


**A Comprehensive
English Grammar**



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BOOK 2

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

VERBS: (4) VOICE

If the person or thing denoted by the subject of a sentence is the doer of the action, then that form of the verb is the ACTIVE VOICE, e.g.

The boy *kicked* the football (*Active Voice*).

If the person or thing denoted by the subject of a sentence is the receiver or sufferer of the action, then that form of the verb is the PASSIVE VOICE, e.g.

The football *was kicked* by the boy (*Passive Voice*).

The passive voice is formed by using the appropriate tense of the verb *to be* + the past participle of the verb, e.g. (See table on p. 220.)

Note that the passive may have the same form as *be* + past participle (used adjectivally), e.g.

The tree *was uprooted* by the wind. (*Passive Voice*)

The tree *was uprooted* when we saw it. (*be* + Past Participle)

The passive voice is not merely a formal variant of the active voice, able to replace it without any change of meaning; there is a difference of emphasis. Generally speaking, the subject of the sentence is the main point of interest; the passive voice is the grammatical device that gives the object of a transitive verb prominence by making it the subject. So, when we want to place the emphasis on the performer of the action, we generally use the active voice; when we want to place the emphasis on the action, or on the receiver of the action, we use the passive voice. Thus, in the sentence:

Albert is cleaning the car. (*Active Voice*)

our point of interest is primarily 'Albert'. The sentence is the answer to some question like: 'What is Albert doing?'

In the sentence:

The car is being cleaned by Albert. (*Passive Voice*)

the emphasis is now on 'the car' and the fact that it is being cleaned. This sentence is perhaps the answer to the question;

<i>Tense</i>	<i>Active Voice</i>	<i>Passive Voice</i>
Present Simple	Mr. Brown teaches this class.	This class is taught by Mr. Brown.
Present Continuous	Mr. Brown is teaching this class.	This class is being taught by Mr. Brown.
Present Perfect	Mr. Brown has taught this class.	This class has been taught by Mr. Brown.
Past Simple	Mr. Brown taught this class.	This class was taught by Mr. Brown.
Past Continuous	Mr. Brown was teaching this class.	This class was being taught by Mr. Brown.
Past Perfect	Mr. Brown had taught this class.	This class had been taught by Mr. Brown.
Future Simple	Mr. Brown will teach this class.	This class will be taught by Mr. Brown.
Future Continuous	Mr. Brown will be teaching this class.	This class will be being taught by Mr. Brown.
Future Perfect	Mr. Brown will have taught this class.	This class will have been taught by Mr. Brown.

NOTE: The Perfect Continuous Tenses are not used passively.

'What is happening to the car?' We are so little concerned with *who* is cleaning it that quite often we should omit all reference to the agent (i.e. the person or thing that performs the action) and simply say: 'The car is being cleaned.' This is particularly the case where the agent is vague or unimportant or unknown. So the passive voice is often used in English where, for example, *on* is used in French or *man* in German with the active voice. Thus:

'Ici on parle français', or:

'Hier spricht man deutsch', would be in English:

'French } (is) spoken here.'
'German }

In sentences like this, the agent with *by* is always omitted; and in many other cases, where the active construction is changed to the passive, it is better to omit the agent. For example, in turning the following sentence from active voice to passive voice:

People in Brazil speak Portuguese.

the answer should be:

Portuguese is spoken in Brazil. **NOT:**

Portuguese is spoken in Brazil by people.

The following examples will illustrate this point further:

*Active**Passive*

No one has used that door
for twenty years.

That door hasn't been used
for twenty years.

Readers must not take
away books in the Refer-
ence Library.

Books in the Reference
Library must not be
taken away.

Someone stole my watch
this morning.

My watch was stolen this
morning.

We use pure butter in these
cakes.

Pure butter is used in these
cakes.

They make cotton goods in
Lancashire.

Cotton goods are made in
Lancashire.

Have you fed the chickens
yet?

Have the chickens been fed
yet?

Since, in the change from active to passive voice, the subject of the passive construction is formed by the object of the active one, only transitive verbs can be used in the passive voice. So verbs of Incomplete Predication, e.g. *seem, be, become*, etc., can never be used in the passive; e.g. *He became King* could never have a passive form such as *A king was become by him*. But certain intransitive verbs can be made into transitive ones by the addition of a preposition. These verbs can be used in the passive voice, e.g.

His plan *was laughed at* by everyone who heard it.

That is a famous bed; it *was slept in* by Queen Elizabeth I.

The children *will be cared for* while she is away.

I believe the house was deliberately *set fire to*.

Such success *was never dreamed of* when we first started.

