

# Language reference

## Unit 1 | Tenses

### Present simple

Use the present simple

- 1 to talk about general facts, states, and situations  
*The purpose of business is to make a profit.*
- 2 to talk about regular or repeated actions, or permanent situations  
*Jack works for Nissan.*
- 3 to talk about timetabled future events  
*The meeting starts at 10.00.*

### Present continuous

Use the present continuous

- 1 to talk about an action in progress at the time of speaking / writing  
*I'm trying to get through to Jon Berks.*
- 2 to talk about a very current activity, taking place around the time of speaking  
*They are pushing the area for development.*
- 3 to talk about fixed plans or arrangements in the future  
*I am meeting the management committee on Friday.*

**Watch out!** Don't forget that stative verbs are not commonly used in the continuous form. Here are some examples: *like, love, hate, want, need, know, suppose, understand, remember, seem.*

### Present perfect simple

Use the present perfect simple

- 1 to talk about actions which finished recently and for which there is a present result  
Recent action: *The IT guys have changed all the PCs and access codes.*  
Result: New PCs and access codes.
- 2 to talk about actions that started in the past and are still going on  
*Silvio has worked for us since he left school.*
- 3 to talk about experiences in your life or events in history  
*I've never been to Bahrain.*

### Present perfect continuous

Use the present perfect continuous to talk about a recently completed action. The focus is on the activity, not the result.

*The IT guys have been changing all the PCs and access codes.*

*(Implication: There are still wires and tools lying around showing that they have only just finished.)*

### Past simple

Use the past simple

- 1 to talk about past actions which are over at the time of speaking  
*I heard from the locals that there were several interesting sites.*
- 2 to talk about past states  
*I lived in Haringey when I worked in the City.*

### Past continuous

Use the past continuous to talk about being in the middle of a past action – there is likely to be an interruption (in the past simple) in the sentence.

*Everything was going really smoothly, when Wu took over the project.*

### Past perfect

Use the past perfect to put events in the past in sequence. The past perfect indicates that the action it refers to happened before a reference to the past simple.

*I had heard from the locals that there were several interesting sites.*

### Past perfect continuous

Use the past perfect continuous to refer to an action in progress before something else happened.

*He was the one who had been working on the project, but his boss was the one who got all the credit.*

### Should

- 1 Use *should* + infinitive to recommend something strongly.  
*You should try that vegetarian restaurant on the river.*
- 2 Use *should* + perfect infinitive to talk about a lost opportunity.  
*You should have gone this morning – it was quite an interesting meeting.*
- 3 Use *could* / *should* + infinitive to predict.  
*It could / should turn out to be quite an interesting conference.*

### Future forms

- 1 Use *will* + infinitive to make on-the-spot decisions.  
*We'll have to point out the training need to the client.*
- 2 Use *be going to* + infinitive when we are talking about an action we have already given some thought to.  
*We're going to have to point out the training need to the client.*
- 3 Use the future continuous to talk about something that will be in progress at a particular time in the future.  
*I will be writing everything up later this week.*
- 4 Use the future perfect to refer to events which finish before a given time.  
*I will have finished by the end of the next financial year.*

» For more on the future, see **Language reference Unit 3** on page 127.

## Unit 2 | Expressing attitudes to the past

### Third conditional

- 1 Use the third conditional to talk about past situations that did not happen.  
*If you had chased up the reference, you would have known not to employ him.*
- 2 Note that only the situation in the clause with *had* (the *if*-clause) must be in the past. The other situation can be past, present, or future: something that did not happen, or is not happening, or will not happen, but which is seen to be linked with the situation in the *if*-clause.  
*If I had got the job at Chelco, I would have been made redundant when the company folded. (past situation, past result)*  
*If I had got that job, I would have been able to afford to buy property by now. (past situation, present result)*  
*If I had got that job, I would have been able to retire in two years' time. (past situation, future result)*

3 The result clause usually has *would*, but we can use *might* instead for a less likely result, and *could* to express possibility.

*If we had reduced prices, more people might have bought our products. (= would perhaps)*

*If you'd told me before about the operation, I could have arranged cover for you. (= it would have been possible for me to arrange cover for you)*

4 Informally, we can use *'d* as a short form of *had* in the *if*-clause, and as a short form of *would* in the result clause.

