

LEVEL 1 –GRAMMAR TOPIC NOTES



Nazila Motahari

To be

The verb **be** has the following forms:

Present simple:	Affirmative	I am You are He/She/It is	We are You are They are
	Question form:	Am I? Are you? Is he/she it?	Are we? Are you? Are they?
	Negative:	I am not/ I'm not You are not/ aren't He/She/It is not/ isn't	We are not/aren't You are not/aren't They are not/aren't
Past simple		I was You were He/She/It was	We were You were They were

The verb **be** is used in the following patterns:

1. with a **noun**:

My mother **is** a teacher.
Bill Clinton **was** the president of the US.

2. with an **adjective**:

This soup **is** very tasty.
The children **were** good.

3. with a **prepositional phrase**:

John and his wife **are from Manchester**.
The flowers **are on the table**.

There is /There are

1. Use of *there is, there are* in sentences and questions

	Singular	Plural
Affirmative sentences	There is a cat in the room.	There are two cats in the room.
Negative sentences	There is not a cat in the room	There are not two cats in the room.
	There is no cat in the room.	There are no cats in the room.
Questions	Is there a cat in the room?	Are there two cats in the room?

2. Contracted forms of *there is*, *there are*

- Contractions are only possible from **there is – there's**
- The form **there're** is not used.
- Do not form contracted forms in questions with *is there/are there*.

	Singular	Plural
Affirmative sentences	There 's a cat in the room.	There are two cats in the room.
Negative sentences	There 's not a cat in the room.	There are not two cats in the room.
	There isn't a cat in the room.	
	There 's no cat in the room.	There are no cats in the room.
Questions	Is there a cat in the room?	Are there two cats in the room?

Prepositions of place, time and movement

Prepositions of Time (in, on, at)

IN

We use **in** with years, seasons and months.

I got married **in 2007**.

I got married **in December**.

I got married **in the winter**.

On

We use **on** with days and dates.

I got married **on 31st December**.

I got married **on New Year's Eve**

AT

We use **at** with times and well-known holiday periods.

I got married **at 3.30**.

I got married **at New Year**.










Here are some other examples you should learn:

- **In** + the morning, the afternoon, the evening, but **at** night.
- **At** + mealtimes (at breakfast, at dinner ...).
- **At** + the weekend.
- **At** the moment, **at** present, **at** that moment.
- **In** the past, **in** the future.

Remember: we don't use in/on/at when we say "this / last / next".



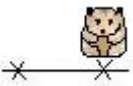
I'll see you **next week**.

Prepositions of Place

<p>under</p>  <p>The cat is under the table</p>	<p>on</p>  <p>The cat is on the table</p>	<p>in</p>  <p>The cat is in the basket</p>
<p>next to</p>  <p>The cat is next to the table</p>	<p>above</p>  <p>The light is above the table</p>	<p>over</p>  <p>The picture is over the table</p>
<p>in front of</p>  <p>The spider is in front of the TV.</p>	<p>behind</p>  <p>The spider is behind the TV.</p>	<p>opposite</p>  <p>The spider is opposite the cat.</p>

Prepositions of Place

There are three main prepositions of place: in, on and at.

<p>in</p>  <p>My hamster is in his cage.</p>	<p>Use in when something is all around - for example buildings / rooms / towns / cities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He's in England • He's in the supermarket • He's in a forest • It's in a book <p>We also say in the middle.</p>
<p>on</p>  <p>My hamster is on the table.</p>	<p>Use on when there is a surface underneath.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a picture on the wall • a bag on the floor • a hat on my head <p>We also say on the left/right.</p>
<p>at</p>  <p>My hamster is at my house.</p>	<p>Use at with addresses and "points in space".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I arrived at 45 North Street. • I arrived at the station. • I arrived at the old oak tree. <p>We also say at the top / bottom and at school / work / home.</p>

Note: **In** and **at** can be very similar sometimes.

I'll meet you **at** the airport.

I'll meet you **in** the airport.

How much/How many

When we want to know the quantity or amount of something, we ask questions starting with **How much** and **How many**.

HOW MUCH ...? - (Quantity)

How much is used with uncountable nouns.

