



## **GRAMMAR GUIDE**

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## ACTIVE VOICE

**GRAMMAR AS CHOICE:** The use of tenses is subjective and hence mostly a matter of choice. Usually, more than one tense can be applied. Which tense is employed depends both on the speakers' point of view and upon their point of concern. The point of view may be in the past, present, or future, the speaker looking forward or backward. The point of concern relates to the speaker's choice between simple and progressive (cf. progressive, page 8).

ACTIVE - 24 FORMS	simple (still shot) punctual concern	progressive (motion picture) sequential concern
<b>Pre-Past (Past Perfect)</b> time before then	I had done	I had been doing
<b>Past</b> detached from the present	I did	I was doing
<b>Future in the Past</b> future as seen from the past	I was going to do I have been going to do I was to do I would do ( <i>past of will</i> )	<del>I was going to be doing</del> <del>I've been going to be doing</del> I was doing (until) I would be doing
<b>Pre-Present (Present Perfect)</b> present memory	I have done	I have been doing
<b>Present</b>	I do	I'm doing
<b>Post-Present</b> concern is present factor	I'm going to do ( <i>intention</i> ) [I do] ( <i>timetable</i> )	I'm going to do be doing [I'm doing] ( <i>arrangements</i> )
<b>Pre-Future (Future Perfect)</b> past as seen from the future	I will have done	I will have been doing
<b>Future</b> concern is future event	I will I will be going to do	I will be doing <del>I will be going to be doing</del>

### PAST PERFECT

We use the past perfect to talk about something that *happened before something else in the past*. We use it when we are talking about the past and want to make clear that something had already happened at the time we are talking about. While the present perfect refers to *time before now*, the past perfect refers to *time before then* (pre-past).

Simple (had + past participle)	Negative	Question
He <u>had left</u> when she arrived.	He <u>hadn't left</u> when she arrived.	<u>Had</u> he <u>left</u> when she arrived?
Progressive (had been + -ing)		
We <u>had been walking</u> for hours, and we were thirsty.	He went to the doctor because he <u>hadn't been feeling</u> well.	How long <u>had</u> she <u>been traveling</u> before she arrived?

### PAST SIMPLE

Speakers take a point of view that is *separated from the present* (as against present perfect, page 4/5).

Regular (verb + - ed)	Negative	Question
Mozart <u>lived</u> in the 18 <sup>th</sup> century.	He <u>didn't live</u> in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century.	When <u>did</u> Mozart <u>live</u> ?
Irregular		
Mozart <u>wrote</u> music.	Mozart <u>didn't write</u> books.	<u>Did</u> Mozart <u>write</u> good music?

## ACTIVE VOICE

### PAST PROGRESSIVE

We use the past progressive to talk about actions or events that were happening at or *around a specific time in the past*.

Background Events	Negative	Question
While I <u>was running</u> downstairs, I slipped and fell (because I <u>was running</u> too fast).	I <u>wasn't watching</u> TV when you called me. I <u>was working</u> and didn't hear you.	What <u>were you doing</u> when the telephone rang?

The focus of the progressive is on the duration of an event as seen from its center. Speakers may perceive time in terms of its unfolding and events as in progress or developing. Whether you use simple or progressive depends on your point of concern. The simple highlights your focus on a point in time (punctual concern), while the progressive emphasizes the sequence of events or actions (sequential concern).

Compare	What <u>were you doing</u> when you heard the burglar? - I <u>was reading</u> in bed. What <u>did you do</u> when you heard the burglar? - I <u>called</u> the police.
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### FUTURE IN THE PAST

We can also talk about something that was yet to come at a certain time in the past.

Future as seen from the Past
Simple - Last time we met, you <u>were going to move</u> to NYC.
Simple - I <u>'ve been going to write</u> to you for so long, but I haven't found time.
Simple - I went to have a look at the room where I <u>was to talk</u> that afternoon.
Simple - I knew then that I <u>would never see</u> him again.
Progressive - He <u>was coming</u> until this afternoon and then he changed his mind.
Progressive - In 1999 I arrived in the town where I <u>would be spending</u> three years of my life.