*I'd have phoned if I'd known.*

5 We often use the third conditional to express regret, or to analyse past actions (especially for criticisms).

*If I had sold my shares in May, I would have made a good profit.*

6 When the past situation is negative, the effect is sometimes to congratulate ourselves or others for the actions they took. This can also happen with past situations that are not grammatically negative, but which are seen as undesirable.

*If you hadn't warned us about that supplier, we would have had serious problems. Thank you so much!*

*If we had followed the consultant's advice, we'd have probably gone bankrupt. (It's a good thing we didn't!)*

» For more information on conditionals, see **Language reference Unit 9** on page 131.

## Perfect modals

1 The **bolded** result clause in this third conditional sentence would make sense on its own. This section of the sentence is a perfect modal (a modal verb followed by a perfect infinitive).

*If we had invested in Northern Rock, **we would have lost nearly everything.***

This pattern is especially useful to talk about our likely actions if we were in the situation described.

*I would have told my manager straight away, rather than hiding everything.*

2 We can also use *could*, *might*, *should*, *ought to*, and *needn't* followed by perfect infinitives (perfect modals) to talk about things that did not happen in the past. Notice that *should* and *ought to* often express irritation and criticism, and that *might* and *could* also do this in many contexts.

*You could have told me you'd be late.*

*I might have known the distributors would let us down.*

*They should have consulted me about the cancellation.*

*They ought to have warned us about the strike.*

*You needn't have sent flowers – but they're lovely.*

## Other ways of expressing condition

1 There are several other words we can use instead of *if* in the *if*-clause of a third conditional sentence.

*If we had invested in Northern Rock, we would have lost nearly everything.*

*Suppose / Supposing we had invested in Northern Rock ...*

*Imagine if we had invested in Northern Rock ...*

2 Use *if only* to emphasize regrets and wishes.

*If only we hadn't relocated, we'd be sitting on €1 million of real estate by now.*

3 We can use *even if* to talk about an unreal past situation, but to say that it would make no difference to the situation in the result clause.

*Even if we had kept to our schedules, the manufacturers probably wouldn't have kept to theirs.*

4 Note that we do not usually use *unless* with the same meaning as *if not* in third conditionals, but we can use it with the meaning *except if*.

*I wouldn't have employed him, unless he had had exceptional references. (I didn't employ him.)*

5 We can use *whether* when we are talking about two or more past situations that would have had the same result.

*Whether we had given the job to Hogg, Curtis, Xama, or Kzenksy, they would have had a difficult task ahead.*

## Unit 3 | Speculating about future changes

### Will / shall or going to

In many sentences and situations, either *will* or *going to* is possible. However, in general use *will*

1 to make predictions based on experience

*We've changed the job description so more people will apply.*

2 to give or ask for information about the future

*When will we need to be ready?*

3 to make future promises, requests, and threats

*Will you give me a hand?*

4 to make spontaneous decisions (at the time of speaking)

*You're running late? OK, well, I'll start the presentation without you.*

5 Note that for offers and suggestions, we use *will* in positive and negative sentences, but *shall* in questions.

*Shall we have a quick drink before dinner?*

Use *going to*

6 to make predictions based on our current feelings and thoughts

*I'm going to get angry in a minute.*

7 to talk or ask about plans or intentions

*Sue's going to attend the Milan conference in June.*

8 to talk about decisions that have already been made

*I'm going to give Ed a written warning, no matter what he says.*

9 Note that we also use the present continuous for arrangements.

*Jeremy's attending the conference in Berlin in May.*

### Future continuous, future perfect, and future perfect continuous

1 Use the future continuous (*will + be + -ing* form) to say that something will be in progress at a time in the future. The focus is on the future actions, rather than their result.

*This time next year, I'll be playing golf on afternoons like this.*

2 Note that *going to + be + -ing* form is also possible, especially for plans and intentions.

*We're going to be experimenting with Internet campaigns from next March.*

3 Use the future perfect (*will + have + past participle*) to say that something will be finished at a time in the future.

*Our end of year figures will have come out by the time of our next meeting.*

- 4 Use the future perfect continuous (*will + have + been + -ing* form) to stress the continuation of an action, seen from a later time in the future.

