over/under*, *between* (two) and *among* (more than two, as a group); *by* (= next to; also means of transport: *by bus, by car* — but *on foot*); *for* (duration: *for two hours*), *during* (inside a named period: *during the meeting*), *since* (starting point: *since 2019*).

Common Error

- ✗ *arrive to the airport* → ✓ *arrive at the airport / arrive in Paris*
- ✗ *depend of* → ✓ *depend on*
- ✗ *married with a doctor* → ✓ *married to a doctor*
- ✗ *listen music* → ✓ *listen to music*
- ✗ *discuss about the plan* → ✓ *discuss the plan*
- ✗ *explain me the rule* → ✓ *explain the rule to me*

Exercises

Exercise 5.1 Adjective or adverb?

Choose the correct word.

1. She dances really (beautiful / beautifully).

2. The exam was surprisingly (easy / easily).
3. He drives too (fast / fastly).
4. I did (good / well) in the test, and I feel (good / well) about it.
5. The team played (bad / badly) in the first half.

Exercise 5.2 Comparatives and superlatives

Complete with the correct form of the adjective in brackets.

1. This is _____ (bad) film I've ever seen.
2. My new flat is much _____ (big) than the old one.
3. The test wasn't as _____ (difficult) as I expected.
4. _____ (far) you go from the coast, _____ (dry) the climate becomes.
5. She's one of _____ (talented) musicians in the country.

Exercise 5.3 in, on, or at?

Fill each gap with *in*, *on*, or *at*.

1. The meeting is _____ Tuesday _____ 3 p.m.
2. She was born _____ 1998 _____ a small town _____ the north of Spain.
3. I'll see you _____ the bus stop _____ the morning.
4. There's a stain _____ your shirt.
5. He isn't _____ work today; he's _____ home.

Exercise 5.4 Word order

Put the words in the correct order.

1. bought / leather / Italian / an / she / beautiful / handbag
2. English / speaks / very / he / fluently
3. always / on time / is / the / train / almost
4. last night / at the theatre / wonderfully / performed / the actors

6

Questions, Negatives, and Sentence Patterns

6.1 Basic word order: SVO

English relies on word order to show who does what. The core pattern is SUBJECT–VERB–OBJECT (SVO):

The dog *(S)* ***chased*** *(V)* ***the cat*** *(O).*

Unlike many languages, English rarely allows the subject to be dropped or the object to move forward in neutral statements. ✗ *Is raining.* → ✓ *It is raining.* ✗ *Yesterday bought I a car.* → ✓ *Yesterday I bought a car.*

6.1.1 The five basic clause patterns

Pattern	Example
S + V	*The baby slept.*
S + V + O	*She reads novels.*
S + V + C (complement)	*He became a lawyer. The soup smells good.*
S + V + O + O (two objects)	*They gave* ***her a prize****.*
S + V + O + C	*We elected* ***him captain****. The news made* ***me happy****.*

With two objects, the person usually comes first (*give her the book*), or after the thing with *to/for* (*give the book to her; buy a gift for him*).

6.2 Yes/no questions

Form yes/no questions by putting an auxiliary before the subject:

- With *be*: ***Are*** *you ready?* ***Was*** *the film good?*
- With an auxiliary or modal already present: ***Have*** *you finished?* ***Can*** *she swim?* ***Will*** *they come?*
- Otherwise, add *do/does/did*: ***Do*** *you smoke?* ***Does*** *he live here?* ***Did*** *they call?*

Short answers repeat the auxiliary: *Yes, I do. / No, she can't. / Yes, they have.*

6.3 Wh- questions

what, which, who, whom, whose, where, when, why, how (+ *how much, how many, how long, how often, how far*).

Wh-word + auxiliary + subject + verb?
*Where **does** she **work**? Why **did** they **leave**? How long **have** you **lived** here?*

6.3.1 Subject questions — no *do*

Key Point

When the wh-word itself is the *subject*, use normal statement order with no *do*: ***Who called** you?* (subject question: somebody called you) vs. ***Who did** you **call**?* (object question: you called somebody). Similarly: *What happened? Which team won? How many people came?*

Common Error

✗ *Who did call you?* (as a neutral question) → ✓ *Who called you?*
✗ *What means this word?* → ✓ *What does this word mean?*
✗ *Where you are going?* → ✓ *Where are you going?*

6.3.2 Prepositions in questions

In natural English, the preposition stays at the end: *Who are you waiting **for**? What are you talking **about**? Which hotel did you stay **at**?* Fronting the preposition (*For whom are you waiting?*) is very formal.

6.4 Negatives

- Add *not* after *be*, auxiliaries, and modals: *She isn't here. We haven't met. You mustn't tell anyone.*
- Elsewhere use *do/does/did* + *not*: *I don't know. He didn't agree.*
- Negative imperatives: *Don't worry. Don't be late.*

Key Point

Standard English allows only *one* negative element per clause. With negative words like *never, nobody, nothing, nowhere, hardly*, keep the verb positive: ✗ *I don't know nothing.* → ✓ *I don't know anything. / I know nothing.* ✗ *We couldn't hardly see.* → ✓ *We could hardly see.*

6.5 Question tags

A question tag turns a statement into a question, inviting agreement or confirmation. Positive statement → negative tag; negative statement → positive tag. The tag repeats the auxiliary (or uses *do*):

- *It's cold today, **isn't it**?*
- *You haven't seen my keys, **have you**?*
- *She works here, **doesn't she**?*
- *They didn't win, **did they**?*

Special tags: *I'm right,* ***aren't I****? Let's start,* ***shall we****? Open the window,* ***will/would you****? Nobody called,* ***did they****?*

6.6 So / Neither for agreement

- Agreeing with positive: *"I love sushi." "**So do I**." "She can drive." "**So can** her sister."*
- Agreeing with negative: *"I don't smoke." "**Neither do I**." / "**Nor do I**." / (informal) "Me neither."*

Note the inverted word order: *So **do I***, not ✗ *So I do.*

6.7 Exclamations

- *What (+ a/an) + (adjective) + noun*: *What a beautiful day! What nonsense! What lovely flowers!*
- *How + adjective/adverb*: *How strange! How quickly time passes!*

6.8 Coordination: *and, but, or, so, because*

Simple sentences join into compound ones with coordinating conjunctions: *She was tired,* ***but*** *she kept working. Hurry up,* ***or*** *we'll be late. It was raining,* ***so*** *we stayed in. We stayed in* ***because*** *it was raining.*

Usage Note

Because introduces a *reason clause* and, in careful writing, should be attached to a main clause rather than standing alone. In speech and informal writing, stand-alone *Because...* answers are normal: *"Why did you leave?" "Because I was bored."*

Exercises

Exercise 6.1 Make questions

Write the question that asks about the underlined part.

1. Marta broke the window. (→ Who...?)
2. She broke the window. (→ What...?)
3. They go to the gym three times a week.
4. He was late because he missed the bus.
5. The journey takes about two hours.

Exercise 6.2 Question tags

Add the correct question tag.

1. You're coming to the party, _____?
2. She doesn't eat meat, _____?
3. They've already left, _____?
4. I'm next, _____?
5. Let's take a break, _____?

Exercise 6.3 Error correction

Correct one error in each item.

1. Where you bought that jacket?
2. I didn't see nobody in the office.
3. "I can't swim." "So can't I."
4. What does happen if I press this button?
5. Explain me why you are late.

Part II

Intermediate: Building Fluency

7

The Tense–Aspect System: Perfect and Progressive

English combines two tenses (past, present) and two aspects (progressive, perfect) into a rich system. This chapter completes the picture begun in Chapters 3 and 4, focusing on the perfect forms that give learners the most trouble.

7.1 Overview of the system

	Simple	Progressive	Perfect
Present	*she writes*	*she is writing*	*she has written*
Past	*she wrote*	*she was writing*	*she had written*
Future	*she will write*	*she will be writing*	*she will have written*

Perfect and progressive can combine: *she has been writing*, *she had been writing*, *she will have been writing*.

7.2 The present perfect

Form: *have/has* + past participle (*worked*, *gone*, *seen*, *written* — see Appendix A).

Key Point

The present perfect connects the past to *now*. Use it when the time is indefinite or the situation continues into or affects the present. Never use it with a finished-time expression: ✗ *I have seen him yesterday.* → ✓ *I saw him yesterday.* / ✓ *I have seen him today.*

7.2.1 Main uses

1. **Life experience (time not stated):** *She **has visited** forty countries. **Have** you ever **eaten** oysters? I **'ve never read** 'Ulysses'.*
2. **Recent events with present relevance:** *I **'ve lost** my keys (so I can't get in now). The taxi **has arrived** (it's outside now).* Often with *just*, *already*, *yet*: *They **'ve just left**. I **'ve already paid**. **Hasn't** the post **come yet**?*
3. **Unfinished periods:** *I **'ve drunk** three coffees **today**. She **'s been** ill **this week**.*
4. **States continuing to now, with *for*/*since*:** *We **'ve lived** here **for** ten years / **since** 2015.*

Key Point

for + a length of time (*for two hours*, *for ages*); *since* + a starting point (*since Monday*, *since I was a child*). ✗ *I know her since 2019.* → ✓ *I have known her since 2019.* (Many languages use

the present here; English requires the present perfect.)

7.2.2 Present perfect vs. past simple

Present perfect	Past simple
time unstated or unfinished	finished, stated or implied time
I've been to Rome. (experience)	*I went to Rome in June.*
She has worked here for years. (still does)	*She worked here for years.* (no longer)
Have you seen Anna? (recently — where is she?)	*Did you see Anna?* (e.g. at yesterday's party)

Usage Note

American English often uses the past simple where British English prefers the present perfect, especially with *just, already, yet*: AmE *Did you eat yet? I already saw it.* BrE *Have you eaten yet? I've already seen it.* Both are standard within their varieties.

7.2.3 *been* vs. *gone*

*She has **gone** to Paris* (she is there, or on the way now).
*She has **been** to Paris* (she went and came back — experience).

7.3 The present perfect progressive

Form: *have/has been + -ing*.

1. **Duration of an activity up to now**, emphasizing the process: *I've **been studying** for three hours.* (focus: the activity and its length)
2. **Recent activity with visible results:** *Why are your hands dirty? — I've **been gardening**.*
3. **Repeated recent actions:** *She's **been calling** me all morning.*

Compare result vs. process: *I've **painted** the kitchen* (finished — result) vs. *I've **been painting** the kitchen* (activity — perhaps unfinished, or explaining the smell of paint). With *how long*, prefer the progressive for activities: *How long **have** you **been waiting**?* With stative verbs, use the simple perfect: *I've **known** her for years* (✗ *I've been knowing*).

7.4 The past perfect

Form: *had* + past participle. It places one past event *before* another past reference point:

- *When we arrived, the film **had** already **started**.* (starting happened first)
- Compare: *When we arrived, the film **started**.* (arrival first, then the start)
- *She told me she **had never seen** snow before.*
- After *after, before, by the time, as soon as*: *By the time the police came, the thieves **had escaped**.*

Usage Note

The past perfect is not needed for every earlier event — only when the order matters and is not already clear. With *before/after*, the simple past is often fine: *She left after the meeting ended.* Do not chain long narratives entirely in the past perfect; establish the earlier time,

then continue in the past simple.

The **past perfect progressive** (*had been + -ing*) is the past version of the present perfect progressive: *Her eyes were red — she **had been crying**. We **had been driving** for six hours when the engine failed.*

7.5 Future perfect and future progressive

- **Future progressive** (*will be + -ing*): an action in progress at a future time — *This time tomorrow, I'**ll be flying** to Tokyo.* Also polite inquiries: *Will you be using the car tonight?*
- **Future perfect** (*will have + participle*): completion by a future deadline — *By Friday, we **will have finished** the report.*
- **Future perfect progressive**: duration up to a future point — *In June, I'**ll have been working** here for twenty years.*

Common Error

After time conjunctions (*when, after, before, until, as soon as, by the time*), use a *present* form for the future, not *will*: ✗ *I'll call you when I will arrive.* → ✓ *I'll call you when I arrive.* ✓ *We'll leave as soon as the rain stops / has stopped.*

Exercises

Exercise 7.1 Present perfect or past simple?

Choose the correct form.

1. Shakespeare (has written / wrote) 37 plays.
2. I (have known / knew) Julia since university.
3. (Have you ever tried / Did you ever try) Vietnamese food?
4. We (have moved / moved) house three times when I was a child.
5. The company (has grown / grew) rapidly since 2020.
6. Sorry, I (have missed / missed) your call earlier this morning. (it is now afternoon)

Exercise 7.2 Simple or progressive perfect?

Put the verb in the present perfect simple or progressive.

1. You're out of breath. _____ (you/run)?
2. She _____ (write) three novels so far.
3. How long _____ (they/learn) Japanese?
4. I _____ (read) that book for weeks and I'm still only halfway through.
5. Someone _____ (eat) all the biscuits — the tin is empty!

Exercise 7.3 Past perfect

Combine the events into one sentence using the past perfect where appropriate.

1. The train left at 9:00. We reached the station at 9:10. (By the time. . .)

2. She spent all her money. Then she asked her brother for a loan. (After… / She asked… because…)
3. He never flew before. He was nervous at the airport.

Exercise 7.4 Future forms

Complete with future progressive or future perfect.

1. By 2030, the city _____ (build) three new metro lines.
2. Don't phone at 8 — we _____ (have) dinner then.
3. In October, they _____ (be) married for 25 years.

8

Modal Verbs

The modal verbs are *can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must*, plus the semi-modals *ought to, need, dare, used to* and phrasal alternatives (*have to, be able to, be allowed to, be supposed to*).

Key Point

Modals share four grammatical properties: (1) no third-person *-s* (*she can*, not ✗ *she cans*); (2) followed by the bare infinitive (*must go*, not ✗ *must to go*); (3) questions and negatives without *do* (*Can you. . . ? You mustn't. . .*); (4) no infinitives or participles — to fill the gaps, use substitutes: *be able to* (for *can*), *have to* (for *must*): *I'd like to* ***be able to*** *ski. She's* ***had to*** *work late all week.*

8.1 Ability: *can, could, be able to*

- Present: *She* ***can*** *speak four languages.*
- Past general ability: *He* ***could*** *run fast as a boy.*
- Past single achievement: use *was able to / managed to*, not *could*: *The fire spread quickly, but everyone* ***was able to*** *escape.* (✗ *everyone could escape*) In the negative, both work: *I* ***couldn't*** *open the jar.*
- Future: *will be able to*: *You* ***'ll be able to*** *walk on it in six weeks.*

8.2 Permission: *can, could, may, might*

Can *I leave early?* (neutral) — ***Could*** *I possibly leave early?* (more polite) — ***May*** *I leave early?* (formal). Granting/refusing: *You* ***can/may*** *use my desk. You* ***can't/ may not*** *park here.*

8.3 Requests, offers, suggestions

- Requests: ***Can/Could/Would*** *you help me?* (*could/would* = more polite)
- Offers: ***Can/Shall*** *I carry that?* ***Would*** *you like some tea?*
- Suggestions: ***Shall*** *we start? We* ***could*** *try the new restaurant. You* ***might want to*** *check the figures.*

8.4 Obligation and necessity: *must, have to, need*

must	obligation the speaker imposes or endorses: *I **must** finish this tonight. You **must** wear a helmet.*
have to	external obligation (rules, circumstances): *I **have to** wear a suit at work. She **has to** catch the 6:30 train.*
mustn't	prohibition: *You **mustn't** tell anyone.* (= don't do it)
don't have to / needn't	absence of obligation: *You **don't have to** come if you're busy.* (= it's not necessary)

Common Error

mustn't ≠ *don't have to*. *You **mustn't** pay* = paying is forbidden. *You **don't have to** pay* = paying is optional. Confusing these reverses your meaning entirely.

Past obligation uses *had to* (there is no past of *must* in this sense): *We **had to** show our passports.*

8.5 Advice: *should, ought to, had better*

*You **should** see a doctor. We **ought to** apologize. You'**d better** hurry (or you'll miss the train — stronger, warns of consequences).* Negative: *shouldn't, ought not to, had better not*.

8.6 Degrees of certainty (epistemic modality)

Modals also grade how sure the speaker is:

Certainty	Example
must (sure it's true)	*The lights are on — they **must** be home.*
will (confident prediction)	*That **will** be the postman.*
should (probable)	*The parcel **should** arrive tomorrow.*
may / might / could (possible)	*She **may** be at lunch. It **might** rain. This **could** be the answer.*
can't (sure it's false)	*He **can't** be forty — he looks twenty-five!*

Key Point

The opposite of epistemic *must* is *can't*, not *mustn't*: *They **must** be out* ↔ *They **can't** be out.*

8.7 Modal + perfect: judgments about the past

Modal + *have* + past participle looks back at past events:

- *must have done*: confident deduction — *The ground is wet; it **must have rained**.*
- *can't/couldn't have done*: confident rejection — *She **can't have taken** the car; she doesn't drive.*
- *may/might/could have done*: possibility — *He **might have missed** the train.*
- *should have done*: the right thing was not done (criticism or regret) — *You **should have told** me earlier.*
- *needn't have done*: it was done, but was unnecessary — *You **needn't have brought** a gift.*
- *would have done*: unrealized past outcome (see Chapter 9) — *I **would have helped**, but I wasn't there.*

Common Error

In speech, *should have* weakens to *should've* — never write ✗ *should of, could of, would of*: → ✓ *should have, could have, would have.*

Exercises

Exercise 8.1 Choose the modal

Choose the best option.

1. You (mustn't / don't have to) shout — I can hear you perfectly.
2. Visitors (mustn't / don't have to) feed the animals. It's forbidden.
3. I (could / was able to) finally fix the printer after two hours.
4. That (can't / mustn't) be Tom at the door; he's in Berlin.
5. We (should / must) leave now, or we'll hit traffic. (advice)

Exercise 8.2 Modal + perfect

Rewrite the idea using a modal perfect (*must/might/can't/should/needn't have* + participle).

