

## The verb phrase

The verb phrase in English has the following forms:

1) a **main verb**:

	Verb	
We	are	here.
I	like	it
Everybody	saw.	the accident
We	laughed.	

The verb may be in the present tense (*are, like*) or the past tense (*saw, laughed*). A verb phrase with only a main verb expresses **simple aspect**

2) an **auxiliary verb ("be")** and a **main verb in –ing form**:

	Auxiliary "be"	Verb (-ing)
Everybody	is	watching
We	were	laughing

A verb phrase with "be" and –ing expresses **continuous aspect**.

3) an **auxiliary verb ("have")** and a **main verb with past participle**:

	Auxiliary "have"	Verb (past participle)	
They	have	enjoyed	themselves.
Everybody	has	worked	hard.
He	had	finished	work.

A verb with "have" and the past participle expresses **perfect aspect**. A verb with *have/has* expresses **present perfect**, and a verb with *had* expresses **past perfect**.

4) an **auxiliary verb ("have" + "been")** and a **main verb in the –ing form**:

	<b>Auxiliary "have" + "been"</b>	<b>Verb (-ing)</b>	
Everybody	has been	working	hard
He	had been	singing	

A verb with "have" and "been" and the present participle expresses **perfect continuous aspect**. A verb with *have/has* expresses **present perfect continuous**, and a verb with *had* expresses **past perfect continuous**.

5) a **modal verb** (can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, would) and a **main verb**:

	<b>Modal Verb</b>	<b>Main verb</b>
They	will	come.
He	might	come.

6) We can use **modal verbs** with the auxiliaries "**be**", "**have**", and "**have been**":

	<b>Modal</b>	<b>Auxiliary</b>	<b>Verb</b>
They	will	be	listening
He	might	have	arrived
She	must	have been	listening

### Active and passive:

Transitive verbs have a **passive** form as well as an active form:

The hunter killed the lion. (active) <> The lion was killed by the hunter. (passive)

Someone has cleaned the windows <> The windows have been cleaned.

The passive forms are made up of the verb "**be**" with a **past participle**:

	<b>"be"</b>	<b>Past participle</b>	
English	is	spoken	all over the world
The windows	have been	cleaned	
Lunch	was being	served	
The work	will be	finished	soon
They	might have been	invited	to the part

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### Exercise 1

Identify the verb phrase in the following. Study what each one of them is composed of :

It is raining again

I have seen you somewhere before

We will be thinking about you

I may see you on Thursday

You should have gone to the doctor

He has been working very hard lately

### Exercise 2

Decide if the verbs in the passage are active or passive

I (had been proceeding) in an easterly direction when I (heard) a scream from No. 15, Grove Street. No-one (answered) when I (rang) the doorbell so I (entered) the building via the back door which was open and (gave) access to the kitchen. The glass (had been smashed) and the lock (had been broken). I (suspected) that force (may have been used) to gain entry, although the rest of the property (was unexplored) at this point. I (noticed) that a quantity of blood (had been spilt) on the floor and several cupboards (had been opened). The intruder (had left) muddy footprints on the floor. I (moved) cautiously through the downstairs area, but (found) no-one in the other rooms. In the hall, the telephone line (had been cut) and more blood (could be seen) on the wall. I (began) to climb the stairs ...

## Question forms

We make questions by:

1: moving an **auxiliary** to the **front** of the clause:

Everybody <b>is</b> watching	>>	<b>Is</b> everybody watching?
They <b>had</b> worked hard	>>	<b>Had</b> they worked hard?
He's finished work	>>	<b>Has</b> he finished work?
Everybody <b>had</b> been working hard	>>	<b>Had</b> everybody been working hard?
He <b>has</b> been singing	>>	<b>Has</b> he been singing?
English <b>is</b> spoken all over the world	>>	<b>Is</b> English spoken all over the world?

The windows <b>have</b> been cleaned	>>	<b>Have</b> the windows been cleaned?
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2: ... or by moving a modal to the front of the clause:

They <b>will</b> come	>>	<b>Will</b> they come?
He <b>might</b> come	>>	<b>Might</b> he come?
They <b>will</b> have arrived by now	>>	<b>Will</b> they have arrived by now?
She <b>would</b> have been listening	>>	<b>Would</b> she have been listening?
The work <b>will</b> be finished soon	>>	<b>Will</b> the work be finished soon?
They <b>might</b> have been invited to the party	>>	<b>Might</b> they have been invited to the party?

3: The **present simple** and the **past simple** have **no** auxiliary. We make questions by **adding** the auxiliary *do/does* for the present simple or *did* for the past simple:

They live here	>>	<b>Do</b> they live here?
John <b>lives</b> here	>>	<b>Does</b> John live here?
Everybody laughed	>>	<b>Did</b> everybody laugh?

### Exercise 3

Form questions using the following words

- Expecting was she you
- Finished you your meal have
- For waiting someone are you
- He been working has
- Is a having good time everybody
- Do need hand a you
- Spoken to you had him
- You will hold this for me