*Our companies will have been working together for ten years in May – we should plan a celebration.*

## Certainty and the future

- 1 Several modals can be used to make predictions about change in the future, with different degrees of certainty.

*The recession in Spain might / could / will affect sales across Europe.*

- 2 With similar meaning, *will + adverbial* (negative: *adverbial + won't*) is possible.

*The Spanish recession will perhaps affect pan-European sales.  
The euro's strength probably won't continue beyond June.*

We can also use a range of adjectives

- 3 with structures like *be ... to ...*

*The Spanish recession is (un)likely / expected / certain / bound to affect sales across Europe.*

- 4 with structures like *it's ... that ... will ...*

*It's (un)likely / probable / certain that the Spanish recession will affect sales across Europe.*

Note that not all these adjectives can be used with both structures. For example, we can say *bound to*, but not *bound that*, and *probable that*, but not *probable to*.

We can also use adverbs of degree (*quite, very, really*, etc.) with most of these structures, to add emphasis or distance.

*The Spanish recession is quite likely to affect sales across Europe.*

## Unit 4 | Pronouns *it, this, and that*

### Referring backwards

*It, this, and that* can be used to refer back to something that has just been mentioned.

All three words can refer back to a person or thing, a situation, or a thought / idea / proposition, etc.

*He said the greater the risk, the greater the potential reward. This might well be true.*

*Here's our prototype. It gives a pretty good idea of what we hope to make.*

*John was arguing for cuts in the R&D budget. That's the last thing we need.*

### Emphasis

- 1 *It* is used for neutral reference: as a simple way of continuing the discussion, without giving special emphasis to the information being referred to.

*There's also a subsidised canteen. It's OK, but no better than in most companies.*

- 2 *This* and *that* are more often used to add emphasis to the information: they draw our attention to what has just been said.

*And we have a gym exclusively for staff. That's one of the best things about working here.*

- 3 *This* in particular is used when there is something new or especially relevant about the information introduced.

*Finally, there's our final salary pension scheme. This has been praised throughout the industry.*

## Reference

- 1 In sentences where several things are mentioned, *it* is usually used to refer to the main topic, whereas *this / that* more often refer to the last topic mentioned.

*There's a meeting in the Kennedy Suite. It's very important and could go on for hours. (it = the meeting)*

*There's a meeting in the Kennedy Suite. That's on the third floor, by the lifts. (that = the Kennedy Suite)*

- 2 Generally, *this* refers to things that are near to us (in space, in time, or conceptually – thought of as close and relevant); *that* refers to things we think of as more distant.

*Carlos asked about the depreciation of the dollar. This will affect us all, he said.*

*Carlos asked about the depreciation of the euro. That was unlikely in the foreseeable future, Kate answered.*

## He, she, they, these, those

- 1 When we are referring to a person mentioned in the previous sentence, *he* or *she* is used in the same way as *it*.

*Heather was the first of the candidates to be interviewed. She was very impressive.*

- 2 When the information referred to has a plural form, *they* is used instead of *it*, *these* instead of *this*, and *those* instead of *that*.

*We discussed several options during the brainstorming sessions. They were all considered impractical, though.*

*We discussed several options during the brainstorming sessions. These were quite good fun, by the way, but hard work.*

## New information

*This* can refer forward to new information. We do not use *that* or *it* in this way.

*Craig isn't a great team player. This is his main problem, though – his lack of creativity. (refers forward to the new information about his lack of creativity)*

*Craig isn't a great team player. That's his main problem. (refers back to the information about the fact that he is not a great team player)*

Even when *this* is used to refer to old information, there is always a sense that what we are going to say about it is new.

## Unit 5 | Adding emphasis

### Adverbs of degree

- 1 Adverbs of degree can add emphasis to most adjectives and adverbs. These include: *very, really, extremely, so, just so, very ... indeed*.

*It was just so short-sighted of them to risk upsetting our Japanese distributors.*

- 2 Some adjectives and adverbs are ungradable: they express extreme qualities such as perfection. With these words we use adverbs such as *completely, absolutely, utterly* (not *very*).

*It's absolutely vital that you inform me of things like that. (Not: It's very vital that you inform me of things like that.)*

» For more information on adverbs of degree, see [Language reference Unit 6](#) on page 129.