Though all transitive verbs can, theoretically, be made passive, there are cases where, in practice, the passive would not be used; for example:

He had a good breakfast before he went to work

would not be used passively as:

A good breakfast was had by him . . .

Some verbs, such as *give, tell, show, lend, get, write, pay, sell, buy, bring, make, fetch, promise, teach*, take two objects, one usually standing for a person, the other for a thing.¹ The word for the person is the INDIRECT OBJECT and is the first of the two objects; the word for the thing is the DIRECT OBJECT, e.g. He sold *us* (indirect) *his house* (direct). Here, *us* means 'to us'. His mother made *Tom* (indirect) a cake. Here *Tom* = 'for Tom'. Further examples:

- ① He told me a story. I showed him my new car. He gave me some good advice. You owe him fifty pence. She taught him French. They promised Henry a bicycle for his birthday.

If a sentence containing two objects is expressed in the passive voice, either of those objects may become the subject, though it is perhaps more usual to make the personal object the subject of the passive voice. *Examples:*

¹ The verb *give* may have an indirect object standing for a thing, e.g.
As the ball came to him he gave *it* a kick,
Give *this matter* your full attention,

Active

Passive

The Prime Minister offered him a post in the Cabinet.	(1) He was offered a post in the Cabinet. (2) A post in the Cabinet was offered him.
They awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1951.	(1) He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1951. (2) The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded him in 1951.

Note in the above examples the omission of the agent with *by*. The construction *by* + agent would be unnatural and unnecessary in sentences like these, where the 'doer' is either clear from the meaning of the sentence, or is not of interest to us.

EXERCISES

I Turn the following sentences into the passive voice:

(a)

(1) The waitress brings the coffee. (2) The waitress is bringing the coffee. (3) The waitress brought the coffee. (4) The waitress has brought the coffee. (5) The waitress was bringing the coffee. (6) The waitress had brought the coffee. (7) The waitress will bring the coffee. (8) I shall bring the coffee. (9) The waitress will have brought the coffee. (10) I shall have brought the coffee.

(b)

(1) I finished my work at about five o'clock. (2) We use your books in our class. (3) They gave him a very handsome present when he retired. (4) We opened the boxes and took out the cigarettes. (5) Do people speak English all over the world? (6) Somebody built this house in 1585. (7) You must answer all the questions on the paper. (8) They blamed me for something that I hadn't done. (9) They are sending Mr. Brown abroad on business. (10) People will forget the whole incident after a few weeks. (11) He took them for a drive in the new car. (12) People are talking about him everywhere. (13) I told him to write to that address. (14) You must plan your work carefully. (15) Someone gave me a pair of gloves for Christmas. (16) They told me you had gone

to Paris. (17) It's time someone told him what is wrong. (18) They gave me a ticket for Newtown instead of for Newton. (19) They didn't tell me all the details of the case. (20) They took him to hospital in an ambulance.

II Turn the following sentences into the passive voice:

(1) The English people greatly love the Queen. (2) Did the Customs Officers search your luggage very carefully? (3) When the parade was over, the commanding officer dismissed the troops. (4) The police denied him entry to the country. (5) Somebody has taken all my books. (6) Scotland Yard officers are investigating the crime. (7) They cannot trace the criminal. (8) They shall not treat me as if I were a baby. (9) The council have approved the plans for the building but we haven't raised the money. (10) The garage mechanic has washed and greased your car.

III Indicate which word in each of the following sentences is the direct object and then write the sentences in the passive voice. In each sentence two forms are possible.

(1) The manager offered him the choice of two posts in the firm. (2) The school governors gave her a scholarship to the University. (3) We cannot award him good marks on the work he has done. (4) Their uncle left them all his property when he died. (5) They gave you the present that was intended for your father.

IV In the following sentences put all the finite verbs in the passive voice:

(1) He promised you that they would meet you at the station. (2) Certainly we shall count on you to devote yourself to the work we are giving you to do. (3) It astonished us to hear that you had not received our letter. (4) They had only lived in that house for three weeks when fire destroyed it. (5) His failure bitterly disappointed his parents, especially as they had been counting on his success.

VERBS: (5) MOOD

Mood is a grammatical term used to denote the forms that a verb takes to show what work it is doing (e.g. expressing a statement, a command, a wish, etc.), and the manner in which the action or state is thought of by the speaker.

There are three moods, INDICATIVE, IMPERATIVE, SUBJUNCTIVE. The one that is by far the most commonly used is the *Indicative*. This is the mood used to make statements and ask questions. All the tenses discussed in pages 157 to 180 are in the Indicative Mood.

THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

The Imperative mood has the same form, in the second Person singular and plural, as the infinitive without *to*. In the first and third persons it is preceded by *let* and an accusative, e.g. '*Let's*' go to the cinema.' 'I can't see him just now; *let* him wait.' It is used to give orders or commands or to make requests, e.g. '*Open* your books.' '*Don't make* so much noise.' '*Pass* the salt, please.' The 'request' may be:

(1) AN ENTREATY, e.g.

'Spare a penny, sir, for a starving man.'

'Help! Help! I'm drowning.'

(2) AN INSTRUCTION:

'To get to the Shakespeare Theatre, *turn* to the right at the river and *keep* straight on.'

(3) AN INVITATION:

'Come inside and meet my wife.'

'Have a cigarette.'

(4) A SUGGESTION:

'Where can I find Mr. Smith?' 'I'm not sure. *Try* his office or *ring* up his house.'

¹ = let us.

(5) A¹ CONDITION, e.g.

*Do that again and I'll call a policeman!*¹

Suppose you had a million pounds, how would you spend the money?

The subject (which is always in the second person) is not usually expressed with the imperative. If it is expressed (usually in negative sentences), it may be in order to add emphasis.

Don't you dare to say I am not telling the truth.

I've been answering questions all day. *Don't you start* now.

If the subject is put in an affirmative sentence it is usually to express contrast, e.g.

You take that piece and I'll take this.

You ask the first question and I'll ask the next one.

In conversation the imperative is often used to express a wish, e.g.

Have a good holiday! Enjoy yourself and come back quite well again.

THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD

There are three Subjunctive forms of the verb: the Present Subjunctive, the Past Subjunctive and the Past Perfect Subjunctive.

THE PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE of all verbs other than the verb *to be* is identical with the Simple Present Tense Indicative, except that the third person singular form is the same as in all the other persons (i.e. without the -s ending). The Present Subjunctive form of *to be* is *be* for all persons.

THE PAST SUBJUNCTIVE is identical with the Simple Past Tense Indicative, except that the verb *to be* has *were* for all persons.

THE PAST PERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE is identical in form with the Past Perfect Indicative.

The subjunctive forms are used in a small number of constructions; the constructions with the Present Subjunctive tend to be rather literary.

¹ See also Conditional Clauses, pages 347-51.

USES OF THE PRESENT SUBJUNCTIVE

The Present Subjunctive is used:

(1) to express a wish or a prayer, e.g.

God *save* the Queen.

Heaven *forbid* that . . .

Heaven *help* us.

Be that as it may . . .

'Thy Kingdom *come*, Thy will *be* done . . .'

A wish can also be expressed by *may* (Past Tense *might*) + infinitive, e.g.

May you be happy all your life.

They prayed that he *might* soon be well again.

(2) after verbs expressing a will or wish for the future, and after verbs like *propose*, *suggest*, etc. This is chiefly in very formal English and especially in legal English. *Examples:*

It is our wish that he *do* what he pleases.

She urged that he *write* and *accept* the post.

I propose that the Secretary's resignation *be* accepted.

The King ordered that the man *be* released.

(3) occasionally in adverbial clauses of concession or condition, e.g.

Though the whole world *condemn* him, I will still believe in him.

This, if the news *be* true, is a very serious matter.

'Murder, though it *have* no tongue, will speak

With most miraculous organ.'¹

In uses (2) and (3) the subjunctive, is often replaced by the SUBJUNCTIVE EQUIVALENT *should* + the infinitive, e.g.

It is our wish that he *should do* what he pleases.

Though the whole world *should condemn* him, I will still believe in him.

If we *should fail* in this, we are ruined.

¹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

USES OF THE PAST SUBJUNCTIVE

The Past Subjunctive is used:

(1) In conditional clauses implying a negative, or in clauses in which the condition is combined with improbability or unreality, e.g.

If I *were* you, I should accept the offer.

If he *were* really interested in buying the property, he would have made an offer before now.

What would you say if I *asked* you to join us for a holiday?

(2) After such expressions as: 'I wish (that) . . .', 'Suppose (that) . . .', 'I had rather (that) . . .', 'as if . . .', 'It's (high) time (that)¹ . . .'. Examples:

I wish I *were* as handsome as he is.

I wish he *visited* us more often.

Suppose (that) the teacher *caught* us wasting time.

I had rather (that) you *told* him than (that) I *did*.

He ran as if his life *depended* on it.

It is (high) time I *went* home.

It will be noted that except in the case of *to be*, verbs in these expressions could be considered as being in the Simple Past Tense.