1. I'm sure Laura forgot the meeting.
2. It was a mistake for you to lend him money.
3. It's possible that they took an earlier flight.
4. It was unnecessary for you to print the documents (but you did).
5. It's impossible that Marco wrote this — it's not his handwriting.

Exercise 8.3 Error correction

Correct one error in each sentence.

1. She cans speak Russian fluently.
2. You must to submit the form by Friday.
3. I would of called you, but my phone died.
4. Do you can help me with this box?
5. Yesterday I must work until midnight.

9

Conditionals and Wishes

Conditional sentences link a condition (*if*-clause) to a result (main clause). English distinguishes real from unreal conditions by shifting the tenses "one step back".

9.1 The four classic patterns

	If-clause	Main clause	Meaning
Zero	present simple	present simple	general truths
First	present simple	*will* + base	real future possibility
Second	past simple	*would* + base	unreal/unlikely present or future
Third	past perfect	*would have* + participle	unreal past

9.1.1 Zero conditional

*If you **heat** ice, it **melts**. If I **drink** coffee late, I **can't sleep**.* (*if* ≈ *whenever*)

9.1.2 First conditional

*If it **rains**, we'**ll cancel** the picnic. If you **finish** early, **call** me. If she **doesn't hurry**, she **may miss** the flight.*

Common Error

No *will* inside the *if*-clause: ✗ *If it will rain, we'll cancel.* → ✓ *If it rains, we'll cancel.* (Exception: polite requests — *If you **will** wait here, the doctor will see you shortly.*)

9.1.3 Second conditional

*If I **had** more time, I **would learn** the piano. If she **lived** closer, we **would see** her more often. What **would** you **do** if you **won** the lottery?*

The past tense here does not mean past time — it marks *unreality*. Compare: *If I **get** the job, I'll move* (realistic — first) vs. *If I **got** the job, I'd move* (speculative — second).

Usage Note

In careful and formal style, use *were* for all persons in unreal conditions: *If I **were** you, I'd accept. If he **were** taller…* Informal *If I was you* is common in speech but avoid it in writing. *If I were you* is the standard formula for advice.

9.1.4 Third conditional

*If you **had told** me, I **would have helped**. If the driver **hadn't braked**, there **would have been** an accident. She **wouldn't have met** him if she **hadn't gone** to that party.*

Common Error

Keep *would* out of the *if*-clause: ✗ *If you would have asked me, I would have said yes.* → ✓ *If you had asked me, I would have said yes.*

9.2 Variations on the classic patterns

- Other modals in the result: *If you finish early, we **can** go out. If he trained harder, he **might** win.*
- *unless* = *if . . . not*: *We'll be late **unless** we leave now.*
- *as long as, provided (that), on condition that* = emphatic *if*: *You can borrow it **as long as** you return it by Monday.*
- *in case* = as a precaution (not a condition): *Take an umbrella **in case** it rains.* (you take it *before* knowing)
- *if so / if not*: *You may already have paid; **if so**, please ignore this letter.*

Mixed conditionals and inverted conditionals (*Had I known. . .*) are treated in Chapter 17.

9.3 *wish* and *if only*

Pattern	Meaning and examples
wish + past simple	regret about the present: *I **wish I had** more free time. I **wish I were** taller.*
wish + past perfect	regret about the past: *I **wish I hadn't said** that. She **wishes she had studied** medicine.*
wish + would	complaint about another's behaviour or desire for change: *I **wish you would stop** interrupting. I **wish it would stop** raining.*

If only is an emphatic *wish*: ***If only** I had listened!*

Common Error

✗ *I wish I would be taller.* → ✓ *I wish I were taller.* (*wish + would* is not used about oneself or plain states)
✗ *I wish I have more money.* → ✓ *I wish I had more money.* (one step back, always)

9.4 *hope* vs. *wish*

Hope is for realistic desires and takes ordinary tenses: *I **hope** you **pass** / **will pass** the exam. Wish* + clause is counterfactual: *I **wish** you **had passed**.* For good wishes with a noun, use *wish + two objects*: *We wish you a merry Christmas / every success.*

Exercises

Exercise 9.1 Identify and complete

Put the verbs in the correct form and name the conditional type.

1. If we _____ (leave) now, we'll catch the 5:40.
2. If metal _____ (get) hot, it expands.
3. If I _____ (be) the minister, I would cut taxes.
4. If you _____ (warn) me, I wouldn't have signed the contract.
5. She _____ (not/be) so tired if she went to bed earlier.

Exercise 9.2 Rewrite

Rewrite each sentence using the word in brackets, keeping the meaning.

1. We'll miss the train if we don't hurry. (unless)
2. I didn't know you were ill, so I didn't visit you. (If)
3. I regret not buying that house. (wish)
4. It annoys me that he leaves the door open. (wish)
5. Take some cash; the card machine may not work. (in case)

Exercise 9.3 Error correction

Correct one error in each sentence.

1. If I will see her, I'll pass on the message.
2. If you would have listened, you would have understood.
3. I wish I can speak Chinese.
4. Unless you don't apologize, she won't forgive you.
5. If he was here now, he'd know what to do. (make it formal)

10

The Passive Voice

In an active sentence the subject acts; in a passive sentence the subject is acted upon: *Shakespeare **wrote** Hamlet* → *Hamlet **was written** by Shakespeare.*

10.1 Form

be (in the required tense) + past participle:

Present simple	*English **is spoken** here.*
Present progressive	*The road **is being repaired**.*
Past simple	*The letter **was sent** on Monday.*
Past progressive	*The house **was being painted**.*
Present perfect	*The files **have been deleted**.*
Past perfect	*The tickets **had been sold** out.*
Future	*The winners **will be announced** tomorrow.*
Modal	*This form **must be signed**. It **can't be done**.*
Modal perfect	*The email **may have been lost**.*
Infinitive / gerund	*She hopes **to be promoted**. He hates **being told** what to do.*

10.2 When to use the passive

1. **The agent is unknown or obvious:** *My bike **was stolen**. He **was arrested** last night* (obviously by the police).
2. **The agent is unimportant or general:** *Rice **is grown** in Asia. These watches **are made** in Switzerland.*
3. **To keep the topic in subject position:** *The cathedral was begun in 1163 and **was completed** a century later.*
4. **Formal and scientific style:** *The samples **were heated** to 90 °C. Participants **were asked** to complete a survey.*
5. **Tact — avoiding blame:** *Mistakes **were made**. The invoice **hasn't been paid** yet.*

Mention the agent with *by* only when it is newsworthy: *The novel was written **by a computer**.* Omit empty agents: ✗ *The thief was arrested by the police.* → usually just ✓ *The thief was arrested.*

Style & Register

Style guides warn against *overusing* the passive, not against using it at all. Prefer the active when the doer matters (*The committee rejected the proposal* is clearer than *The proposal was rejected*), and use the passive deliberately for the reasons above. Blanket "never use the passive" advice is itself poor advice.

10.3 Verbs with two objects

Either object of a verb like *give, send, offer, show, teach, tell* can become the passive subject; the person is the more common choice:

- Active: *They offered **her the job**.*
- Passive 1: ***She** was offered the job.* (preferred)
- Passive 2: ***The job** was offered to her.*

10.4 Reporting with the passive

For official or hedged statements, English uses two elegant patterns with verbs like *say, believe, think, know, report, expect, consider*:

1. *It* + *passive* + *that*-clause: ***It is believed that** the painting is a forgery.*
2. Subject + passive + *to*-infinitive: *The painting **is believed to be** a forgery. He **is thought to have left** the country.* (perfect infinitive for earlier time)

10.5 *get*-passives and *have something done*

- *get* + *participle* (informal, often for accidents/misfortune): *He **got hit** by a golf ball. She **got promoted**.*
- *have/get something done* (causative — arranging a service): *I'**m having** my car **serviced** tomorrow. We **got** the roof **fixed**.* Also misfortunes: *She **had** her bag **stolen**.* (See Chapter 22 for more.)

Common Error

- Intransitive verbs have no passive: ✗ *The accident was happened yesterday.* → ✓ *The accident happened yesterday.* Similarly *appear, arrive, die, occur, exist*.
- Don't drop *be*: ✗ *The report finished yesterday.* (if you mean someone finished it) → ✓ *The report was finished yesterday.*
- Keep the participle, not the past form: ✗ *The window was broke.* → ✓ *The window was broken.*

Exercises

Exercise 10.1 Transform

Turn the active sentences into passives; omit the agent if it is not needed.

1. Somebody cleans the office every evening.
2. They are building a new stadium near the river.
3. The chef has prepared all the dishes by hand.
4. People say that the water in this spring heals wounds. (two ways)
5. You must return the equipment by Friday.
6. A local artist painted the mural in 1998.

Exercise 10.2 Active or passive?

Choose the better voice and justify briefly.

1. (A: The police arrested the suspect. / B: The suspect was arrested.) — news headline focus on the suspect
2. (A: Researchers heated the mixture. / B: The mixture was heated.) — methods section of a paper
3. (A: My assistant will send you the contract. / B: The contract will be sent to you by my assistant.) — business email where the assistant matters

Exercise 10.3 have something done

Rewrite using *have/get + object + participle*.

1. A hairdresser cut my hair yesterday.
2. A builder is going to repair our garage door.
3. Thieves stole her passport while she was travelling.

11

Gerunds, Infinitives, and Verb Patterns

When one verb follows another, English forces a choice: *enjoy* ***doing***, *decide* ***to do***, *let someone* ***do***. These patterns must largely be memorized, but there are useful regularities.

11.1 The gerund (*-ing* form as a noun)

A gerund behaves like a noun and can be a subject, object, or complement:

- Subject: ***Swimming*** *is good exercise.* ***Being*** *punctual matters here.*
- After prepositions — always the gerund: *She's good* ***at drawing***. *He left* ***without saying*** *goodbye. I'm looking forward* ***to seeing*** *you. We're used* ***to getting*** *up early.*
- After certain verbs (see below): *I enjoy* ***cooking***.

Common Error

to is sometimes a preposition, not part of an infinitive — then it takes the gerund: *look forward* ***to meeting***, *be used* ***to driving***, *object* ***to paying***, *commit(ted)* ***to improving***. ✗ *I look forward to hear from you.* → ✓ *I look forward to hearing from you.*

11.2 Verbs followed by the gerund

admit, avoid, can't help, can't stand, consider, delay, deny, discuss, dislike, enjoy, fancy, finish, give up, imagine, involve, keep (on), mention, mind, miss, postpone, practise, put off, recommend, resent, risk, suggest

He ***admitted taking*** *the money. Would you* ***mind opening*** *the window? I* ***can't help laughing***. *She* ***suggested going*** *by train.*

Common Error

✗ *She suggested to go by train.* → ✓ *She suggested going by train.* / ✓ *She suggested that we (should) go by train.*
✗ *I enjoyed to meet them.* → ✓ *I enjoyed meeting them.*

11.3 Verbs followed by the *to*-infinitive

afford, agree, appear, arrange, ask, choose, decide, demand, deserve, expect, fail, help, hesitate, hope, learn, manage, offer, plan, prepare, pretend, promise, refuse, seem, tend, threaten, want, would like

We ***decided to stay***. *She* ***refused to answer***. *They* ***can't afford to move***. *He* ***seems to know*** *everyone.*

11.3.1 Verb + object + *to*-infinitive

advise, allow, ask, encourage, expect, forbid, force, invite, order, permit, persuade, remind, teach, tell, want, warn: *They **invited us to join** them. I **reminded him to lock** up. She **wants me to call** her.*

Common Error

✗ *I want that you come early.* → ✓ *I want you to come early.* (*want* never takes a *that*-clause)

11.4 The bare infinitive

- After modals: *You must **go**.*
- After *make* and *let* + object: *They **made** us **wait**. **Let** me **explain**.* (but passive: *We were made **to wait***)
- After *help*, both work: *She helped me (to) move.*
- Perception verbs *see, hear, watch, feel, notice* + object: bare infinitive for a complete event, *-ing* for one in progress: *I **saw him cross** the road* (whole action) vs. *I **saw him crossing** the road* (in the middle of it).

11.5 Verbs taking either form

11.5.1 Little or no change of meaning

begin, start, continue, like, love, hate, prefer: *It started to rain / raining.* (After *would like/love*, only the infinitive: *I'd like **to see** the menu.*)

11.5.2 Change of meaning

	+ gerund	+ to-infinitive
remember	past action remembered: *I remember **locking** the door.*	duty to do next: *Remember **to lock** the door.*
forget	*I'll never forget **seeing** the Taj Mahal.*	*Don't forget **to buy** milk.*
stop	quit an activity: *He stopped **smoking**.*	pause in order to do: *He stopped **to smoke**.*
try	experiment: *Try **restarting** the router.*	attempt something difficult: *I tried **to open** the jar, but couldn't.*
regret	be sorry about the past: *I regret **saying** that.*	formal bad news: *We regret **to inform** you. . .*
mean	involve: *The new job means **moving** to Leeds.*	intend: *I meant **to call** you.*
go on	continue same activity: *She went on **talking**.*	change to a new activity: *She went on **to become** CEO.*

11.6 Infinitive of purpose

Use *to* + verb (or *in order to* / *so as to*, more formal) to express purpose: *I went out **to get** some air. She trains daily **in order to stay** fit. He left early **so as not to miss** the train.* ✗ *I came here for to see you. / for seeing you.* → ✓ *I came here to see you.*

Exercises

Exercise 11.1 Gerund or infinitive?

Put the verb in brackets into the correct form.

1. I don't mind _____ (wait), but I refuse _____ (queue) for more than an hour.
2. She agreed _____ (help) us _____ (organize) the event.
3. Have you finished _____ (write) the report?
4. He denied _____ (break) the window.
5. We're looking forward to _____ (hear) from you.
6. They made us _____ (show) our ID cards.

Exercise 11.2 Meaning pairs

Explain the difference between the sentences in each pair.

1. (a) He stopped drinking coffee. (b) He stopped to drink a coffee.
2. (a) I remember posting the letter. (b) I must remember to post the letter.
3. (a) Try talking to her. (b) Try to talk to her.
4. (a) I saw the children play in the garden. (b) I saw the children playing in the garden.

Exercise 11.3 Error correction

Correct one error in each sentence.

1. I suggested to take a taxi.
2. She wants that her son studies medicine.
3. He left without to say goodbye.
4. I'm used to drive on the left now.
5. My parents let me to stay out late.
6. Avoid to travel during rush hour.

12

Relative Clauses

Relative clauses let us pack information about a noun into the same sentence: *The woman **who lives next door** is a surgeon.*

12.1 The relative pronouns

	For people	For things
Subject	*who, that*	*which, that*
Object	*who(m), that, —*	*which, that, —*
Possessive	*whose*	*whose, of which*

- Subject: *the author **who/that** wrote this; a machine **which/that** counts votes*
- Object (pronoun optional): *the film (**that**) we saw; the man (**who(m)**) I met*
- Possessive: *the student **whose** phone rang; a house **whose** windows face the sea*
- Place, time, reason: *the town **where** I grew up; the day **when** we met; the reason **why** she left*

Common Error

Do not add a second pronoun for the same role: ✗ *The book that I read **it** was fascinating.* → ✓ *The book that I read was fascinating.*
✗ *The city where I live **there**. . .* → ✓ *The city where I live. . .*

12.2 Defining vs. non-defining clauses

Key Point

A **defining** clause identifies which one we mean — no commas, and *that* is allowed: *The keys **that open the safe** are missing.* A **non-defining** clause adds extra, omissible information — commas required, *that* forbidden, pronoun never omitted: *My father, **who is 82**, still drives.*

The commas change meaning:

- *The passengers **who felt ill** were taken ashore.* (only those who felt ill)
- *The passengers, **who felt ill**, were taken ashore.* (all of them — and, by the way, they felt ill)

Usage Note

American editorial style reserves *which* for non-defining clauses (*the report, which was late,. . .*) and prefers *that* in defining ones (*the report that was late*). British usage happily allows defining *which* (*the report which was late*). Both systems are correct; follow your style guide.

12.3 Prepositions in relative clauses

- Informal (preposition at the end): *the flat (that) she lives **in**; the people (that) I work **with***
- Formal (preposition + *whom/which*): *the flat **in which** she lives; the colleagues **with whom** I work*
- Never *that* after a preposition: ✗ *the house in that I grew up* → ✓ *the house in which I grew up / the house (that) I grew up in*

12.4 *which* referring to a whole clause

Non-defining *which* can comment on the entire preceding statement: *The train was two hours late, **which meant** we missed the connection.* In careful writing, make sure the reference is clear (see Chapter 28 on ambiguity).

12.5 Quantifier + *of whom/which*

Elegant in formal writing: *The company employs 300 people, **most of whom** work remotely. He owns four cars, **none of which** he drives. She made several claims, **some of which** were later disproved.*

12.6 Reduced relative clauses

Relative pronoun + *be* can often be deleted:

- Active meaning → *-ing*: *the woman **(who is) standing** by the door; anyone **wanting** tickets*
- Passive meaning → past participle: *the issues **(that were) raised** at the meeting; a novel **written** in exile*
- Infinitive after superlatives and *first/last/only*: *the first woman **to win** two Nobel Prizes; the only person **to object***

(Full treatment of participle clauses in Chapter 19.)

Exercises

Exercise 12.1 Combine

Join each pair into one sentence with a relative clause.

1. The nurse was very kind. She looked after my mother.
2. A bypass is a road. It goes around a town.
3. Marie Curie won two Nobel Prizes. Her research changed physics.
4. We stayed in a village. Picasso was born there.
5. My laptop has crashed again. I bought it only last month. (non-defining)

Exercise 12.2 Commas or no commas?

Add commas where needed, or write “no commas”.

1. My sister who lives in Canada is visiting us. (I have one sister)
2. The candidates who failed the first test were eliminated. (only some failed)
3. Mount Fuji which last erupted in 1707 attracts millions of climbers.

4. The novel that won the prize is out of print.

Exercise 12.3 Reduce

Shorten the relative clause where possible.