### PRESENT PERFECT

#### Past v. Present Perfect

A speaker with a present point of view may look back to the pre-present. The pre-present period is time-up-to-now. A speaker with such a point of view may not **specify when** something took place: *I've lived in L.A. for years*. Whether the speaker still lives there can only be inferred from context. A speaker may very well consider the same event as clearly **detached from the present** and take a past point of view: *I lived in L.A. for years*. Now a listener knows the speaker lives there no longer.

Grammars usually say the pre-present is connected with now. This holds true from a subjective perspective. Speakers embrace the past event as their **present memory** even though the event dates back a long time. The essential difference is that speakers' view the pre-present as not being separated from the present, and hence their time reference is vague, while people imagine past time as a period distinctly detached from the present.

## ACTIVE VOICE

### PRESENT PERFECT - SIMPLE

#### have/has + past participle

We use the present perfect to talk about the past, but we *don't specify "when" something happened in the past*. In fact, we just talk about *time before now* (pre-present). Regular verbs end in [-ed].

Time Before Now	Negative	Question
I've <u>lived</u> in NYC for years.	I <u>haven't lived</u> in NYC too long.	<u>Have</u> you ever <u>lived</u> in NYC?

We can either use the past or the present perfect to talk about the past. However, if there's a past time cue, we usually use the past. Such a cue shows that we specify *when* something happened in the past.

#### Time Cues

Past Simple	Present Perfect Simple
Did you watch the movie <u>yesterday</u> ? Did we meet <u>last week</u> ? She went out <u>some time ago</u> . No, I'm sorry. I didn't see her <u>on Monday</u> .	Have you seen any good movies <u>recently</u> ? Have we ever met <u>before</u> ? She has <u>already</u> gone out. No, I'm sorry. I haven't seen her <u>lately</u> .

#### Without Time Cues

<b>Emma: "I <u>worked</u> at a bank for twenty years."</b>
The listener knows that Emma doesn't work at the bank anymore because the past is considered to be detached from the present.
<b>Emma: "I <u>have worked</u> at a bank for twenty years."</b>
The present perfect refers to time-up-to-now. Emma doesn't specify " <i>when</i> " in the past. The listener doesn't know, whether she still works at the bank or not. She just looks back to a period before now, which is not separated from the present. It's her " <i>present memory</i> " even if she worked there long ago.

N.B.: In newspapers and broadcasts you may sometimes encounter sentences such as "*Soldier has been killed in accident last night."* Here the present perfect is used in order to convey up-to-dateness of the news item and current relevance. According to Practical English Usage, such structures are "unusual but not impossible (though learners should avoid them)."

### PRESENT PERFECT - PROGRESSIVE

#### have/has been + past participle

Again, the difference between the simple and the progressive is to emphasize the event itself as an extended activity (sequential concern - progressive) or to give a secondary reference to the event (punctual concern - simple). It doesn't matter whether the event is completed or not.

Time Before Now	Negative	Question
It <u>has been raining</u> all day, but it has stopped now.	I <u>haven't been studying</u> very well recently.	Who <u>has been sitting</u> at my desk? Someone has messed up my files.

## ACTIVE VOICE

### PRESENT SIMPLE

We use the present simple to talk about things that happen *all the time* or that are *true in general* (facts and permanent state of affairs = timeless). We add [-s] or [-es] to the third person singular (he/she/it).

All the Time	Negative	Question
I <u>play</u> tennis every week. He/She <u>plays</u> tennis every week.	They <u>don't play</u> tennis. He/She <u>doesn't play</u> tennis.	Do you <u>play</u> tennis? <u>Does</u> he/she <u>play</u> tennis?
Always True		
Water <u>boils</u> at 100 °C.	Water <u>doesn't boil</u> at 50 °C.	<u>Does</u> water <u>boil</u> at 50 °C?

### PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

am/is/are + -ing

We use the present progressive to talk about *actions or situations* that are happening at or *around the time of speaking* (before, during, and after the moment of speaking). The focus is on the duration of an event as seen from its center. For point-in-time actions, which are quickly completed rather than being in progress or which have no temporal quality at all (mere facts), we usually prefer the present simple.