HOW MUCH + UNCOUNTABLE NOUN

- **How much** time do we have to finish the test?
- **How much** money did you spend?
- **How much** sugar would you like in your coffee?
- **How much** paper will I need?
- **How much** milk is in the fridge?
- **How much** traffic was there on the way to work?

If the verb **To Be** is used with an uncountable noun, it is in singular form (= IS or WAS etc.)

HOW MUCH ...? - (Price)

How much can also be used when we want to know the PRICE of something.

In this case, we can use **How much** with countable nouns (both singular and plural nouns).

- **How much** is that painting?
- **How much** are those shoes?
- **How much** did your jacket cost?
- **How much** is the dress on display in the window?
- **How much** will it cost me?
- **How much** does it cost ?

HOW MANY ...? - (Quantity)

How many is used when we want to know the QUANTITY of something.

It is only used with plural countable nouns.

HOW MANY + PLURAL NOUN

- **How many** days are there in January?
- **How many** people work in your company?
- **How many** cousins do you have?
- **How many** books did you buy?
- **How many** countries are there in the world?
- **How many** students are in the class right now?
- **How many** chairs are there in this room?
- **How many** pieces of chocolate would you like?

Some and Any

Countable

There are **some**

people.
cups.
books.
newspapers.
chairs.
shoes.
Euros.

Uncountable

There is **some**

money.
traffic.
paper.
time.
coffee.
food.

Countable

Statements: We can use **some** in positive sentences with plural **countable** nouns:-

Positive: I read **some** books.

Uncountable

We can use **some** in positive sentences with **uncountable** nouns:-

I would like **some** coffee.

Countable

There aren't **any**

people.
cups.
books.
newspapers.
chairs.

Uncountable

There isn't **any**

money.
traffic.
paper.
time.
coffee.
food.

shoes.
Euros.

We can use **any** in negative
Statement: sentences with
plural **countable** nouns:-

Negative: I don't read **any** books.

We can use **any** in
negative sentences
with **uncountable** nouns:-

I don't want **any** coffee.

Countable

people?
cups?
books?
Are(n't) there **any** newspapers?
chairs?
shoes?
Euros?

Uncountable

money?
traffic?
paper?
time?
coffee?
food?
Is(n't)
there **any**

We can use **any** in
Questions: questions with
plural **countable** nouns:-

Positive Q: Are there **any** books?

Negative Q: Aren't there **any** books?

We can use **any** in questions
with
plural **uncountable** nouns:-

Do you need **any** coffee?

Don't you need **any** coffee?

A few, A little

There are a few	people	There is a little	money
	cups		traffic
	books		paper
	newspapers		time
	chairs		coffee
	shoes		food
	Euros		

Countable

Uncountable

Statements:

Positive: "I meet **a few people** every day."

"There is **a little paper** in the printer."

"I only have **a few Euros**."

"I only have **a little money**."

Many, Much

There aren't many	people	There isn't much	money
	cups		traffic
	books		paper
	newspapers		time
	chairs		coffee
	shoes		food

Countable

Statements:

Negative: I don't read **many** books.

Questions:

Positive Q: Are there **many** books?

Negative Q: Aren't there **many** books?

Uncountable

I don't drink **much** coffee.

Do you need **much** coffee?

Don't you need **much** coffee?

This, That, These, Those

Why do we use this and these?

We use **this** (singular) and **these** (plural) as pronouns:

- to talk about people or things **near us**:

This is a nice cup of tea.
Whose shoes are **these**?

- to **introduce people**:

This is Janet.
These are my friends, John and Michael.

WARNING:

We don't say ~~*These are John and Michael.*~~
We say *This is John and this is Michael.*

- to introduce ourselves to begin a conversation **on the phone**:

Hello, **this** is David, Can I speak to Sally?

Why do we use that and those?

We use **that** (singular) and **those** (plural):

- to talk about things that are **not near us**:

What's **that**?
This is our house, and **that's** Rebecca's house over there.
Those are very expensive shoes.

- We also use **that** to refer back to something someone said or did:

- - Shall we go to the cinema?
- Yes, **that's** a good idea.

