
Oxford

Learner's Pocket Grammar

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NHÀ XUẤT BẢN DÂN TRÍ

Oxford

Learner's Pocket Grammar

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Introduction

Oxford Learner's Pocket Grammar provides a complete, concise overview of English grammar for learners at Intermediate level and above. The book is divided into 180 two-page units. Each unit takes a key topic and explains how the grammar works, and how to use it. Example sentences illustrate the grammar in use, and warn students of common errors to avoid. There are over 150 tips offering guidance on the idiomatic use of English. Extensive cross-referencing allows students to build a full, rich understanding of English grammar, and the content of the units reflects thorough corpus-based research.

The book can be used to complement any English course by offering a quick overview of any troublesome grammar points, and a deeper explanation of the most essential grammar than coursebooks typically have space for. It is ideal for revision for exams, and has been written with the grammar syllabuses of IELTS, FCE, CAE and CPE in mind. *Oxford Learner's Pocket Grammar* corresponds to CEF levels B2, C1 and C2.

Used alongside *Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary*, this book offers a complete, pocket-sized English language reference package.

Words and phrases

A There are eight word classes in English, sometimes called 'parts of speech'.

Verb: *be, bring, decide, look, must, take, write*

Noun: *car, dog, idea, London, sadness, time*

Adjective: *big, different, high, natural*

Adverb: *badly, often, probably, soon*

Determiner: *a, every, my, the, this*

Pronoun: *him, myself, something, you*

Conjunction: *and, because, but, if*

Preposition: *at, by, to, with*

B Some words belong to more than one word class. Here are some examples.

promise (verb):

I promise I won't be late.

promise (noun):

I won't be late and that's a promise.

human (noun):

When did humans first land on the moon?

human (adjective):

We're defending our human rights.

that (determiner):

Look at that poster.

that (pronoun):

This is the car that I'd like.

that (conjunction):

I just know that it's true.

C There are five kinds of phrase.

A **verb phrase** has an ordinary verb. There can also be one or more auxiliaries in front of the ordinary verb.
was, arrives, can see, don't know, have been thinking

A **noun phrase** (► 84) has a noun. There can also be a determiner and/or an adjective in front of the noun.
music, some money, a good game

An **adjective phrase** is often just an adjective. There can also be an adverb of degree (► 127) in front of the adjective.
great, very old, most ridiculous

An **adverb phrase** is often just an adverb. There can be an adverb of degree (► 127) in front of the adverb.
sometimes, very carefully

A **prepositional phrase** is a preposition + noun phrase. ► 135A–B
on the road, by Friday, for a long time

TIP

In English there are lots of verbs that we can use as nouns in expressions such as *have a look, make a copy* and *do a search*. ► 47

2 The simple sentence

These are the possible structures in a simple sentence.

A Subject + Verb

The visitors have arrived.

The old man died.

A verb in this structure is called an intransitive verb, e.g. *arrive, die, rise, wait*.

B Subject + Verb + Object

The kids have eaten all the sandwiches.

The shop sells computers.

A verb in this structure is called a transitive verb, e.g. *eat, sell, take, wear*.

C Subject + Verb + Complement

This jacket is nice.

The song became a big hit.

A verb in this structure is called a linking verb, e.g. *be, become, get, look, seem*. The complement can be an adjective phrase (*nice*) or a noun phrase (*a big hit*).

D Subject + Verb + Adverbial

The match is tomorrow.

We got on the bus.

The meetings are every month.

An adverbial can be an adverb phrase (*tomorrow*), a prepositional phrase (*on the bus*) or a noun phrase (*every month*).

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

E Subject + Verb + Object + Object

We should give the children presents.

Sarah sent me a text message.

Here there is a direct object (*a text message*) and an indirect object (*me*). ➤ 3

F Subject + Verb + Object + Complement

The project kept everyone very busy.

All the publicity made the song a big hit.

Here the complement (*a big hit*) relates to the object of the clause (*the song*).

G Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial

I put my mobile in my pocket.

The police got the car out of the river.

Here the adverbial (*out of the river*) relates to the object (*the car*).

H We can add extra adverbials to any of the clause structures.

The visitors have just arrived.

To my surprise, Sarah actually sent me a text message right away.

TIP

With some verbs it is easy to predict the structure. *Give* usually has two objects; *put* always has an object + adverbial. But some verbs occur in different structures; for example *tell the truth* (one object) and *tell me a story* (two objects).