Notice that the PAST SUBJUNCTIVE is usually concerned with PRESENT time, e.g. It's a lovely day; I wish I *were* at the seaside (NOW).

To speak of PAST time the PAST PERFECT SUBJUNCTIVE is used, e.g. It was a lovely day yesterday; I wish I *had been* at the seaside then. (See also Conditional sentences, pp. 347-51.)

EXERCISES

I Name the moods of the verbs in the following sentences:

- (1) Keep straight on until you come to the theatre and then turn left.
- (2) We should have gone for a walk today if the weather had been fine.
- (3) Come and have a drink.
- (4) Heaven help the sailors on a night like this.
- (5) It is

¹ But after 'It's time that', *was* not *were* in the first and third person singular would be usual, e.g. It's time that I *was* going.

time we left for the airport. (6) Don't you touch that or you'll break it. (7) Did you enjoy his singing this evening? (8) Have a good time at the party. (9) If I were in his place, I should accept their offer. (10) I suggest that he be nominated as Chairman.

II Write five sentences in which the verbs are in the subjunctive mood.

III Name the moods of the verbs in the following sentences:

- (1) Let us go to the theatre this evening, shall we?
- (2) What shall we do, supposing there are no seats left?
- (3) It was ordered that no smoking be allowed in the library.
- (4) If you did that, you would be very sorry afterwards.
- (5) Will you have a little more meat, Mr. X?

Active (to) write	Simple	Perfect
Passive (to) be written		
Active (to) have written		
Passive (to) have been written		

The infinitive is usually, but not always, preceded by to, e.g. He wants to leave England at once. To cry is human, to forgive divine. (Alexander Pope)

I saw him take the money. Let me tell you a story.

The infinitive without to is sometimes called the plain or 'bare' infinitive.

THE PLAIN INFINITIVE (WITHOUT TO) IS USED:

1. after the special finites can (could), do (did), may (might), shall (should), will (would), must, need, dare, e.g. He can speak French. Did you hear a noise? I might go. We shall meet him. I will help you. You must come with us. You needn't go yet. I dare not leave him.

VERBS: (6) THE NON-FINITES

The non-finites are the Infinitive, the Participles and the Gerund.

THE INFINITIVE

This is the 'dictionary form' of the verb, i.e. the form under which a verb appears in the dictionary. It expresses the notion of the verb in its general sense, not as it applies to any particular subject. It is called 'infinitive' because its form is not limited (Latin *finis* = limit), as a finite verb is, by the number and person of its subject. There are four forms of the Infinitive:

	<i>Simple</i>	<i>Perfect</i>
<i>Active</i>	(to) write	(to) have written
<i>Passive</i>	(to) be written	(to) have been written

The infinitive is usually, but not always, preceded by *to*, e.g.

He wants *to learn* English.

'*To err* is human, *to forgive* divine.' (Alexander Pope)

Let me *tell* you a story.

I saw him *take* the money.

The infinitive without *to* is sometimes called the 'plain' or 'bare' infinitive.

THE PLAIN INFINITIVE (WITHOUT -to) IS USED:

I. after the special finites *can* (*could*), *do* (*did*), *may* (*might*), *shall* (*should*), *will* (*would*), *must*, *need*, *dare*, e.g.

He can *speak* French. Did you *hear* a noise? I might *go*.

We shall *meet* him. I will *help* you. You must *come* with us.

You needn't *go* yet. I daren't *leave* him.

But THE INFINITIVE WITH *to* IS USED:

(a) after the special finites *ought* and *used*, e.g.

You *ought to go*. I *used to live* there.

(b) with *do*, *need* and *dare* when they are used not as special finites but as full verbs, e.g.

I did it *to please* you. You don't *need to go* yet.

He won't *dare to disobey* his teacher.

(c) with *be* and *have* when they are used to express commands, compulsion, etc., e.g.

You *are to go* to the Headmaster's room at once.

I *have to be* in my office by 9 o'clock.

2. after the Verbs of Perception: *see*, *hear*, *feel*, etc. (see also p. 169), and after *make* and *let*, e.g.

She saw him *take* the money.

I heard her *play* the piano.

He felt his blood *run* cold and his flesh *creep*.

The teacher made him *write* out the exercise again.

Don't make me *laugh*.

I will let you *use* my bicycle.

Let's all *go* to the cinema.

But if these verbs are used in the passive voice, the infinitive takes *to*, e.g.

He was heard *to cry*.

They had been made *to work*.

He was seen *to take* the money.

The verb *help* sometimes, and generally in American English, is followed by the infinitive without *to*, e.g.

