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Intermediate English Grammar for ESL Learners

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Intermediate English Grammar for ESL Learners

Third Edition

Robin Torres-Gouzerh



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Preface

Grammar can be frustrating to master as you try to learn a language. This book was written to be easily accessible to students of English as a second language. *Practice Makes Perfect: Intermediate English Grammar for ESL Learners* is designed to help beginner- and intermediate-level learners hone their grammatical skills to the point where they are comfortable with English grammar. Technical terminology has been kept to a minimum, and simple terms are used wherever possible. As a result, you will be able to focus on learning new material.

You have already begun your study of English grammar. This book will provide you with a higher-level look at that grammar. The numerous examples provide models on which you can rely to form your own original sentences. The many practical exercises give you the opportunity to practice what you have learned. Be sure to use the answer key to check your work. And this second edition is supported by additional review questions in the McGraw-Hill Education Language Lab app.

As you progress through this book, you will find that your confidence in using English is growing, and by the time you finish the book, you will be one major step closer to being a fluent speaker and writer. This page intentionally left blank

The sentence



In formal spoken or written English, every sentence must be **complete**. The basic rule is that all sentences must have a **subject** (S), which can be a **pronoun**, a **noun**, or a **noun phrase**, and a **verb** (V), which can also be a **verb phrase**. In many cases, the verb can be followed by a **direct object** (O). Consider the following examples.

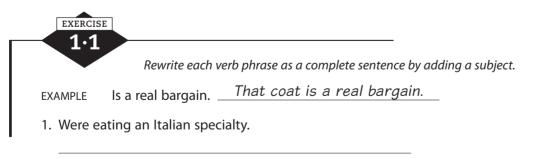
She works. (S) + (V)Fish swim. (S) + (V)The children played. (S) + (V)The bus driver needs a break. (S) + (V) + (O)My mother liked the movie. (S) + (V) + (O)

Every sentence must have a **subject**. The imperative sentence is an exception to this basic rule, because the subject, *you*, is understood. Imperative sentences are used to instruct someone to do something.

Go to class. Pick up your mess, please. Read objective newspapers.

Verbs that do not require a direct object are called **intransitive verbs**. Some common intransitive verbs are *exist* and *rise*. They are typically used with prepositional phrases, as illustrated in the following examples.

It is possible that life **existed** on Mars millions of years ago. Black smoke **rose** from the burning tires.



2. Have worked in Austin for two years.

3. Purchased it last week. _

Is awful. ______
 Looks comfortable. ______
 Went to the theater. ______

Noun phrases

The subject of a sentence can be a **noun phrase**, which can be **simple** or **complex**. The subject can be one word or a group of words that includes a noun together with other words that provide information about the noun. Some noun phrases can be quite complex. Consider the following sentences.

The boy went to the playground. **The lively boy** went to the playground. **The lively boy next door** went to the playground.

No matter how complex a noun phrase is, it still remains the subject of the sentence and determines the form of the verb. The verb in the sentences above is *went*.



Underline the subject(s) in each sentence.

- 1. Children ought to be more careful.
- 2. Water is good for you.
- 3. Prague is an amazing and historic Eastern European city.
- 4. The furry, clean, calm cat slept on the couch.
- 5. The furry, clean, calm, black cat ran outside.
- 6. The furry, clean, calm, black cat with a scar jumped on the counter.
- 7. The big, ugly, dirty, brown bear with long ears and large claws attacked a hunter.
- 8. She read a magazine yesterday.
- 9. Peter went to the circus.
- 10. Lending money and giving too much advice can cause problems.

Verb phrases

The verb in a sentence can also appear in a **verb phrase**.

He **has** often **spoken** of you. She **will** not **be able** to understand this document. Sometimes extra information is added before the subject and verb, or between the subject and the verb. This information is often adverbial. In the first example below, the adverbial phrases tell **where**, **how frequently**, and **when** the action took place. In the second example, the adverbial phrase tells **why** and **when** the action took place.

In Pennsylvania, Marc **often** went running **in the morning**. Marc, **because he was feeling unhealthy**, went running **in the morning**.