## Fronting

- In most active sentences, the subject of the verb comes first. However, we can alter the word order to place the information we want to emphasize at the beginning of the sentence. This is called 'fronting'.  
*I liked the conference hall, but I thought the accommodation was awful. → The conference hall I liked. The accommodation I thought was awful.*
- Note that subject and verb / auxiliary are inverted after negative expressions, after *only*, and after participles.  
*Rarely have I seen such a confident presentation.*  
*Only in Japan can you get fish as fresh as this.*  
*Included in the contract was a job description.*

## It-clefts

### Form

*it* + *be* + emphasized language + relative clause

### Use

To focus our attention on a noun phrase or adverbial.

*It was the finance director who suggested freezing recruitment.*  
*It was earlier this morning that she phoned me.*

## What-clefts

### Form

*what* + noun phrase / clause + *be* + emphasized language

### Use

To move our attention to the end of the sentence.

*What he does is assess proposals.*  
*What I want is an evening off.*

## Other phrases

We can also use phrases such as *the person / people who / that, the place where, the reason why, the thing that* to add emphasis.

*Tom is the person that you need to speak to.*  
*The place where our 2012 conference will be held is Brighton.*  
*The thing that annoys me most is that no one contacted us about the problem.*

## Unit 6 | Adverbs

### Adverbs of degree

- Many adverbs of degree are used to qualify the gradable adjective or adverb they precede, e.g. *quite, rather, pretty, fairly, a bit, a little*, and, especially in American English, *somewhat*.  
*The figures were **quite** promising.*  
*He suggested, **rather** stupidly, that we forget about the deadlines.*
- We can use most of these words with adjective + noun combinations. Note the word order with *quite*.  
*It was **a rather tedious** speech.*  
*It was **quite a good party**. (Not: ~~It was a quite good party.~~)*
- We can also use an adverb of degree with *not*, e.g. *not very, not really, not absolutely*. We can also say *not at all*.  
*I'm **not very** / **not at all** concerned about the canteen's closure.*

- Note that *not really* can mean both *not very* and *not, in fact*. The word stress (see the underlined words in the examples) in the sentence helps to convey the different meanings.

*I'm **not really** angry about her resignation, just disappointed. (not angry, in fact)*  
*He wasn't really angry, but he raised his voice. (a bit angry)*

- When the adverb comes before *not*, the meaning is different.  
*I'm **not absolutely** convinced. (less than 100%)*  
*I'm **absolutely not** convinced. (0%)*

Note that putting the adverb before *not* isn't possible with *very*.

*I'm **not very** happy with this situation. (Not: ~~I'm very not happy with this situation.~~)*

## Focus adverbs

- The adverbs *even, just, and only* focus our attention on one part of a sentence. They usually come before a main verb, but after an auxiliary or *be*.  
*Exetica **only** had better results than us in May. (not in June, etc.)*  
*I **just** don't understand why team A didn't complete the first away day task. (I really don't understand)*  
*Jo couldn't **even** remember all the details. (a criticism of Jo)*
- If these adverbs refer to a noun phrase then they come before it, and the meaning is changed.  
***Only** Exetica had better results than us in May. (no other company)*  
*I don't understand why team A didn't complete **just** the first away day task. (they managed to complete all the others)*  
*I don't understand why **just** team A didn't complete the first away day task. (all the other teams managed to do it)*  
***Even** Jo couldn't remember all the details. (Jo is expected to be good at remembering and the fact that she couldn't indicates that there were a lot of details.)*

## Functional adverbials

Adverbials are often used to refine the message conveyed by the sentence, without altering the meaning of any individual words. For example, they can be used

- to soften negative reactions  
***Unfortunately**, I can't agree with you. (also: regrettably, sadly)*
- to provide a link to what someone else has said  
***Of course**, you're right about that, but ... (also: no doubt, obviously, evidently, certainly)*
- to move the subject of conversation / writing onto a different area  
***Frankly**, I'd prefer not to discuss that ... (also: to be honest, honestly, actually)*

## Unit 7 | Participle clauses | Future in the past

### Participle clauses

- An adverbial clause begins with a conjunction (e.g. *because, when, after*) and gives extra information about the main topic in a sentence.  
***When I travel by train**, I prefer to sit by the window.*  
Often it is possible to use a clause with a present participle instead. This is called a participle clause.  
***Travelling by train**, I prefer to sit by the window.*