He helped me (to) *compose* the letter.

Will you help me (to) *clean* the car?

3. after *had better*, *had (would) rather*, *had (would) sooner*, *need hardly*, *cannot but*, e.g.

You *had better tell* him the truth. I *had (would) rather not see* him. I'd *sooner take* a taxi than walk. I *need hardly tell* you how serious the matter is. I *cannot but (= cannot do anything except) agree* to his terms.

THE INFINITIVE WITH *to* IS USED in all other cases.

THE PARTICLE *to* WITHOUT THE INFINITIVE

There are occasions when the particle *to* is used without the infinitive verb. This construction (omission of the infinitive verb) occurs when the *to* refers to a verb that has previously been used and that, if expressed, would be an infinitive with *to*, e.g.

I shall go if I want *to* (go).

He won't work harder than he needs *to* (work).

He would like to come but he's afraid he won't be able *to* (come).

If you don't know the answer, you ought *to* (know it).

'Will you come to dinner with me?' 'I should love *to* (come).'

FUNCTIONS OF THE INFINITIVE

I. The infinitive can act as a noun. Thus, it may be:

(a) The SUBJECT of a sentence, e.g.

To act like that is childish.

To know all about English is one thing; *to know* English is quite another.

(b) The COMPLEMENT of a verb, e.g.

They are *to be* married soon.

To live like this is *to enjoy* life.

This house is *to let*.

How do you think I am *to answer* the letter?

What I like is *to swim* in the sea and then *to lie* on the warm sand.

(c) The OBJECT of a verb, e.g.

I want *to know* the answer.

He must learn *to work* hard and *to save* money.

'Men fear death as children fear *to go* in the dark.' (Francis Bacon)

I should like *to have been told* the result earlier.

There is a construction in which the infinitive together with a noun or pronoun (in the objective case) makes a close group

that forms the object of a verb. This is called the ACCUSATIVE INFINITIVE construction. *Examples:*

	Accusative	Infinitive	
He helped	me	to dig	my garden
I made	him	do	it
They let	us	go	
John asked	him	to write	to you
I watched	her	come	into the room
I have never known	him	to behave	so badly before
He couldn't bear	her	to be	unhappy

2. The infinitive may have an adverbial function, generally of purpose or result, e.g.

I went there *to see* him.

Mary has gone *to get* some fruit.

He is working late *to make up* for his absence yesterday.

I have come *to learn* English.

He was lucky enough *to win* the prize.

You should eat *to live*, not live *to eat*.

Help yourself to the cake; it is there *to be eaten*.

'And fools, who came *to scoff*, remained *to pray*.'

(Goldsmith, *Deserted Village*)

3. It may have an adjectival function and qualify a noun or an indefinite pronoun, e.g.

That is not the way *to speak* to your uncle. (qualifying *way*)

Look at the number of shops *to let*. (qualifying *shops*)

Alexander the Great wept because he had no more worlds *to conquer*. (qualifying *worlds*)

That was a silly thing *to do*.

He wore a pale blue shirt and a tie *to match*.

He gave me something *to eat*.

They have nothing *to do*.

Is there anyone *to take care* of these children?

The questions *to be answered* are on page 40.

4. It is used with adjectives expressing emotion or desire, e.g.

I was very glad *to see* you.

He is happy/delighted/content *to be* with us.

George was anxious/eager *to get* home.

I am very pleased *to have been* of help.

It is used also with some other adjectives, e.g. *fit, able* etc:

These shoes are not fit *to wear*.

Tom isn't able *to go* to the party.

Richard is sure *to come*; he'll be the first *to come* and last *to go* away.

Other adjectives that can take this construction are:

afraid, ready, worthy, easy, hard, certain, useless, possible, right, (un)able, wrong, etc.

Some adverbs also take this construction, e.g. *far, best*:

He knows how far *to go*.

She explained how best *to cook* the meat.

5. The infinitive can be used in 'absolute' constructions such as:

To tell you the truth, I don't know what the answer is.

To hear him talk, you would think he was a millionaire.

To cut a long story short . . .

To continue with what I was saying . . .

6. It is used after *know* and certain other verbs with interrogative words (see patterns on pages 396-7, 398), e.g.

I don't know how *to tell* you.

She knows where *to find* the key.

You will soon learn when *to use* that construction.

Show him how *to do* the exercise.

NOTE: The verb *know* must have one of the words *how, when* after it when a simple infinitive follows it. Such a sentence as:

'He knows to speak English' is wrong.

But *know* without one of these words is possible with *not*, e.g.

He knows *not to speak* (= that he must not speak) when the Headmaster is speaking.