In both of these examples, when we ask the question "Who went running?" the answer is "Marc" the subject of both sentences. The added information is that he often ran in the morning when he was in Pennsylvania, and that he ran because he felt unhealthy.

Underline both the subject and the verb or verb phrase in each sentence.

- 1. The big, brown dog sitting in the shade is hungry.
- 2. I always drink coffee in the morning before work.
- 3. After getting to the hotel room, Saul ordered room service.
- 4. The youth hostels we stayed in while we were in Budapest weren't too expensive.
- 5. My professor, after noticing that I had been studying hard, was nicer to me.
- 6. Maybe her father is sicker than you think.
- 7. In the future, presidential elections will be held on the Internet.
- 8. After the show, the people who were sitting in the front row got up.

Modifiers

exercise 1·3

There are many types of sentence modifiers. Among the most important are **adjectives**, **adverbs**, and **prepositional phrases**.

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns.

That **striped** snake is poisonous. Our **new** neighbor is a **professional** basketball player. He is **old**.

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.

She **seldom** wrote after she moved away. The **severely** wounded man was taken to the hospital. The witness spoke **very** nervously about the robbery.

Prepositional phrases can modify nouns or verbs.

The man **in the garden** is a police officer. **For many years** they lived **in Mexico**.

	exercise 1·4
	Complete each sentence with an appropriate modifier: adjective, adverb, or prepositional phrase.
EXAN	MPLE They stayed up and chatted <u>until dawn</u> .
1.	he headed for home on foot.
2.	Do you recognize the man on the corner?
3.	She speaks to me anymore.
4.	dress.
5.	He took her advice very
6.	go skiing in Colorado.
7.	Your brother plays the piano
8.	Please speak I'm trying to nap.
9.	Yesterday, I saw a accident
10.	My sister is a competent lawyer.

The verb phrase



It is impossible to compose a correct sentence without using a proper verb. The verb is at the very foundation of a sentence. The **verb phrase** may be composed of only one word or it may have related parts. Consider the following examples.

Angela **had to go** to Chicago. The boys **are fishing** at the creek. Someone **should repair** that window.

Sometimes, the related parts are composed of more than one word. In the examples above, the verbs are *go*, *fish*, and *repair*, and the related parts are *had to*, *are*, and *should*.



Underline the verb phrase in each sentence, whether the verb phrase is composed of a verb alone or a verb and related parts.

- 1. He doesn't go to meetings on Tuesdays.
- 2. He goes to the park with his dog.
- 3. She is heading out to school.
- 4. He never washes the dishes.
- 5. She is going to the theater tonight.
- 6. He has traveled to Spain before.
- 7. She has been practicing yoga for two years now.
- 8. He has to be at the train station by 8 A.M.
- 9. She goes to school in Chicago.
- 10. She had visited Chicago many times.
- 11. She is going to travel to Chicago.

Auxiliary verbs

Some sentences contain a single verb (for example, go), while other sentences include a related part before the main verb (for example, a form of be + a form of the verb go). Auxiliary verbs are among the related parts that can form a verb phrase; in some grammar books, they are called "helping verbs." The second example below illustrates the verb *be* used as an auxiliary.

She goes to class. She **is going** to class.

The first sentence contains a form of the single verb *go*. In the second example, however, the sentence also contains the verb *go*, but this time it has a related part, the auxiliary verb *is*, which precedes the verb in its present participle form (*is going*).

Auxiliary verbs change how a verb is used. Such changes can affect the tense, mood, or even the meaning of the verb.

The auxiliary *be* can be used in any tense, and in every tense the main verb is in the form of a present participle.

PRESENT	She is fixing that old clock.
PAST	She was fixing that old clock.
PRESENT PERFECT	She has been fixing that old clock.
PAST PERFECT	She had been fixing that old clock
FUTURE	She will be fixing that old clock.

The auxiliary verb *have* is used with a past participle to form the present perfect or past perfect tense.

She **has lived** here all her life. They **have been working** on the problem all day. Martin **had** never **seen** a kangaroo before. She **had been napping** when the fire broke out.

The auxiliary *do/did* is used with a basic verb to form a **question**, a **negative statement** with *not*, or an **emphatic statement**. *Do* is used in the present tense, and *did* in the past tense.

