

# Analyzing the Grammar of English

*Third Edition*

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and  
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15. present tense, future time, unscheduled event in a subordinate clause
16. present tense, present time, performative verb
17. past perfect, enduring situation
18. past tense, enduring past situation
19. present tense, present time, durative verb
20. past tense, repeated events in the past
21. synthetic conditional, repeated/habitual action in the past

#### Notes

1. Lexical verbs are distinguished from auxiliary verbs in that the latter are limited in function to marking person, number, tense, and voice in compound verb tenses, whereas the former are largely used to convey “dictionary meaning,” the more semantically rich content of the verb phrase’s components. Thus in a verb phrase such as *has been walking*, both *has* and *been* are auxiliary verbs that serve to tell us that the tense in question is present perfect progressive. Although *walking* also conveys progressivity through the bound inflectional /ing/ morpheme, its primary function is to describe the activity—perambulation—that has been taking place.
2. There are regional differences in the standard American pronunciation of this word: some—chiefly Northern—pronounce *catch* as [kætʃ]; most others—chiefly Midland and Southern—pronounce it [kætʃ]. Both of these forms are generally accepted. A third pronunciation, [kɪtʃ], is universally stigmatized.
3. Two rival standard pronunciations typify this form too: [kɒt]—chiefly Northern, upper-Midwestern, and Southern—and [kɑt] (mid-Atlantic, Midland, and California). The [ɔ] → [ɑ] shift has been slowly making progress in all dialects of English for centuries, and in some dialects has all but eradicated [ɔ] except in a limited number of environments such as pre-liquid.
4. Obviously we are excluding **hortative commands** such as *Let’s all go to the pancake house!* and *Let’s see if we can’t finish this project on time* from consideration here, since though directed to second persons they include the first person speaker as well.
5. The word *conditional* appears between quotation marks because while the **forms** being considered are in the conditional tense, their **functions** do not express actions or functions that could be termed conditional. For a thorough discussion of what constitutes conditionality, see the appropriate section at the end of chapter 4.

## Basic Structures, Questions, Do-Insertion, Negation, Auxiliaries, Responses, Emphasis, Contraction

### The Five Basic Structures

English noncomplex sentences have five basic structures: affirmative statements, negative statements, *yes/no* affirmative questions, *yes/no* negative questions, and content questions. Here are the symbols used to represent each structure, together with an example of each one:

+ (affirmative statement):	You live here.
– (negative statement):	You don’t live here./You do not live here.
yn+ ( <i>yes/no</i> affirmative question):	Do you live here?
yn– ( <i>yes/no</i> negative question):	Don’t you live here?/Do you not live here?
wh/co ( <i>wh</i> [-word] content question):	Where do you live? Why do you live here? When do you live here? (etc.)

### Two Different Types of Questions

Here is the difference between *yes/no* questions on the one hand and *wh*/content questions on the other hand: *wh*/content questions can never be answered *yes* or *no*, whereas *yes/no* questions can be answered *yes* or *no* and usually are. Thus:

- [1] Where do you live?—\*Yes. [Totally ungrammatical.]
- [2] Where do you live?—On Sixth Avenue. [Grammatical, and one of many possible answers.]

#### DO-INSERTION

We pay close attention to whether any given clause contains the nonmodal auxiliary *do*. Adding *do* to a clause is known as **do**-insertion. *Do* appears where we would expect it to appear in negative statements—as the first part of the predicate, and just after the subject, as figure 3a reveals. But in the three interrogative structures—yn+, yn–, and wh/co—*do* appears before the subject:

- [3] Do you live here?
- [4] Don’t you live here?/Do you not live here?
- [5] Where do you live?

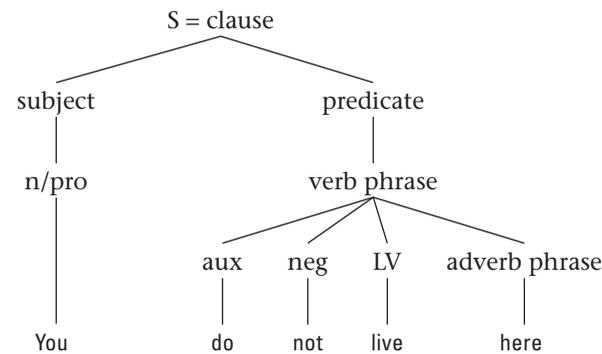


Figure 3a Presence of *do*-Insertion

The process by which *do* gets placed before its subject is known as **auxiliary inversion**. To understand how *do* gets there, we use the + structure as the point of departure when creating the other four structures. The process by which we get from + to **yn+** looks like this:

- 1. [the + statement]                      You live here.
- 2. [*do*-insertion]                      you do live here
- 3. [auxiliary inversion]                      do you live here
- 4. [adding intonation/punctuation]                      Do you live here?