1. The man who is talking to Sara is my uncle.
2. Applications that are received after May 1 will not be considered.
3. She was the first athlete who broke the record twice.
4. Students who wish to attend should register online.

13

Reported Speech

Reported (indirect) speech relays what someone said without quoting the exact words: *"I'm tired," she said → She said (that) she was tired.*

13.1 The backshift of tenses

When the reporting verb is past (*said, told, asked*), tenses usually move one step back:

Direct	Reported
present simple: *"I work here."*	past simple: *he worked there*
present progressive: *"She is waiting."*	past progressive: *she was waiting*
past simple: *"We won."*	past perfect: *they had won*
present perfect: *"I've finished."*	past perfect: *she had finished*
will: *"I'll call."*	*would*: *he would call*
can: *"I can swim."*	*could*: *she could swim*
may: *"It may rain."*	*might*: *it might rain*
must (obligation): *"You must sign."*	*had to*: *we had to sign*

Past perfect, *would, could, might, should, ought to* do not change further.

Usage Note

No backshift is needed when the statement is still true or the reporting verb is present: *She says she **is** tired. He said the Earth **orbits** the Sun. Anna told me she **still works** there.* Backshifting in such cases (*Anna told me she still worked there*) is also correct and slightly more detached.

13.2 Changes of person, time, and place

Pronouns and pointers shift with the new perspective:

today → that day	*tomorrow → the next day*
yesterday → the day before	*now → then*
this → that	*here → there*
ago → before	*next week → the following week*

"I'll see you here tomorrow," he said → He said he would see me there the next day.

13.3 Reported questions

Key Point

Reported questions use *statement* word order, with no *do*-support and no question mark: *"Where do you live?"* → *She asked me* ***where I lived***. Yes/no questions use *if* or *whether*: *"Are you ready?"* → *He asked* ***whether I was ready***.

Common Error

✗ *She asked me where did I live.* → ✓ *She asked me where I lived.*
✗ *He asked me that I was ready.* → ✓ *He asked me if I was ready.*

The same order applies to **indirect questions** in polite requests: *Could you tell me* ***where the station is****?* (✗ *where is the station*)

13.4 Reported commands and requests

Use *tell/ask/order/warn/advise* + *object* + *to*-infinitive: *"Wait outside."* → *She* ***told us to wait*** *outside.* *"Please don't smoke."* → *He* ***asked them not to smoke***. Note the position of *not*: *not to* + verb.

13.5 Reporting verbs and their patterns

Move beyond *say* and *tell* — richer verbs summarize the speech act:

Pattern	Verbs and examples
verb + *to*-infinitive	*offer, promise, refuse, threaten, agree*: *She* ***promised to write***.
verb + object + *to*-inf.	*advise, invite, remind, warn, urge*: *He* ***warned us not to invest***.
verb + gerund	*admit, deny, suggest, recommend*: *They* ***denied taking*** *it.*
verb + preposition + gerund	*apologize for, insist on, accuse (sb) of, blame (sb) for, congratulate (sb) on*: *She* ***apologized for being*** *late.*
verb + *that*-clause	*explain, complain, admit, claim, point out*: *He* ***explained that*** *the office was closed.*

Common Error

say vs. *tell*: *tell* needs a person object; *say* does not. ✗ *She said me the truth.* → ✓ *She told me the truth.* ✗ *He told that he was busy.* → ✓ *He said (that) he was busy. / He told* ***me*** *that he was busy.*
explain: ✗ *Explain me the rule.* → ✓ *Explain the rule* ***to me***.

Exercises

Exercise 13.1 Report the statements

Put into reported speech with a past reporting verb.

1. “I’m leaving tomorrow,” Marta said.
2. “We haven’t seen this film,” they said.
3. “I can’t find my glasses,” Grandpa said.
4. “The results will be published next week,” the professor said.
5. “I didn’t touch your phone,” my brother said.

Exercise 13.2 Report the questions and commands

1. “Where is the nearest bank?” (She asked. . .)
2. “Did you enjoy the concert?” (He wanted to know. . .)
3. “Don’t open the window,” the guard said to us.
4. “How long have you been waiting?” (They asked me. . .)
5. “Please check your booking details again.” (The airline advised. . .)

Exercise 13.3 Choose the reporting verb

Rewrite each quotation using the verb given.

1. “Yes, it was me — I broke the vase.” (admit)
2. “I’ll definitely pay you back on Monday.” (promise)
3. “Why don’t we take the coastal road?” (suggest)
4. “I’m so sorry I shouted at you.” (apologize)
5. “You copied my design!” (accuse)

14

Comparison, Quantifiers, and Articles Revisited

This chapter deepens three areas introduced at beginner level: comparison structures, quantifier subtleties, and the article system at intermediate level.

14.1 Advanced comparison structures

14.1.1 Modifying comparatives

Grade the size of a difference:

- Big difference: ***much / far / considerably / significantly*** *cheaper;* ***a great deal*** *faster*
- Small difference: ***slightly / a little / a bit / marginally*** *cheaper*
- No difference: ***just as*** *good* ***as****;* ***no*** *better* ***than****;* ***every bit as*** *talented* ***as***
- Multiples: ***twice as*** *expensive* ***as****;* ***three times the*** *size* ***of***

14.1.2 *the + comparative … the + comparative*

The longer *you wait,* ***the harder*** *it gets.* ***The more*** *she earned,* ***the more*** *she spent. The sooner, the better.*

14.1.3 Other patterns

- *comparative and comparative*: *It's getting* ***harder and harder*** *to park here.*
- *superlative + present perfect*: *This is* ***the best meal I've ever had****.*
- *by far* with superlatives: *She is* ***by far the most experienced*** *member.*
- *not nearly / nowhere near*: *The sequel is* ***nowhere near as good as*** *the original.*
- *all the + comparative*: *We lost the match, which made the victory next year* ***all the sweeter****.*

Common Error

- ✗ *This is the most unique design.* — in careful usage, *unique* is absolute; prefer ✓ *a truly unique design* or ✓ *the most unusual design.*
- ✗ *different than* (BrE) — prefer ✓ *different from* (safe everywhere); *different to* is acceptable BrE; *different than* is common AmE, especially before clauses.
- Comparing likes with likes: ✗ *The salary in London is higher than Manchester.* → ✓ *. . . higher than* ***in*** *Manchester / higher than* ***that in*** *Manchester.*

14.2 Quantifiers in depth

14.2.1 *all, whole, every, each*

- *all* + *(of the)* + *plural/uncountable*: *all (of) the students, all day* (= the entire day)
- *whole* with singular countables: *the whole day, a whole week* (*all the day* is unidiomatic)
- *every* for generalization; *each* for one-by-one focus; only *each* can be used of two: *a ring on **each** hand*
- *every* + singular verb, but *every one **of** the students **has**. . .*

14.2.2 *both / either / neither*

***Both** proposals have merit. **Either** date suits me. **Neither** explanation convinced the jury. **Neither of** the explanations **was/were** convincing* (singular verb is more formal). Correlatives: *both . . . and; either . . . or; neither . . . nor*: *She speaks **neither** French **nor** German.*

14.2.3 *most, most of, no, none*

- Generalizing: ***Most** people agree* (no *the*).
- Specific set: ***Most of the** people I asked agreed.* ✗ *Most of people. . .* → ✓ *Most people / Most of the people.*
- *no* + noun; *none of* + noun phrase: ***No** refunds will be given. **None of** the refunds **has/ have** arrived.*

14.2.4 *enough, too, so, such*

- *enough* after adjectives/adverbs, before nouns: *warm **enough**, **enough** chairs*
- *too* + *adjective (+ to-infinitive)*: *It's **too hot to work**.* Note *too* is negative; do not use it for emphasis: ✗ *The view was too beautiful!* → ✓ *really/so beautiful*
- *so* + *adjective; such (+ a)* + *(adjective)* + *noun*: *so expensive; such an expensive city; so much noise; so many options* — with result clauses: *It was **such a** boring film **that** we left early.*

14.3 Articles at intermediate level

14.3.1 Generic statements

Three grammatical ways to generalize:

1. *Ø* + *plural*: ***Tigers** are endangered.* (most natural)
2. *the* + *singular*: ***The tiger** is endangered.* (formal, species as a class)
3. *a* + *singular*: ***A tiger** is a dangerous animal.* (any example of the class)

14.3.2 Institutions, media, and set phrases

- *the* with media and services: *listen to **the** radio, read **the** news(paper), call **the** police* — but *watch **Ø** television*.
- *the* with musical instruments: *play **the** piano* (AmE also *play piano*).
- Fixed pairs without articles: *from top to bottom, hand in hand, day after day, face to face*.
- *the* + adjective = a class of people: ***the rich**, **the unemployed**, **the elderly*** (+ plural verb).

Exercises

Exercise 14.1 Comparison structures

Rewrite keeping the meaning, using the words in brackets.

1. As we climbed higher, breathing became more difficult. (The . . . the)
2. This hotel is much cheaper than that one. (nowhere near)
3. I have never read a more moving novel. (This is. . .)
4. Her flat is double the size of mine. (twice)

Exercise 14.2 Quantifiers

Choose the correct option.

1. (Every / Each) of the twins has a different hobby.
2. I spent the (all / whole) weekend marking essays.
3. (Most / Most of) students found the course useful.
4. There were (so / such) many complaints that the product was withdrawn.
5. The coffee was (too / so) hot that I couldn't drink it.

Exercise 14.3 Articles

Insert *a/an*, *the*, or — (nothing) where needed.

1. _____ unemployed often face _____ discrimination.
2. She plays _____ violin and her brother plays _____ drums.
3. _____ whale is _____ largest mammal on _____ Earth.
4. We watched _____ television all evening, then listened to _____ radio.

15

Phrasal Verbs and Prepositional Verbs

A phrasal verb is a verb plus one or two particles whose combined meaning is often not predictable from the parts: *give up* (= quit), *put off* (= postpone), *run into* (= meet by chance). They dominate informal English; mastering them transforms fluency.

15.1 The four structural types

Type	Examples
1. Intransitive (no object)	*The car **broke down**. Please **sit down**. The plane **took off**.*
2. Transitive, separable	*She **turned down** the offer / **turned** the offer **down** / **turned it down**.*
3. Transitive, inseparable	*He **takes after** his mother. We're **looking into** the matter.*
4. Three-part (verb + adverb + preposition)	*I won't **put up with** this. She **came up with** a brilliant idea. We've **run out of** milk.*

Key Point

With separable phrasal verbs, a *pronoun* object must go between verb and particle: ✓ *turn it down*, ✗ *turn down it*. A noun object may go on either side, but long objects go after the particle: *She turned down **the most generous offer the firm had ever made**.*

15.2 Common particles and their core meanings

Particles carry recurring meanings that make new phrasal verbs guessable:

- *up* — completion or increase: *eat up, use up, finish up, speed up, turn up* (the volume), *grow up*
- *down* — reduction or to the ground: *slow down, calm down, cut down, burn down, note down*
- *off* — departure, separation, disconnection: *set off, see someone off, cut off, switch off, wear off*
- *on* — continuation or connection: *carry on, keep on, move on, switch on, get on (with)*
- *out* — outward, completely, to disappearance: *find out, work out, run out, put out* (a fire), *die out, sort out*
- *over* — transfer or repetition: *take over, hand over, think over, start over* (AmE)
- *through* — from start to finish: *read through, get through, think through*

15.3 Fifty phrasal verbs you must know

- *break down* — stop working; lose control emotionally
- *break up* — end a relationship
- *bring up* — raise a child; mention a topic
- *call off* — cancel
- *carry out* — perform, conduct
- *catch up (with)* — reach the same level
- *check in/out* — register at / leave a hotel
- *come across* — find by chance
- *come up with* — think of (an idea)
- *cut down on* — reduce consumption of
- *deal with* — handle
- *drop off* — deliver; fall asleep
- *end up* — finally be/do
- *figure out* — understand, solve
- *fill in/out* — complete (a form)
- *find out* — discover
- *get along/on with* — have a good relationship
- *get over* — recover from
- *get rid of* — dispose of
- *give up* — quit
- *go on* — continue; happen
- *go over* — review
- *hang up* — end a phone call
- *hold on* — wait
- *keep up with* — maintain the pace of
- *let down* — disappoint
- *look after* — take care of
- *look for* — search for
- *look forward to* — anticipate with pleasure
- *look into* — investigate
- *look up* — search for (in a reference)
- *make up* — invent; reconcile
- *make up for* — compensate for
- *pick up* — collect; learn casually
- *point out* — draw attention to
- *put off* — postpone
- *put on* — dress in; gain (weight)
- *put up with* — tolerate
- *run into* — meet by chance
- *run out of* — exhaust the supply of
- *set up* — establish
- *show up* — arrive, appear
- *sort out* — resolve, organize
- *take after* — resemble (family)
- *take off* — leave the ground; remove; succeed suddenly
- *take over* — assume control of
- *take up* — start (a hobby); occupy (space/-time)
- *turn down* — refuse; reduce (volume)
- *turn out* — prove to be
- *work out* — exercise; find a solution; turn out well

Style & Register

Phrasal verbs are neutral-to-informal; most have a single-word, Latin-origin synonym that suits formal writing: *put off* → *postpone*, *find out* → *discover*, *look into* → *investigate*, *carry out* → *conduct*, *get rid of* → *eliminate*, *come up with* → *devise*. Match register: *The experiment was **carried out**...* is fine in a paper, but *We **postponed** the barbecue* may sound stiff at home.

Common Error

- ✗ *Turn off it.* → ✓ *Turn it off.*
- ✗ *She looks after very well her patients.* → ✓ *She looks after her patients very well.* (inseparable — nothing between verb and preposition)
- ✗ *I look forward to see you.* → ✓ *I look forward to seeing you.*
- Beware of literal vs. idiomatic readings: *She **ran into** the room* (literal) vs. *She **ran into** an old friend* (idiomatic).

Exercises

Exercise 15.1 Replace with a phrasal verb

Replace the underlined verb with a phrasal verb from this chapter.

1. The meeting was cancelled at the last minute.
2. I encountered my old teacher at the market.
3. They established a small software company.
4. Could you complete this form, please?
5. We must reduce the amount of sugar we eat.
6. The detective promised to investigate the complaint.

Exercise 15.2 Particle choice

Complete with the correct particle(s).

1. I can't put _____ his rudeness any longer.
2. We've run _____ coffee — can you pick some _____ on your way home?
3. She takes _____ her grandmother — the same smile.
4. The concert turned _____ to be the best I've ever seen.
5. He never lets his friends _____.

Exercise 15.3 Pronoun placement

Rewrite each sentence replacing the noun object with a pronoun.

1. Please switch off the lights.
2. She brought up three children alone.
3. They called off the strike.
4. I'll look into the problem tomorrow.

Part III

Advanced: Precision and Range

16

Advanced Tense and Aspect

At advanced level, tense choice becomes a matter of perspective and rhetoric, not just rules. This chapter examines the subtler corners of the system.

16.1 Aspect as viewpoint

Aspect does not locate an event in time; it chooses a *camera angle* on it:

- **Simple** = the event as a complete whole, a fact: *She wrote the report.*
- **Progressive** = the event from inside, unfolding, boundaries out of view: *She was writing the report.*
- **Perfect** = the event looked back on from a later vantage point, with current relevance: *She has written the report.*

Because aspect is viewpoint, the same real-world situation can often be described with different aspects, with different rhetorical effects: *I **read** your thesis last night* (done, whole) vs. *I **was reading** your thesis last night* (scene-setting, possibly unfinished, invites continuation).

16.2 Narrative tenses

Skilled narration interleaves four past forms:

Past simple the storyline's events, in sequence: *She **opened** the letter and **froze**.*

Past progressive backdrop and interrupted actions: *Rain **was falling** as the train pulled out.*

Past perfect flashbacks — earlier than the storyline: *The letter confirmed what she **had** long **suspected**.*

would* / *used to habitual past within narration: *Every evening her father **would read** aloud by the fire.*

Style & Register

The **historic present** narrates past events in the present tense for vividness — standard in jokes, plot summaries, headlines, and increasingly in literary fiction and conversational storytelling: *So yesterday this man **walks** into the office and **demands** to see the manager…* In academic writing, the present is also used for timeless reference to texts: *Orwell **argues** that political language corrupts thought.*

16.3 The future in the past

To express what was still ahead at a past moment:

- *would*: *He didn't know it then, but he **would become** president.* (fate/retrospective certainty)

- *was/were going to*: unfulfilled intention — *We **were going to call** you, but it got too late.*
- *was/were to + infinitive*: formal destiny or arrangement — *The meeting **was to take place** in Geneva. She **was never to see** him again.*
- *was/were about to*: imminence — *I **was about to leave** when the phone rang.*

16.4 Subtleties of the present perfect

16.4.1 Time-frame test

The present perfect requires a time frame that includes *now*. This explains contrasts such as: *Have you seen the exhibition?* (it is still on) vs. *Did you see the exhibition?* (it has closed). Similarly *this morning*: *I've written three emails this morning* (still morning) vs. *I wrote three emails this morning* (it is now afternoon).

16.4.2 Hot news and its afterlife

Journalism introduces news with the present perfect and then shifts to the past simple for details: *A tornado **has struck** northern Texas. The storm **touched down** at 6 p.m. and **destroyed** dozens of homes.* This two-step pattern is worth imitating.

16.4.3 Present perfect with future reference

In time clauses, the present perfect stresses completion before the main event: *I'll email you **when I've finished** the draft.* Compare: *when I finish* (near-synonymous, less emphasis on the completed result).

16.5 Progressive nuances

- **Politeness and tentativeness:** *I **was wondering** if you could help me. **Were** you **wanting** to see the manager?* (past progressive distances and softens)
- **Temporary behaviour vs. character:** *You're **being** very generous today* (behaviour now) vs. *You **are** very generous* (character).
- **Emotional colouring with *always*:** *He's **always borrowing** money and forgetting to pay it back.* (affectionate or irritated exaggeration)
- **Future progressive as neutral future:** *Will you **be joining** us for dinner?* avoids the pushiness of *Will you join us?* — it asks about the course of events, not the person's will.

