

## Verbs

### Definition

Verbs are *doing* words: I run, you read, he swims, she works etc.

### Persons and numbers

Verbs have:

3 **persons**: 1st, 2nd and 3rd

and

2 **numbers**: singular and plural

1st person singular	I
2nd person singular	You
3rd person singular	He/she/it

1st person plural	We
2nd person plural	You
3rd person plural	They

### Subject of the verb

A verb has a **subject**. The subject is the person or thing who is *doing the verb*.

E.g. I sing  
You eat  
She runs  
We sing  
You eat  
They run

The subject of a 1st or 2nd person verb will always be a **pronoun**. In the 3rd person, the subject can either be a **pronoun**, as in the examples above, or one or more **nouns**.

E.g. Lucy runs, the girl runs, she runs  
Mike and Bijan run, the boys run, they run

### Tenses

Verbs have **tenses**

Present	tells us what is happening <i>now</i>
Future	tells us what will happen <i>in the future</i>
Past	tells us what happened, has happened, or was happening, <i>in the past</i>

The form that these tenses takes varies, depending on precisely what it is we are trying to express. There is a distinction between the **simple**, the **continuous** and the **perfect** forms of tenses.

Thus, in the present tense, we can say the following:

I walk to work	Simple present
I am walking to work	Continuous present

In the past, we can say the following:

I walked to work	Simple past
I was walking to work	Continuous past
I have walked to work	Perfect past

### More on past tenses

The **simple past tense** just tells us that something *happened* in the past, without telling us anything about what the result of that action is *now*.

I <i>broke</i> my leg	but for all we know it is now mended
I <i>lost</i> my dog	but for all we know I have now found him again

The **perfect tense** (sometimes called the *present perfect* tense) tells us the *present result* of an action *completed in the past*.

I <i>have eaten</i> my sandwich	I ate it in the past, and it is now all gone
I <i>have lost</i> my dog	I lost it in the past, and it is still lost

And this is different again from the **imperfect tense** (or *continuous past* tense) which tells us what *was happening*, or *used to happen*, in the past.

I <i>was eating</i> my sandwich at home
I <i>used to eat</i> my sandwich on the bus

There is quite a range of tenses that we use in English, but this will be sufficient for now.

### Auxiliary verbs

As we have seen, sometimes a verb is made up of two verbs working together: a **main verb** and an **auxiliary verb**. This is generally to adjust the precise meaning we are aiming for, to change the tense, or to create emphasis.

The most obvious examples of auxiliary verbs used in this way are the verbs 'to be', 'to do' and 'to have'.

E.g. I *am* eating  
I *do* eat  
I *have* eaten

E.g. He *is* eating  
He *does* eat  
He *has* eaten

E.g. They *have* eaten  
They *were* eating  
They *did* eat

Note that, the form of a verb starting with 'to' e.g. 'to be', 'to walk', 'to eat' etc is called the **present infinitive**.

### Conjugating

In many languages, the form of the verb changes as we **conjugate** it, or move through the persons and tenses. In particular, the *ending* of the verb tends to change. In English this doesn't really happen, but a trace of it can

still be seen in two very common areas:

1. The 3rd person singular of most English verbs adds **s**  
E.g. I walk, you walk, he walk**s**, we walk, you walk, they walk  
  
I eat, you eat, she eat**s**, we eat, you eat, they eat

If the verb ends in a **vowel**, this can sometimes change to **-es**:

- E.g. I go, you go, he go**es**, we go, you go, they go  
I do, you do, she do**es**, we do, you do, they do

And if it ends in a **y**, we get **-ies**:

- E.g. I fly, you fly, it fl**ies**

2. The verb 'to be' is irregular and conjugates as follows:

I	am
You	are
He/she/it	is
We	are
You	are
They	are

We don't really have to worry about these forms when we speak and write English, because we pick them up without thinking about them. But people learning English have to take great care to get these forms right, in the same way that we, learning another language, have to learn how the verbs in that language conjugate. And if we are being fussy, we can certainly pick out when someone is getting the conjugation of a verb wrong.

# Nouns

## Definition

**Nouns** are *naming* words. They may be the names of persons (Robert), places (London), things (cheese) or qualities (strength).

## Types of noun

Nouns are either:

- (a) **Proper Nouns**, which are the names of persons or places
- or
- (b) **Common Nouns**, which are everything else.

Common Nouns may be:

**Concrete** - meaning you can touch them

E.g. Lucy, a dog, water

**Abstract** - meaning you can't!

E.g. Fear, courage

## Collective

E.g. A crowd, a flock.

Note that you can have a crowd of people, where the word *crowd* is a collective noun, and the word *people* is a concrete noun.

## Singular and plural

Nouns can be singular or plural. Generally, to make an English noun plural we add the letter S.

E.g. One rabbit, two rabbits  
One book, two books  
One car, two cars

But some nouns form their plurals in rather different ways, and when this is the case, you just have to learn it, although sometimes there is a pattern that these nouns follow.

E.g. One man, two men  
One woman, two women  
One goose, two geese  
One mouse, two mice  
One wife, two wives  
One roof, two rooves  
One tooth, two teeth  
One potato, two potatoes

## Subject agrees with the verb in person and number

The subject is the person(s) and/or thing(s) doing the verb. If the subject is singular, the verb will be singular; if it is plural, the verb will be plural.

