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General English for Non- Departmental Classes

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Simple Present Tense

subject + auxiliary verb + main verb

do base

Affirmative	Interrogative	Negative
I think	Do I think ?	I do not think.
You think	Do you think?	You don't think.
he, she, it thinks	Does he, she, it think?	He, she, it doesn't think.
we think	Do we think?	We don't think.
you think	Do you think?	You don't think.

Look at these examples with the main verb *be*. Notice that there is no auxiliary:

subject	main verb	
+ I	am	French.
You, we, they	are	French.
He, she, it	Is	French.
- I	am	not old.
You, we, they	are	not old.
He, she, it	Is	not old.
? Am	I	late?
Are	you, we, they	late?
Is	he, she, it	late?

Note:

1. **he, she, it:** in the third person singular the verb **always ends in -s:**
he wants, she needs, he gives, she thinks.
2. Negative and question forms use DOES (=the third person of the auxiliary 'DO') + the infinitive of the verb.
He wants. Does he want? He does not want.
3. Verbs ending in **-y** : the third person changes the **-y** to **-ies**:
fly → flies, cry → cries
Exception: if there is a vowel before the **-y**:
play → plays, pray → prays
4. Add **-es** to verbs ending in: **-ss, -x, -sh, -ch**:
he passes, she catches, he fixes, it pushes

Examples:

1. Third person singular with s or -es

- *He goes* to school every morning.
- *She understands* English.

- *It mixes* the sand and the water.
- *He tries* very hard.
- *She enjoys* playing the piano.

BE CAREFUL! The simple present is **not used to express actions happening now.**

Examples:

1. For habits

He *drinks* tea at breakfast.

She only *eats* fish.

They *watch* television regularly.

2. For repeated actions or events

We *catch* the bus every morning.

It *rains* every afternoon in the hot season.

They *drive* to Monaco every summer.

3. For general truths

Water *freezes* at zero degrees.

The Earth *revolves* around the Sun.

Her mother *is* Peruvian.

4. For instructions or directions

Open the packet and *pour* the contents into hot water.

You *take* the No.6 bus to Watney and then the No.10 to Bedford.

5. For fixed arrangements

His mother *arrives* tomorrow.

Our holiday *starts* on the 26th March

6. With future constructions

She'll see you before she *leaves*.

We'll give it to her when she *arrives*.

Simple Past Tense

Subject + past form only

or

Subject + auxiliary *did* + base form

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I walked	I didn't walk	Did I walk?
You walked	You didn't walk	Did you walk?
He, she, it walked	He didn't walk	Did he walk?
We walked	We didn't walk	Did we walk?
You walked	You didn't walk	Did you walk?
They walked	They didn't walk	Did they walk?

Simple past, *be*, *have*, *do*:

Subject	Verb		
	Be	Have	Do
I	was	had	did
You	were	had	did
He, she, it	was	had	did
We	were	had	did
You	were	had	did
They	were	had	did

Affirmative

- I *was* in Japan last year
- She *had* a headache yesterday.
- We *did* our homework last night.

Negative and interrogative

Note:

For the negative and interrogative simple past form of "*do*" as an ordinary verb, use the auxiliary "*do*", e.g. We *didn't do* our homework last night. The negative of "*have*" in the simple past is usually formed using the auxiliary "*do*", but sometimes by simply adding *not* or the contraction "*n't*".

The interrogative form of "*have*" in the simple past normally uses the auxiliary "*do*".

- They *weren't* in Rio last summer.
- We *hadn't* any money.
- We *didn't have* time to visit the Eiffel Tower.
- We *didn't do* our exercises this morning.

- *Were they* in Iceland last January?
- *Did you have* a bicycle when you were a boy?
- *Did you do* much climbing in Switzerland?

Examples: Simple past, irregular verbs

- He *went* to a club last night.
- *Did he go* to the cinema last night?
- He *didn't go* to bed early last night.
- We *gave* her a doll for her birthday.
- *They didn't give* John their new address.
- *Did Barry give* you my passport?
- My parents *came* to visit me last July.
- *We didn't come* because it was raining.
- *Did he come* to your party last week?

