

Making English Grammar Meaningful and Useful
Mini Lesson #18
English Grammar: It's Not So Difficult

The **purpose** of this lesson is to summarize a few trends that have been demonstrated in these lessons to show that English grammar follows certain regular patterns which are easily learned when identified by self-describing terms.

The previous lessons progress from the basic concept of Subject-Verb Combinations to the use of Contrary-To-Fact If Clauses. Throughout, self-describing terminology has been used to make grammatical features more easily understood. Some of these terms have been recycled through several lessons. They are summarized here:

- **Tense** – A term applied to the Verb in a Subject-Verb Combination which usually consists of a Helping Verb and a Main Verb, and which communicates the time of the action or event of the Subject-Verb Combination.
- **Helping Verb** – A verb that accompanies a Main Verb in a Verb Tense and which has many functions
- **Before Tenses** – Verb Tenses that use ‘**have**’ as a Helping Verb and communicate the meaning of **before** a certain time.
- **Control Verb** – A verb that controls the form of a following verb. The following verb can be in the TO Form, the ING Form or the Simple Form.
- **Doers** and **Receivers** – Terms that describe the Subjects of Active Voice and Passive Voice sentences respectively.
- **N-N Noun** – A noun that is neither Singular nor Plural. It is often referred to an uncountable noun.
- **Determiner** – A word that accompanies a noun and determines the noun type. There are Simple Determiners, Definite Determiners, Possessive Determiners, Place Determiners and Quantifying Determiners.
- **Connector** – A words that connects. Connectors connect words, phrases, clauses, and even sentences.

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- **Clause** – A word group that has a Subject-Verb Combination.
- **Contrary-to-Fact** – An expression that communicates the opposite of reality.

A few fundamental grammatical concepts are important in several aspects of English structure.

- **Simple** – The word means not complicated or not complex. In these lessons the **Simple Form, Simple Tenses, Simple Determiners** and **Simple Connectors** were all presented. **Simple Sentences** have only one Subject-Verb Combination.
- **Subject-Verb Combinations** – Every English sentence requires an S-V combination. All S-V Combinations require a tense. Many English sentences require S-V agreement. S-V relationships are the basis for Active and Passive Voice distinctions. All Clauses require S-V Combinations.
- **Verb Forms** – Verbs have more forms than most other parts of speech. Some Verb Forms are used in Verb Tenses. Others are used in phrases, following Control Verbs, and when they are used as adjectives or nouns.
- **Helping Verbs** – Most English Tenses use Helping Verbs. They have both grammatical and communicational functions. They are used in nearly all negative statements and in nearly all questions. Modals are Helping Verbs with meaning.
- **Word Groups** – English words are found in groups with certain word orders and collocations. Some word groups are **Sentences**, others are **Clauses** and others are **Phrases**. Many word groups are used as idioms, metaphors, and similes. Others are used in fixed expressions.

Mastery of these grammatical terms and concepts can enable English language learners to become more proficient and accurate in their use of the language.