16.6 Perfect infinitives and gerunds

Non-finite forms also carry perfect aspect, for anteriority:

- *He claims **to have met** the president.* (meeting before claiming)
- *She was sorry **to have missed** the ceremony.*
- *I regret **having spoken** so bluntly.*
- *The suspect denied **having been** anywhere near the scene.*
- Unrealized past intention: *I **was to have chaired** the session, but I fell ill. I meant **to have replied** sooner.*

Exercises

Exercise 16.1 Narrative tenses

Put each verb into the most natural narrative form.

1. By midnight the guests _____ (leave), and Elena _____ (clear) the table when she _____ (notice) the envelope someone _____ (slip) under the door.
2. When I was small, my grandmother _____ (tell) me a story every night before I _____ (go) to sleep.

Exercise 16.2 Future in the past

Rewrite the bracketed idea with an appropriate future-in-the-past form.

1. At that time nobody suspected that the company [collapse within a year].
2. Sorry we didn't wait — we [leave] just as you texted.
3. The ceremony [be held] outdoors, but the storm forced it inside.

Exercise 16.3 Choose and justify

Choose the better form and explain the nuance in one sentence.

1. (Did you ever meet / Have you ever met) my grandfather? (he died last year)
2. You (are / are being) ridiculous — stop pretending you can't hear me.
3. I (wondered / was wondering) whether you might read my draft.
4. The committee announced that a decision (was / had been) reached the previous evening.

17

Advanced Conditionals and the Subjunctive

17.1 Mixed conditionals

Real reasoning often crosses time zones: a past cause with a present result, or a present cause with a past result. Mix the halves of the second and third conditionals accordingly.

17.1.1 Past condition → present result

If + past perfect, *would* + base verb:

- *If I **had taken** that job, I **would be** in Singapore now.*
- *If we **hadn't missed** the flight, we **would be** on the beach by now.*

17.1.2 Present condition → past result

If + past simple, *would have* + participle:

- *If he **weren't** so stubborn, he **would have apologized** years ago.*
- *If she **didn't speak** fluent Mandarin, they **would never have hired** her.*

Key Point

Choose each half of a conditional *independently*: past perfect for unreal past, past simple for unreal present, in the *if*-clause; *would have + participle* for past results, *would + base* for present results. The four combinations all occur.

17.2 Inverted conditionals

Formal English can drop *if* and invert subject and auxiliary:

- ***Had I known**, I would have called earlier.* (= If I had known)
- ***Were** the offer **to be** withdrawn, we would seek other partners.* (= If the offer were. . .)
- ***Should** you **require** assistance, please contact reception.* (= If you should require — polite business style)

Negatives are not contracted in inversion: ***Had it not been** for your help, we would have failed.* (✗ *Hadn't it been*)

17.3 Other refinements

- *if it were not for / if it hadn't been for* + noun: *If it weren't for the noise, this flat would be perfect. If it hadn't been for the goalkeeper, we would have lost.* (Formal inversion: *Were it not for. . . ; Had it not been for. . . *)
- *but for* + noun (formal): ***But for*** *the storm, we would have arrived on time.*
- *supposing / suppose / imagine*: ***Suppose*** *you lost your passport — what would you do?*
- *on condition that, provided that*: strong contractual *if*.
- *if* + *should* for remote chance: *If you* ***should*** *happen to see her, give her my regards.*
- *if* + *was/were to* for hypothetical futures: *If the glaciers* ***were to melt****, sea levels would rise dramatically.*
- *would rather* + *past*: *I'****d rather*** *you* ***didn't smoke*** *in here.*
- *it's (high/about) time* + *past*: *It's high time we* ***left****.*

17.4 The subjunctive

English keeps two fossilized subjunctives, both alive and well in formal usage.

17.4.1 The mandative subjunctive

After verbs, adjectives, and nouns of demanding, suggesting, and requiring (*demand, insist, propose, recommend, request, suggest; essential, vital, important, imperative; recommendation, requirement*), the *that*-clause verb appears in the *base form* for all persons:

- *The board insisted that he* ***resign*** *immediately.*
- *We recommend that she* ***be*** *appointed.*
- *It is vital that every visitor* ***sign*** *the register.*
- Negative: *They asked that the news* ***not be released****.*

Usage Note

The mandative subjunctive is vigorous in American English. British English often prefers *should*: *The board insisted that he* ***should resign*** — or even the plain indicative: *. . . insisted that he resigned* (which risks ambiguity with a factual reading). In international formal writing, the subjunctive (*that he resign*) is the safest choice.

17.4.2 The *were*-subjunctive

Unreal *were* for all persons survives in conditionals and after *wish, as if/though, suppose*:

- *If I* ***were*** *in charge, things would change.*
- *He acts as if he* ***were*** *the owner.*
- *I wish it* ***were*** *summer.*

17.4.3 Formulaic subjunctives

Fixed expressions preserve older syntax: *God* ***save*** *the King!* ***Long live*** *the Republic!* ***Be*** *that as it may. . .* ***Suffice*** *it to say. . . Come what may. . . far* ***be*** *it from me. . . if need* ***be****.*

Exercises

Exercise 17.1 Mixed conditionals

Complete with appropriate forms.

1. If they _____ (not/move) abroad in 2010, their children _____ (speak) Spanish now.
2. If he _____ (be) more careful by nature, he _____ (not/lose) his passport last week.
3. If I _____ (accept) their offer, I _____ (work) in Berlin today.

Exercise 17.2 Inversion

Rewrite without *if*, using inversion.

1. If you should change your mind, let us know.
2. If the government had acted sooner, lives would have been saved.
3. If the company were to relocate, half the staff would leave.
4. If it hadn't been for the referee's error, we would have won.

Exercise 17.3 Subjunctive

Complete using a subjunctive construction.

1. The doctor recommended that he _____ (take) a month's rest.
2. It is essential that the data _____ (be) verified before publication.
3. The union demanded that the decision _____ (reverse — passive).
4. She treats me as if I _____ (be) a child.
5. It's high time the council _____ (do) something about the potholes.

18

Inversion, Fronting, and Cleft Sentences

English word order is rigid — which is exactly why deliberate departures from it carry so much emphasis. This chapter covers the three main emphasis-shifting devices.

18.1 Negative inversion

When a negative or restrictive adverbial opens the sentence, subject and auxiliary invert, exactly as in a question:

- ***Never have I seen*** *such chaos.*
- ***Rarely does*** *a debut novel* ***attract*** *such praise.*
- ***Under no circumstances should*** *passengers* ***leave*** *their seats.*
- ***Not until the final page do*** *we* ***learn*** *the truth.*
- ***Little did*** *they* ***know*** *what awaited them.*
- ***No sooner had*** *we* ***sat down than*** *the phone rang.*
- ***Hardly had*** *the match* ***begun when*** *it started to pour.*
- ***Only later did*** *she* ***understand*** *his warning.*
- ***Not only did*** *they* ***miss*** *the deadline, but they also lost the files.*

Key Point

Triggers include: *never, rarely, seldom, little, hardly … when, scarcely … when, no sooner … than, not only, not until, under no circumstances, on no account, at no time, nowhere, only + adverbial (only then, only after…, only by…).* If there is no auxiliary, supply *do/does/did*: *Seldom* ***does*** *he complain.*

Common Error

Inversion applies only when the negative element modifies the whole clause and stands first. ✗ *Never I have seen such chaos.* → ✓ *Never have I seen such chaos.* And with *only + subject*, there is no inversion: *Only Maria knew the code.* (not ✗ *Only did Maria know*)

Style & Register

Negative inversion is emphatic and somewhat literary. One instance electrifies a paragraph; three in a row read like a melodrama. Use it sparingly, at genuine climaxes.

18.2 Other inversions

- *So + adjective … that*: ***So severe was*** *the drought* ***that*** *rivers vanished.*
- *Such + be … that*: ***Such was*** *the demand* ***that*** *the site crashed.*

- Fronted place/movement adverbials with verbs of position and motion (full verb inversion): ***On the hill stands*** *a ruined tower.* ***Out of the mist appeared*** *a ship.* ***Here comes*** *the bus.* (Not with pronoun subjects: *Here it comes.*)
- After *as* and *than* in formal comparison: *She excelled in physics,* ***as did*** *her sister. City dwellers spend more* ***than do*** *their rural counterparts.*
- Conditional inversion (*Had I known. . .*) — see Chapter 17.

18.3 Fronting

Any element can move to the front for contrast or flow, usually *without* inversion:

- Object fronting: ***Some of his claims*** *I accept;* ***others*** *I find absurd.*
- Complement fronting: ***Beautiful*** *it certainly is — practical it is not.*
- Whole clause as given information: ***That she was brilliant*** *nobody denied.*

Fronting works best when the fronted element links back to the previous sentence (see Chapter 24 on information flow).

18.4 Cleft sentences

Clefts split one message into two clauses to spotlight one element.

18.4.1 *It*-clefts

It + *be* + *focus* + *that/who*-clause:

- Neutral: *Marie discovered radium in 1898.*
- Focus on agent: ***It was Marie who*** *discovered radium.*
- Focus on object: ***It was radium that*** *she discovered.*
- Focus on time: ***It was in 1898 that*** *she discovered radium.*

The *it*-cleft asserts its focus and presupposes the rest — ideal for correcting: *It wasn't me* ***who*** *broke the printer; it was the intern.*

18.4.2 *Wh*-clefts (pseudo-clefts)

What-clause + *be* + focus:

- ***What*** *this town* ***needs*** ***is*** *a decent library.*
- ***What*** *she did* ***was*** *(to) resign on the spot.*
- Reversed: *A decent library* ***is what*** *this town needs.*
- With *all* (= the only thing): ***All*** *I want* ***is*** *five minutes of quiet.*

Wh-clefts suit speech and set up the focus as the answer to an implied question (*What does this town need?*). Variants: *The reason (why). . . is that. . . ; The place where. . . is. . . ; The person who. . . is. . .*

Common Error

✗ *The reason is because. . .* — redundant in careful style: → ✓ *The reason is that. . .* or simply ✓ *. . . because. . .*

Exercises

Exercise 18.1 Negative inversion

Rewrite beginning with the word(s) in brackets.

1. I have never heard such nonsense. (Never)
2. The results were published only after two years. (Only after two years)
3. We had hardly left the house when it began to snow. (Hardly)
4. You should not open this door under any circumstances. (Under no circumstances)
5. She not only speaks five languages but also plays three instruments. (Not only)

Exercise 18.2 Clefts

Rewrite to emphasize the underlined element, using the cleft type in brackets.

1. The manager approved the budget. (it-cleft)
2. I admire her honesty. (wh-cleft)
3. The show becomes interesting in the second act. (it-cleft)
4. We just need a little more time. (All. . .)

Exercise 18.3 Spot the error

Correct any errors of inversion; one sentence is already correct.

1. No sooner we had arrived than the trouble started.
2. So was strong the wind that trees were uprooted.
3. Little he knew about what the day would bring.
4. Only when the test ended did the students relax.
5. Not until 1920 women could vote in the United States.

19

Participle, Absolute, and Reduced Clauses

Participle clauses compress full clauses into elegant phrases — the signature of mature written English. *Because she felt tired, she went home early* → ***Feeling tired**, she went home early.*

19.1 The forms

Present participle	*knowing, walking* — active, same time or reason
Perfect participle	*having known, having walked* — active, earlier time
Past participle	*known, built, exhausted* — passive
Passive perfect	*having been warned* — passive, earlier time
Negative	*not knowing, never having seen*

19.2 Adverbial participle clauses

Participle clauses can express time, reason, result, condition, and concession — the reader infers the connection:

- Time: ***Crossing the bridge**, we saw the whole valley.* ***Having finished** the audit, the team wrote its report.* (perfect participle = clearly earlier action)
- Reason: ***Being a doctor**, she knew the symptoms.* ***Not wanting** to seem rude, I stayed another hour.*
- Result: *The volcano erupted overnight,* ***blanketing** the town in ash.*
- Condition: ***Taken daily**, the supplement is harmless.*
- Concession (with conjunction): ***While admitting** the error, the minister refused to resign.*
- After conjunctions/prepositions: ***Before signing**, read the terms.* ***On hearing** the news, she wept.* ***After being questioned**, he was released.*

Key Point

The implied subject of a participle clause must be the subject of the main clause. When it is not, the participle "dangles": ✗ *Walking to the station, the rain started.* (the rain wasn't walking) → ✓ *Walking to the station, **I** got caught in the rain.* / ✓ *As I was walking to the station, the rain started.* Full discussion of danglers in Chapter 28.

19.3 Absolute constructions

An **absolute** clause has its *own* subject and modifies the whole sentence — formal and literary:

- ***The weather being*** *fine, the ceremony was held outdoors.*
- ***All things considered****, the project succeeded.*
- *She stood in the doorway,* ***her coat dripping****, waiting for an apology.*
- ***God willing****, we shall meet again.*
- With *with*: ***With inflation rising****, the bank raised rates. He can't work* ***with the children shouting****.*

19.4 Reduced adverbial clauses

Time and concession clauses reduce when the subjects match:

- *While (she was) waiting for the bus, she read.*
- *When (it is) heated, the metal expands.*
- *Though (he was) exhausted, he finished the race.*
- *If (it is) necessary, call me at home.*

19.5 Participles as modifiers of nouns

Reduced relative clauses (Chapter 12) rely on the active/passive contrast:

- *the man* ***leading*** *the project* (= who is leading — active)
- *the project* ***led*** *by the man* (= that is led — passive)
- *the road* ***connecting*** *the villages; falling prices; a growing concern*
- *a* ***broken*** *promise; the* ***invited*** *guests; recently* ***published*** *findings*

Common Error

Choose the participle by voice, not habit: ✗ *the discussed issues yesterday* → ✓ *the issues discussed yesterday* (participle phrases with their own modifiers follow the noun);
✗ *a boring student* (if you mean the student feels bored) → ✓ *a bored student*;
✗ *The instructions were confused.* (if the instructions cause confusion) → ✓ *The instructions were confusing.*

Style & Register

Participle clauses lighten prose but blur logical connections — the reader must guess whether you mean *because*, *when*, or *although*. In argumentative writing, keep explicit conjunctions for the connections that matter, and reserve participle clauses for background.

Exercises

Exercise 19.1 Compress

Rewrite using a participle or absolute clause.

1. Because he had lost his ticket, he had to buy another.
2. After she had checked the figures twice, she submitted the report.

3. As the hotel was full, we drove to the next town.
4. When the contract had been signed, the partners shook hands.
5. Because I didn't know the area, I used a map.

Exercise 19.2 Expand

Rewrite each participle clause as a full clause with an explicit conjunction.

1. Having been warned twice, the driver lost his licence.
2. Weather permitting, the flight will leave on time.
3. Not having read the manual, she pressed the wrong button.
4. Seen from above, the island resembles a crescent.

Exercise 19.3 Fix the danglers

Rewrite so that each participle has the right subject.

1. Driving through the desert, the temperature reached 45 °C.
2. Having finished the meal, the bill was requested.
3. Opening the cupboard, a mouse jumped out.
4. Written in 1848, readers still find the pamphlet electrifying.

20

Nominalization, Ellipsis, and Substitution

20.1 Nominalization

Nominalization turns verbs and adjectives into nouns: *decide* → *decision*, *grow* → *growth*, *accurate* → *accuracy*, *fail* → *failure*. It is the engine of abstract, academic prose.

20.1.1 Why writers nominalize

- To make a process the *topic* of discussion: *The company expanded rapidly.* ***This expansion*** *created new problems.*
- To compress a clause into a phrase: *Because the government failed to act, prices rose* → ***The government's failure to act*** *drove up prices.*
- To sound impersonal and objective: ***An analysis*** *of the samples* ***was undertaken****.*

20.1.2 Common nominalizing suffixes

-tion/-sion	*inform* → *information*	*-ment*	*develop* → *development*
-ance/-ence	*resist* → *resistance*	*-al*	*arrive* → *arrival*
-ity	*scarce* → *scarcity*	*-ness*	*aware* → *awareness*
-ure	*fail* → *failure*	*-th*	*grow* → *growth*
zero suffix	*increase, change, use*	*-ing*	*the signing of the treaty*

Style & Register

Nominalization is a tool, not a virtue. Overuse produces "zombie nouns" and buries the action: ✗ *The implementation of the reduction of costs was achieved by the management.* → ✓ *Management cut costs.* Rule of thumb: nominalize to link back to something already said, or to name a concept; otherwise, let verbs be verbs.

20.2 Ellipsis

Ellipsis omits words recoverable from context. Handled well, it is the difference between natural and robotic English.

20.2.1 Ellipsis in coordination

- Shared subject: *She came in, (she) sat down, and (she) opened her laptop.*
- Shared auxiliary: *He has apologized and (has) promised to pay.*
- Shared verb (gapping): *Anna ordered fish; Marco, (ordered) steak.*
- Shared elements from the second conjunct (right-node raising): *She admires, but her brother distrusts, all politicians.*

20.2.2 Ellipsis after auxiliaries (stripping the verb phrase)

The auxiliary stands for the whole verb phrase:

- *"Will you come?" "I might (come)."*
- *She can't swim, but her sister* ***can****.*
- *They said they would call, and they* ***did****.*
- With *to* (infinitival ellipsis): *"Join us!" "I'd love* ***to****." He didn't want to move, but he had* ***to****.*

20.2.3 Situational ellipsis (informal)

Speech drops predictable openings: *(Do you) Want some coffee? (I) Hope you're well. (It) Sounds great. (Are you) Ready?* Recognize it; avoid it in formal writing.