Present Continuous (Progressive) Tense

subject + auxiliary verb + main verb

Be base + ing

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I am going	I am not going	Am I going?
You are going	You aren't going.	Are you going?
He, she, it is going	He, she, it isn't going	Is he, she, it going?
We are going	We aren't going	Are we going?
You are going	You aren't going	Are you going?
They are going	They aren't going	Are they going?

Look at these examples :

subject	auxiliary verb	main verb	
+ I	Am	speaking	to you.
+ You	Are	reading	this.
- She	Is not	staying	in London.
- We	Are not	playing	football.
? Is	He	watching	TV?
? Are	They	waiting	for John?

The present continuous of any verb is composed of two parts - *the present tense of the verb to be + the present participle of the main verb.*

(The form of the present participle is: *base+ing*, e.g. *talking, playing, moving, smiling*)

Affirmative

Subject	+ <i>to be</i>	+ base+ <i>ing</i>
she	is	talking

Negative

Subject	+ <i>to be + not</i>	+ base+ <i>ing</i>
she	is not (isn't)	talking

Interrogative

<i>to be</i>	+ <i>subject</i>	+ base+ <i>ing</i>
is	she	talking?

BE CAREFUL! Some verbs are not used in the continuous form - see below.

The verbs in the list below are normally used in the simple form, because they refer to *states*, rather than actions or processes:

List of common verbs normally used in simple form:

Senses / Perception

feel*, hear, see*, smell, taste

Opinion

assume, believe, consider, doubt, feel (= think), find (= consider), suppose, think*

Mental states

forget, imagine, know, mean, notice, recognize, remember, understand

Emotions / desires

envy, fear, dislike, hate, hope, like, love, mind, prefer, regret, want, wish

Measurement

contain, cost, hold, measure, weigh

Others

look (=resemble), seem, be (*in most cases*), have (*when it means to possess*)*

Notes:

- 'Perception' verbs (see, hear, feel, taste, smell) are often used with 'can': e.g. *I can see...*

Examples

- I *wish* I was in Greece now.
- She *wants* to see him now.
- I don't *understand* why he is shouting.
- I *feel* we are making a mistake.
- This glass *holds* half a litre.

Past Continuous (Progressive) Tense

Subject + auxiliary verb BE + main verb
 conjugated in simple past tense present participle
was base + ing
were base + ing

Affirmative

Negative

Interrogative

I was playing

I was not playing

Was I playing?

You were playing

You were not playing

Were you playing?

He, she, it was playing

She wasn't playing

Was she playing?

We were playing

We weren't playing

Were we playing?

You were playing

You weren't playing

Were you playing?

They were playing

They weren't playing

Were they playing?

Look at these examples:

subject	auxiliary verb	main verb	
+ I	Was	watching	TV.
+ You	Were	working	hard.
- He, she, it	Was not	helping	Mary.
- We	Were not	joking.	
? Were	You	being	silly?
? Were	They	playing	football?

The past continuous of any verb is composed of two parts : the past tense of the verb *to be (was/were)*, and the base of the main verb *+ing*.

Subject	was/were	base-ing
They	were	watching

Affirmative

She was reading

Negative

She wasn't reading

Interrogative

Was she reading?

Interrogative negative

Wasn't she reading?

More examples

- They *were waiting* for the bus when the accident happened.
- Caroline *was skiing* when she broke her leg.
- When we arrived he *was having* a bath.
- When the fire started I *was watching* television.

we will not we won't
they will not they won't

NOTE: In modern English *will* is preferred to *shall*.

Shall is mainly used with *I* and *we* to make an offer or suggestion, or to ask for advice. With the other persons (*you, he, she, they*) *shall* is only used in literary or poetic situations, e.g.

- "With rings on her fingers and bells on her toes, *She shall have music wherever she goes.*"

Future With 'going to'

This form is composed of three elements: the appropriate form of the verb '*to be*' + *going to* + the *infinitive* of the main verb:

Subject	'to be'	going to	infinitive
She	is	going to	leave

Note: In everyday speech, '*going to*' is often shortened to '*gonna*', especially in American English.

NOTE: It is unusual to say 'I'm going to go to...'

Instead, we use '*going to*' + *a place or event*:

Examples

- We *are going to the beach* tomorrow.
- She *is going to the ballet* tonight.
- *Are you going to the party* tomorrow night?