- We can use most conjunctions before the participle. An exception is *because*.  
*After travelling by train, I needed some fresh air. (Not: Because travelling by train, I allowed plenty of time.)*
- Usually, we use the present participle (verb + *-ing*) for present and recent situations, in place of the present simple / continuous / perfect, and past simple / continuous.  
*Since living in Dubai, I've learnt to cope with hot weather. (= since I have lived ...)*  
*Learning English, I often wrote difficult words on post-it notes. (= when I was learning ... / learnt ...)*
- Having* + past participle is used in place of the past perfect (for a past action before another past action).  
*Having decided to hire Fatima Mattar, we made her a job offer. (= after we had decided)*
- We can use a passive participle in place of a passive adverbial structure.  
*Offered the job, I wasn't sure whether to accept it. (= when I had been offered the job)*
- Note also *given*, which has a meaning similar to *because* + *be*.  
*Given his reluctance to accept criticism, you'll have to be careful how you word the letter. (= because he is reluctant ...)*

## Future in the past

### Was going to

- We can use *was going to* to talk about the future from a point of view in the past: to talk about things that were planned, or former intentions.  
*I was going to visit our Alicante office too, but my plane was delayed.*
- It is the **intention** that is in the past and has changed. The time the plan / intention refers to can be in the future.  
*Tomorrow we were going to go to the races, but the course has been flooded.*
- The time the plan / intention refers to can also be in the past.  
*Yesterday I was going to have my appraisal, but my boss was ill.*
- This structure is often used to explain why something did not happen, to make excuses, to explain changes to plans, to give background to our current intentions / thoughts.  
*Hi, John. I was going to call you today, but I totally forgot.*  
*We were going to have the meeting in the café, but it was too noisy.*  
*I was going to invite Denis out to dinner tonight. Do you think it's a good idea?*
- We can also use perfect tenses with *going to*, for different perspectives in the past.  
*She's been going to visit this office for ages – I don't think she ever will.*  
*They had been going to make me redundant, if I hadn't taken early retirement.*

### Other structures

A number of other structures are also possible.

- The past continuous can be used for former arrangements (just as we would use the present continuous for a current arrangement).  
*I was meeting their sales rep at 3.00 p.m., but he's just cancelled. (Compare with: I'm meeting their sales rep at 3.00 p.m.)*

- Was to* / *were to* is possible, as the past form of *be to*, particularly to talk in a formal style about past plans and arrangements.  
*We were to launch the product at the International Spring Convention. Unfortunately there were delays beyond our control.*

## Unit 8 | Using questions

### Yes / no questions

*Yes* / *no* questions are questions that could be answered *yes* or *no*. They usually begin with an auxiliary verb or *be*, followed by the subject. It is usually impolite to reply with just *yes* or *no*. Extra words are necessary for politeness, and often giving extra, more detailed information is appropriate.

*Is this the best solution?* ~ *Yes, after detailed research we're convinced that it is.*

### Wh- questions



*Wh-* questions ask for specific information about people, places, etc., and begin with *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, *which*, *how many*, etc., followed by inversion of subject and auxiliary (note the position of *did* and *you* in the example below).

*Where did you study for your MBA?* ~ *In Stanford. Why do you ask?*

### Indirect questions and modals in questions

- In indirect questions, the question that asks for information is contained ('embedded') within another question or a statement. Note that, unlike with standard questions, there is no inversion of subject and auxiliary.  
*I'd like to know how many days annual leave you offer.*
- Modal verbs are also used to make a question less direct.  
*Would you say that you're a team player? (Rather than: Are you a team player?)*  
*May I ask if you'd be likely to accept the job?*  
*Could I check whether you've signed in with security?*

### Other ways of asking questions

- A statement can sometimes have the function of a question. In writing, this is shown by a question mark (?). In speaking, there is a rise in intonation.   
*And you trained as a lawyer before moving into banking?* ~ *Yes, that's right.*
- Particularly in speech, we can sometimes use parts of statements to similar effect.   
*And your other interests?* ~ *I like football and tennis.*

### Question tags

- We can follow a statement with a question tag (inverted subject and auxiliary / *do* / *be*), to check or confirm information, or check that the person we are talking to agrees with or is following us. Usually a positive statement has a negative tag, and vice versa.  
*They said they'd arrive around 9.00 p.m., didn't they?*  
*It's probably best if we deal with that later, don't you think?*

- Note that it is possible to have a positive tag after a positive statement, to express a reaction to something you have just heard, for example.