20.3 Substitution

Instead of omitting, English can replace with a pro-form:

- *one/ones* for countable nouns: *I'll take the blue* ***one****. These shoes are worn out — I need new* ***ones****.*
- *do so* for verb phrases (formal): *Anyone wishing to object may* ***do so*** *in writing.*
- *so/not* after *think, hope, believe, suppose, be afraid*: *"Will it rain?" "I think* ***so****. / I hope* ***not****."*
- *so + auxiliary + subject* (addition): *She left early, and* ***so did I****.* vs. *so + subject + auxiliary* (confirmation): *"You promised!" "****So I did****."*
- *if so / if not*: *The part may be faulty;* ***if so****, we will replace it.*

Common Error

- ✗ *"Is it far?" "I don't think." →* ✓ *I don't think* ***so****.*
- ✗ *I asked him to leave, and he did so leave. →* ✓ *. . . and he did (so).*
- Ellipsis must be recoverable and parallel: ✗ *The staff were informed and the manager the reasons. →* ✓ *The staff were informed, and the manager explained the reasons.*

Exercises

Exercise 20.1 Nominalize / denominalize

(a) Rewrite 1–3 with a nominalization; (b) rewrite 4–6 with strong verbs.

1. The committee decided quickly, which surprised everyone.
2. Because demand grew, prices rose.
3. The two sides agreed, which ended the strike.
4. A review of the proposal was conducted by the team.
5. The occurrence of the failure of the pump was at midnight.
6. There was resistance on the part of residents to the demolition of the theatre.

Exercise 20.2 Ellipsis

Cross out every word that can be naturally omitted.

1. She washed the dishes, and then she dried the dishes.
2. I haven't read the report, but I will read the report tonight.

3. He plays tennis, and his wife plays golf.
4. “Are you coming to the party?” “I’d like to come to the party, but I can’t come to the party.”

Exercise 20.3 Substitution

Replace the underlined words with an appropriate pro-form.

1. “Do you think the talks will succeed?” “I hope the talks will succeed.”
2. My old laptop is faster than my new laptop.
3. She promised to review the file, and she reviewed the file.
4. “Has the parcel arrived?” “I’m afraid the parcel has not arrived.”

21

Discourse Markers and Cohesion

Grammar does not stop at the sentence boundary. Cohesion is the grammar of *texts*: the devices that bind sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into arguments.

21.1 The cohesion toolkit

Reference pronouns and determiners pointing backward (anaphora) or forward (cataphora): *The committee published **its** findings. **These** caused an uproar.* Cataphora: *Before **she** became famous, **Adele** sang in pubs.*

Substitution and ellipsis (Chapter 20): *one*, *do so*, *so/not*, and omission.

Conjunction linking words — the discourse markers below.

Lexical cohesion repetition, synonyms, and general nouns: *a Boeing 747 . . . the aircraft . . . the plane*; and summarizing nouns: *this **approach**, that **claim**, such **measures**.*

21.2 Discourse markers by function

Function	Markers
Adding	*moreover, furthermore, in addition, besides, what is more, not to mention*
Contrasting	*however, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, in contrast, by contrast, whereas, while, yet, even so, still*
Conceding	*admittedly, granted, of course, to be sure, it is true that*
Cause and result	*therefore, consequently, as a result, thus, hence, accordingly, for this reason*
Exemplifying	*for example, for instance, in particular, notably, such as, a case in point*
Reformulating	*in other words, that is (to say), namely, to put it another way*
Sequencing	*first(ly), second(ly), then, next, subsequently, finally, lastly*
Summarizing	*in short, in sum, to conclude, overall, on balance, all in all*
Digressing, returning	*incidentally, by the way; anyway, in any case, at any rate*

21.2.1 Grammar of the linkers

The most common cohesion errors are grammatical, not lexical — using a conjunction as an adverb or vice versa:

Type	Behaviour
Coordinators (*and, but, or, so, yet, for*)	join two clauses inside one sentence: *It was late,* ***but*** *we carried on.*
Subordinators (*although, because, whereas, while, since, unless*)	attach a dependent clause: ***Although*** *it was late, we carried on.* No comma splice possible.
Conjunctive adverbs (*however, therefore, moreover, nevertheless*)	connect *sentences*; need a full stop or semicolon before them: *It was late****; however,*** *we carried on.*

Common Error

- Comma splice with *however*: ✗ *It was late, however we carried on.* → ✓ *It was late; however, we carried on.* / ✓ *It was late, but we carried on.*
- Doubling connectors: ✗ *Although it was late, but we carried on.* → pick one: ✓ *Although it was late, we carried on.*
- ✗ *Despite of the rain…* → ✓ *Despite the rain / In spite of the rain / Despite the fact that it rained.*
- *on the other hand* needs a genuine contrast of alternatives, not just any second point — for mere addition use *in addition*.

21.3 Concession and contrast in depth

Fine distinctions among the contrast words:

- *although/though* + clause: plain concession. *though* can also end a sentence informally: *Nice flat. Small, though.*
- *even though* = emphatic factual concession; *even if* = hypothetical: *Even though it rained, we went* (it did rain) vs. *Even if it rains, we'll go* (maybe it will).
- *whereas/while*: balanced contrast of two facts: *Exports rose,* ***whereas*** *imports fell.*
- *despite / in spite of* + noun or gerund: *Despite losing, they celebrated.*
- *however* + adjective/adverb + clause: ***However hard*** *she tried, the door stayed shut.* Same with *no matter how/what/where*: *No matter what happens, stay calm.*
- *Adjective + as/though + subject + verb* (formal concession): ***Tired as she was****, she finished the shift.* ***Strange though it may seem****, the figures are correct.*

21.4 Paragraph cohesion in practice

A cohesive paragraph typically: (1) opens with a topic sentence whose subject names the paragraph's theme; (2) begins later sentences with *given* information (backward links) and ends them with *new* information; (3) uses *this/these + summary noun* to carry complex ideas forward.

Compare the disjointed and cohesive versions:

> *Disjointed:* The council closed the library. Reading levels in the district had been falling for a decade. A petition with 12,000 signatures was ignored. Budget pressures were cited.

Cohesive: The council closed the library, citing budget pressures. **The decision** ignored a petition with 12,000 signatures — and **it** came just as reading levels in the district, already falling for a decade, needed support most.

Style & Register

Do not sprinkle markers mechanically; the strongest cohesion is often *structural* (given-before-new, parallel patterns, summary nouns). A paragraph that needs *moreover* in every sentence usually needs reorganizing instead.

Exercises

Exercise 21.1 Choose the linker

Choose the correct option.

1. (Despite / Although) the delay, we arrived in time.
2. Sales fell sharply; (therefore / whereas), the factory cut production.
3. (Even if / Even though) you dislike opera, you'd enjoy this production — it's spectacular.
4. He is strict; (on the other hand / in addition), he is fair.
5. (However / No matter) you look at it, the plan is risky. (adjust if needed)

Exercise 21.2 Repair the cohesion

Fix the punctuation or structure of each item.

1. The results were promising, however the sample was tiny.
2. Although the price was high, but the quality was poor.
3. Despite of his injury, he played the full match.
4. The theory is elegant. The theory has little evidence. The theory remains popular. (combine cohesively)

Exercise 21.3 Concession patterns

Rewrite using the pattern in brackets.

1. She was very experienced, but she failed the simulation. (Experienced as. . .)
2. It doesn't matter how much it costs; we need it. (However. . .)
3. He apologized, but the damage was done. (Admittedly. . . — two sentences)

22

Advanced Passives and Causatives

22.1 The full causative system

Causatives express getting things done through others.

Pattern	Meaning and examples
have + object + bare inf.	authority; instruct someone: *I'll **have my assistant send** you the file.*
have + object + participle	arrange a service: *We **had the piano tuned**.* Also suffer: *He **had his car broken into**.*
get + object + to-inf.	persuade, manage to make: *She **got the landlord to repaint** the flat.*
get + object + participle	informal service/completion: *I must **get this tooth looked at**. We finally **got the report finished**.*
make + object + bare inf.	compel: *The teacher **made us rewrite** the essay.* (passive: *we were made **to** rewrite*)
let + object + bare inf.	allow: *They **let the students leave** early.* (passive: use *be allowed to*)
cause + object + to-inf.	formal, usually negative outcomes: *The fault **caused the engine to overheat**.*
force / compel / oblige + object + to-inf.	stronger than *make*: *The storm **forced us to land** in Denver.*

Common Error

- ✗ *I made my hair cut.* → ✓ *I had/got my hair cut.*
- ✗ *She made him to apologize.* → ✓ *She made him apologize.*
- ✗ *The manager let us to go home.* → ✓ *. . . let us go home.*
- ✗ *I'll have the copies did.* → ✓ *I'll have the copies done.* (past participle, always)

22.2 Middle voice and ergative verbs

Some verbs pair a transitive use with an intransitive one in which the *object* becomes the subject — no passive morphology needed. These are **ergative** verbs:

- *She **opened** the door. / The door **opened**.*
- *They **sell** the tickets online. / The tickets **sold** out in minutes.*
- Common ergatives: *break, begin, boil, burn, close, cook, crash, dry, end, freeze, improve, increase, melt, move, run, shut, start, stop, vary.*

The related **middle construction** describes inherent properties, usually with an adverb: *This fabric **washes well**. The novel **reads like** a thriller. Cheap wine **doesn't keep**.*

Key Point

Three ways to background the agent, in increasing formality: ergative (*the door opened*), *get*-passive (*the door got opened*), *be*-passive (*the door was opened*). The ergative hints that the event happened by itself; the passives imply an agent.

22.3 Passives of prepositional and phrasal verbs

The preposition or particle stays with the verb:

- *The children* ***are*** *well* ***looked after****.*
- *This problem* ***must be dealt with*** *at once.*
- *The old system* ***has been done away with****.*
- *She hates* ***being talked about****.*

22.4 Impersonal and reporting passives revisited

Beyond *It is said that…* (Chapter 10), formal English offers:

- *There + passive + to-infinitive*: ***There are thought to be*** *over a million refugees in the region.*
- Perfect infinitive for anteriority: *The manuscript* ***is believed to have been written*** *around 1200.*
- Progressive infinitive: *He* ***is reported to be recovering*** *well.*
- *seem/appear/prove/turn out* + infinitive as agentless hedges: *The rumours* ***proved to be*** *unfounded.*

Style & Register

Scientific writing has drifted from *The samples were analysed* toward *We analysed the samples*; most journals now welcome the first person for what the authors did, keeping the passive for procedures where the agent is irrelevant. Use whichever puts the *topic* of your paragraph in subject position.

Exercises

Exercise 22.1 Causatives

Rewrite using the causative pattern in brackets.

1. A jeweller is going to engrave the ring for us. (have)
2. The customs officers compelled him to open his suitcase. (make)
3. I persuaded my neighbour to water the plants. (get)
4. Someone stole her credit card details. (have — misfortune)
5. The new rules permit staff to work remotely. (let)

Exercise 22.2 Ergatives and middles

Rewrite without naming any agent, using an ergative or middle construction.

1. Someone closed the museum at five.

2. You can wash this jacket in a machine, and it comes out fine.
3. The publishers sold out the first edition within a week.
4. Something started the fire in the basement. (use *start*)

Exercise 22.3 Advanced passives

Rewrite in the passive, keeping the tense and nuance.

1. People say that the mayor is considering resignation. (two ways)
2. Historians believe that invaders destroyed the temple in 900 AD. (subject + passive + perfect infinitive)
3. Nobody has looked into these allegations.
4. Everyone looked up to the old professor.

Part IV

Very Advanced: Mastery

23

Syntax: Constituents, Phrases, and Functions

To master the hardest points of English, it helps to see sentences the way linguists do: as hierarchies of **constituents**, each with a *category* (what it is) and a *function* (what it does).

23.1 Categories vs. functions

Categories (form)	Functions (role)
noun phrase (NP): *the old bridge*	subject, object, complement
verb phrase (VP): *has been repaired*	predicate
adjective phrase (AdjP): *very proud of her*	modifier, complement
adverb phrase (AdvP): *quite carefully*	adjunct
prepositional phrase (PP): *under the bridge*	modifier, adjunct, complement
clause (finite or non-finite)	subject, object, modifier, adjunct

The same category can serve many functions: in ***Under the bridge*** *is a good spot*, the PP is the subject; in *We met* ***under the bridge***, it is an adjunct.

23.2 Tests for constituency

How do you know *the old bridge* is a unit? It passes the classic tests:

1. **Substitution:** replace with a pro-form — ***It*** *has been repaired.*
2. **Movement:** shift it as a block — ***The old bridge****, they finally repaired.*
3. **Clefting:** *It was* ***the old bridge*** *that they repaired.*
4. **Question-answer:** *What did they repair?* — ***The old bridge.***
5. **Coordination:** conjoin with a like unit — *the old bridge* ***and the new tunnel****.*

These tests settle real editorial questions, e.g. where a modifier attaches (see ambiguity, Chapter 28).

23.3 The structure of the noun phrase

English NPs follow a strict template:

all the first three remarkable Victorian railway *bridges* ***in Wales that survive***

pre-determiner < determiner < ordinal < cardinal < adjectives (in the order of Chapter 5) < noun modifiers < **head** < PP complements/modifiers < relative clause.

Noun + noun sequences (*railway bridge*, *government policy review*) stack recursively; long stacks tax readers — prefer *review of government policy* to *government policy review process delay* chains.

23.4 The verb phrase and its auxiliaries

Auxiliaries occur in a fixed order:

modal < **perfect** ***have*** < **progressive** ***be*** < **passive** ***be*** < **main verb**

The files ***might have been being copied*** *while we spoke.* (rare but grammatical — all four slots filled)

The first auxiliary is the **operator**: it carries tense, hosts negation (*might* ***not*** *have. . . *), and inverts in questions (***Might*** *the files have been copied?*). When no auxiliary is present, *do* steps in as operator — the **do-support** that runs through Chapters 3 and 6.

23.5 Complements vs. adjuncts

A **complement** is selected and often required by the head; an **adjunct** is optional extra information:

- *She put the keys* ***on the table****.* (PP complement — *put* demands a place: ✗ *She put the keys.*)
- *She found the keys* ***on the table****.* (adjunct — *She found the keys* stands alone.)
- Verbs dictate their complements (**valency**): *rely* ***on****, accuse* ***of****, provide* ***with****, prevent* ***from****.* Valency errors are among the most persistent advanced mistakes: ✗ *discuss about*, *emphasize on*, *comprise of* → ✓ *discuss*, *emphasize*, *comprise* (or *consist of*).

23.6 Subordinate clauses by function

Function	Examples
Subject clause	***That she resigned*** *shocked us.* ***What he said*** *makes sense.* ***To err*** *is human.*
Object clause	*I know* ***(that) you're right****. She asked* ***whether we agreed****. He enjoys* ***cooking for friends****.*
Complement of adjective/noun	*glad* ***that you came****; the fact* ***that costs rose****; a plan* ***to expand***
Adverbial clause	***when the bell rang****;* ***because it was late****;* ***if you insist****;* ***so that no one would see***
Relative clause	modifies a noun (Chapter 12)

Heavy subject clauses are usually **extraposed** with dummy *it*: ***It*** *shocked us* ***that she resigned*** — see Chapter 24.

Usage Note

The *that* of an object clause can be omitted after common verbs (*I think Ø you're right*), but keep it (a) after less frequent verbs (*the minister conceded* ***that****. . . *), (b) when a phrase intervenes (*She said yesterday* ***that****. . . *), and (c) whenever omission invites misreading: ✗ *He believes the witness lied* momentarily misparses *the witness* as object — ✓ *He believes* ***that*** *the witness lied.*

Exercises

Exercise 23.1 Constituency tests

Use at least two tests to decide whether the bracketed string is a constituent.

1. She [gave the letter] to her lawyer.
2. The jury found [the defendant guilty].
3. He spoke [to the students in the hall]. (two readings!)

t the results were faked soon became obvious.

Exercise 23.2 Complement or adjunct?

Say whether the bracketed phrase is a complement or an adjunct.

1. They treated the guests [with great courtesy].
2. They dealt [with the complaint].
3. She became [a judge] [in 2019].
4. He placed the vase [on the shelf] [this morning].

Exercise 23.3 Valency repair

Correct the complementation errors.

1. The panel discussed about the merger for two hours.
2. The kit comprises of ten components.
3. She emphasized on the need for caution.
4. We must prevent the disease to spread.
5. The report provides readers useful comparisons.

24

Information Structure: Given, New, and End-Weight

Two sentences can be truth-conditionally identical yet feel utterly different in context. Information structure — the packaging of given and new information — explains why, and it governs most "which version sounds better?" decisions in skilled writing.

24.1 Given before new

English sentences flow best when they start from what the reader already knows (the **theme** or topic) and move toward what is new (the **rheme** or focus):

> *Marie Curie discovered polonium in 1898.* ***The discovery*** *made her famous.* (smooth: *the discovery* is given)
> *Marie Curie discovered polonium in 1898. Fame came to her because of* ***the discovery****.* (jolting: new information first)

Most of the constructions in this book exist to serve this principle:

- **Passive** keeps the topic in subject position: *The bridge was designed by Telford* (paragraph about the bridge).
- **Clefts** (Chapter 18) mark one element as the focus.
- **Fronting** moves a given element to the start: ***That objection*** *we have already answered.*
- **Inversion after place adverbials** unveils a new subject at the end: *On the hill stands* ***a ruined tower****.*

24.2 End-weight

English pushes long, heavy constituents to the end of the clause. Violating end-weight strains the reader even when the grammar is impeccable.

- **Extraposition** of clausal subjects: ✗ *That the minister knew nothing about payments made in her name over six years is implausible.* → ✓ ***It*** *is implausible* ***that the minister knew nothing****. . .*
- **Heavy-NP shift**: *She explained* ***to the board*** *[her plan to restructure the entire division].* (long object moved after the PP)
- **Dative alternation**: choose *give someone something* or *give something to someone* so the heavier item comes last: *She gave* ***the committee*** *[a report running to three hundred pages]* vs. *She gave* ***the report*** *to [the committee that had commissioned it three years earlier].*
- **Phrasal verb particles**: *turn* ***down*** *[the offer of a lifetime]* rather than *turn [the offer of a lifetime] down.*

24.3 Existential *there*

There + *be* exists to introduce brand-new referents at the end of the clause: ***There's*** *a package for you at reception.* Starting instead with the new item (*A package is at reception for you*) sounds unnatural precisely because it violates given-before-new.