Give, send, buy, etc

A Two objects

When a verb has two objects, the first is the indirect object, and the second is the direct object.

You give the attendant your ticket.

(NOT *You give your ticket the attendant.*)

We'll send our teacher a message.

Nigel bought Celia a diamond ring.

I can reserve you a seat.

Here the indirect object (*you*) refers to the person receiving something, and the direct object (*a seat*) refers to the thing that is given.

B Object + prepositional phrase

Instead of an indirect object, we can use a prepositional phrase with *to* or *for*.

You give your ticket to the attendant.

Nigel bought a diamond ring for Celia.

The phrase with *to* or *for* comes after the direct object.

C To or for?

These verbs can go with *to*: *award, fax, feed, give, grant, hand, leave (in a will), lend, mail, offer, owe, pass, pay, post, promise, read, sell, send, show, take, teach, tell, throw, write.*

These verbs can go with *for*: *buy, cook, fetch, find, fix, get, keep, leave, make, order, pick, reserve, save.*

Bring goes with either *to* or *for*. You bring something *for* someone but *to* a place.

D Pronouns after *give*, *send*, etc

When there is a pronoun, it usually comes before a phrase with a noun.

James lent me his mobile

I might send them to my sister.

When there are two pronouns after the verb, we normally use *to* or *for*.

We'll send them to you straight away.

My friend saved it for me.

E Describe, explain, etc

Some verbs can occur with *to* or *for* but **not** with an indirect object.

Tim described the men to the police.

(NOT *Tim described the police the men.*)

I'll explain everything to you.

(NOT *I'll explain you everything.*)

Such verbs include *announce*,
communicate, *deliver*, *describe*, *donate*,
explain, *obtain*, *propose*, *purchase*,
report, and *suggest*.

TIP

It is safer to use an indirect object only with a short verb like *give* or *send* and not with a longer verb like *describe* or *explain*. Say *Can you give me the figures?* but *Can you explain the figures to me?*

4 The use of statements

A There are four sentence types. Each has a main use.

- Statement (giving information)
You took a photo.
- Question (asking for information)
Did you take a photo?
- Imperative (an order or request)
Take a photo.
- Exclamation (expressing a feeling)
What a nice photo!

B Besides the main use, some sentence types have other uses. For example, a statement can ask for information.

I want to hear all your latest news.

A question can be a request.

Could you close the window, please?

C There are many uses (or ‘communicative functions’) of statements, for example:

- Offering to do something
I can carry that for you.
- Thanking someone
I'm very grateful.
- Giving orders
I'd like you to check these figures.

D Some present-simple verbs express the use of the statement. They are ‘performative verbs’. They include:

THE USE OF STATEMENTS

admit, advise, agree, apologize, guarantee, insist, object, predict, promise, protest, refuse, suggest, warn.

Here are some examples.

- Apologizing
It was my fault. I apologize.
- Promising
I promise to behave myself.
- Predicting
I predict a close game.
- Suggesting
I suggest we all meet later.

In general, performative verbs are fairly emphatic, and some are rather formal. For example, *I promise to behave* is more emphatic than *I'll behave*, and *I apologize* is more formal than *I'm sorry*.

E Sometimes we use a modal verb before a performative verb.

I'd advise you to shred the documents.

I must insist we keep to the rules.

I can guarantee you'll enjoy yourself.

TIP

It is important to learn how statements are used in communication. Some are strongly associated with certain uses, e.g. *I'm going to ...* expresses an intention, *I think you should ...* gives advice and *If only ...* expresses a wish.

5 Negative statements

A In a negative statement, *not* or *n't* comes after the auxiliary verb. We write the auxiliary and *n't* together as one word.

We have not received an invitation.

The scheme wasn't working properly.

If there is more than one auxiliary, *not* or *n't* comes after the first auxiliary.

We shouldn't have stayed so long.

I might not be coming back next term.

B In simple tenses we use *do* as the auxiliary.

I don't like cowboy films.

The player did not speak to reporters.

(NOT *The player spoke not to reporters.*)

C Be on its own has *not* or *n't* after it.

The area is not/isn't very nice.

D We do not use *no* in a negative verb form.

The message didn't arrive.

