

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

Present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

We use present perfect tenses to talk about activities and experiences that started in the past but which include the time up to now, or they have a connection with the present.

Present perfect simple

We form the present perfect simple with the subject + *have/has* + past participle.

Example I've visited Kenya, but I've never visited South Africa.

In the example, the person is talking about his or her experiences up until now.

We also use the present perfect simple to talk about achievements and things that started and finished in the past and have a result now. If there is no present result then we use the past simple.

Example I've bought a ticket, so I'm going to the concert. (past action with present result)

Present perfect continuous

We form the present perfect continuous with the subject + *have/has been* + the present participle of the main verb.

Example The baby has been crying a lot.

We use the present perfect continuous to talk about recent, continuing activities.

In the cartoon, the woman is sleepy, probably because the baby has been crying all night. The baby started crying earlier in the night and is still crying. The result is that the woman has had no sleep.

We often use a time expression with the present perfect continuous.

Example The woman hasn't been sleeping a lot recently/at night/lately.



Compare the two tenses:

Tense	Subject	<i>have/has</i>	<i>been</i>	Main verb	Extra information
Present perfect simple	I/You/We/They	have		studied	Japanese.
	He/She/It	has			
Present perfect continuous	I/You/We/They	have	been	studying	Japanese recently.
	He/She/It	has			

'I have studied Japanese' means I probably now speak some Japanese.

'I have been studying Japanese recently' means I started to learn recently, and I am still learning, with the result that I probably speak only a little Japanese.

Past perfect

We use the past perfect to talk about an event that occurred before another event in the past.

We form the past perfect with the subject + *had* + past participle.

Example They had made lunch. Two hours later the guests arrived.

In the example, the guests' arrival is also a past event. However, the hosts had prepared lunch long before they reached their house.

Form

Subject	<i>had</i>	Past participle	Extra information
I/You/He/She/It/They	had	made	lunch.

The past perfect is often followed by a time expression such as *before* or *until*.

Example We had visited Paris twice before we moved there permanently.

Units 3 & 4

Reported speech

When we report what people said, there are two ways of expressing it. The first is to repeat what the person said:

Example Anna said 'I prefer to learn English in the classroom.'

This is direct speech.

In reported speech we do not repeat what the person said. We report it:

Example Anna said that she preferred to learn English in the classroom.

Direct and reported speech

In reported speech we report what the person said at the time of speaking.

Direct speech: I prefer to learn English in the classroom. →

Reported speech: She said she preferred ... Her preference was stated at that time, not now.

When we report speech, the form of the verbs used changes from direct speech.

So does the time phrase.

Examples Peter said, 'I will go to London tomorrow.'
Peter said he would go to London the following day.

Direct speech	Reported speech
<i>will</i>	<i>would</i>
<i>is/are going to</i>	<i>was/were going to</i>
present simple tense	past simple tense
present continuous tense	past continuous tense
present perfect tense	past perfect tense
present perfect continuous tense	past perfect continuous tense
past simple tense	past perfect tense
past continuous tense	past perfect continuous tense
past perfect, and past perfect continuous tense – no change	
Modals: <i>can, may</i>	<i>could, might</i>

Time phrase changes

next week/month/year → *the following week/month/year*

tomorrow → *the following day*

last week/month/year → *the previous week/month/year*

yesterday → *the previous day*

two days ago → *two days previously*

Questions and negatives

These follow the same tense changes as statements. With reported questions we use *if* or *whether*, and there is no question mark.

Examples Colin asked, 'Did you do your online English homework?'
Colin asked if I had done my online English homework.
Tamara said, 'I don't like working on Sundays.'
Tamara said she didn't like working on Sundays.

Modal verbs

We use modal verbs to talk about a number of language functions such as certainty and possibility, deduction, advice, ability and obligation. Modal verbs appear with other verbs (the main verb), or in short answers.

Example You should try this food. It's delicious.

In the example, *should* is used to give advice about tasting the food.

Modals are unlike other verbs. They don't change their form for *he/she* or *it*.

I/You/He/She/It/We/They can't eat chicken.