- - I've got a new job.
- **That's** great.
- - I'm very tired.
- Why is **that**?

this, these, that, those with nouns

We also use **this**, **these**, **that** and **those** with **nouns** to show proximity

We use **this** and **these** for people or things near us:

We have lived in **this** house for twenty years.

Have you read all of **these** books?

... and **that** and **those** for people or things that are not near us:

Who lives in **that** house?

Who are **those** people?

Articles a/an/the

Use A(AN) when you are talking about a thing in general, NOT a specific thing.

Examples:

- I need **a** phone. *Not a specific phone, any phone*
- Mark wants **a** bicycle. *Not a particular bicycle, a bicycle in general*
- Do you have **a** driver's license? *In general*

Use A(AN) when talking about a thing which is new, unknown, or introduced to a listener for the first time. Also use A(AN) when you are asking about the existence of something.

Examples:

- I have **a** car. *The car is being introduced for the first time.*
- Tom is **a** teacher. *This is new information to the listener.*
- Is there **a** dictionary in your backpack? *Asking about the existence of the dictionary*

Similarly, use A(AN) to introduce what type of thing we are talking about.

Examples:

- That is **an** excellent book. *Describing the kind of book*
- Do you live in **a** big house? *Asking about the kind of house*
- I ate **a** thick, juicy steak. *Describing the kind of steak*

REMEMBER: You cannot use A(AN) with plural nouns because A(AN) means "one" or "a single".

Examples:

- I saw a tigers in Yellowstone National Park. **Not Correct**
- I saw tigers in Yellowstone National Park. **Correct**

Use *THE* when talking about something which is already known to the listener or which has been previously mentioned, introduced, or discussed.

Examples:

- I have a cat. **The** cat is black.
- There is a book in my backpack. **The** book is very heavy.
- Do you know where I left **the** car keys? *The listener knows which specific car keys you are talking about.*
- Do you own a car? Is **the** car blue? *You assume they do have a car after asking about it in the first sentence.*
- Nobody lives on **the** Moon. *The Moon is known to everyone.*

Subject Pronouns, Object pronouns, Possessive adjectives





SUBJECT PRONOUN	OBJECT PRONOUN	POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE
I	me	my
you	you	your
he	him	his
she	her	her
it	it	its
we	us	our
they	them	their

Possessive ('s)

When we want to show that something belongs to somebody or something, we usually add an apostrophe + s ('s) to a singular noun and an apostrophe (') to a plural noun, for example:

- **the boy's ball** (one boy)
- **the boys' ball** (two or more boys)

Notice that the number of balls does not matter. The structure is influenced by the possessor and not the possessed.

	one ball	more than one ball
one boy	 the boy's ball	 the boy's balls
more than one boy	 the boys' ball	 the boys' balls

Proper Nouns (Names)

We very often use possessive 's with names:

- This is Mary's car.
- Where is Ram's telephone?
- Who took Anthony's pen?
- I like Tara's hair.

Irregular Plurals

Some nouns have irregular plural forms without **s** (man → men). To show possession, we usually add **'s** to the plural form of these nouns:

singular noun	plural noun
my child's dog	my children's dog
the man's work	the men's work
the mouse's cage	the mice's cage
a person's clothes	people's clothes

Modals:

Can, Must, should

Structure with Modal Verbs

A Modal verb is followed by another verb in the base form (the infinitive without the 'To') and they are not conjugated (we don't add an 'S' in third person). See the following structure:

Subject + Modal Verb + Verb (base form of the infinitive)

- I **can** speak English (NOT: I can ~~t~~ speak English)
- He **can** speak Spanish (NOT: He can ~~s~~ speak Spanish)
- She **can** speak Spanish (NOT: She ~~s~~ speak Spanish)

Modal Verbs in Negative Sentences

Subject + Modal Verb + **not** + Verb (base form of the infinitive)

- You **must not** walk on the grass. (= You mustn't walk on the grass.)
- He **cannot** speak Arabic. (= He can't speak Arabic.)
- We **should not** be late. (= We shouldn't be late.)

As you can see in the examples above, contractions of the **Modal verb + not** are normally possible.