(NOT *The message no arrived.*)

E *Not* can come before a word or phrase which needs correcting, or before some expressions of quantity, distance, or time.

I ordered tea, not coffee.

Not many people have their own aircraft.

There's an internet café not far away.

We arrived not a moment too soon.

F Other negative words

There are other words besides *not* which have a negative meaning.

<i>No, none, etc</i>	<i>Not/n't</i>
We have no time.	We haven't any time.
Tickets? Oh, there are none left.	Tickets? Oh, there aren't any left.
I saw no one acting strangely.	I didn't see anyone acting strangely.
I did nothing wrong.	I didn't do anything wrong.
There was nowhere to park.	There wasn't anywhere to park.
Few people were interested.	Not many people were interested.
There was little interest.	There wasn't much interest.
I've never seen the film.	I haven't ever seen the film.
We seldom eat out.	We don't often eat out.
Adam no longer lives here.	Adam doesn't live here any more .
I've hardly started on my project.	I haven't really started on my project.
You can't sing, and neither can I.	You can't sing, and I can't either.

6 Negatives with emphasis and inversion

A The emphatic negative

We can stress *not* or an auxiliary with *n't*.

I did NOT take your mobile.

I DIDN'T take your mobile.

We speak the word with extra force, and in writing we highlight the word, e.g. by underlining or using capital letters.

We can also use *at all* to emphasize a negative.

We don't like our new boss at all.

In no time at all, the tour was over.

At all usually goes at the end of a clause or after a negative phrase, e.g. *no time*.

Here are some other phrases which emphasize a negative.

The event did not go well by any means.

I'm not in the least hungry.

Her son's visits were far from frequent.

We can use *absolutely* before *no, nobody, nowhere*, etc.

There was absolutely nowhere to park.

We can use *whatever* or *whatsoever* after *nothing* or *none*, or after *no + noun*.

There's nothing whatever we can do about it.

I have no sympathy whatsoever.

NEGATIVES WITH EMPHASIS AND INVERSION

B Inversion after a negative phrase

A negative phrase can come in front position. This can happen with phrases containing *no*, *never*, *neither*, *nor*, *seldom*, *rarely*, *hardly*, and *only*. The auxiliary (*should*) comes before the subject (*you*).

Under no circumstances should you travel alone.

(Compare: *You should not travel alone under any circumstances.*)

Never in my life have I seen such things.

The electricity had been disconnected – nor was there any water.

Only in summer is it hot enough to swim.

Sometimes a phrase with *not* can come in front position.

Not until the following Monday was I able to see a doctor.

If the verb is in a simple tense, we use the auxiliary verb *do*.

Seldom do we have any visitors.

(Compare: *We seldom have any visitors.*)

Only once did my attention wander.

TIP

A negative phrase with inversion can sound formal and literary. An exception is *no way*, which is informal, e.g. *No way can we get there on time.*

► The imperative

A Form

The imperative is the base form of the verb, e.g. *wait*, *answer*.

Wait a moment, please.

Answer all the questions.

The negative is *do not/don't* + base form.

Do not remove this book from the library.

Don't make so much fuss.

For emphasis we use *do* + base form.

Do be careful.

B Use

The basic use of the imperative is to tell someone what to do. But this use is too abrupt in many situations, and there are more polite ways of telling people what to do. For more details, ► 8.

The imperative is also used in these contexts.

- Slogans and advertisements

Save the planet. Visit historic Bath.

- Warnings and reminders

Look out! There's a car coming.

Don't forget your key.

- Instructions and directions

Select a document from the menu.

Turn left at the lights.

- Informal offers and invitations

Have a biscuit. Come to lunch.

- Good wishes

Have a nice holiday. Enjoy yourselves.

C Imperative + question tag

We can use a positive tag after a positive imperative.

Come here, will/would/can/could you?

The tag makes the imperative less abrupt.

Can't you? after an imperative expresses annoyance or impatience.

Keep still, can't you?

In warnings and reminders, the tag is *won't you?* after a positive imperative and *will you?* after a negative.

Drive carefully, won't you?

Don't forget your key, will you?

D Let's

Let's + verb expresses a suggestion.

Let's go for a walk. ~ *Good idea.*

The negative is *let's not* or (in British English) *don't let's*.

Let's not waste/Don't let's waste time.

In British English we can use the tag *shall we?*

Let's sit down, shall we?