*And you're happy with that decision, are you?*

## Functions of questions

Beyond asking for information, questions can have a range of functions. We can use them

- to check that the audience is following / understands  
*It's not, is it, a question of threats, but of opportunities, do you see?*
- to set up / introduce a subject which you then explain  
*What are our objectives for the coming year? Well, first of all, we hope to ...*
- to give yourself time to think, or to give the audience a pause in concentration  
*And then, erm, how can I put this? Well, we have decided that ...*
- to challenge what someone has said  
*And you really believe that these measures will have an effect, do you?*  
*~ Well, they should certainly help relieve the pressure in the short term.*
- to lead someone towards a specific point of view  
*That may not be a good thing, surely?*  
*Don't you agree that it's better to wait?*

## Unit 9 | Conditionals

### Form

These are the main conditional forms.

Type	Situation	Result
zero	<i>If + present</i> <i>If you hand in work late,</i>	present <i>you make a bad impression.</i>
first	<i>If + present</i> <i>If we lose the contract,</i>	<i>will + infinitive</i> <i>we'll be in trouble.</i>
second	<i>If + past tense</i> <i>If we lost the contract,</i>	<i>would + infinitive</i> <i>my job would be on the line.</i>
third	<i>If + past perfect</i> <i>If we'd got the contract,</i>	<i>would have + infinitive</i> <i>we would have made a lot of money.</i>

### Zero conditionals

- Use zero conditionals when the relationship between the situation and result is always true or always the same; there is no element of chance or doubt.  
*If we hit our targets, we get a bonus.*
- We can also use two past tenses, to talk about something that always used to be true.  
*We got time off in lieu if we worked weekends.*
- Informally, we can use this structure where a first conditional would be more appropriate in a formal situation.  
*If we lose the contract, we're in trouble.*

### First conditional

- Use the first conditional when a situation is very likely to have the result given.  
*If you arrive late, you'll miss the first part of the meeting.*
- The present continuous and present perfect are possible in the *if*-clause.  
*If Jenny's working on this project, she'll learn a lot of useful stuff.*  
*If Amit's broken his leg, you'll have to give the presentation.*
- Other modal expressions such as *can*, *may*, *be going to* are possible in the result clause.  
*If we don't gain market share, we may be in a sticky situation.*  
*I'm going to change distributors if Kikibo don't get their act together.*

### Second conditional

- Use the second conditional when a situation is hypothetical or imagined.  
*If taxes rose, we would consider relocating.*
- The second conditional is also useful to make suggestions, offers, warnings, etc. more distant and polite.  
*If you arrived at meetings on time, we'd get much more done.*
- Might* and *could* are also possible in the result clause.  
*We could save hundreds of hours if we adopted the new system.*

### Mixed conditionals

- It is possible to use the *if*-clause of a second conditional (*if* + past simple) with the result clause of a third conditional (*would* + perfect infinitive). This is an example of a mixed conditional.  
*If you cared more about your work, you would have been promoted years ago.*

Note that here we are talking about a general hypothetical situation, with an imagined past result.

- More often we use the *if*-clause of a third conditional (*if* + past perfect) with the result clause of a second conditional (*would* + present / continuous infinitive).  
*If I had got the job, I would earn €100,000 by now. (would + present infinitive)*  
*If I had got the job, I would be commuting for four hours a day. (would + continuous infinitive)*

Note that here we are imagining something that didn't happen in the past, with a present result.

» For more information on the third conditional, see **Language reference Unit 2** on page 126.

### Passives

Passive forms are possible in all types of conditional sentence, in either clause.

- If the contract is lost, we'll be in trouble.*  
*If we adopted the new system, hundreds of hours could be saved.*

### Other words instead of *if*

- In many conditional sentences, *when* can replace *if*. This makes a situation sound more likely. The same is true of *every time*.  
*When we hit our targets, we get a bonus.*  
*Every time we hit our targets, we get a bonus.*

- 2 In zero, first, and second conditionals, we can use *unless* to mean 'except if' or 'if not'.