NEGATION

We also pay close attention to the **neg** (negative word) *not* and where it gets inserted in the syntax. Neg *not* negates the verb (makes the verb negative) in – or **yn–** or **wh/co–**. *Not* usually appears right after the auxiliary, an important characteristic that distinguishes English from most other languages. Here is the process by which we get from + to –:

- 1. [the + statement]                      You live here.
- 2. [*do*-insertion]                      you do live here
- 3. [*not* insertion: the –]                      You do not live here.

In only two neg structures, both involving the uncontracted *not* in **yn–** and also **wh/co**, does the neg appear elsewhere—right after the subject, in fact. Compare:

- yn– contracted:**                      Don't you live here?
- yn– uncontracted:**                      Do you *not* live here?
- wh/co contracted:**                      Why don't you understand?
- wh/co uncontracted:**                      Why do you *not* understand?

The Role of the First Auxiliary (*aux*)

We already know that –, **yn+**, **yn–**, and **wh/co** have one thing that the + structure lacks: the nonmodal auxiliary *do*. Whenever + lacks an auxiliary verb (as for example *You live here*), you must insert *do* into any of the negatives and questions that derive from it (thus *You don't live here*, *Do you live here?* *Don't you live here?*

*Where do you live?*). Auxiliary verbs are either (a) nonmodals (*be/do/have*) or (b) modals (*can/could/may/might/must/shall/should/will/would*) or perimodals (*ought to, might as well, would rather*, etc. [see chapter 4 for the complete list]). English does not allow patterns like *\*You not live here*, *\*Not you live here?* etc. *Do*-insertion in negatives and questions is obligatory when the affirmative statement lacks an auxiliary. Figure 3b presents several examples of this. All the + structures in these examples contain auxiliaries—either the nonmodal *be*, the nonmodal *have*, or the modal auxiliary *can*. Because the affirmative statements already contain an auxiliary, the auxiliary *do* is not inserted. What we notice about these –, **yn+**, **yn–**, and **wh/co** structures is that none contains any form of *do*. As we already know, *do* is not added to negatives and questions if the corresponding + structure already has an *aux*.

The auxiliary plays an extremely important role in any English structure it appears in. The first auxiliary in a clause marks **person** and **number** as well as **tense**. Perhaps it is no accident that the three nonmodal auxiliaries *do*, *be*, and *have* are morphologically irregular and quite varied in form. But while those three are varied, the nine **modal** auxiliaries—*can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would* (plus the marginal modal *ought to*)—are **invariant** in form, never inflecting for person or number and lacking not only tense but present/past participles as well. (See chapter 4 for more information on modals.)

Nonmodal Auxiliaries *Be/Do/Have* Can also Be Used as Lexical Verbs

While *be/do/have* usually function as auxiliaries, they can also function in a non-auxiliary capacity as lexical verbs. Here are some examples of this:

- [6] BE: I am the best cook.
- [7] DO: I do the dishes every night.
- [8] HAVE: I have many chores.

When *be* functions as an LV, it never allows *do*-insertion:

- +            I am the best cook.
- I am not the best cook.            (\*I do not be the best cook.)
- yn+        Am I the best cook?            (\*Do I be the best cook?)
- yn–        Am I not the best cook?            (\*Do I not be the best cook?)
- wh/co      Why am I the best cook?            (\*Why do I not be the best cook?)

	nonmodal auxiliaries		modal auxiliary
	<i>BE</i> as the aux	<i>HAVE</i> as the aux	<i>CAN</i> as the aux
+	You are trying.	You have tried.	You can try.
–	You aren't trying.	You haven't tried.	You can't try.
yn+	Are you trying?	Have you tried?	Can you try?
yn–	Aren't you trying?	Haven't you tried?	Can't you try?
	Are you not trying?	Have you not tried?	Can you not try?
wh/co	What are you trying?	What have you tried?	What can you try?