The main uses of modals are:

Function	Modal verbs	Example
Permission	can, may can't, may not	You may borrow my car, but be careful. You can't wear jeans to a wedding.
Ability	can can't	Dima can cook well. Donald can't play tennis.
Possibility	can can't	You can find the times of trains online. He can't get here in time for the train – he left home too late.
Recommendation	should, ought to, had better shouldn't, oughtn't to	You ought to go and see that show. It's great. They had better improve their grades. You shouldn't walk in the road. It's dangerous.
Obligation	must, have to mustn't	You have to be polite at parties. You mustn't touch the red button.
Lack of obligation	don't have to	He doesn't have to eat everything if he isn't hungry.
Deduction	must may, might, could can't (be)	The train must be late. He's normally home by six o'clock. It might be delayed because of the weather. It can't be the weather. It's been sunny all day.

Points to remember

We use *don't have to* to express the lack of obligation, not negative obligation.

For negative obligation we use *mustn't*.

had better is stronger than *should* and *ought to*. It can also be used as a threat.

Example Your behaviour had better improve, or we won't let you come to the concert with us.

ought to is stronger than *should*. It is also slightly more formal.

In deducting the causes of a situation, *must* expresses the speaker's certainty about the reason.

May and *could* express the speaker's view that the cause is a possibility.

Might also expresses possibility, but is less confident that it's the right answer.

We use *can't be* to exclude possibilities and express the speaker's certainty that the situation is not the result of a particular cause.

Main verbs that can express modality

Some main verbs can also be used to express modality. *Need* can express obligation, and *needn't* expresses the lack of obligation.

Example You needn't worry. There are plenty of people who can help me.

Be able to is mainly used to discuss ability.

Example He's coming to the party, but he isn't able to help.

Comparatives and modifiers

Modifiers with comparatives

When we make comparisons between data, we use modifiers to adjust the meaning and to give more specific detail.

considerably higher than ...

somewhat more popular than ...

slightly cheaper than ...

We use them:

- to show a big difference

Example Younger people are *considerably/much/far* more skilled at using smartphones than older generations.

- to show a moderate difference

Example Tablets are *somewhat/rather* more popular than laptops.

- to show a small difference.

Example Tablets are *a little/slightly* cheaper than laptops.

Modifiers with verbs

We can use adverbs to modify a verb.

Look at these monthly shop sales of smartphones.

Smartphone	January	March
Model S7	248	239
Model S8	60	145

Examples Sales of the S7 fell slightly.
Sales of the S8 rose quickly/considerably/dramatically.

Units 5 & 6

Common prefixes

Prefixes are letter pairs or groups that go at the beginning of words to change the meaning of the word in some way. Prefixes like *un-*, *ir-*, *im-* and *dis-* are all used to make opposites.

Examples uninteresting irresponsible impatient dishonest

To indicate either an insufficient amount of something, or too much of something, we can use the prefixes *-under* and *-over*.

Examples undervalued overpaid

To indicate 'before' or 'after', we can use the prefixes *pre-* and *post-*.

Examples preschool, precooked
post-war, post-traumatic stress

There are other common prefixes, such as *mis-*, *re-*, *de-* and *down-*.

Examples misrepresentation, miscommunication
replay, rewrite
demotivate, decontaminate
downgrade, downhearted

Articles

We use articles to introduce nouns: *a man/the spider*. They come at the beginning of a noun phrase. The articles are *a*, *an* and *the*.

There are also some cases where we don't use an article. This is sometimes called 'the zero article'.

a/an

We use *a* and *an*:

- to refer to something for the first time
- to classify or define something
- after *there is* when referring to a single noun.

Examples I saw a kingfisher by the river.
A mosquito is an insect that drinks blood.
There is a species of dolphin in the Yangtze River.

We use *a* with most nouns. We use *an* with nouns that begin with a vowel or a vowel sound: *an elephant, an hour*.

the

We use *the*:

- when both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader know the thing being referred to
- when there can only be one thing we are referring to
- before a superlative.

Examples When I looked through the microscope, I could see the seeds.
 I was late because the car wouldn't start.
 Mosquitoes are the most dangerous insects in Africa.