The negative of can is cannot ('not' is joined to 'can') and the contraction is **can't**

Modal Verbs in Questions

Modal Verb + Subject + Verb (base form of the infinitive)

- **May** I help you?
- **Can** I have another piece of cake please?
- **Would** you like to come with us?

Have to /Has to

have to, has to in the Simple Present

Pronouns	Affirmative sentences	Negative sentences	Questions
I, we, you, they	I have to get up early.	I do not have to get up early.	Do I have to get up early?
he, she, it	She has to get up early.	She does not have to get up early.	Does she have to get up early?

'have to'

'have to' is used to mean that something is necessary. It is used in the following way in affirmative sentences:

subject + modal (have to / has to) + verb

'I have to wash my car today.'

'He has to write a report.'

'I had to go to the bank yesterday.'

'have to' in negative sentences

In negatives to show that something is **not** necessary we follow this rule:

subject + doesn't have to + verb

'We don't have to work tomorrow.'

'She doesn't have to wear a uniform to school'

'I didn't have to make my bed when I was young'

Basic Word Order

When we make a sentence in English, we normally follow the following order.

Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb Of Place + Adverb Of Time. Let's see the following example.

Subject	Verb	Object	Manner	Place	Time
The boy	studies	English	well	at school	every day.
The maid	cleans	the house	thoroughly		every morning.
John	works		hard		every day.
Mary	married	George			Yesterday.

Present Simple tense

The simple present tense in English is used to describe an action that is regular, true or normal.

We use the present tense:

1. For repeated or regular actions in the present time period.

- I **take** the train to the office.
- The train to Berlin **leaves** every hour.
- John **sleeps** eight hours every night during the week.

2. For facts.

- The President of The USA **lives** in The White House.
- A dog **has** four legs.
- We **come** from Switzerland.

3. For habits.

- I **get up** early every day.
- Carol **brushes** her teeth twice a day.
- They **travel** to their country house every weekend.

4. For things that are always / generally true.

- It **rains** a lot in winter.
- The Queen of England **lives** in Buckingham Palace.
- They **speak** English at work.

Verb Spelling

We form the present tense using the base form of the infinitive (without the TO).

In general, in the third person we add 'S' in the third person.

Subject	Verb	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	speak / learn	English at home
he / she / it	speaks / learns	English at home

The spelling for the verb in the third person differs depending on the ending of that verb:

1. For verbs that end in **-O**, **-CH**, **-SH**, **-SS**, **-X**, or **-Z** we add **-ES** in the third person.

- go – goes
- catch – catches
- wash – washes
- kiss – kisses
- fix – fixes
- buzz – buzzes

2. For verbs that end in a **consonant + Y**, we remove the **Y** and add **-IES**.

- marry – marries
- study – studies
- carry – carries
- worry – worries

NOTE: For verbs that end in a **vowel + Y**, we just add **-S**.

- play – plays
- enjoy – enjoys
- say – says

Negative Sentences in the Simple Present Tense

To make a negative sentence in English we normally use Don't or Doesn't with all verbs EXCEPT **To Be** and **Modal verbs** (can, might, should etc.).

- Affirmative: You speak French.
Negative: You **don't** speak French.

You will see that we add **don't** between the subject and the verb. We use **Don't** when the subject is **I, you, we** or **they**.

- Affirmative: He speaks German.
Negative: He **doesn't** speak German.

When the subject is **he, she** or **it**, we add **doesn't** between the subject and the verb to make a negative sentence. Notice that the letter **S** at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the negative sentence. We will see the reason why below.

Negative Contractions

Don't = Do not

Doesn't = Does not

I **don't** like meat = I **do not** like meat.

There is no difference in meaning though we normally use contractions in spoken English.

Word Order of Negative Sentences

The following is the word order to construct a basic negative sentence in English in the Present Tense using **Don't** or **Doesn't**.

Subject	don't/doesn't	Verb*	The Rest of the sentence
I / you / we / they	don't	have / buy eat / like etc.	cereal for breakfast
he / she / it	doesn't		

* Verb: The verb that goes here is the base form of the infinitive = The infinitive without TO before the verb. Instead of the infinitive **To have** it is just the **have** part.

