

Language reference

These reference pages give you more details about the grammar focused on in the course book units. Refer to these pages when you do your workbook exercises. They are a good way to revise and make sure you understand how to use all the key language from the course.

The notes show how to form sentences using grammatical structures and how these forms change. They also give details of exceptions and tricky areas.

The notes also give clear examples of how language is used in complete sentences and exchanges. You can use and adapt these examples to develop your own sentences and conversations.



Units 1 & 2

Revision of tenses

Present simple

We use the present simple to talk about things that are generally true. These can be facts or current information. We use the verbs *be* and *do*.

- Examples**
- A** Is Milan in Italy?
B Yes, it is.
- A** Where's Jon?
B He's in the library.
- A** Do you eat fish?
B No, I don't.
- A** Does Lara play tennis?
B No, she doesn't.

We use the short form of *be* when it is followed by a phrase but not in a short answer.

- Example**
- A** Are you cold?
B Yes, I'm freezing./Yes, I am.

Present continuous

We use the present continuous to talk about current activities. These can be activities in progress as we speak or situations around the time of speaking.

- Examples**
- A** Are you feeling OK?
B Yes, I'm fine.
- A** How's your course going?
B It's going really well, thanks.

Present perfect

We use the present perfect to talk about experiences and events that happened in the past and may happen in the future. We don't use the present perfect with a definite time.

- Examples**
- A** Have you ever been to Australia?
B Yes, I have. I've been twice.
- A** Have you had your results yet?
B Not yet. They should come any day now.
- A** ~~Have you been~~ Did you go to the maths lecture yesterday?
B Yes, I did.

Past simple

We use the past simple to talk about finished events in the past.

- Example** He studied very hard and got an 'A' grade for his science exam.

We use the past simple of *be* or *do* to make questions.

- Examples**
- A** Was the feedback OK?
B Yes, it was pretty positive.
- A** Did the lecture finish on time?
B No, the lecturer didn't check the time and went over by 30 minutes.

We refer to a specific time using phrases such as *last year*, *in 1980*, *when he lived in Dubai*, etc. Notice the difference in the use of the past simple with a specific time reference and the present perfect with a non-specific time reference.

- Examples**
- A** Did you ever live abroad *when you were a child*?
B Yes, I lived in Hawaii.
- A** Have you ever lived abroad?
B Yes, I've lived in three different countries.

will

We use *will* to talk about future events.

- Example** The president will give her first speech on 10th November.

We often use *will* with *Do you think ...?* and *Are you sure ...?*

- Examples**
- A** Do you think Paula will come to the dinner?
B Yes, I think so. She's bought a new dress.
- A** Are you sure your tutor will give you a good grade?
B No, I'm not. He doesn't think I work hard enough.

going to

We use *going to* to talk about future plans and intentions.

- Examples**
- A** Have you got any plans for the weekend?
B Yes, I'm going to visit some old friends.
- A** I'm going to learn Portuguese.
B Why?
A Because I want to visit Lisbon one day.

Narrative tenses

When we tell a story, we talk about finished past actions using the past simple.

Example I saw an accident this morning.

We use the past continuous to give background information.

Example I was walking to work.

We can put the two parts of the story together in two ways.

Example I was walking to work when I saw an accident.
I saw an accident while I was walking to work.

We use *when* before the point in time when the event occurred.

We use *while* before the reference to the background situation.

Units 3 & 4

Passives

We use the passive form to focus on the object of the action rather than the performer of the action.

We form the passive with *be* and a past participle. We change the tense of *be* to match the situation.

Examples Liang is being looked after by his relatives.
Liang had been given some money by his uncle to buy a train ticket.

We use the passive when the performer of the action is not important.

Example Liang wanted to leave his village. Fortunately, he was offered a good job in the city.

In this case, the person or company that offered Liang a job is not important.

We also use the passive when the performer is obvious and does not need to be stated.

Example Liang will be given a medical examination before he starts work.
(We know that a doctor will perform the examination.)

Sometimes the performer is unknown.

Example Liang was knocked off his bicycle on his way to the station. He didn't see who it was.

We use *by* when we use the passive and want to give details about the performer of the action.

Example Liang wanted to leave his village. Fortunately, he was offered a good job in the city by a construction company.

Note that we only use the passive with transitive verbs. The passive cannot be used with intransitive verbs.

Examples transitive: put, make, give, read
intransitive: stay, happen, talk, arrive

Some verbs can be transitive or intransitive.

Examples leave, stop, do, live

Units 5 & 6

Modals of deduction

We use modal verbs to say how true we think something is. The modal verb is followed by a verb in the infinitive.

Example Working in a diamond mine must be really tough.

We use *must* when we are sure something is true but do not have direct experience. We base our statement on external evidence. In the example, the speaker has never worked in a diamond mine but has possibly read that working hours are long and the job is dangerous.

We use *can't* to talk about something we are sure is not true.

Example **A** He must be guilty.

B No, he can't be guilty. He was at work when the crime happened.

We use *may*, *might* or *could* when we think it is possible that something is true, but we are not sure.

We often use evidence to support our statement.

Examples **A** The painting may be by van Gogh. The brushstrokes are very similar.

B I don't think so. It was painted in 1950. Look, there's a date at the bottom.

A Will Jane be home soon?

B No, she might be late. She didn't leave the office till after seven.

A Whose is this glove?

B It could be Harry's. He left in a bit of a hurry.

To talk about possibility in the past we use modals in the present perfect.

Examples He must have fallen over. He's covered in mud.

Oh, no! I can't find my phone. I might have dropped it.

We use *can't have* to talk about something that is not true in the past.

Example **A** How did she get in?

B She can't have climbed through the window. It's too high.

A She must have used a ladder.

The negative of *might have* is *might not have*.

First conditional

We use the first conditional to talk about possible future situations and their consequences.

We form the first conditional with the present simple in the *if* clause and *will* in the future clause.

Examples If you work hard, you'll pass your exams.

We can also use the negative form.

Examples If you don't work hard, you won't pass your exams.

We can use *going to* in place of *will* in an appropriate context.

Examples If it rains tonight, I'm going to stay home and watch TV.

In this case, the speaker is talking about their intentions so they can use *going to*.

We can also change the order of clauses in the sentence.

Examples It'll be terrible if someone fails their first-year exams.

We can use *unless* instead of *if not*.

Examples I won't buy a new coat unless it's under \$50.

For consequences that are not certain, we use *may* or *might* and the verb.

Examples If he hands his assignment in late, he might not get a grade.

Second conditional

We use the second conditional to talk about imaginary or unlikely situations.

We form the second conditional with the past simple in the *if* clause and *would* in the future clause.

Situations we describe using the second conditional are less likely to occur than situations we describe using the first conditional.

Examples **A** If I get a well-paid job, I'll save up some money to buy a car.

B If I got a well-paid job, I'd save up some money to buy a car.

In this case, a is more likely to happen than b.

In some cases, the situation described is impossible.

Examples If I was/were a dog, I'd chase rabbits all day.

For *if* clauses with *I* we can use either *was* or *were*.

We can also use *might* or *could* in place of *would*.

Examples If there was a restaurant near here, we could have supper.

Notes

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Notes

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