Around Now	Negative	Question
It's <u>raining</u> at the moment.	It <u>isn't raining</u> at the moment.	<u>Is</u> it <u>raining</u> at the moment?

Present Progressive	Present Simple
They <u>are playing</u> soccer in the backyard. (duration) <u>Is</u> the heat <u>working</u> again?	The striker <u>shoots</u> , and ... goal! (punctual action) No, it's not. The radiator still <u>feels</u> cold. (fact)

### POST-PRESENT & FUTURE

#### Post-Present v. Future

A speaker's point of view may be present looking forward. Under these circumstances, the speaker's concern is with **present factors**, which are expected to lead to an event. The speaker may emphasize an **external factor**: *I'm moving to L.A. next week* (arrangement in place - the process has begun). *According to schedule, I leave at 7 A.M.* (timetable - punctual concern). The speaker may as well have an **internal factor** in mind: *I'm going to move to L.A. next week* (present intention - punctual). *I'm going to be moving to L.A. next week* (present intention - sequential). A speaker could also take a future point of view. Then the speaker's primary concern would be with the **future event**, as in *I'll move to L.A. next week* (punctual). *This time next week I'll be moving to L.A.* (sequential).

#### Present Simple and Progressive

The present simple often refers to fixed events in the future (schedules). The progressive usually indicates that arrangements are in place and a process has begun.

Present Simple (timetables)	Present Progressive (arrangements)
The bus <u>leaves</u> tomorrow at 8 o'clock.	I'm <u>flying</u> next Friday.

## ACTIVE VOICE

### be going to + infinitive be going to be + -ing

We use *going to* to talk about something that is already *planned or decided or we can see it coming now*. This structure is really the present progressive of *go* (with a focus on events *after* the moment of speaking = post-present). Since we often talk about our plans or intentions, it is very common in everyday speech. In informal speech, *going to* is often shortened to *gonna*.

Simple (intentions)	Negative	Question
We're <u>going to buy</u> a new car. Dark clouds! It's <u>gonna</u> rain.	We <u>aren't going to buy</u> a new car. Blue sky! It's <u>not gonna</u> rain.	<u>Are we going to buy</u> a new car? Look at the sky. <u>Is it gonna</u> rain?
Progressive		
I'm <u>going to be working</u> all day tomorrow. I won't have time.	I'm <u>not going to be working</u> for long tomorrow. I'll have time.	How long <u>are you going to be working</u> tomorrow?

*Going to* highlights our concern with present factors (present intentions). *Will* emphasizes our concern with the future event, which is perceived as detached from the present.

Going to	Will
I don't know the answer. I'm <u>going to find out</u> .	I don't know the answer. I'll <u>know</u> it next week.

### will + infinitive will be + -ing

We use "will" to talk about what we *think or guess will happen*. The contraction of *will not* is *won't*.

Simple (will + infinitive)	Negative	Question
It <u>will be</u> cold tomorrow.	It <u>won't be</u> cold tomorrow.	<u>Will it be</u> cold tomorrow?
Progressive (will be + -ing)		
Good luck with your exam. We <u>will be thinking</u> of you.	We <u>won't be seeing</u> each other for some time. I'm on vacation.	Where <u>will you be flying</u> today?
will + be going to + infinitive		
I'll <u>be going to see</u> her when I get to L.A.	(guess + intention)	<u>Will they be going to stay</u> with us?

## FUTURE PERFECT

We can talk about something that has been completed before a certain point in the future. The point of view is in the future looking back.

Past as seen from the Future:
Simple (will have + past participle) - I'll <u>have moved</u> to NYC by the end of next month. Progressive (will have been + -ing) - I <u>will have been teaching</u> for five years this summer.

## ACTIVE VOICE

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### PROGRESSIVE VERB FORMS

**GRAMMAR AS CHOICE:** The use of tenses is **subjective** and hence mostly a matter of choice. The focus of the progressive is on the duration of an event as seen from its center. Speakers may perceive time in terms of its unfolding and events as in progress or developing. Whether you use simple or progressive depends on your point of concern. The simple highlights your focus on a point in time (punctual concern), while the progressive emphasizes the sequence of events or actions (sequential concern).