Remember that the infinitive is the verb before it is conjugated (changed) and it begins with **TO**. For example: to have, to eat, to go, to live, to speak etc.

Examples of Negative Sentences with Don't and Doesn't:

- You **don't** speak Arabic.
- John **doesn't** speak Italian.
- We **don't** have time for a rest.
- It **doesn't** move.
- They **don't** want to go to the party.
- She **doesn't** like fish.

Questions in the Simple Present Tense

To make a question in English we normally use **Do or Does**. It has no translation in Spanish though it is essential to show we are making a question. It is normally put at the beginning of the question.

- Affirmative: You speak English.
Question: **Do** you speak English?

You will see that we add **DO** at the beginning of the affirmative sentence to make it a question. We use **Do** when the subject is **I, you, we** or **they**.

- Affirmative: He speaks French.
Question: **Does** he speak French?

When the subject is **he**, **she** or **it**, we add **DOES** at the beginning to make the affirmative sentence a question. Notice that the letter **S** at the end of the verb in the affirmative sentence (because it is in third person) disappears in the question. We will see the reason why below.

We **DON'T** use **Do** or **Does** in questions that have the verb **To Be** or **Modal Verbs** (can, must, might, should etc.)

Word Order of Questions with Do and Does

The following is the word order to construct a basic question in English using **Do** or **Does**.

Do/Does	Subject	Verb*	The Rest of the sentence
Do	I / you / we / they	have / need want etc.	a new bike?
Does	he / she / it		

*Verb: The verb that goes here is the base form of the infinitive = The infinitive without **TO** before the verb. Instead of the infinitive **To have** it is just the **have** part.

Remember that the infinitive is the verb before it is conjugated (changed) and it begins with **TO**. For example: to have, to eat, to go, to live, to speak etc.

Examples of Questions with Do and Does:

- **Do** you need a dictionary?
- **Does** Mary need a dictionary?
- **Do** we have a meeting now?
- **Does** it rain a lot in winter?
- **Do** they want to go to the party?
- **Does** he like pizza?

Short Answers with Do and Does

In questions that use do/does it is possible to give short answers to direct questions as follows:

Sample Questions	Short Answer (Affirmative)	Short Answer (Negative)
Do you like chocolate?	Yes, I do.	No, I don't.
Do I need a pencil?	Yes, you do.	No, you don't.
Do you both like chocolate?	Yes, we do.	No, we don't.
Do they like chocolate?	Yes, they do.	No, they don't.
Does he like chocolate?	Yes, he does.	No, he doesn't.
Does she like chocolate?	Yes, she does.	No, she doesn't.
Does it have four wheels?	Yes, it does.	No, it doesn't.

However, if a question word such as **who**, **when**, **where**, **why**, **which** or **how** is used in the question, you cannot use the short answers above to respond to the question.

Verbs following by infinitive and “ing”

After the following verbs we use “ing (Gerund)

I **like** walking in the park.

I **enjoy** walking in the park.

I **hate** eating sea food.

I **love** eating ice-cream.

After these verbs we use infinitives (to+verb)

I **would like** to see a movie today.

I **want** to travel to London.

I **hope** to pass my test.

Simple past tense

The **Simple Past Tense**, often just called the **Past Tense**, is easy to use in English.

If you already know how to use the Present Tense, then the *Past Tense* will be easy.

In general, the **Past Tense** is used to talk about something that started and finished at a definite time in the past.

How to form the Past Tense in English

The main rule is that for every verb in English, there is only one form of it in the past tense.

(The exception is the Past tense of To Be, which has two forms: *was* and *were*)

This is totally different from other languages such as Spanish, French, Italian etc. where you change the verb ending for every subject.

For example: The past tense of the verb **want** is **wanted**.
Wanted is used as the past tense for all subjects/pronouns.

- I wanted
- You wanted
- He wanted
- She wanted
- It wanted
- We wanted
- They wanted

So you just have to learn one word to be able to use it in the past tense. In this case we just needed to learn the one word *wanted* which can be used for all subjects (or people).