Formal variants: *There* ***remains*** *one problem. There* ***arose*** *a dispute. There* ***seems to be*** *a misunderstanding.*

24.4 Focus by stress and by syntax

Speech marks focus with intonation; writing must use syntax and lexis:

- Focusing adverbs: *only, even, also, just, particularly* — position them next to what they modify. ***Only*** *the interns attended* (nobody else) vs. *The interns* ***only*** *attended* (they did nothing else) vs. *The interns attended* ***only*** *the morning session*. In speech, loose placement is normal; in print, misplaced *only* genuinely misleads.
- *do*-emphasis: *We* ***do*** *appreciate your patience. She* ***did*** *warn you.*
- Emphatic reflexives: *The author* ***herself*** *admits as much.*
- *as for / regarding / when it comes to* to (re)set the topic: ***As for*** *the budget, we'll decide next week.*
- Right-dislocation (informal speech): *He's a genius,* ***that boy***. Left-dislocation: ***That boy***, *he never stops.* (conversational only)

Style & Register

When a sentence feels awkward, diagnose it informationally: (1) Does it open with given information? (2) Does the main news come last? (3) Is the heaviest constituent at the end? Rewriting to satisfy these three checks fixes most clumsy sentences without touching the content.

Exercises

Exercise 24.1 Reorder for flow

Rewrite the second sentence of each pair so it flows from the first.

1. The lab tested three alloys. Titanium proved the most durable of the three alloys tested by the lab. (tighten)
2. In 2019 the firm opened a Lisbon office. Forty engineers now work in the office the firm opened in Lisbon. (tighten)
3. A stranger knocked at midnight. The stranger's arrival changed everything. (fine — explain why it works)

Exercise 24.2 End-weight

Improve each sentence by repositioning the heavy constituent.

1. That anyone could survive a fall from that height without serious injury amazed the doctors.
2. She sent the analysis that the client had been demanding for weeks to us.
3. He turned the most lucrative sponsorship deal in the sport's history down.

Exercise 24.3 Focus

Place *only* to express each meaning of "She lent her car to her brother on Sundays."

1. The car was the one thing she lent him.
2. Her brother was the one person she lent it to.
3. Sundays were the one day she lent it.

25

Agreement: The Hard Cases

Subject–verb agreement is trivial until it isn't. This chapter collects the cases that trip up even professional writers, and the principles that resolve them: **grammatical concord** (match the form), **notional concord** (match the meaning), and **proximity** (match the nearest noun — legitimate only in limited cases).

25.1 Collective nouns

team, committee, family, government, staff, audience, board, crew

- AmE strongly prefers the singular: *The committee **has** decided.*
- BrE allows both, by perspective: *The committee **has** decided* (as a body) vs. *The committee **were** divided* (as individuals).
- Be consistent within a text, and keep pronouns aligned: ✗ *The board has changed their policy.* → ✓ *The board has changed **its** policy.*

25.2 Quantified subjects

- *a number of* + plural verb; *the number of* + singular: ***A number of** issues **remain**. **The number of** issues **is** growing.*
- Fractions, percentages, *majority*: agree with the noun after *of*: *Two-thirds of the budget **was** spent; two-thirds of the voters **were** undecided. The majority of members **support** the motion.*
- Measures as a unit take the singular: *Five years **is** a long time. Ten miles **is** too far to walk. Three hundred dollars **seems** fair.*
- *more than one* — singular despite its meaning: *More than one witness **was** present.*
- *many a* + singular: *Many a career **has** ended this way.*
- Arithmetic: *Two and two **is/are** four* — both heard; singular is safer.

25.3 Coordinated and correlative subjects

- *and* → plural: *Oil and water **do** not mix.* Exception — single idea: *Fish and chips **is** my favourite. The hammer and sickle **was** on the flag.*
- *or, either. . . or, neither. . . nor* → agree with the *nearer* subject (proximity rule): *Either the manager or the assistants **are** responsible. Neither the assistants nor the manager **is** responsible.* If the result sounds awkward, rewrite: *Either the manager is responsible, or the assistants are.*
- Additive phrases (*as well as, together with, along with, in addition to*) do *not* change the number: *The captain, as well as the players, **was** disappointed.*

25.4 Distance and attraction errors

The most common real-world error: the verb "attracts" to a nearby noun instead of the true head:

- ✗ *The quality of the recordings* ***were*** *poor.* → ✓ *The quality . . .* ***was*** *poor.*
- ✗ *A bouquet of roses* ***were*** *delivered.* → ✓ *A bouquet . . .* ***was*** *delivered.*
- Strip the sentence to head noun + verb to check.

25.5 Special subjects

- Clausal subjects are singular: *That they lied* ***is*** *obvious. Whether we go* ***depends*** *on the weather.*
- Gerund subjects are singular: *Reading novels* ***improves*** *vocabulary.*
- Titles, names of works, and quoted plurals: singular — *"Great Expectations"* ***was*** *serialized. The United Nations* ***has*** *voted. "Thanks"* ***is*** *sometimes all you need to say.*
- Plural-form singulars: *news, politics, economics, mathematics, measles, billiards* → singular: *Economics* ***is*** *useful.* But when meaning practical affairs: *The economics of the deal* ***are*** *shaky. His politics* ***are*** *extreme.*
- Pair nouns: *trousers, scissors, glasses* → plural, unless counted with *pair*: *These scissors* ***are*** *blunt; this pair of scissors* ***is*** *blunt.*
- *police, people, cattle* → plural: *The police* ***are*** *investigating.*

25.6 Agreement with *there*, *it*, and inverted subjects

- *there* + *be* agrees with the following noun: *There* ***are*** *several options.* Informal speech uses *there's* with plurals (*There's two ways to do this*); avoid in writing.
- In full inversion, find the postponed subject: *Among the guests* ***were*** *two senators.*
- Clefts: *It* ***is*** *the details that* ***matter****.* (*it is* fixed; the relative verb agrees with the focus)
- *one of the* + *plural* + *relative clause*: strictly, the clause modifies the plural: *She is one of the few people who* ***understand*** *the system.* (*who understands* is common but resisted by careful editors)

25.7 Pronoun agreement

- *each, every, either, neither, everyone, nobody* → singular verb; follow-up pronoun is now normally singular *they*: *Everyone* ***has their*** *own key.*
- *none of* + plural: singular or plural — *None of the files* ***was/were*** *encrypted* (singular more formal).
- Keep number consistent across a sentence: ✗ *If a student fails, they must retake it, and he should also inform the office.* — pick one strategy throughout.

Exercises

Exercise 25.1 Choose the verb

Select the correct (or better) form; note where both are defensible.

1. The list of ingredients (is / are) printed on the label.
2. Neither the CEO nor the directors (was / were) available.

3. A number of complaints (has / have) been received.
4. Twenty minutes (is / are) all I need.
5. The staff (is / are) unhappy about the rota. (BrE)
6. Politics (make / makes) strange bedfellows.
7. There (was / were) a laptop and two phones in the bag.
8. She is one of those managers who (listens / listen).

Exercise 25.2 Error hunt

Each sentence contains one agreement error; correct it.

1. The bouquet of lilies and roses were left at the door.
2. Each of the proposals have strengths.
3. The committee have submitted its report. (make consistent)
4. More than one candidates were shortlisted.
5. The quality of his arguments and evidence leave much to be desired.

Exercise 25.3 Rewrite to avoid awkward agreement

Rewrite so the agreement is both correct and natural.

1. Either you or your sister (be) responsible for locking up.
2. Neither the tenants nor the landlord (want) the case to go to court.
3. Every doctor and every nurse (have) signed the petition.

26

Hedging, Modality, and Academic Register

Expert writing is judged not only by correctness but by *calibration*: claiming exactly as much as the evidence allows. The grammar of hedging and boosting is the instrument of that calibration.

26.1 The hedging toolkit

Device	Examples
Modal verbs	*may, might, could, would, should*: *This **may** reflect sampling bias.*
Lexical verbs	*seem, appear, suggest, indicate, tend, imply*: *The data **suggest** a link.*
Adverbs	*arguably, possibly, presumably, apparently, largely, generally, typically, somewhat*
Adjectives	*possible, likely, probable, plausible, consistent with*
Nouns	*possibility, tendency, assumption, likelihood*
Approximators	*about, roughly, around, approximately, in most cases, to some extent*
Distancing constructions	*It could be argued that. . . ; According to some accounts. . . ; is thought to. . .*

Compare the uncalibrated and calibrated claims:

✗ *Social media causes depression in teenagers.*
✓ *Heavy social-media use **appears to be associated with** higher rates of depressive symptoms in adolescents, **although** causality **remains** unclear.*

Style & Register

Hedging is dose-dependent. One hedge signals scholarly care; three in a row signal timidity: ✗ *It might perhaps be possible to suggest that. . .* → ✓ *It is possible that. . .* / ✓ *This suggests that. . .* Choose *one* hedge per proposition, at the right strength.

26.2 Boosting

The opposite move — strengthening commitment — has its own grammar: *clearly, undoubtedly, indeed, certainly, in fact, of course; show, demonstrate, establish, prove; it is evident that*. Skilled writers hedge their own novel claims and boost established background: *It is **well established** that X; our results **suggest** that Y.*

26.3 Impersonal constructions

Academic register shifts responsibility from persons to propositions:

- Anticipatory *it*: ***It is likely that*** *the effect generalizes.* ***It should be noted that*** *n was small.*
- Abstract rhetors: ***This paper argues***. . . ***Section 3 shows***. . . ***The findings indicate*** . . .
- Passives of cognition: *is assumed, is taken to, has been interpreted as.*
- Nominalized hedges: *a* ***tendency*** *for scores to decline* rather than *scores tended to decline.*

26.4 Politeness and indirectness

The same distancing grammar softens requests, disagreement, and bad news in professional communication:

- Past tense for politeness: *I* ***wanted*** *to ask about the invoice.* ***Would*** *you have a moment?*
- Progressive softening: *I* ***was wondering*** *whether you* ***were planning*** *to attend.*
- Negative interrogatives inviting agreement: ***Wouldn't*** *it be safer to wait?*
- Understatement (litotes): *The results were* ***not entirely*** *convincing. That was* ***not*** *his* ***finest*** *hour.*
- Softened disagreement: ***I see your point, but***. . . ***I'm not sure I*** *entirely* ***agree.*** ***With respect,*** *the figures point the other way.*

26.5 Register contrasts at a glance

Informal	Formal / academic
a lot of, loads of	*a great deal of, numerous, considerable*
get better / worse	*improve / deteriorate*
find out	*ascertain, determine*
look into	*investigate, examine*
put up with	*tolerate*
about (a topic)	*regarding, concerning, with respect to*
so (linking)	*therefore, consequently*
besides (adding)	*moreover, furthermore*
contractions (*don't, it's*)	full forms (*do not, it is*)
you (generic)	*one*; passive; *readers, users*

Usage Note

Formality is a scale, not a switch. Modern academic and business prose has relaxed: first person (*we show*), contractions in blogs and emails, and phrasal verbs in journalism are all normal. Match the register of the venue you are writing for — the worst error is mixing levels within a sentence: ✗ *The committee will look into the ramifications and stuff.*

Exercises

Exercise 26.1 Calibrate the claims

Rewrite each overclaim as a properly hedged academic sentence.

1. Remote work makes employees more productive.
2. The new drug cures the disease.

3. Video games cause violence.
4. Our model predicts elections.

Exercise 26.2 De-hedge

Each sentence is over-hedged; reduce it to a single, well-chosen hedge.

1. It might possibly be the case that the sample could perhaps be biased.
2. It could arguably be suggested that there is maybe a tendency for prices to somewhat rise.

Exercise 26.3 Shift the register

Rewrite formally (1–3) or informally (4).

1. We found out that lots of users put off updating their software.
2. They looked into the problem but couldn't figure out what set it off.
3. The plan fell through because the backers pulled out.
4. It is regrettable that the anticipated improvement in performance did not materialize. (email to a friendly colleague)

27

Punctuation Mastery

Punctuation is grammar made visible. At an expert level it is not decoration but a system of signals with near-grammatical rules.

27.1 The comma

27.1.1 Where commas are required

1. After most introductory elements: ***After the vote,*** *the chamber emptied.* ***Frankly,*** *I doubt it.* ***Having signed,*** *she left.* (Very short openers may drop it: *In 2019 we moved.*)
2. Around non-defining relative clauses and other parentheticals: *The CEO****, who founded the firm,*** *resigned. The plan* ***, however,*** *failed.*
3. Between items in a series: *We need flour, eggs(,) and milk.* — on the serial (Oxford) comma, see below.
4. Before a coordinator joining independent clauses: *The experiment failed****, but*** *the team learned a great deal.*
5. Between coordinate adjectives: *a long, tedious meeting* (test: *long and tedious* works) — but not cumulative ones: *a little old stone cottage.*
6. After a quotation before the tag: *"I'm ready," she said.*

27.1.2 Where commas are forbidden

- Between subject and verb: ✗ *The results of the second and much larger trial, were negative.*
- Between verb and object: ✗ *She said, that she agreed.* (no comma before an indirect *that*-clause)
- Around defining relative clauses: ✗ *Students, who cheat, will fail* means all students cheat.
- Splicing two sentences: the **comma splice** — ✗ *The server crashed, nobody noticed.* Repair with a full stop, semicolon, coordinator, or subordinator: ✓ *The server crashed; nobody noticed.* / *The server crashed, but nobody noticed.* (Literary exceptions — *I came, I saw, I conquered* — are deliberate and rhythmic.)

Usage Note

The **serial comma** (*red, white, and blue*) is house style at most American publishers and at Oxford; most British newspapers omit it. Use it consistently, and always insert it when omission creates ambiguity: *I thank my parents, Ayn Rand(,) and God.*

27.2 The semicolon and the colon

- **Semicolon** joins two closely related independent clauses: *The lab was silent; everyone was watching the gauge.* Also separates list items that contain commas: *Delegates came from Lyon, France; Turin, Italy; and Basel, Switzerland.*

- **Colon** introduces what fulfils the promise of the first clause — a list, an explanation, a quotation, an elaboration: *She had one goal: revenge. Three cities were shortlisted: Lyon, Turin, and Basel.* What precedes a colon must be able to stand alone: ✗ *The shortlisted cities were: Lyon, Turin. . .* → drop the colon or rewrite (✓ *The shortlist comprised three cities: . . .*).
- Capital after a colon: BrE lowercase; AmE often capitalizes a full sentence after the colon. Be consistent.

27.3 Dashes, parentheses, hyphens

- The **em dash** (—) sets off interruptions with emphasis: *The witness — if we can call him that — changed his story twice.* BrE often prefers a spaced en dash (–) for the same job. Limit to one pair per sentence.
- **Parentheses** whisper what dashes shout: asides the reader may skip. Punctuation goes outside unless the whole sentence is parenthesized. (Like this.)
- The **en dash** (–) marks ranges and connections: *pages 12–15, the London–Paris route, the 2024–25 season*.
- The **hyphen** (-) binds compounds. Hyphenate compound modifiers before a noun: *a well-known author, a five-year plan, an up-to-date list* — but not after: *the author is well known; the list is up to date*; and never with *-ly* adverbs: ✗ *a highly-paid job* → ✓ *a highly paid job*. Distinguish *re-cover* (cover again) from *recover*; *twenty-four-hour shifts* from *twenty four-hour shifts*.

27.4 The apostrophe

- Possession: singular *the judge's ruling*; regular plural *the judges' ruling*; irregular plural *the children's books*; classical names ending in *-s* allow *Socrates'* or *Socrates's*.
- Contractions: *it's* (= it is/has), *who's* (= who is), *they're, you're, let's*.
- Never for plurals: ✗ *apple's for sale, the 1990's, two PhD's* → ✓ *apples, the 1990s, two PhDs*.
- The possessive pronouns have none: *its, hers, ours, theirs, whose*.
- Time and money possessives: *a day's pay, two weeks' notice*.

27.5 Quotation marks

- AmE: double quotes, commas and periods *inside*: *"Call it 'luck,"' she said.* BrE: often single quotes, punctuation placed by logic: *'Call it "luck"', she said.*
- Question and exclamation marks go inside only if they belong to the quotation: *Did she really say "never"?* vs. *She asked, "Why me?"*
- Scare quotes signal distance — use sparingly: *the "upgrade" broke everything.*

27.6 Restrictive punctuation as meaning

Punctuation changes truth conditions. Classic contrasts:

- *The players, who were exhausted, asked to stop.* (all) vs. *The players who were exhausted asked to stop.* (some)
- *Let's eat, Grandma.* vs. *Let's eat Grandma.*
- *The panel interviewed the finalists, who impressed them.* vs. *. . . the finalists who impressed them.*

- *She didn't leave, because she was angry.* (she stayed — anger was the reason) vs. *She didn't leave because she was angry.* (ambiguous: perhaps she left for another reason)

Exercises

Exercise 27.1 Punctuate

Insert all necessary punctuation.

1. after the merger was announced the share price which had been falling for months doubled
2. the recipe calls for flour butter sugar and three large eggs
3. there was only one problem nobody had tested the parachute
4. my brother who lives in oslo is visiting my sister lives here
5. its been a year since the company lost its licence

Exercise 27.2 Comma splice repair

Repair each splice in two different ways.

1. The deadline passed, nobody had submitted anything.
2. She is a brilliant negotiator, her deals prove it.

Exercise 27.3 Hyphenation

Add or remove hyphens as required.

1. a well respected twenty year old critic
2. the strategy was ill conceived but the ill conceived plan succeeded anyway (fix both halves)
3. a quickly-assembled team of highly trained engineers
4. they signed a five year, thirty million dollar contract

Exercise 27.4 Meaning by punctuation

Explain the difference in meaning within each pair.

1. (a) The staff, who joined after 2020, get no bonus. (b) The staff who joined after 2020 get no bonus.
2. (a) She said the manager is lying. (b) She, said the manager, is lying.
3. (a) Re-sign the contract. (b) Resign the contract… I mean, resign from the post.