Figure 3b Absence of *do*-Insertion

### Intransitive Verbs and “Voice”

A purely **intransitive verb** cannot take a direct object. Ever. English does not have many such verbs. Here is an example of a purely intransitive verb, along with proof of its inherent **intransitivity**:

come:

- [66] Sal always comes {  
 early  
 on time  
 by car  
 running  
 at 7:30

The words and phrases used as complements are all adverbs that answer questions such as *when* or *how*. They are not direct objects, as we can see by the inability of sentence (66)'s various complements to enter into passive transformations:

- [67] \*Early is always come by Sal.  
 [68] \*On time is always come by Sal.  
 [69] \*By car is always come by Sal.  
 [70] \*Running is always come by Sal.  
 [71] \*At 7:30 is always come by Sal.

Nor can we force a direct object onto (66), as the following proves:

- [72] \*Sal will always come {  
 bread  
 money  
 sailboat  
 library  
 camping gear

Other important and frequently used intransitive verbs include:

*appear arrive fall go happen lie rise wait*

Strictly intransitive verbs can only be used in active voice constructions. Intransitives never allow passivization, as we have just seen. Since none can take a DO, there is no DO available to become the passive equivalent's GS.

### TRANSITIVE VERBS IN SUPERFICIALLY INTRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Just because a transitive verb can take a DO does not mean that it is always going to do so. Indeed, many transitive verbs are frequently unaccompanied by DOs, but since all transitive verbs can take a DO, a DO is potentially addable to the otherwise objectless construction. Here are some examples of transitive verbs that lack DOs but could readily add them:

- [73] Al drinks from noon until midnight.  
 actor verb prepositional phrases

We assume that what he drinks is alcohol, so a DO like *vodka* or *gin* can be readily added: *Al drinks vodka from noon until midnight.*

- [74] The beggar approached, but then scurried away.  
 actor verb

We assume the beggar approached someone—me, you, him, her, whomever.

- [75] Every year charities request money, and this year I finally decided to give.  
 actor verb DO actor verb phrase

We assume that an IO such as *people* or *us* or *me* can be inserted into the first clause—*charities request money from us*—and that a DO can likewise be inserted into the second clause: *I finally decided to give money.*

- [76] The important thing is to win. [*Win the game* is an easy expansion to conceptualize.]

### NORMALLY TRANSITIVE VERBS USED INTRANSITIVELY

If normally transitive verbs such as *move*, *open*, or *shake* are used in a construction where no direct object can be added—*The cliff moved/The door opened/The earth shook*—then such a verb is indeed being used intransitively and the verb must be viewed as intransitive in this particular instance. (Constructions like these are quite different from constructions like *Al drinks [vodka] from noon until midnight* to which a DO is readily added.)

### Activity 4.4

#### THINKING IT THROUGH

A. Identify each of the following sentences as active voice or passive voice. Then change them—if possible—from active to passive or vice versa.

#### Example of how to proceed:

X. I gave the dog a bone. “This sentence is in the active voice. Its passive voice equivalent is either ‘The dog was given a bone by me’ or ‘A bone was given to the dog by me.’”

- The paperboy has come for his monthly payment.
- This perfume gives off a very strange odor.
- I went away to the seashore last summer.
- Luella changed a dollar bill at the convenience store.
- Seventeen books were returned to the library by three delinquent patrons.

EQUI-DELETION

[97] Edgar expects to visit Las Vegas.

RAISING TO OBJECT

[98] Edgar expects her to visit Las Vegas.

Let's now examine each one of these processes separately.

**Infinitive Complement with Equi-Deletion**

By deconstructing a compound sentence such as (97)—*Edgar expects to visit Las Vegas*—we come up with two independent sentence components:

- a. Edgar expects [something].
- b. Edgar visits Las Vegas.

When these two single clauses come together into a bi-clausal compound sentence, the finite 3.sg. present tense verb form *visits* is transformed into its corresponding infinitive *to visit*: *Edgar expects to visit . . .* The time has come to comment at length on the phenomenon that leads up to and then produces this transformation. The transformation is known as **equi-deletion**. The structure it starts out with is illustrated by the following tree (fig. 8d). Observe that the notation “Edgar-1” appears twice. We use it to point out that the Edgar of the main clause is the selfsame Edgar as the Edgar of the subordinate clause, so we speak of the two Edgars as being **equivalent**. Perhaps to avoid redundancy, English deletes the second or equivalent Edgar, thus creating an **equi(valent) deletion**, shortened to **equi-deletion**.