*Unless we keep our contract with Zimierz, we'll be without a Polish partner company.*

- 3 Participles such as *providing*, *provided*, *assuming*, and *supposing*, and phrases such as *on the condition that* and *as long as*, can also replace *if*.

*Providing the building goes well, our new offices will be ready in May 2012.*

*As long as the pound stays strong, our projections will be realistic.*

## Unit 10 | The passive

### Forms

- 1 In all tenses (simple, continuous, or perfect) we form the passive with *be* in the appropriate tense + past participle.

*Mistakes were being made. (past continuous)*

*Eight applications have been received. (present perfect)*

- 2 Passive modals are also possible in simple, continuous, or perfect forms.

*Forms may be filled in with black ink, or typed.*

*The computer network must be being updated – I can't access it.*

*Your timesheet should have been received by now.*

Semi-modals (e.g. *have to*, *be going to*) follow the same rules.

*You're going to be offered a position in the Frankfurt office.*

- 3 A passive infinitive is *to be* + past participle. A passive perfect infinitive is *to have been* + past participle.

*I'm delighted to be offered the post, but unfortunately I must decline.*

*I'm delighted to have been offered the post, but unfortunately I must decline.*

- 4 A passive *-ing* form is *being* + past participle. A passive perfect *-ing* form is *having been* + past participle.

*Being asked to leave the company wasn't pleasant.*

*Having been offered three options, Jim chose the cheapest.*

- 5 The object of an active sentence becomes the subject of a passive sentence. If a verb has two objects, either object can become the subject.

*Someone at the door gave us a handout.*

*We were given a handout.*

*A handout was given to us.*

Verbs that do not take an object (e.g. *go*, *come*, *fall*) cannot be made passive.

*Profits fell last year. (Not: Profits were fallen last year.)*

### Use

- 1 We use the passive to focus attention on the action mentioned, or on the object of the action (the person or thing affected by it). We do not know who does the action, or it isn't important.

*The office has been redecorated. It looks so much better than before!*

- 2 Using the passive helps create an impersonal style. This is often appropriate in formal English, for example in business letters and reports, where a personal style would not be appropriate.

*Results for the first quarter were published on 6 April, and were strong.*

- 3 The passive is a useful way of adding distance between an action and those doing it, for example, when giving people bad news.

*Regrettably, redundancies will have to be made. Some of those sitting here will be affected. (Compare: I'll have to make redundancies. It will affect some of you.)*

- 4 In discourse, we often choose to use the passive if it provides a better link with the sentence before. In these cases, we can say who does the action using *by*.

*We asked for ways to improve customer relations. Making changes to our complaints procedure was suggested by several respondents.*

### Passive reporting

- 1 We use the passive with reporting verbs when we don't know, or would prefer not to say, whose words we are reporting – for example, if their identity is confidential or sensitive.

*I've been asked to write you a reference.*

- 2 In the active sentence below, *Carol* is an indirect object.

*Jim told Carol the likely result of the restructuring.*

The indirect object becomes the subject of a passive sentence.

*Carol was told the likely result of the restructuring.*

Some reporting verbs do not take an indirect object, so cannot form passives in this way. These include: *agree*, *allege*, *announce*, *argue*, *claim*, *decide*, *predict*, *report*, *say*, *state*, and *suggest*. Instead, we use them in a structure with an empty subject: *it + be + past participle + that*.

*It was alleged that you stole money from the company.*

## Unit 11 | Inversion

### Questions

The most common uses of inversion word order are in questions and short answers.

- 1 In inversion word order, the auxiliary comes before the subject.

*Have you got any paperclips? ~ No. ~ Neither have I.*

- 2 *Do / does* is used as an auxiliary with simple-tense verbs.

*Does Chris like the new receptionist?*

- 3 Ordinary verbs *be* and *have* and modal auxiliaries do not require *do*.

*Was I the best candidate?*

*Can you help us?*

As well as in questions, inversion is used in a variety of structures, often rather formally.

### Negative expressions

- 1 Inversion is used after the negative words *neither* and *nor*, and after phrases with *not* and *no*.