A speaker's concern may be the **starting or finishing point of a period**: *I've lived in L.A. for years*. The speaker could have the starting point of the period in mind (still lives there) or its endpoint (lives there no longer). People may instead form a mental picture of **the sequence itself**: *I've been living in L.A. for years* (still/no longer). *I was living in L.A. for years* (no longer since the past is considered as being remote and separated from the present).

Grammars often state the progressive is used for events perceived as **temporary** or incomplete. This again holds true from a subjective perspective. What speakers deem temporary may in fact last an hour or years. Since it is rather a matter of perception and not what objectively happened, the temporal quality of the following event - arrival of the President - can also change: *It was raining when the President arrived*. *The bomb exploded while the President was arriving*. Even though the President's arrival took the same time in each case, the speaker's perception of the action differs.

The next examples show that the speaker has four possibilities to interpret the temporal relationship between the "leaving" and the "coming in" (cf. *The English Verb by Michael Lewis, page 89*):

1. *He left when I came in.*
2. *He was leaving when I came in.*
3. *He left when I was coming in.*
4. *He was leaving when I was coming in.*

It is **not the real time** taken by an action which is important, but the speaker's perception of the situation. The speaker describes the events either as two consecutive points in time (in 1. = pure fact), as one action interrupting another extended action (in 2. and 3.), or the speaker sees both occurrences as extended in time (in 4.). Thus the fundamental distinction is similar to the difference between a still shot and a motion picture. **Simple tenses mirror a punctual concern, while progressive reflects a sequential viewpoint**: *They're playing splendidly*. *He shoots. Goal!*

Past Perfect	We <u>had been hiking</u> since sunrise, and we were hungry.
Past	I dropped my key when I <u>was trying</u> to open the door.
Future in the Past	In 1999 I arrived in the town where I <u>would be spending</u> 3 years of my life.
Present Perfect	It <u>has been raining</u> all day.
Present	Where is she? She's <u>playing</u> tennis.
Post-Present	We're <u>going to be moving</u> to L.A. next month.
Future Perfect	I'll <u>have been working</u> here for 2 years this summer.
Future	<u>Will they be traveling</u> in business class?



## PASSIVE VOICE

When A does something to B, there are often two ways to talk about it. If we want A (the doer = the one who acts) to be the subject, we use an active verb: *Chambermaids clean the room everyday*. If we want B (the receiver of the action = the one something is done to) to be the subject, we use a passive verb: *This room is cleaned (by chambermaids) every day*. Sometimes we can even form two different passive sentences. This happens when the verb has two objects (= two recipients). Active: *We gave the information to the police*. Passive: (1) *The information was given to the police*. (2) *The police were given the information*.

The following table shows all passive verb forms of the central be-passive: **be + past participle**

PASSIVE - 24 FORMS	simple (still shot) punctual concern	progressive (motion picture) sequential concern
Pre-Past (Past Perfect) time before then	it had been done	<del>it had been being done</del>
Past detached from the present	it was done	it was being done
Future in the Past future as seen from the past	it was going to be done it's been going to be done it was to be done it would be done	<del>it was going to be being done</del> <del>it's been going to be being done</del> <del>it was being done (until)</del> <del>it would be being done</del>
Pre-Present (Present Perfect) present memory	it has been done	<del>it has been being done</del>
Present	it is done	it is being done
Post-Present concern is present factor	it is going to be done	<del>it is going to be being done</del>
Pre-Future (Future Perfect) past as seen from the future	it will have been done	<del>it will have been being done</del>
Future concern is future event	it will be done it will be going to be done	<del>it will be being done</del> <del>it will be going to be being done</del>

### **ACTIVE & PASSIVE** (*italics* = active forms; underlined = passive forms)

Less than 24 hours after losing his voice the famous singer *has made* a fantastic recovery and *will be singing* at Madison Square Garden this evening. "I'm *feeling* a lot better," *he said* at his Manhattan home. "I was being interviewed by a German magazine when my throat *dried up*. I *had been talking* far too much. I *will have recovered* by tonight." His problem was diagnosed as exhaustion and he *has been resting*. I *had heard* he was *getting* better and when I *went* to see him, he *was sitting* in bed smoking a cigar. "I *smoke* one or two a day. They are made for me in Havana."