Do you **understand** Arabic? **Did** Mr. Keller **sell** that old car yet? You **don't have** enough money to buy that CD. You're wrong. I **do have** enough money. But you **did not have** enough money yesterday.

Modal auxiliaries

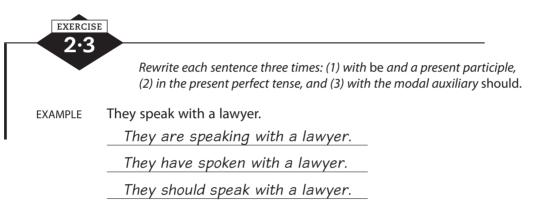
Some auxiliary verbs are called **modal auxiliaries**. They are used with a verb to show the **degree of obligation** of the action of the verb. Two important modal auxiliaries are *have to* and *should*.

Do you **have to play** the radio so loud? Mary **has to stay** at home today. Dad, you **should**n't **work** so hard in this heat. Why **should** I **care**?



Underline the auxiliary verb in each sentence.

- 1. He does attend meetings on Tuesdays.
- 2. He is walking to the park with his dog.
- 3. She is leaving for summer camp on Sunday.
- 4. Alberto has gone to Cuba.
- 5. He has traveled to the south of Spain for years.
- 6. She should go alone this time.
- 7. He has to walk faster.



1. James tries on a pair of pants.

- 2. I live on about a hundred dollars a week.
- 3. Father scolds the children.

4. Does she work hard?

5. The conductor waits on the platform.

The verb



Verbs are words that express action. They can express **tense** (the time at which the action occurred) and **voice**. The voice can be **active** (where the subject performs the action) or **passive** (where the subject is placed in a passive position in the sentence).

The most common verb tenses are the **present**, **past**, and **future**. Each of these tenses has a **progressive**, **habitual**, and **perfect** form.

Linking verbs

A linking verb connects a subject and a subject complement, a word that describes or clarifies the subject. The most commonly used linking verb is the verb *be*. Consider the following examples.

Table tennis **is** fun. Their grandfather **was** a war hero.

Other words commonly used as linking verbs are *appear, seem, look, feel, sound, taste,* and *smell.*

You **seem** a little unhappy today. That woman **looks** rather sick. This sweater **feels** warm. Her meatloaf **smells** great!

Linking verbs are intransitive. They do not have direct objects. Notice that the verb in each of the following examples is a transitive verb with the direct object *flower*.

The little girl **smelled** the flower. No one wanted to **buy** a flower from her. I only **sold** one flower today.

To identify the direct object in a sentence, ask *what* or *whom* of the verb: *What did the little girl smell? What did no one want to buy? What did I sell today?* The answer to each question is *flower*, the direct object. Linking verbs never have a direct object.

3.1
Complete each sentence with an appropriate linking verb.

 1. Her suggestion _______ useful at the time.

 2. Barbara _______ very different with her new haircut.

 3. From here, clouds _______ fluffy like cotton balls.

 4. Chocolate éclairs _______ my favorite pastry.

 5. This honey _______ wonderful.

 6. That idea _______ crazy to them.

 7. Peter told me he ______ sick today.

Most verbs have five forms:

- **Base form.** This is the verb in its original form, the form you find in the dictionary. *Run, study, eat, think, write, fall, open,* and *ask* are verbs in their base form.
- Third-person singular form: base form + -s (or -es). This form is used with *he*, *she*, or *it* in the present tense. *Runs*, *studies*, *eats*, *thinks*, *writes*, *falls*, *opens*, and *asks* are verbs in the third-person singular form.
- **Past tense form.** This form can be regular or irregular. The regular past tense is the base form + *-ed. Studied, opened,* and *asked* are verbs in the regular past tense form. There are fewer irregular verbs in the English language than regular verbs. These verbs are called **irregular**, because they do not end with *-ed* in the past tense. *Ran, ate, thought, wrote,* and *fell* are past tense forms of irregular verbs.
- Present participle, or progressive, form: base form + -*ing.* Running, studying, eating, thinking, writing, falling, opening, and asking are verbs in the present participle, or progressive, form.
- **Past participle form.** This form can be regular or irregular. The regular past participle form is the base form + *-ed. Studied, opened,* and *asked* are verbs in this form. Irregular past participles are formed differently, for example, *run, eaten, thought, written,* and *fallen.*

Irregular verbs

Verbs are categorized as irregular when they do not end in *-ed* in the past tense form. Although there are fewer irregular verbs than regular verbs, they are also among the most commonly used verbs.