There are also a number of special uses of *the*:

- before the names of rivers, mountain ranges, seas and oceans, and some geographical features: *the River Nile, the Himalayas, the Indian Ocean, the North Pole, the Cape of Good Hope, the Sahara Desert*
- before the names of: *the Sun, the Moon, the world* but not planets (Saturn, not the Saturn)
- before named ships or trains: *the Queen Mary, the Flying Scotsman*
- to talk about an animal or an invention as a single identity

Examples The dolphin is a highly intelligent species.
 The car has transformed the way we travel.

The 'zero' article

We don't use an article with plural and uncountable nouns when we are talking about things or people in general.

Examples Microscopes are very useful scientific instruments.
 Rice is used in cooking, particularly in Asian countries.

ing and to + infinitive

We use *-ing* or *to + infinitive* after a verb.

Examples I enjoy driving to the city.
 I want to visit India.

There are no set rules about whether a verb is followed by *-ing* or *to + infinitive*, but there are some groups of words which are useful to remember.

Verbs followed by *-ing*

Liking and disliking: *detest, dislike, enjoy, fancy, like, love, prefer*

Saying and thinking: *admit, consider, deny, imagine, suggest*

Other common verbs: *avoid, finish, keep, miss, practise, risk*

Note that with *would + like/love/hate* we use *to + infinitive*.

Examples I like driving my car.
 I'd like to go on holiday.

Verbs followed by *to + infinitive*

Plans, decisions and future events: *arrange, decide, expect, hope, intend, plan, want, wish*

Other common verbs: *attempt, fail, forget, help, manage, tend, try*

Verbs followed by object + *to + infinitive*

Influencing someone or something's behaviour: *advise, allow, enable, force, get, help, invite, persuade, recommend, remind, teach, tell, use*

Verbs followed by *-ing* or *to + infinitive*

A few verbs can be followed by either *-ing* or *to + infinitive*. Often this changes the meaning very slightly.

Example I like swimming. I like to swim in the sea.

In the example, the first sentence has a general meaning. With *to + infinitive* the suggestion is that there are certain times or places where the person likes to swim. It is less general.

Other verbs that can be followed either by *-ing* or *to + infinitive* include: *love, prefer, intend, try*

Spelling changes

Look at these *+ -ing* endings:

He finished reading the book. (read + *-ing*)

She doesn't enjoy writing. (write - e + *-ing*)

I like swimming. (swim + m + *-ing*)

For most verbs the spelling doesn't change: *read* → *reading*

For verbs ending in -e, the -e is removed: *drive* → *driving*, *write* → *writing*

For verbs ending in consonant + vowel + consonant we double the last consonant:

swim → *swimming*, *run* → *running*

Future perfect and future continuous

Future perfect

We use the future perfect to talk about an event that occurs before a point in the future.

Future Perfect Tense



Example By Wednesday, I'll have finished my English project.

In the example, the person knows that his/her English project needs to be written. It isn't completely written yet, but it will be finished at or before Wednesday. He/She might have started writing it already, or will start at some point between today and Wednesday.

We form the future perfect with *will + have + past participle*. We use it with *by + a time phrase*: *by Thursday, by next year, by the time I'm 23*.

We use the future perfect continuous to talk about continuing activities up to a point in the future.

Example By the end of the month, Anna will have been working at this company for ten years.

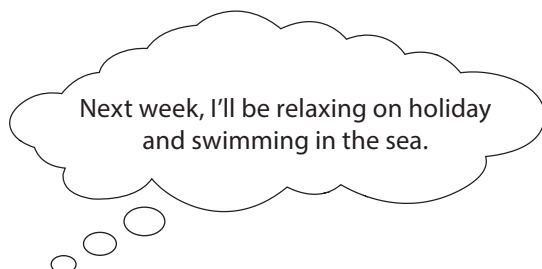
In this example, Anna has worked at the same company for nine years and 11 months. She will still be working there at the end of next month.

Future continuous

We use the future continuous to talk about events in progress at a point in the future.

We often use the future continuous with a future time phrase, for example, *next month*, or *in a year's time*.

Example



We form the future continuous with *will + be + present participle*.