His loft is being converted so that his neighbors won't be disturbed by his singing. The walls have been covered in cork and by the end of the week the house will have been soundproofed. "I *will have been living* here for two years in January and I really *don't want* to leave. The loft had been used as an art gallery before I *came*. I *was going to do it up* for ages, but I've only just *found* time."

### **GET & HAVE PASSIVES**

The get-passive enables a clear distinction between a dynamic event and a state or situation. It is frequently used in informal contexts and sounds less neutral. Dynamic events: *My car got damaged. He got fired*. Neutral: *My car was damaged. He was fired*.

The pseudo-passive with have or get is more common in spoken language and shows a greater degree of involvement of the person affected by an action in initiating the action: *I had my hair cut* = *I got my hair cut* = *My hair was cut by someone and I arranged for this to happen*. Further Examples: *We got our car serviced. We had some trees taken down*. It also enables a recipient to be made the grammatical subject: *They had their keys stolen* = *Their keys were stolen* = *Someone stole their keys*.

## SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

Sue wants to phone Paul but she can't do this because she doesn't know his number. She says:

**If I knew his number, I would phone him.**

Sue says: **If I knew** his number... This tells us that she *doesn't* know his number. She is imagining the situation. The *real* situation is that she doesn't know his number.



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To express imaginary situations, which are unreal and hypothetical, we use the following structure:

If + Past	Would + Infinitive
If I <u>knew</u> her name, If you <u>lost</u> your job, If they <u>played</u> tennis,	I <u>would tell</u> you. what <u>would you do</u> ? he <u>wouldn't stand</u> a chance.

To talk about imaginary, unreal situations in the past, we use the following structure:

If + Past Perfect	Would Have + Past Participle
If you <u>had worked</u> harder, If you <u>had asked</u> me, If you <u>hadn't helped</u> me,	you <u>would have passed</u> your exam. I <u>would have told</u> you. I <u>would have been</u> in trouble.

Be careful to use past or past perfect in the if-clause:

Standard English	Nonstandard
If I <u>won</u> the lottery, I would be rich. If he <u>had run</u> faster, he would have won.	If I <del>would win</del> the lottery, I would be rich. If he <del>would have run</del> faster, he would have won.

Commas set off subordinate and main clause if the subordinate clause comes first: *If I were you, I wouldn't drop out of school. I wouldn't drop out of school if I were you.*

That She See
Finally, the subjunctive is used in that-clauses following formal requests, orders, or recommendations. The subjunctive is formed the same way as the infinitive of the verb, without any inflections. In everyday speech, we often prefer should + infinitive.  It is essential <u>that she contact</u> us as soon as possible. It is important <u>that she be</u> present when we sign the documents. The judge recommended <u>that he</u> (should) <u>remain</u> in prison for life.

## USAGE GUIDE

### ARTICLE

When general reference is made to **all members of a class**, the article is not used (zero article). The article is used when reference is made to a **defined sub-class**.

Zero Article	Article
Stars very greatly in size. (stars in general)	<u>The</u> stars are bright tonight. (the visible stars)
Salt is bad for you. (salt in general)	Could you pass me <u>the</u> salt? (in the shaker)
Furniture is very expensive. (any furniture)	We'll have to move <u>the</u> furniture. (these items)
Nurses work very hard. (nurses in general)	<u>The</u> nurses are on strike. (this group of employees)
Railways don't make much profit. (any railways)	<u>The</u> railways are never on time. (our local railways)
I met her at college (when we were students; BrE)	I'll meet you at <u>the</u> college. (particular place)
She's in hospital (as a patient; BrE)	I left my coat in <u>the</u> hospital. (particular place)

In American English, university and hospital are not used without articles: *She was unhappy at the university. Say that again and I'll put you in the hospital.*