The following chart illustrates the various forms of some common irregular verbs. This list is not comprehensive; a complete list can be found in most dictionaries.

BASE FORM	THIRD-PERSON SINGULAR	PAST TENSE	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	PAST PARTICIPLE
cut	cuts	cut	cutting	cut
eat	eats	ate	eating	eaten
find	finds	found	finding	found
go	goes	went	going	gone
run	runs	ran	running	run
say	says	said	saying	said
speak	speaks	spoke	speaking	spoken
think	thinks	thought	thinking	thought
write	writes	wrote	writing	written

The verb *be* is an exception. Like other verbs, it has a base form (*be*), a progressive form (*being*), and a past participle (*been*). Yet the present tense of *be* has three distinct forms: (I) *am*, (he/she/it) *is*, and (we/you/they) *are*. Moreover, the past tense of *be* has two distinct forms: (I/he/ she/it) *was* and (we/you/they) *were*.

Tenses

Most verbs can be conjugated in the present, past, and future tenses. The present participle, or progressive form, of a verb is used together with the auxiliary *be* to show a **continuing** or **incomplete action** in the various tenses. Consider the verb *speak* in its progressive form.

PRESENT	She is speaking with John.
PAST	She was speaking with John.
PRESENT PERFECT	She has been speaking with John.
PAST PERFECT	She had been speaking with John.
FUTURE	She will be speaking with John.
FUTURE PERFECT	She will have been speaking with John.

Compare these sentences with the following sentences, which illustrate a **completed** or **habitual action**.

PRESENT	She speaks with John.
PAST	She spoke with John.
PRESENT PERFECT	She has spoken with John.
PAST PERFECT	She had spoken with John.
FUTURE	She will speak with John.
FUTURE PERFECT	She will have spoken with John.

The progressive form of *be* (*being*) is used only in the present and past tenses.

PRESENT	He is sick.	He is being good.
PAST	He was sick.	He was being good.
PRESENT PERFECT	He has been sick.	_
PAST PERFECT	He had been sick.	_
FUTURE	He will be sick.	_
FUTURE PERFECT	He will have been sick.	—

EXERCISE 3.2	
	write each present-tense sentence using the other five tenses.
1. I study mathema	tics.
PAST	
PRESENT PERFECT	
PAST PERFECT	
FUTURE	
FUTURE PERFECT	
2. Tom is going to I	raq.
PAST	
PRESENT PERFECT	
PAST PERFECT	
FUTURE	
FUTURE PERFECT	
3. Anna comes alor	ıg.
PAST	
PRESENT PERFECT	
PAST PERFECT	
FUTURE	
FUTURE PERFECT	
1. They are driving	to Arizona.
PAST	
PRESENT PERFECT	
PAST PERFECT	
FUTURE	
FUTURE PERFECT	



In each sentence, if the verb illustrates habitual action, rewrite the sentence with the progressive form of the verb. If the verb is the progressive form, rewrite the sentence to illustrate habitual action. Retain the tense of the original sentence.

- 1. Why is he running so fast?
- 2. The boys swam across the river.
- 3. The hungry campers have eaten the hot dogs.
- 4. I won't be going to work today.
- 5. The old woman was very nice to me.
- 6. My uncle has sung in a chorus.
- 7. Will you drive your dad's new car?
- 8. I was thinking about you.
- 9. We had shopped there.
- 10. We were camping on the side of a hill.



The progressive tenses

Most verbs can form a present participle and be used in the progressive tenses. These tenses express the idea that an action is in progress during a particular time, that an action begins before, is in progress during, and continues after a period of time or after another action begins.