28

Structural Traps: Danglers, Parallelism, and Ambiguity

This chapter is a field guide to the constructions that ambush proficient writers: sentences that are grammatical in form yet defective in attachment, balance, or reference.

28.1 Dangling and misplaced modifiers

28.1.1 Danglers

A modifier "dangles" when its implied subject is absent from the sentence:

- ✗ *Having reviewed the file, the appeal was rejected.* (the appeal didn't review) → ✓ *Having reviewed the file,* ***the judge*** *rejected the appeal.*
- ✗ *At the age of six, my family emigrated.* → ✓ *When I was six, my family emigrated.*
- ✗ *To qualify for the discount, the form must be submitted by May.* → ✓ *To qualify for the discount,* ***you*** *must submit the form by May.*

Some danglers are sanctioned idioms — *speaking of, judging by, considering, given, assuming, strictly speaking*: ***Judging by*** *the noise, the party was a success* is fine.

28.1.2 Misplaced modifiers

Modifiers attach to the nearest plausible host — put them next to what they modify:

- ✗ *She served sandwiches to the guests on paper plates.* (guests on plates?) → ✓ *She served the guests sandwiches on paper plates.*
- ✗ *We saw a fox driving through the forest.* → ✓ *Driving through the forest, we saw a fox.*
- Squinting modifier: ✗ *Runners who train rarely get injured.* (rarely train, or rarely get injured?) → ✓ *Runners who rarely train get injured.* / *Runners who train get injured only rarely.*

28.2 Faulty parallelism

Coordinated items must share a grammatical shape. Readers use the first item as a template for the rest; breaking the template derails them.

- ✗ *She likes hiking, to swim, and reading novels.* → ✓ *She likes hiking, swimming, and reading novels.*
- ✗ *The job requires attention to detail, communicating clearly, and that you meet deadlines.* → ✓ *The job requires attention to detail, clear communication, and reliable delivery.*

- Correlatives must flank matching constituents: ✗ *She not only speaks French but also German.* → ✓ *She speaks not only French but also German.* Same for *either. . . or, neither. . . nor, both. . . and, whether. . . or*.
- Comparisons need comparable terms: ✗ *The rules of chess are more complex than checkers.* → ✓ *. . . than* ***those of*** *checkers.*
- Shared words must fit every branch: ✗ *The staff were informed of and trained in the new system* works (*of/in* both present); ✗ *He has and always will support the club* fails (*has support*?) → ✓ *He has always supported the club and always will.*

28.3 Ambiguity

28.3.1 Attachment ambiguity

The officer watched the man ***with binoculars****.* — who has the binoculars? *We discussed the proposal* ***to cut costs at Friday's meeting****.* — cutting at the meeting, or discussing at the meeting? Resolve by moving the modifier or splitting the sentence: *At Friday's meeting, we discussed the proposal to cut costs.*

28.3.2 Coordination scope

old men and women (old [men and women] or [old men] and women?); *Croatian history teachers* ([Croatian history] teachers or Croatian [history teachers]?). Repair with a hyphen (*Croatian-history teachers*), reordering (*women and old men*), or expansion (*teachers of Croatian history*).

28.3.3 Pronoun reference

- ✗ *When Ana met Clara, she was nervous.* — who? Repeat the noun or restructure: ✓ *Ana was nervous when she met Clara.*
- Vague *this/that/it/which* pointing at a whole clause: ✗ *Sales rose but returns doubled, which pleased no one.* — what exactly displeased? → ✓ *. . . , a combination that pleased no one* (anchor *this/which* to a summary noun: *this trend, this discrepancy*).
- ✗ *The city council refused the marchers a permit because they feared violence.* — *they*? Rewrite: ✓ *. . . because the council feared violence.*

28.3.4 Negation scope

All the candidates were not qualified — none, or not all? Prefer ✓ *None of the candidates was qualified* or ✓ *Not all the candidates were qualified.* Similarly *I didn't go because it was raining* — add a comma (*didn't go, because*) or rewrite (*It was the rain that kept me home / I went, but not because of the rain*).

28.4 Garden-path sentences

Some grammatical sentences force the reader to backtrack:

- *The horse raced past the barn fell.* (= The horse [that was] raced past the barn fell.)
- *The old man the boats.* (= The old [people] man [= crew] the boats.)
- *Fat people eat accumulates.* (= Fat [that people eat] accumulates.)

Real prose creates milder versions whenever a reduced relative or an omitted *that* invites the wrong first parse: *He warned the students taking the exam late arrivals would be barred* → add *that*: ✓ *He warned the students taking the exam* ***that*** *late arrivals would be barred.*

Style & Register

The cure for every trap in this chapter is the same discipline: read your sentence as a stranger would, one word at a time, asking at each point "what would I attach this to?" When in doubt, prefer the boring restructure to the elegant ambiguity.

Exercises

Exercise 28.1 Repair the modifiers

1. Flying over the valley, the villages looked like toys.
2. After marinating overnight, you can grill the chicken.
3. The tour includes a visit to the palace, which lasts two hours.
4. He nearly earned $100,000 last year. (he earned almost that amount — fix *nearly*)

Exercise 28.2 Restore parallelism

1. The course teaches how to draft, editing, and revision strategies.
2. We want either to expand into Asia or Europe.
3. Her lectures were witty, insightful, and never ran over time.
4. Cycling is better for the environment than to drive.

Exercise 28.3 Disambiguate

Give both readings, then rewrite to force each one.

1. Visiting relatives can be exhausting.
2. The chicken is ready to eat.
3. Flavio saw the tourist with the telescope.
4. Small business owners protested the new tax.

29

Usage Disputes and the Grammar of Style

The final frontier of mastery is knowing which "rules" are real, which are conventions of edited prose, and which are superstitions. This chapter sorts the classic disputes into three bins: **genuine rules**, **register conventions**, and **zombie rules** (invented prohibitions that never matched good usage).

29.1 Zombie rules: safe to ignore

Split infinitives *to boldly go* has been standard English for centuries. Split when rhythm or clarity demands: *She decided **to gradually reduce** her hours* (moving *gradually* elsewhere changes the meaning or the emphasis). Avoid only very wide splits: ✗ *to, without telling anyone or leaving a note, go*.

Ending a sentence with a preposition Fully standard: *This is the kind of pedantry I will not put up **with**. What are you looking **at**?* Fronting is available for formality (*the principles for which we stand*), not required.

Starting a sentence with *and* or *but* Standard at every level of formality, and ancient. *But* as an opener is often the cleanest contrast marker. Do not overuse.

***whose* for things** *a theory whose implications are vast* is correct; *of which* is available but often clumsier.

***hopefully* as a sentence adverb** *Hopefully, the rain will stop* is as legitimate as *frankly* or *fortunately* used the same way, and is accepted by modern usage panels.

29.2 Register conventions: know your audience

who* vs. *whom *Whom* is required only in formal writing, and only where an object pronoun would appear: *To **whom** it may concern; the candidate **whom** we selected*. Test by substitution: *he* → *who*, *him* → *whom*. In speech, *who* everywhere (except right after a preposition) is unremarkable. Hypercorrect *whom* is worse than no *whom*: ✗ *the applicant whom we hope will join us* → ✓ *who we hope will join us* (subject of *will join*).

less* vs. *fewer Edited prose prefers *fewer* with counted plurals (*fewer errors*) and *less* with mass nouns (*less noise*) — but *less* is idiomatic with measures and sums: *less than three weeks, less than $50, one less thing to worry about*.

like* vs. *as (if) Conservative style reserves *like* for noun comparisons (*runs like a deer*) and *as / as if* for clauses (*as I said, as if he knew*). Conversational English uses *like* for both; formal writing still expects *as*.

data, media, criteria See Chapter 1: singular *data* is standard outside conservative scientific venues; *criteria* and *phenomena* remain firmly plural in edited prose (*one criterion, two criteria*).

***may* vs. *might* in the past** For real possibilities use either; for counterfactuals, careful usage

requires *might have*: *Had the ambulance been slower, she **might have** died* (✗ *may have died* suggests we still don't know).

Contractions Normal in journalism, business email, and this book; avoided in contracts, statutes, and the most formal academic prose.

29.3 Genuine distinctions worth keeping

imply / infer The speaker implies; the listener infers.

uninterested / disinterested *Uninterested* = bored; *disinterested* = impartial (*a disinterested referee*). The distinction is eroding but still enforced in careful prose.

affect / effect Verb *affect* (influence), noun *effect* (result); rarer: verb *effect* (bring about — *effect change*), noun *affect* (psychology: emotional state).

lie / lay *lie–lay–lain* (no object); *lay– laid–laid* (takes an object): *I lay down at noon; I laid the book down.* The past of *lie* being *lay* causes the confusion — memorize the two full paradigms.

its / it's, your / you're, their / they're / there Not usage debates — plain spelling errors with outsized reputational cost.

i.e. / e.g. *i.e.* = that is (restates); *e.g.* = for example (samples). Both take a following comma in AmE style and are confined to parentheses and notes in formal prose.

Dangling modifiers, comma splices, agreement The genuinely grammatical core — Chapters 28, 27, and 25.

29.4 The grammar of good sentences

Beyond correctness, a handful of grammatical habits does most of the work of "good style":

1. **Put characters in subjects and actions in verbs.** ✗ *The collapse of the bridge was due to the failure of the inspectors to detect corrosion.* → ✓ *The bridge collapsed because the inspectors failed to detect corrosion.*
2. **Keep subject and verb close.** Long interruptions between them are where readers get lost (and agreement errors breed — Chapter 25).
3. **End sentences on the news** (end-focus, Chapter 24).
4. **Prune throat-clearing:** ✗ *It is important to note that*, ✗ *the fact that*, ✗ *in terms of*, ✗ *there is a need for* — each usually deletable.
5. **Vary sentence length deliberately.** A short sentence after long ones lands like a verdict. Like this.
6. **Prefer the concrete verb** to verb + nominalization: *decide* not *make a decision*, *examine* not *conduct an examination of* — unless the nominal serves cohesion (Chapter 20).

Exercises

Exercise 29.1 Rule, convention, or zombie?

Classify each "rule" and justify in one sentence.

1. Never begin a sentence with *because*.
2. Use *fewer* with count nouns in formal writing.
3. Never split an infinitive.
4. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent.

5. Do not use contractions in a legal contract.

Exercise 29.2 Word choice

Choose the form expected in careful edited prose.

1. The witness (implied / inferred) from the smoke that the fire had started earlier.
2. There were (less / fewer) applicants this year.
3. The mediator must remain (uninterested / disinterested).
4. Yesterday I (lay / laid) awake for hours.
5. The policy will (affect / effect) thousands of tenants.
6. If the goalkeeper had reacted faster, we (may / might) have won.

Exercise 29.3 Style surgery

Rewrite for characters-as-subjects, actions-as-verbs, and end-focus.

1. It is important to note that a reduction in costs was achieved by the new team through the elimination of redundant processes.
2. There is a possibility of the occurrence of delays due to the implementation of the upgrade of the system this weekend.
3. The rejection of the proposal by the committee was a disappointment to the applicants.

A

Irregular Verbs

The list below covers the irregular verbs an advanced learner needs. Verbs marked [B] have a common regular alternative in British English (*learned/learnt, dreamed/dreamt*); [A] marks distinctively American forms (*gotten, dove*).

Base	Past	Participle	Base	Past	Participle
arise	arose	arisen	lay	laid	laid
awake	awoke	awoken	lead	led	led
be	was/were	been	lean[B]	leant	leant
bear	bore	borne/born	learn[B]	learnt	learnt
beat	beat	beaten	leave	left	left
become	became	become	lend	lent	lent
begin	began	begun	let	let	let
bend	bent	bent	lie (recline)	lay	lain
bet	bet	bet	light	lit	lit
bind	bound	bound	lose	lost	lost
bite	bit	bitten	make	made	made
bleed	bled	bled	mean	meant	meant
blow	blew	blown	meet	met	met
break	broke	broken	pay	paid	paid
bring	brought	brought	put	put	put
build	built	built	quit	quit	quit
burn[B]	burnt	burnt	read	read	read
burst	burst	burst	ride	rode	ridden
buy	bought	bought	ring	rang	rung
catch	caught	caught	rise	rose	risen
choose	chose	chosen	run	ran	run
cling	clung	clung	say	said	said
come	came	come	see	saw	seen
cost	cost	cost	seek	sought	sought
creep	crept	crept	sell	sold	sold
cut	cut	cut	send	sent	sent
deal	dealt	dealt	set	set	set
dig	dug	dug	shake	shook	shaken
dive[A]	dived/dove	dived	shine	shone	shone
do	did	done	shoot	shot	shot
draw	drew	drawn	show	showed	shown
dream[B]	dreamt	dreamt	shrink	shrank	shrunk
drink	drank	drunk	shut	shut	shut
drive	drove	driven	sing	sang	sung
eat	ate	eaten	sink	sank	sunk
fall	fell	fallen	sit	sat	sat
feed	fed	fed	sleep	slept	slept
feel	felt	felt	slide	slid	slid
fight	fought	fought	speak	spoke	spoken

Base	Past	Participle	Base	Past	Participle
find	found	found	spend	spent	spent
flee	fled	fled	spill[B]	spilt	spilt
fly	flew	flown	spin	spun	spun
forbid	forbade	forbidden	split	split	split
forget	forgot	forgotten	spread	spread	spread
forgive	forgave	forgiven	spring	sprang	sprung
freeze	froze	frozen	stand	stood	stood
get[A]	got	got/gotten	steal	stole	stolen
give	gave	given	stick	stuck	stuck
go	went	gone	sting	stung	stung
grind	ground	ground	strike	struck	struck
grow	grew	grown	swear	swore	sworn
hang	hung	hung	sweep	swept	swept
have	had	had	swim	swam	swum
hear	heard	heard	swing	swung	swung
hide	hid	hidden	take	took	taken
hit	hit	hit	teach	taught	taught
hold	held	held	tear	tore	torn
hurt	hurt	hurt	tell	told	told
keep	kept	kept	think	thought	thought
kneel[B]	knelt	knelt	throw	threw	thrown
know	knew	known	understand	understood	understood
			wake	woke	woken
			wear	wore	worn
			weep	wept	wept
			win	won	won
			wind	wound	wound
			write	wrote	written

Usage Note

Three troublesome pairs: *lie–lay–lain* (recline) vs. *lay–laid–laid* (put down) vs. regular *lie–lied–lied* (tell untruths); *hang–hung–hung* (suspend) vs. regular *hang–hanged–hanged* (execute); *rise–rose–risen* (no object) vs. *raise–raised–raised* (takes an object).

B

Glossary of Grammatical Terms

adjunct
An optional element adding circumstantial information (time, place, manner): *She resigned **last week**.*

agreement (concord)
Matching of grammatical features, chiefly subject and verb in number and person.

anaphora
Reference back to something already mentioned: *Maria arrived late. **She** apologized.*

aspect
The viewpoint on an event's internal structure — progressive (ongoing) or perfect (retrospective) — as opposed to tense, which locates it in time.

auxiliary verb
A helping verb (*be, have, do*, and the modals) that supports tense, aspect, voice, negation, and questions.

bare infinitive
The infinitive without *to*: *let him **go***.

case The form a pronoun takes by function: subjective (*I*), objective (*me*), possessive (*my/mine*).

cataphora
Reference forward: *Before **she** spoke, **Ana** checked her notes.*

causative
A construction expressing that the subject causes an action to be done: *have the car repaired*.

cleft sentence
A structure splitting one clause in two to focus an element: *It was Jo who called.*

collective noun
A singular noun denoting a group: *team, committee*.

comparative
The form of an adjective or adverb expressing "more": *faster, more useful*.

complement
An element required to complete a head's meaning: *She became **a judge**. He relied **on luck**.*

conditional
A sentence linking a condition (*if*-clause) to a result.

conjunction
A linking word: coordinating (*and, but, or*) or subordinating (*because, although, if*).

constituent
A word or group of words functioning as a single unit within a hierarchy.

coordination
Joining elements of equal rank: *tea **and** coffee*.

countable noun
A noun with singular and plural forms that can be counted: *book/books*.

determiner
A word specifying a noun's reference: *the, this, some, every, my*.

direct object
The entity directly affected by the verb: *She wrote **a letter**.*

ellipsis
Omission of recoverable words: *She can sing and (she can) dance.*

ergative verb
A verb usable transitively and intransitively with the object becoming subject: *open, break, sell*.

extraposition
Moving a heavy subject clause to the end, leaving *it*: ***It** helps **that you came**.*

finite verb
A verb form marked for tense and agreeing with a subject: *she **writes*** (vs. non-finite *writing, to write, written*).

fronting
Moving an element to initial position for emphasis or cohesion.

gerund
The *-ing* form functioning as a noun: *I enjoy **swimming**.*

head
The word that determines a phrase's category: the noun in an NP, the verb in a VP.

hedging
Grammatical and lexical softening of claims: *may, appear, arguably*.

imperative
The base-form clause type used for directives: ***Sit** down.*

indirect object
The recipient/beneficiary: *She gave **him** a book.*

infinitive
The base form, usually with *to*: *to write*.

intransitive verb
A verb taking no object: *arrive, sleep*.

inversion
Reversal of subject and (auxiliary) verb: *Never **have I**. . .*

modal verb
An auxiliary expressing possibility, necessity, permission, etc.: *can, must, might*.

mood
The grammatical marking of factuality: indicative, imperative, subjunctive.

nominalization
Recasting a verb or adjective as a noun: *decide* → *decision*.

noun phrase (NP)
A phrase headed by a noun or pronoun.

participle
The *-ing* (present) or *-ed/-en* (past) verb form used in compound tenses, passives, and as modifiers.

particle
: The adverb-like element of a phrasal verb: *give **up***.

passive voice
: The construction promoting the object to subject: *The law **was changed**.*

perfect
: The aspect relating an event to a later reference time: *has finished*, *had left*.

phrasal verb
: A verb + particle combination with (often) idiomatic meaning: *put off*.

predicate
: What is said about the subject; the VP.

preposition
: A word relating a noun phrase to the rest of the clause: *in*, *on*, *despite*.

pronoun
: A word standing in for a noun phrase: *she*, *it*, *themselves*, *who*.

quantifier
: A determiner or pronoun of quantity: *many*, *few*, *all*, *several*.

register
: The variety of language suited to a situation — formal, neutral, informal.

relative clause
: A clause modifying a noun, introduced by *who*, *which*, *that*, etc.

reported speech
: Conveying utterances without quoting: *She said she was tired.*

stative verb
: A verb of state rather than action, resisting the progressive: *know*, *belong*.

subjunctive
: The mood of non-factuality: *I insist that he **be** present; if I **were** you*.

subordination
: Embedding a clause inside another: *I left **because it was late**.*

superlative
: The "most" form: *fastest*, *most useful*.

tense
: Grammatical location of an event in time — in English, past vs. present, with future expressed periphrastically.

transitive verb
: A verb requiring a direct object: *take*, *make*.

uncountable (mass) noun
: A noun with no plural, treated as an undifferentiated mass: *water*, *advice*.

valency
: The number and type of complements a verb selects.

voice
: The active/passive alternation.

zero article
: The meaningful absence of an article: *Ø Life is short.*

C

Answer Key

Where several answers are possible, the most natural one is given first; acceptable alternatives follow in parentheses.