### -ING FORM

**1. Preposition + -ing:** The form of the verb that follows a preposition is the -ing form (gerund), as in *Is she responsible for handling the phone calls?* When **to** is a **preposition** and not an infinitive marker, it is followed by a noun or the -ing form: *I look forward to hearing from you. He is used to driving in London. Do you object to working on Sundays? The director has devoted herself to raising funds. In addition to helping me feel better, eating right can control my weight. Inverted commas are restricted to enclosing a quotation within a quotation. I'm opposed to doing that kind of work.* However, some verbs are followed by the infinitive: *She is prone to lose her temper.* Further examples include agree, consent, entitled, and inclined. According to Practical English Usage, only a good dictionary will help. Sometimes a second subject occurs between the preposition and the -ing form. If it is a pronoun, the object form is frequently used in spoken English: *You mean she would object to him coming if she knew?* In formal English, the **possessive pronoun** is used: *You mean she would object to his coming if she knew? This may result in their receiving lots of spam. We look forward to your coming next weekend.*

#### 2. Verbs only followed by -ing:

admit	endure	miss
adore	enjoy	object
appreciate	(can) face	postpone
avoid	fancy	practice (BrE: practise)
burst out (laughing)	feel like	prevent
commence	finish	put off
consider (think about)	give up	recall
contemplate	imagine	report
defer	involve	resent
delay	keep (on)	risk
deny	lie (deceive)	sit
detest	loathe	(can't) stand
dislike	mention	suggest
dread	mind	understand

It is considered better style to use the **possessive pronoun** if a second subject occurs between the two verbs: *Do you miss his/him being around? I didn't mind their/them playing in my garden.* In the preceding sentence, **consider** is followed by a to-infinitive because it is used in the meaning of "regarded as." Only if it means "think about," the -ing form is compulsory: *Have you considered contacting him?* **Suggest** is never followed by a to-infinitive: *I suggested his going by train.* In American English, it may be followed by that + subjunctive, as in *I suggested that he go by train.* Even ordinary present may be used: *I suggested that he goes by train.*

## USAGE GUIDE

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### NOTIONAL AGREEMENT

Subjects and verbs must agree in number. **Singular compound subjects** joined by “and” require a plural verb, unless the expression is idiomatic: *A dog and a cat are my company. Bacon and eggs is my favorite breakfast.* Singular nouns connected by “or, either/or, neither/nor, along with,” and the like take a singular verb: *A dog or a cat is good company.*

The **rule of proximity** states that the verb agrees with the part closer to it: *Either her cats or my dog is to be sold. Either my dog or her cats are to be sold.* **As well as** may behave like the coordinator “and”: *Beauty as well as love are redemptive.* More often it is backgrounded: *Beauty, as well as love, is redemptive. He, as well as I, is not feeling well.*

Pronouns must agree with antecedent nouns. **Gender neutral language** causes problems. There are essentially four choices: *Everybody may put on his coat. Everybody may put on her coat. Everybody may put on their coat. Everybody may put on his or her coat.*

The American Heritage Dictionary argues that pronouns such as “everybody, each, anyone,” and the like are singular in grammar but plural in meaning and hence may take “their” but a singular subject may not. Thus, the usage panel rejects the sentence *A student takes about six years to complete their course work.*

The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language accepts this sentence on the grounds that “they” could be either plural or singular, just as plural “you” replaced singular “thou” historically. You can avoid the problem by recasting the sentence or shifting it to the plural: *Students take about six years to complete their course work.*

A moot question among usage experts is the expression **one of those**, as in *She is one of those people who worries/worry needlessly.* When you recast the sentence, the solution becomes obvious: *Of those people who worry needlessly, she is one.* However, the use of a singular verb is also common and no mistake.

**Collectives** such as “committee, jury, public, and board” may take singular or plural verbs and pronouns depending on whether the speaker perceives the group as a unit or refers to the members of the group: *The jury has not made up its mind (AmE). The jury have not made up their mind (BrE).*

**Measure phrases** take singular verbs: *Five miles is more than I want to walk. That ten days was fantastic. Twenty dollars is a ridiculous amount to pay to go to the movies.*

### PUNCTUATION

apostrophe (') asterisk (\*) brackets [ ] colon (:) comma (,) dash (–) ellipsis (...) exclamation point (!)  
hyphen (-) parentheses ( ) period (.) quotation marks (“”) semicolon (;) slash, stroke, solidus, virgule (/)

#### Apostrophe

The apostrophe indicates missing letters in contractions (*isn't*) and distinguishes genitives from plurals (*boy's, boys'*; *pl. boys*). Usage is divided in literary reference if the noun is ending in -s, as in *Socrates' ideas* or *Dickens's novels*. Never use an apostrophe in possessive pronouns (*This hat is hers*).