The present progressive

The present progressive tense expresses an action that is taking place at the moment of speaking and can imply that the action is incomplete.

> Lauren **is shopping** right now. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: *She is still shopping*.) He **is traveling** to Germany. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: *He hasn't arrived yet*.) The sun **is shining** brightly. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: *The sun continues to shine*.)

The girls **are walking** to the park. (INCOMPLETE ACTION: *They haven't arrived yet.*)

Often, the progressive present tense can be used to imply a future tense meaning.

I **am driving** home this weekend. **Are** you **going** to college next fall?

The past progressive

The past progressive tense expresses an action that took place in the past but was in progress for a period of time or was incomplete.

> Lauren **was shopping** all day. (IN PROGRESS ALL DAY) The boys **were fighting** over a toy. (IN PROGRESS FOR A PERIOD OF TIME) Tim **was studying** but got tired and took a nap. (INCOMPLETE) They **were driving** home when they ran out of gas. (INCOMPLETE)

It is quite common to add a *when* clause to statements that show an incomplete action or an action in progress that is interrupted.

She was crying when I arrived.

Mom was trying to rest **when** the phone rang.

We were just sitting down to supper **when** our neighbor knocked at the door. Mary was practicing the piano **when** I dropped by.

EXERCIS 4.1	3E	
	Complete each sentence with an appropriate when clause.	
EXAMPLE	She was just getting out of bed when <u>the doorbell rang</u> .	
1. I was	leaning back in my chair when	·
2. Were	you standing on the corner when	?
3. Aunt	Doris was baking a cake when	•
4. We w	ere making up the bed in the spare room when	

Now, provide an appropriate progressive-tense clause to complete each sentence.

EXAMPLE	<i>I was just opening my eyes</i> when I heard Mom come in.
5	when the dog began to bark.
6	when the door slammed shut.
7	when I heard someone call my name.
8	when the road suddenly ended.
9	when a bee stung me.
10	when someone stole my purse.

It is possible to place a past progressive verb in a clause that begins with *while* in order to emphasize that the action was in progress when an interruption occurred.

While I was swimming in the pool, I felt sick.My brother began to cry while I was trying to study.While you were out jogging, someone broke into the house.While he was standing at the bus stop, it started to snow.

A when clause and a while clause can be used with the same sentence elements.

While he was standing at the bus stop, it started to snow. He was standing at the bus stop **when** it started to snow.

While Father was working in the basement, I fell and broke my arm. Father was working in the basement **when** I fell and broke my arm.

The interruption of an action in progress can be another action in progress.

While I was trying to fall asleep in my apartment, the upstairs neighbor was making noise. She was checking the test results while I was working in the lab.

	EXERCISE 4.2
	Change each sentence from a statement containing a when clause to a statement containing a while clause.
1.	They were opening their Christmas gifts when the Christmas tree fell over.
2.	Tom was swimming in the pool when his little brother fell in the water.
3.	She was speaking with the letter carrier when a taxi pulled up in front of the house.
4.	Ms. Howard was lecturing her class when her cell phone rang.
5.	The boys were playing checkers on the floor when the cat jumped into the middle of their game.

The future progressive

The future progressive tense expresses an action in progress or incomplete that will be taking place at a time in the future.

Lauren **will be shopping** when I call her. We **will be traveling** by car. **Will** you **be having** dinner with us tonight? The two boys **will be sharing** a room together.

As with the present and past progressive tenses, the future progressive is used to express an action in progress that is interrupted.

He **will be cooking** when we get there. The children **will** probably **be sleeping** when you peek in on them. When you open your eyes, you **will be standing** in your new house. **Will** you still **be working** in the garden when I stop by?

Note that, although the clause with the progressive form of the verb is in the future tense, the verb in the *when* clause is in the present tense.

She will be preparing breakfast when the flowers arrive.

This difference of tenses also occurs with *while* clauses: The *while* clause is in the present tense, and the main clause is in the future tense.

While you're out skiing, I'll be making some lunch.

In some cases, the simple future and the future progressive tenses express very similar situations or actions, especially when the future action takes place at an indefinite time in the future. In the following examples, note that both sentences express an almost identical situation: We can't say for sure at what time Tyler is coming, but he is expected soon.