Amanda *is* walking to school  
Amanda and Mike *are* walking to school

The dog *was* drinking some water  
The dogs *were* drinking some water

Care needs to be taken with collective nouns. A collective noun, although it refers to a (plural) group of people or things, is itself a singular noun. It is thus correct to say:

A crowd or people *is* walking down the street  
A flock of birds *is* flying across the sky

## Pronouns

### Definition

**Pronouns** are a way of referring to a noun without naming the noun.

There are lots of types of pronoun, but we will begin with the most familiar, personal pronouns.

### 1. Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns have persons and numbers, as we have already learnt when we looked at verbs.

1st person singular	I
2nd person singular	You
3rd person singular	He/she/it

1st person plural	We
2nd person plural	You
3rd person plural	They

But they also have **Cases**. We will learn a lot about cases in Latin, but in English they are less tricky because our nouns do not change their form when they move into different cases. Pronouns, however, are different, and they **DO** change their form when they move into different cases, so we need to learn now about cases.

### Cases

There are six cases:

Nominative	Used for the subject
Vocative	Used for addressing someone or something
Accusative	Used for the object
Genitive	Used for <i>of</i>
Dative	Used for <i>to</i> or <i>for</i>
Ablative	Used for <i>by</i> , <i>with</i> or <i>from</i>

The only important distinction in English is between the nominative, on the one hand, used for the subject, and all the other cases, on the other hand, which are used for every other situation. The accusative, genitive, dative and ablative cases are called the **oblique cases**, and we will use this to describe them rather than listing all these cases over and over again. (The vocative case doesn't change either, but for some reason it is not classed as an oblique case.)

To help us, English uses exactly the same form of its nouns, no matter what case they are in.

E.g. Lucy sees Bijan  
Bijan sees Lucy  
Lucy, come here please  
The mother of Bijan is called Lucy  
The father of Lucy is called Bijan  
Lucy gives the book to Bijan  
The book belongs to Lucy

Bijan goes shopping with Lucy  
Lucy goes shopping with Bijan

But pronouns are different, because they *do* have different forms for the nominative and the other (oblique) cases.

	Nominative	Oblique
1st person singular	I	Me
2nd person singular	You	You
3rd person singular	He/she/it	Him/her/it
1st person plural	We	Us
2nd person plural	You	You
3rd person plural	They	Them

We instinctively know that it is correct to say 'I am reading a book', rather than 'Me am reading', but it is nice to know *why* it is correct. And understanding these cases, and how they are used, helps us with getting the following correct:

You and I are talking	NOT	You and me are talking
We and they are arguing	NOT	Us and them are arguing
He and you are eating	NOT	Him and you are eating
You and she are happy	NOT	You and her are happy

### Using personal pronouns

Personal pronouns are useful because it saves you having to repeat a noun again and again. It would be very dull if you had to repeat a noun every time you referred to it:

Sally went shopping with her friend Bijan. Sally asked Bijan whether Bijan had any money and Bijan told Sally that Bijan did. Bijan and Sally went into a shop and Bijan asked Sally to pass Bijan a shopping basket. Sally passed a basket to Bijan and Bijan thanked Sally for passing the basket. The basket became heavy because Bijan was putting lots of items into the basket.... SNOOZE

Much nicer to be able to say:

Sally went shopping with her friend Bijan. Sally asked Bijan whether *he* had any money and Bijan told *her* that *he* did. *They* went into a shop and Bijan asked Sally to pass *him* a shopping basket. *She* passed a basket to *him* and *he* thanked *her* for passing *it*. The basket became heavy because *he* was putting lots of items into *it*.

Next time:

A load more pronouns

2. Reflexive
3. Possessive
4. Demonstrative
5. Definitive
6. Intensive
7. Relative
8. Interrogative
9. Indefinite

## Conjunctions

A **conjunction** is used to *join* nouns, phrases or sentences. There are two main types, coordinating and subordinating.

**Coordinating conjunctions** are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

These are used to join nouns together: fish *and* chips

or sentences: We are learning Latin *but* they are learning French.

**Subordinating conjunctions** are: after, although, because, and whether.

They are used to join subordinate clauses to main ones. A clause is a grammatical structure containing a subject and a verb, which makes sense on its own. A subordinate clause is a clause which, although containing a subject and verb, relies on the main clause to give it context and meaning.

E.g.

I was swimming (clause)

It was hot (clause)

I was swimming *because* it was hot (main clause with a subordinate clause, explaining why I was swimming)

## Prepositions

A **preposition** is a little word placed in front of a noun or pronoun that tells us how that word fits in relation to the other words in the sentence.

E.g. *Under* the table, *on* the floor, *in* the water

One thing to note about prepositions is that the noun or pronoun that comes after them is always put in an oblique case, not the nominative case. Luckily this doesn't affect us much in English, because nouns do not have different forms for the different cases. But with pronouns, it *does* matter.

E.g. He is walking with me  
She is walking with her  
They are walking with us  
We are playing with them

People often wonder whether to say:

They were working with you and I

or

They were working with you and me

If you know the rule about prepositions being followed by an oblique case, you won't have trouble with that.