#### Comma

(1) Commas set off **independent clauses** joined by “and, but, or, for, nor, not, so, and yet”: *He left, yet she stayed.*

(2) Commas separate subordinate and main clause if the **subordinate clause comes first**: *As long as she takes the exam, we will overlook her attendance problems. If you get stuck, come back and see me.* But: *Come back and see me if you get stuck.*

## USAGE GUIDE

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(3) Commas are used for **listing**: *We had steak, onions, and ice-cream for dinner.* Note that the comma after onions is called the Oxford comma because Oxford University Press and many American editors require it, while Cambridge University Press doesn't. Without it, onions and ice-cream would be yummily yoked together.

(4) Commas set off **parenthetical** words and phrases, which could be omitted: *This is, by and large, good news. Furthermore, I don't believe she's guilty.*

(5) Commas are used for **clarity**: *As he climbed, the stairs got steeper.* Without the comma, you might read *As he climbed the stairs* and then have to begin again to find a subject for *got steeper*.

### Parentheses

Inside a sentence, the materials within parentheses need not be capitalized nor have end punctuation but may include a question mark or an exclamation point: *We were up late most nights (not working, of course!) and so usually slept in.* Abbreviations within parentheses may end with a period.

### Period

A terminal period is suppressed after an abbreviation: *It's sunny in L.A.* An ellipsis is followed by a period: *"etc. ... ."*

### Quotation Marks

Comma and period go inside the closing quotation marks, whereas colon and semicolon belong outside: *The Times said the movie was "deeply moving"; the Daily Telegraph called it "a waste of time."* Exclamation point and question mark go inside when they belong with the quoted material, outside when they belong to the main sentence: *Suddenly he cried, "Help us!" I love Priscilla's poem "Drifting"!* Single quotation marks are restricted to enclosing a quotation within a quotation: *John said, "She kept shouting 'Get out!'."* The British use the marks in a reverse order: *John said, 'She kept shouting "Get out!".'*

## WHO, WHOM, WHICH, THAT

The traditional rules for choosing between **who** and **whom** are relatively simple but not always easy to apply. *Who* is used where a nominative pronoun such as *I* or *he* (subjective case) would be appropriate: *The actor who played Hamlet was there* (who is the subject of played). *Whom* is used where an objective pronoun such as *me* or *him* (objective case) would be fitting: *Whom do you like best?* In this sentence, you is the subject and whom the object of like. Intervening words and phrases may make this difficult to see:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ did John say he was going to support?
2. There goes the lineman \_\_\_\_\_ the coach believes is the team's best player.
3. We all wondered about \_\_\_\_\_ the intruders were.
4. We don't know \_\_\_\_\_ to trust.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ shall I say is calling?
6. \_\_\_\_\_ did you give it to?

The distinction remains a hallmark of formal style. In speech and informal writing, *whom* may sound stuffy even when used correctly (Answer Key: 1. Whom, 2. who, 3. who, 4. whom, 5. Who, 6. Whom).

According to conservative usage manuals, **which** gives parenthetical information, while **that** should be used to define the antecedent: *The Suez Canal, which was opened in 1969, is more than 101 miles long. The dog that is barking is a nuisance.* The Columbia Guide to Standard American English states: "Almost no one follows this rule perfectly in other than Edited English and few can perfectly follow even there." The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language even considers this rule as an untenable invention of prescriptivists. However, when *which* gives parenthetical information, it is always preceded by a comma.

## FOSSILIZED EXPRESSIONS + LINKING PHRASES

## SYNONYMS

A

**According to** the weather report, it'll rain tomorrow.

His report is **in accordance with** the facts.

We were late **on account of** the traffic jam.