TIP

You can use *Let me see* or *Let me think* to show that you are thinking about something, e.g. *Let me see. What else do we need?*

∞ Getting people to do things

A There are many different ways of getting people to do things in English. Compare these sentences.

I'd be very grateful if you could translate this letter. (asking a favour)

Could you translate this letter, please?
(a polite request)

Translate this letter. (an instruction on an exam paper)

The form we use for an order or request depends on the situation.

It is usually necessary to use a polite formula such as *Could you ...?* rather than an imperative.

B To be very polite when asking a favour, we need to use a longer formula.

Would you be so kind as to move into the other room, please?

I wonder if you'd mind dealing with the matter for me.

In most situations we use a question form.

Could you sign here, please?

Would you mind giving me a lift?

It is always worth taking the trouble to put your request into a question form. It would not be polite to say simply *Give me a lift.*

GETTING PEOPLE TO DO THINGS

Even people in authority often use a polite formula rather than an imperative.

Can you get your books out, please?

I want you to just keep still a moment.

You mustn't spend too long on this.

I'd like you to move closer together.

Would you like to come this way?

C The imperative can be used to give orders.
Teacher to pupils: *Open your books, please.*
Doctor to patient: *Don't move.*
Boss to employee: *Now print out a copy.*

But it is unusual to begin a conversation with an imperative. Often a polite formula is used first, then a series of imperatives.

Can you get out your books, please?

Open them at page 60 and look at the photo. Then think about your reaction.

An imperative can also be used informally between equals.

Give me a hand with these boxes.

Hurry up, or we're going to be late.

D This is how we ask to be given something.
Can/Could we have our bill, please?
I'd like an orange juice.
A box of matches, please.

TIP

Rather than *Do it*, say *Could you do it, please?* or *Would you mind doing it, please?*

Questions

A Types of question

There are two types: a yes/no question and a wh-question.

A yes/no question can be answered by *yes* or *no*.

Do you sell magazines? ~ **Yes, we do.**

Will I need to pay? ~ **No, it's free.**

The question begins with an auxiliary verb (*do, will*).

A wh-question begins with a question word.

When are you travelling? ~ **Tomorrow.**

What should we do? ~ **I don't know.**

For more details on question words,

► 10-11.

B Inversion in questions

In most questions there is inversion of the subject and auxiliary verb. (But

► 10C.)

Are you doing a course here?

Why has the machine stopped?

Where can we sit?

Compare the statement **You are doing** ... and the question **Are you doing** ...?

If there is more than one auxiliary verb (e.g. *could* and *have*), then only the first one comes before the subject.

Could I have reserved a seat?

(NOT **Could have I reserved a seat?**)

In simple tenses we use *do* as the auxiliary.

Do you like walking?

Where did everyone stay?

(NOT *Where stayed everyone?*)

Be on its own as an ordinary verb also comes before the subject.

Is this cotton? Why were you late?

(NOT *Why did you be late?*)

C Questions without inversion

In informal conversation a question can sometimes have the same word order as a statement.

You were late? ~ Yes, I'm afraid so.

They went which way? ~ That way.

But this pattern is used less often in English than in many other languages.

D Indirect questions

We can ask a question indirectly, and less abruptly, by putting it into a sub-clause with a question word or with *if/whether*. There is no inversion in the sub-clause.

Could you tell me how much this costs?

I want to know if I can book a seat.

TIP

We use questions in many ways: not only to ask for information, but also to make requests (*Could you ...?*), suggestions (*Shall we ...?*), offers (*Can I ...?*, *Would you like to ...?*), and to ask permission (*May I...?*).

Wh-questions

A Question words

These are the eight question words.

Who did Matt choose as his partner?

What are you reading?

Which is your car?

Whose is this newspaper?

Where do you work?

When did the accident happen?

Why is your friend so upset?

How did you manage to get a ticket?

B Question word + noun

What, which, and whose can have a noun (or adjective + noun) after them.

What action will you take?

Which day is best for you?

Whose stupid idea was this?

C Subject and object questions

When *who* or *what* is the subject of a question, there is no inversion.

The word order is the same as in a statement. Compare these questions.

Subject: *Who invited you? ~ Laura did.*
(Someone invited you.)

Object: *Who did you invite? ~ My friends.*

(You invited someone.)

We can also use *how many* or *how much*.

How many people know the secret?

How much of the money was left?