Tyler **will come** soon. Tyler **will be coming** soon.

	EXERCISE 4·3		
		-	mple present or the present progressive ten
EXAN	MPLE Cecilia can't come	to the door because she .	<i>is washing</i> (wash) her hair.
1.	David	(wash) his car eve	ry weekend.
2.	Paul usually	(eat) in from	t of the building, but today he
		eat) at the far corner tal	ble.
3.	Please explain it to me aga explanation.	ain. I	(try) to understand your
4.	l sent Paul an e-mail last w	veek, but I haven't receive	d an answer yet.
	I	(still + wait) for his rep	ly.
5.	l was getting tired of gray this morning.	skies. I'm glad the sun	(shine) again
6.	Every morning at ten, the	heater	(turn on) and
		(stay on) until mid-afterr	noon.
7.	It's so cold! No wonder it _		_ (hail).
8.	Tyler is a basketball player because it's off-season.	, but he	(not + play) right now,
9.	. He (coach) kids during the summer, and he		
		(train) in the fall.	
10.	In the spring, he	(attend) school in the morning and
		(play) with his team in th	<i>C</i> :

	EXERCISE 4.4				_
	4.4		each sentence, using eithei b in parentheses.	r the simple past or the past	progressive tense
EXAI	MPLE Iat a		(go) to the park last v	veek, but it <u>was not</u>	_ (not + be) sunny
1.	I		(call) Kim yesterda	y morning, but she	
_			(not + be) at home	. She	(visit)
ł	her aunt lik	e she usual	ly does on Tuesday morr	nings.	
2. I	I		(hear) the neighbo	ors washing their dishes l	ast night,
k	because I		(be) awak	e.	
3. 1	The weathe	r was perfe	ct yesterday when we h	ad the picnic at Peace Pa	ark.
٦	The sun		(shine). A ra	ather pleasant wind	
_			(blow). The children	I	(run) around
ā	all day.				
4. N	My parents		(joke) al	bout something when	
Ι	l		(enter) the room. T	hey instantly	
_			(stop) and	(prete	nd)
t	they		(do) something	g else.	
5. I	received a	package fr	om Korea in the mail. Wl	hen I	(open) it,
I	l		(find) a letter from	my girlfriend and a coup	ole of pictures.
6. \	While Pedro)	(organi	ize) his jazz records, his s	ister Miranda
_			(dust) off the turnta	bles.	
7. 5	Steven		(prefer) the	science fiction stories he	heard on the radio.
8. \	While his da	ad	(tell)	him the story of the Thre	e Mosquitoes, Steven
_			(fall) asleep, so his c	lad quietly	(close)
t	the book ar	nd silently _		(walk) out of the room	ı.
9. N	Mike		(run) down the	e stairs when his foot	
_			(catch) in one of the	e rails. Unfortunately,	
ł	he		(break) his knee	and ankle.	

I	ERCISE	
	Complete each sentence, using either the present progressive or the future progress tense of the verb in parentheses.	ssive
EXAN	LE Right now, I am playing. Tomorrow at this time, I <u>will be working</u> (work	k).
1. I	ill leave the university at three tomorrow. When I (arrive))
а	yoga class, my friends (wait) for me to begin the warm-u	р
e	ercises.	
2. A	THE: When do you leave for summer camp?	
V	NESSA: In a couple of days. Can you believe it? A week from now,	
I	(sleep) under the stars. I (climb)
n	ountains.	
A	THE: Sounds like fun! I (think) of you the whole time.	
3. A	ONSO: Are you going to be downtown next Saturday evening?	
C	THERINE: No, I don't think so. I (stay) home to finish painti	ng
n	living room.	
4. L	ok at those dark clouds on the horizon. I bet by the time our drive	
_	(be) over and we get home, it (reference)	ain).
	xt winter at this time, I (use) the exact same gloves I am ht now. They're just way too expensive.	using
6. R	HARD: How will I reach you if your cell-phone battery goes dead?	
N	HAEL: I (stay) at the Thunderbird and	
Ι	(be) pretty sure they have phones in the rooms.	