Past Tense Regular Verbs

To change a regular verb into its past tense form, we normally add –ED to the end of the verb.

- play – played
- cook – cooked
- rain – rained
- wait – waited

There are some exceptions with a slight change in spelling which you can see here:

[Spelling of words ending in ED.](#)

Examples of sentences using regular verbs in the past tense

- Last night I **played** my guitar loudly and the neighbors **complained**.
- She **kissed** me on the cheek.
- It **rained** yesterday.
- Angela **watched** TV all night.
- John **wanted** to go to the museum.

Note: There are three different ways of pronouncing the –ed at the end of a verb in the past tense.

We recommend reading our guide about the [pronunciation of –ED at the end of words](#).

Negative sentences in the Past Tense

We use **didn't (did not)** to make a negative sentence in the past tense.

This is for regular AND irregular verbs in English.

(Exception is *To Be* and Modal Verbs such as *Can*)

Compare the following:

Present: They **don't** live in Canada.

Past: They **didn't** live in Canada.

The main verb (*live* in the example above) is in its base form (of the infinitive). The auxiliary *DIDN'T* shows that the sentence is negative AND in the past tense.

NOTICE: The only difference between a negative sentence in the present tense and a negative sentence in the past tense is the change in the auxiliary verb.

Both don't and doesn't in the present tense become **didn't** in the past tense.

Compare the negative sentences in the examples below:

Present: You **don't** need a mechanic.

Past: You **didn't** need a mechanic.

Present: You **don't** walk to work.

Past: You **didn't** walk to work.

Present: He **doesn't** speak Japanese.

Past: He **didn't** speak Japanese.

Examples of negative sentences in the Past Tense

- I **didn't** want to go to the dentist.
- She **didn't** have time.
- You **didn't** close the door.
- He **didn't** come to my party.
- They **didn't** study so they **didn't** pass the test.
- We **didn't** sleep well last night.

Questions in the Past Tense

We use **did** to make a question in the past tense.

This is for regular AND irregular verbs in English.

(Exception is *To Be* and Modal Verbs such as *Can*)

Compare the following:

Present: **Do** they live in France?

Past: **Did** they live in France?

The main verb (*live* in the example above) is in its base form (of the infinitive). The auxiliary *DID* shows that the question is in the past tense.

NOTICE: The only difference between a question in the present tense and a question in the past tense is the change in the auxiliary verb.

Both Do and Does in present tense questions become **Didn't** in past tense questions.

Compare the questions in the examples below:

Present: **Do** you need a doctor?

Past: **Did** you need a doctor?

Present: **Do** you ride your bike to work?

Past: **Did** you ride your bike to work?

Present: **Does** he live in Italy?

Past: **Did** he live in Italy?

We can also use a question word (Who, What, Why etc.) before DID to ask for more information.

- Did you study? – Yes, I did.
- **When** did you study? – I studied last night.
- **Where** did you study? – I studied at the library.

Read more about short answers in the past tense.

Examples of Questions in the Past Tense

- **Did** you go to work yesterday?
- **Did** they arrive on time?
- **Did** she like the surprise?
- Where **did** she go?
- What **did** you do yesterday?
- What **did** you say? - I didn't say anything.
- Why **did** we have to come?

Irregular Verbs in the Past Tense

Irregular verbs are ONLY irregular in affirmative/positive sentences. (An exception to this is with the verb TO BE in the Past Tense).

For example: The past tense of GO is WENT. It does not end in –ED so it is considered irregular.

The word **went** is used for all subjects – I, you, we, they, he, she, it.

- I **went** to the beach
- He **went** to the park.
- She **went** to the zoo.
- They **went** to the library.

BUT, as we mentioned before, it is only in its irregular form (*went*) in sentences that are affirmative/positive.

Compare the following using GO in the past tense.

- They **went** to the beach
- They didn't **go** to the beach --- **Didn't** shows that we are talking in the past tense.
- Did they **go** to the beach? --- **Did** shows that we are talking in the past tense.

Another example with an irregular verb.

The past of EAT is ATE.

- You **ate** my cake.
- You didn't **eat** my cake.
- Did you **eat** my cake?