When creating this type of compound sentence, we end up performing several transformations including **equi-deletion** (which we have just studied) and **infinitivizing** (transforming the subordinate clause’s verb into an infinitive). These and other structures and transformations appear here:

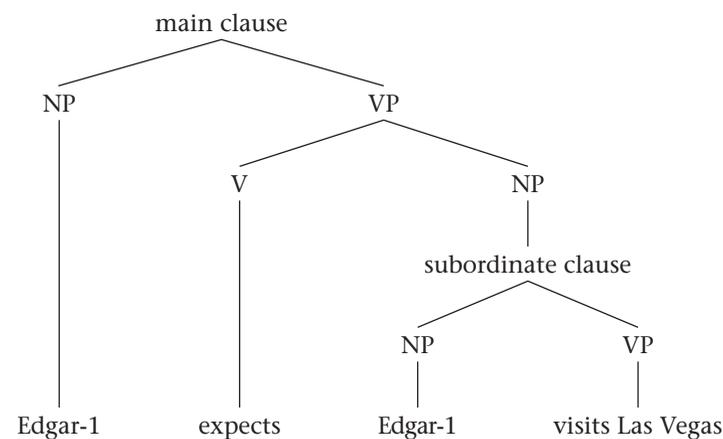


Figure 8d The Structure of an Equi-Deletion

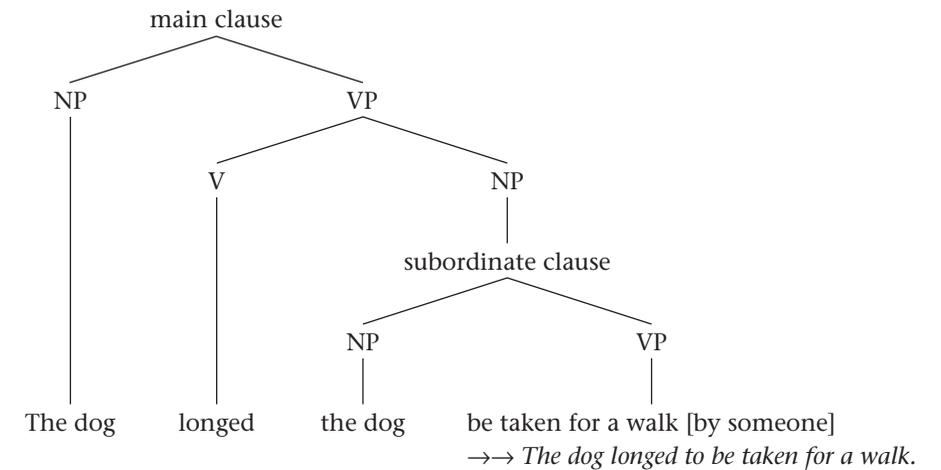


Figure 8e Equi-Deletion Complements in the Passive Voice

- main clause:** Edgar-1 expects [something]
- subordinate clause:** Edgar-1 visits Las Vegas
- compounding:** Edgar-1 expects Edgar-1 visits Las Vegas →
- infinitivizing:** Edgar-1 expects Edgar-1 to visit Las Vegas →
- equi-deletion:** Edgar expects [ ] to visit Las Vegas →
- final product:** Edgar expects to visit Las Vegas.

A large number of matrix verbs—*attempt, care, crave, demand, fail, long, remember, wish*—conform to the equi-deletion pattern. Here are some additional examples of equi-deletion:

- [99] Jennifer attempted to make a neutron bomb.
- [100] Victor didn't care to sleep in a tent.
- [101] Our relatives demand to inherit all the money.
- [102] The dog longed to be taken for a walk.

As (102) has shown, matrix verbs giving rise to subordinate clause equi-deletions allow such complements to appear in the passive voice (fig. 8e).

**Infinitive Complement with Raising to Object**

A compound sentence that is typical of this second type of infinitive complementation—*Edgar expects her to visit Las Vegas*—has two independent sentence components, as (103) will show:

- [103] Edgar expects her to visit Las Vegas.

  - a. Edgar expects [something].
  - b. She visits Las Vegas.

A tree for (103) would look like figure 8f. Since *Edgar* and *she* are obviously not equivalent, no equi-deletion can take place. What does take place is something