**On no account** should you touch live wires.

**In addition to** riding her horse, she played her guitar this morning.

**All in all**, she's a good athlete.

**Apart from** a little rain, we had fine weather.

The marathon was organized **under the auspices of** local athletic clubs.

B

The principal thanked the parents for their help **on behalf of** the entire teaching staff.

I called the office **at the behest of** my boss.

I felt **both** happy **and** sad.

C

**In any case**, we'll have to leave soon.

A storm was coming, so **under the circumstances** we left for home.

**In comparison with** his early works, his later plays are darker.

He used to write comedies. **By contrast**, his later plays are darker.

She gave us permission to use the computer **on condition that** we report any problems.

**In this connection**, the agreement can be seen as a step toward peace.

Physicists are working **in conjunction with** engineers on the project.

**In consequence**, stock values declined.

I'm not sick; **on the contrary**, I'm quite healthy.

Hard work **coupled with** good luck make a successful business.

**In conclusion**, we must work together for peace.

D

He succeeded **by dint of** patience and hard work.

E

**Either** Jenny **or** June has the book.

**In essence**, both sides agree on the issue.

We have several team sports, **for example** baseball and soccer.

as stated by

in agreement with

because of; due to; owing to

under no circumstances

besides; over and above

by and large; on the whole

aside from; except for

under the aegis of [i.e. patronage]

in the name of

[i.e. an urgent request]

[i.e. as well; equally]

at any rate; at all events

given these conditions

compared to

in contrast with; as opposed to  
provided that

in this context; in this regard

[i.e. a combination]

as a result; consequently

conversely

along with

finally; conclusively; lastly

through the force of

negative: neither...nor

basically, fundamentally

for instance

He told a joke <b>at my expense</b> .	[i.e. causing pain or financial loss]
<b>To some extent</b> , she was responsible for the accident.	<b>to a certain degree; up to a point</b>
F	
The team won <b>in the face of</b> strong competition.	<b>in spite of; despite</b>
All those <b>in favor of</b> the motion say "aye."	<b>in support of</b>
G	
<b>In general</b> , it's best to eat dinner before dessert.	<b>generally; in principle</b>
H	
<b>On the one hand</b> , he works awfully slowly, but <b>on the other hand</b> , he does careful work.	[i.e. from one point of view; from another point of view]
<b>In hindsight</b> , it's easy to see what went wrong.	<b>in retrospect</b>
I	
Anyone can try out for a part in this play, <b>irrespective of</b> past acting experience.	<b>regardless of</b>
L	
She received a check <b>in lieu of</b> cash.	<b>in place of; instead of</b>
<b>In light of</b> the report, let's try a different approach to the problem.	<b>in view of; in consideration of</b>
M	
They succeeded <b>by means of</b> patience.	<b>owing to; with the use of</b>
O	
<b>Not only</b> did he turn up late, <b>but he also</b> forgot his books.	[i.e. two related things happened]
I'd prefer to go on vacation in May, <b>as opposed to</b> September.	<b>as against; in contrast to</b>
We built the shed <b>in order to</b> store our tools.	<b>for the purpose of</b>
P	
The food is good, but not <b>on a par with</b> my grandmother's.	<b>tantamount to</b>
I don't want to go yet - <b>in the first place</b> I'm not ready, and <b>in the second place</b> it's raining.	<b>firstly, secondly, etc.</b>
She will, <b>in all probability</b> , have left before we arrive.	<b>in all likelihood</b>
R	
The new salary scale <b>refers to</b> company managers only.	<b>relate to; pertain to</b>
I'm writing to you <b>with reference to</b> your letter of March 15.	<b>with regard to; with respect to</b>
In the 100 m sprint race, Sara and Lizzy came first and third <b>respectively</b> .	[i.e. each in the order named]
S	
I invested in the company <b>on the strength of</b> my brother's advice.	<b>on the basis of; because of</b>
T	
We're uncertain <b>in terms of</b> his ability to do the job.	<b>concerning</b>
V	
The country is <b>on the verge of</b> war.	<b>on the brink of</b>
They are rich <b>by virtue of</b> a large inheritance.	<b>by reason of; on the grounds of</b>