Chapter 1

1.1 1 C 2 U 3 U 4 U 5 C (= an article) 6 U

1.2 1 an engineer; a European company 2 — Honesty; the best policy 3 the Alps; — Italy 4 — breakfast; a hotel; the station 5 The water 6 — work; — bus

1.3 1 the *children's* toys 2 three *sisters-in-law* 3 These *phenomena* 4 two *loaves of bread* and some *milk* 5 My *parents'* house

Chapter 2

2.1 1 me 2 I 3 him 4 their (or *his or her* in very formal style) 5 its

2.2 1 little 2 some 3 any 4 a few 5 Few

2.3 1 Neither of the answers *was* correct. 2 send the report *to me* 3 *Every employee* must 4 *These* shoes 5 tell *them* I'm in a meeting

Chapter 3

3.1 1 freezes 2 are having 3 drives; is cycling 4 don't understand 5 is snowing 6 arrives

3.2 1 Does she speak Portuguese? 2 They aren't ready. 3 Has he got a driving licence? 4 The children don't like broccoli. 5 Are there any messages for me?

3.3 1 He *doesn't* work 2 I *don't believe* this story 3 She *has* two children 4 Does he *play*. . . ? 5 I *agree* with 6 She *always drinks* tea in the morning.

Chapter 4

4.1 bought, caught, came, drank, fell, felt, flew, forgot, held, left, lost, paid, ran, taught, thought, threw, wore, won, wrote, began

4.2 1 rang; left 2 found; was walking 3 didn't hear; was listening 4 were you doing

4.3 1 I'll get 2 are going to drop 3 are flying 4 begins 5 will pass ('re going to pass)

4.4 1 I used to drink coffee every morning. 2 She is used to working night shifts. 3 There used to be a bakery on this corner.

Chapter 5

5.1 1 beautifully 2 easy 3 fast 4 well; good 5 badly

5.2 1 the worst 2 bigger 3 difficult 4 The further (farther); the drier 5 the most talented

5.3 1 on; at 2 in; in; in 3 at; in 4 on 5 at; at

5.4 1 She bought a beautiful Italian leather handbag. 2 He speaks English very fluently. 3 The train is almost always on time. 4 The actors performed wonderfully at the theatre last night.

Chapter 6

6.1 1 Who broke the window? 2 What did she break? 3 How often do they go to the gym? 4 Why was he late? 5 How long does the journey take?

6.2 1 aren't you 2 does she 3 haven't they 4 aren't I 5 shall we

6.3 1 Where *did you buy* that jacket? 2 I didn't see *anybody* (I saw nobody) 3 "*Neither* can I." 4 What *happens* if I press this button? 5 *Explain to me* why you are late. (Tell me why. . .)

Chapter 7

7.1 1 wrote 2 have known 3 Have you ever tried 4 moved 5 has grown 6 missed

7.2 1 Have you been running? 2 has written 3 have they been learning 4 have been reading 5 has eaten

7.3 1 By the time we reached the station, the train had left. 2 After she had spent all her money, she asked her brother for a loan. 3 He had never flown before, so he was nervous at the airport.

7.4 1 will have built 2 will be having 3 will have been married

Chapter 8

8.1 1 don't have to 2 mustn't 3 was able to 4 can't 5 should

8.2 1 Laura must have forgotten the meeting. 2 You shouldn't have lent him money. 3 They may/might have taken an earlier flight. 4 You needn't have printed the documents. 5 Marco can't have written this.

8.3 1 She *can* speak 2 must *submit* 3 would *have* called 4 *Can you* help me. . . ? 5 I *had to* work until midnight.

Chapter 9

9.1 1 leave (first) 2 gets (zero) 3 were (second) 4 had warned (third) 5 wouldn't be (second)

9.2 1 Unless we hurry, we'll miss the train. 2 If I had known you were ill, I would have visited you. 3 I wish I had bought that house. 4 I wish he wouldn't leave the door open. 5 Take some cash in case the card machine doesn't work.

9.3 1 If I *see* her 2 If you *had listened* 3 I wish I *could* speak Chinese. 4 *Unless you apologize* / If you don't apologize 5 If he *were* here now

Chapter 10

10.1 1 The office is cleaned every evening. 2 A new stadium is being built near the river. 3 All the dishes have been prepared by hand. 4 It is said that the water in this spring heals

wounds. / The water in this spring is said to heal wounds. 5 The equipment must be returned by Friday. 6 The mural was painted by a local artist in 1998.

10.2 1 B (topic is the suspect; agent obvious) 2 B (scientific convention; agent irrelevant) 3 A (the assistant is newsworthy, so keep her as subject)

10.3 1 I had my hair cut yesterday. 2 We're going to have our garage door repaired. 3 She had her passport stolen while (she was) travelling.

Chapter 11

11.1 1 waiting; to queue 2 to help; (to) organize 3 writing 4 breaking 5 hearing 6 show

11.2 1 (a) he quit coffee; (b) he paused (some activity) in order to drink one 2 (a) I recall the past act of posting; (b) I must not neglect the future act 3 (a) experiment — talking to her may solve the problem; (b) make the attempt to talk (it may be difficult) 4 (a) I watched the complete episode of playing; (b) I saw them in the middle of playing

11.3 1 suggested *taking* 2 wants her son *to study* 3 without *saying* 4 used to *driving* 5 let me *stay* 6 Avoid *travelling*

Chapter 12

12.1 1 The nurse who looked after my mother was very kind. 2 A bypass is a road that/which goes around a town. 3 Marie Curie, whose research changed physics, won two Nobel Prizes. 4 We stayed in the village where Picasso was born. 5 My laptop, which I bought only last month, has crashed again.

12.2 1 commas (non-defining: only one sister) 2 no commas 3 commas 4 no commas

12.3 1 The man talking to Sara is my uncle. 2 Applications received after May 1 will not be considered. 3 She was the first athlete to break the record twice. 4 Students wishing to attend should register online.

Chapter 13

13.1 1 Marta said (that) she was leaving the next day. 2 They said they hadn't seen that film. 3 Grandpa said he couldn't find his glasses. 4 The professor said the results would be published the following week. 5 My brother said he hadn't touched my phone.

13.2 1 She asked where the nearest bank was. 2 He wanted to know if/whether I had enjoyed the concert. 3 The guard told us not to open the window. 4 They asked me how long I had been waiting. 5 The airline advised passengers to check their booking details again.

13.3 1 He admitted breaking the vase (that he had broken the vase). 2 He promised to pay me back on Monday. 3 She suggested taking the coastal road. 4 She apologized for shouting at me. 5 He accused her of copying his design.

Chapter 14

14.1 1 The higher we climbed, the more difficult breathing became. 2 That hotel is nowhere near as cheap as this one. 3 This is the most moving novel I have ever read. 4 Her flat is twice as big as mine (twice the size of mine).

14.2 1 Each 2 whole 3 Most 4 so 5 so

14.3 1 *The* unemployed often face — discrimination. 2 *the* violin; *the* drums 3 *The* whale is *the* largest mammal on — Earth (on *the* Earth also possible). 4 — television; *the* radio

Chapter 15

15.1 1 called off 2 ran into (came across) 3 set up 4 fill in (fill out) 5 cut down on 6 look into

15.2 1 up with 2 out of; up 3 after 4 out 5 down

15.3 1 Please switch them off. 2 She brought them up alone. 3 They called it off. 4 I'll look into it tomorrow. (inseparable — pronoun follows the preposition)

Chapter 16

16.1 1 had left; was clearing; noticed; had slipped 2 would tell (used to tell); went

16.2 1 . . . that the company would collapse within a year. 2 We were about to leave (were going to leave) just as you texted. 3 The ceremony was to have been held outdoors, but the storm forced it inside.

16.3 1 *Did you ever meet* — his lifetime is a closed period. 2 *are being* — temporary behaviour, not character. 3 *was wondering* — past progressive distances the request, making it more tentative and polite. 4 *had been* — the decision preceded the (past) announcement.

Chapter 17

17.1 1 hadn't moved; would speak 2 were; wouldn't have lost 3 had accepted; would be working

17.2 1 Should you change your mind, let us know. 2 Had the government acted sooner, lives would have been saved. 3 Were the company to relocate, half the staff would leave. 4 Had it not been for the referee's error, we would have won.

17.3 1 take (should take) 2 be 3 be reversed 4 were 5 did

Chapter 18

18.1 1 Never have I heard such nonsense. 2 Only after two years were the results published. 3 Hardly had we left the house when it began to snow. 4 Under no circumstances should you open this door. 5 Not only does she speak five languages, but she also plays three instruments.

18.2 1 It was the manager who approved the budget. 2 What I admire about her is her honesty. 3 It is in the second act that the show becomes interesting. 4 All we need is a little more time.

18.3 1 No sooner *had we arrived* than. . . 2 So *strong was* the wind that. . . 3 Little *did he know*. . . 4 correct 5 Not until 1920 *could women vote* in the United States.

Chapter 19

19.1 1 Having lost his ticket, he had to buy another. 2 Having checked the figures twice, she submitted the report. 3 The hotel being full, we drove to the next town. 4 The contract (having been) signed, the partners shook hands. 5 Not knowing the area, I used a map.

19.2 1 Because he had been warned twice, the driver lost his licence. 2 If the weather permits, the flight will leave on time. 3 Because she hadn't read the manual, she pressed the wrong button. 4 When it is seen from above, the island resembles a crescent.

19.3 1 As we drove through the desert, the temperature reached 45 °C. 2 Having finished the meal, we asked for the bill. 3 When I opened the cupboard, a mouse jumped out. 4 Written in 1848, the pamphlet still electrifies readers.

Chapter 20

20.1 (a) 1 The committee's quick decision surprised everyone. 2 The growth in demand pushed prices up. 3 The two sides' agreement ended the strike. (b) 4 The team reviewed the proposal. 5 The pump failed at midnight. 6 Residents resisted the demolition of the theatre.

20.2 1 She washed the dishes, and then dried them. 2 I haven't read the report, but I will tonight. 3 He plays tennis, and his wife golf. 4 "I'd like to, but I can't."

20.3 1 I hope *so*. 2 than my new *one* 3 and she *did (so)* 4 I'm afraid *not*.

Chapter 21

21.1 1 Despite 2 therefore 3 Even if 4 on the other hand 5 *However* you look at it (= no matter how)

21.2 1 The results were promising; however, the sample was tiny. 2 Although the price was high, the quality was poor. 3 Despite his injury (In spite of his injury), he played the full match. 4 e.g. "Although the theory is elegant, it has little evidence; nevertheless, it remains popular."

21.3 1 Experienced as she was, she failed the simulation. 2 However much it costs, we need it. 3 Admittedly, he apologized. The damage, however, was done.

Chapter 22

22.1 1 We're going to have the ring engraved. 2 The customs officers made him open his suitcase. 3 I got my neighbour to water the plants. 4 She had her credit card details stolen. 5 The new rules let staff work remotely.

22.2 1 The museum closed at five. 2 This jacket washes well. 3 The first edition sold out within a week. 4 The fire started in the basement.

22.3 1 It is said that the mayor is considering resignation. / The mayor is said to be considering resignation. 2 The temple is believed to have been destroyed in 900 AD. 3 These allegations have not been looked into. 4 The old professor was looked up to by everyone.

Chapter 23

23.1 1 *gave the letter* fails movement and clefting (**It was gave the letter that she to her lawyer*) — not a constituent. 2 *the defendant guilty* resists the standard tests as a unit in movement, though many grammars treat it as a small clause; at minimum, *the defendant* and *guilty* are separate constituents of the VP. 3 Ambiguous: as one constituent (= students who were in the hall) it passes substitution (*to them*); as two (speaking took place in the hall) each PP passes tests separately. 4 Passes substitution (*That soon became obvious*) — a subject clause, hence a constituent.

23.2 1 adjunct 2 complement 3 *a judge*: complement; *in 2019*: adjunct 4 *on the shelf*: complement (required by *place*); *this morning*: adjunct

23.3 1 discussed the merger 2 comprises ten components (consists of ten components) 3 emphasized the need 4 prevent the disease from spreading 5 provides readers with useful comparisons (provides useful comparisons for readers)

Chapter 24

24.1 1 "Titanium proved the most durable." (the rest is given) 2 "Forty engineers now work there." 3 It works because *the stranger's arrival* repackages the previous sentence as given information, and the news (*changed everything*) comes at the end.

24.2 1 It amazed the doctors that anyone could survive a fall from that height without serious injury. 2 She sent us the analysis that the client had been demanding for weeks. 3 He turned down the most lucrative sponsorship deal in the sport's history.

24.3 1 She lent *only her car* to her brother on Sundays. 2 She lent her car *only to her brother* on Sundays. 3 She lent her car to her brother *only on Sundays*.

Chapter 25

25.1 1 is 2 were (nearer subject) 3 have 4 is 5 are (BrE, individuals) 6 makes 7 was (proximity; *were* also defensible) 8 listen

25.2 1 was left 2 Each. . . *has* strengths 3 The committee *has* submitted *its* report (or *have. . . their*) 4 More than one candidate *was* shortlisted 5 The quality. . . *leaves* much to be desired

25.3 1 Either you are responsible for locking up, or your sister is. 2 Neither the tenants nor the landlord *wants* the case to go to court. (or: The landlord doesn't want the case to go to court, and neither do the tenants.) 3 Every doctor and every nurse *has* signed the petition.

Chapter 26

26.1 Sample answers: 1 Remote work *may improve* productivity *for some* employees, *although effects vary* across roles. 2 The new drug *appears to be effective against* the disease *in early trials*. 3 *Some studies suggest an association between* violent video games *and* short-term aggression; *causal evidence remains weak*. 4 Our model *correctly predicted* the last three elections, *which suggests it may generalize*.

26.2 1 The sample may be biased. 2 Prices tend to rise.

26.3 1 We found that many users postpone updating their software. 2 They investigated the problem but could not determine what had triggered it. 3 The plan failed because the backers withdrew. 4 e.g. "Shame the speed-up we were hoping for didn't happen."

Chapter 27

27.1 1 After the merger was announced, the share price, which had been falling for months, doubled. 2 The recipe calls for flour, butter, sugar(,) and three large eggs. 3 There was only one problem: nobody had tested the parachute. 4 My brother, who lives in Oslo, is visiting; my sister lives here. 5 It's been a year since the company lost its licence.

27.2 1 The deadline passed; nobody had submitted anything. / The deadline passed, but nobody had submitted anything. 2 She is a brilliant negotiator; her deals prove it. / She is a brilliant negotiator — her deals prove it.

27.3 1 a well-respected twenty-year-old critic 2 The strategy was ill conceived, but the ill-conceived plan succeeded anyway. 3 a quickly assembled team of highly trained engineers (no hyphens after *-ly* adverbs) 4 a five-year, thirty-million-dollar contract

27.4 1 (a) all staff joined after 2020 and none gets a bonus; (b) only the post-2020 joiners are excluded. 2 (a) she reports that the manager lies; (b) the manager reports that *she* lies. 3 *re-sign* = sign again; *resign* = give up the post — the hyphen reverses the meaning.

Chapter 28

28.1 1 As we flew over the valley, the villages looked like toys. 2 After the chicken has marinated overnight, you can grill it. 3 The tour includes a two-hour visit to the palace. 4 He

earned nearly $100,000 last year.

28.2 1 The course teaches drafting, editing, and revising. 2 We want to expand into either Asia or Europe. 3 Her lectures were witty and insightful, and they never ran over time. 4 Cycling is better for the environment than driving.

28.3 1 (i) relatives who visit are tiring → "Relatives who visit can be exhausting"; (ii) going to visit relatives is tiring → "Visiting our relatives can be exhausting." 2 (i) the chicken is cooked and can be eaten → "The chicken is ready to be eaten"; (ii) the chicken is hungry → "The chicken is ready for its feed." 3 (i) Flavio used the telescope → "Through the telescope, Flavio saw the tourist"; (ii) the tourist carried it → "Flavio saw the tourist who was carrying the telescope." 4 (i) owners of small businesses → "Small-business owners protested"; (ii) short business owners → "The small owners of businesses protested" (forced reading).

Chapter 29

29.1 1 zombie — *Because she was ill, she stayed home* is impeccable; the myth targets fragments, not the word. 2 convention — expected in edited prose, relaxed in speech and with measures. 3 zombie — split when clarity or rhythm benefits. 4 genuine rule of grammar. 5 register convention — correct for that genre, not a rule of grammar.

29.2 1 inferred 2 fewer 3 disinterested 4 lay 5 affect 6 might

29.3 Sample rewrites: 1 The new team cut costs by eliminating redundant processes. 2 This weekend's system upgrade may cause delays. 3 The committee's rejection of the proposal disappointed the applicants. (Better: The committee rejected the proposal, disappointing the applicants.)