*In no way do I accept their conclusions. Neither do I think the report should be circulated.*

*Not without careful thought am I writing this letter. Nor is it without having consulted several of my closest associates.*

- 2 We also use inversion after adverbs such as *seldom*, *rarely*, *scarcely*, *hardly* (*ever*), *little* that restrict the meaning / reference of the verb that follows.

*Rarely have I been to such a well-organized product launch.*

*Little did we know that she had accepted a position with our rivals.*

### Only

When *only* is used with time expressions or prepositional phrases, the verb that follows is inverted.

Only before 30 September **can you** hand in a non-calculated tax return.

Only by travelling overland **can you** really appreciate a country.

## Participles

When participles are moved to the front position, inversion takes place in formal English.

*Waiting for us in his office **was my boss.***

## Conditionals

Instead of saying *if I had, if she was*, etc., we can use inversion.

Note that *was* becomes *were*.

***Had the minister** announced the tax increases more openly, he would have faced a storm of criticism.*

***Had I** been told about the dress code, I wouldn't have felt such a fool.*

***Were she** to be fired, she'd probably sue.*

We can use the inverted structure *should* + subject as another way of expressing condition.

***Should we** require further information, we will contact you again. (= If we require ...)*

These forms are especially common with passive structures.

## Unit 12 | Discourse markers

### Truthfulness

1 *Honestly* and *frankly* are used to claim that the speaker is telling the truth. Often they introduce criticism or negative remarks.

*Quite* adds emphasis to both words.

*Frankly*, I didn't like the venue.

*Quite honestly*, I thought your comments were ill-judged.

2 *To tell you the truth* and *to be honest* have a similar function.

*To tell you the truth*, I didn't enjoy the conference.

*To be honest*, the meeting was a complete waste of time.

### Strengthening arguments

All of the following discourse markers stress the importance of the point that follows.

1 We can use *in fact*, *as a matter of fact*, and *after all* to suggest that an opinion is not personal, but is based on evidence.

*As a matter of fact*, house prices fell by 2.5% last month.

2 We can use *if you ask me* and *I must say* to suggest that it is personal.

*If you ask me*, the government is to blame for ruining the economy.

3 We can use *clearly*, *of course*, *naturally*, *obviously*, *undoubtedly*, and *after all* to suggest that what will follow is not controversial or will not be questioned.

*Clearly*, the next two years will be critical for the future of the economy.

### Concession

1 We can use *admittedly*, *to be sure*, *it's true that*, to acknowledge that someone has made a good point before disagreeing with them, or to concede a negative point before making a different point.

The sentence that follows often begins with *but* or *however*.

*Admittedly*, the result could have been better. *However*, we retained our position as market leader.

2 We can concede that someone else has a point before making our own point, to make our own point sound stronger or more carefully thought out. To do this, *admittedly*, *to be sure*, and *it's true that ... but / however* are possible.

*A We're in danger of missing the deadline.*

*B It's true that we're dealing with an incredibly large workload at the moment, but I know that we can meet this deadline.*

### Discourse patterns

Some discourse markers draw attention to the discourse itself – the pattern of what is said.

1 We can use the following to rephrase or paraphrase an argument: *as I was saying*, *as it were*, *I mean*, *if you like*, *so to speak*, *that's to say*, *to put it another way*, *well*.

*Your holiday could cause a real problem for ... well, I mean, we need to amend the schedules, really.*

2 We can use the following to link to a new topic: *now*, *anyway*, *mind you*, *moving on*, *actually*, *indeed*.

*So, that's the plan for the next two months. Anyway, didn't you want to ask me about the sales figures?*

3 We can use the following to return to a previous topic: *anyway*, *as I was saying*.

*The contract was signed yesterday and ... oh, David, you've decided to join us! Anyway, as I was saying, the contract has just been signed and ...*

4 We can use the following to introduce a conclusion: *so*, *anyway*, *basically*, *in conclusion*, *to sum up*.

*That was what my report uncovered, so basically, we have to consolidate our product list over the next year.*

### Acknowledging non-literal meanings

Some discourse markers show that language is being used in a way that is different from its usual, literal meaning: *so to speak*, *as it were*, *if you will / like*.

*A George seems quite volatile.*

*B Yeah, he's a bomb waiting to go off, so to speak.*