

Grammar



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Grammar – a word of reassurance

Most English speaking people under the age of 55 will have never studied grammar formally, unless they have studied a foreign language.

Even if you cannot name the parts of speech or put labels on particular grammar errors, be reassured that as a native speaker you almost certainly have the (English) grammar knowledge you need to tutor a CaLD student.

- Generally grammar points should not be taught in isolation.
- Take note of your student's errors and use positive correction techniques by modelling the correct form.
- You can draw attention to rules and provide activities to reinforce correct forms later.
- When you don't know the rule, you can look it up with /for your student. Your region has an excellent resource for this "English Grammar in Use" by Raymond Murphy.

Below are some common grammar facts which your CaLD student will probably find useful.

Three important verbs

The verbs (or parts of) **To Be**, **To Have** and **To Do** are used as auxiliary verbs (helping verbs) with other verbs in certain contexts:

To be in continuous tenses – I **am** listening, she **was** watching; and also with passives: The lost child **was** found by police. The program **is** watched by millions.

To have in perfect tenses – **Have** you finished? She **had** already eaten.

To do in negative and question sentences – **Do** you take sugar? She **didn't** answer.

Verb – to be

Positive

Short forms

I	am	from Australia.	I'm from Australia
He She It	is		He's from Australia She's It's
We You They	are		We're You're They're

Negative

Short forms

I	am not	from Australia.	I'm not from Australia
He She It	is not		He isn't from Australia She isn't It isn't
We You They	are not		We aren't You aren't They aren't

Question form (interrogative)

Am	I	from Australia ?
Is	he she it	
Are	We You they	

Verb – to have

Positive

Short forms

I	have	a new car	I've got
He She It	has		He's got She's got It's got
We You They	have		We've got You've got They've got

Negative

Short (contracted) forms

I	have not	(got) a new car	I haven't
He She It	has not		He hasn't She hasn't It hasn't
We You They	has not		We haven't You haven't They haven't

Question form (interrogative)

Have	I	finished yet ?
Has	he she it	
Have	we you they	

Verb – to do

Positive

I	do	like icecream
He She It	does	
We You They	do	

Negative

Short forms

I	do not	like icecream	I don't
He She It	does not		He doesn't She doesn't It doesn't
We You They	do not		We don't You don't They don't

Question form (interrogative)

Do	I	like icecream?
Does	he she it	
Do	we you they	

Tense

- The tense of the verb indicates **the time** of the action: present, past, future.
- CaLD students often (if not always) make errors with verb tenses.
- The following tables indicate the form of **four tenses**: present simple and continuous, past simple and continuous.

1. Present Simple Tense

- The present simple expresses a fact or something that is true for some time.
I come from England. The sun rises in the east. It rains heavily in winter.
- It also expresses habits.
They walk the dog every day. She smokes 20 cigarettes a day. He takes milk in tea.

Positive

I You We They	work
He She It	works

Negative

I You We They	don't	work.
He She It	doesn't	

Question

Do	I you we they	work?
Does	he she it	

Short answers

Yes I do . No we don't . Yes they do .
Yes he does . No she doesn't . Yes it does .

2 The Present Continuous

- The present continuous describes activity happening now:
You're listening. She's typing a letter. They're sitting in the canteen.
- It also describes an activity in the near future:
We're having a party next Saturday. I'm going to the concert tonight.

Positive and Negative

I	am	(not) going	outside
He She It	is		
We You They	are		

Question

Am	I	going ?
Is	he she it	
Are	You We they	

3 Past Simple

- The past simple an action that has finished:
*I **lived** in NSW for three years. She **moved** house last week.*

Positive

I You We They He She It	moved	to Australia in 2006.
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Negative

I You We They He She It	didn't move	to Australia in 2006.
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Question

Did	I You We They He/she/it	move?
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Short answers

Yes, I did / No I didn't . Yes, you did . / No you didn't . Yes, we did . / No we didn't . Yes, he did . / No he didn't .
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4 Past Continuous

- The past continuous expresses an action that happened over a period of time (in the past).
- It is often used in a sentence where one action was happening (and continued) when another occurred:

*She **was taking** a shower when the phone **rang**.*

Positive and negative

I He She	was (wasn't)	eating dinner when.....
We You They	were (weren't)	

Question

Was	I he she	eating dinner when.....
Were	you we they	

Regular or Irregular Verbs

Regular verbs are verbs which add **ed** to form the past. Most verbs in English are regular. Note the following pronunciations when "ed" is added:

- Look (looked), Jump (jumped), Watch (watched) – ed sounds like "t"
- Earn (earned), Rain (rained) Form (formed) – ed sounds like "d"
- Rent (rented), Sound (sounded) – ed makes an extra syllable (Id)

Spelling patterns:

If the regular verb ends in consonant e – just add "d" (like – liked)

If the regular verb ends in consonant y – change y to i + ed (cry – cried)

If a short verb with a single vowel ends in a consonant – double the consonant + ed (stop – stopped, bat – batted, step – stepped)

Here is a chart of commonly used **Irregular Verbs**.

An irregular verb changes spelling patterns in the past tense and past participle.

PRESENT	PAST	PAST WITH HAVE/HAS/HAD	PRESENT	PAST	PAST WITH HAVE/HAS/HAD
be am/is/are	was were	been	hurt	hurt	hurt
beat	beat	beaten	kept	kept	kept
become	became	become	know	knew	known
begin	began	begun	lose	lost	lost
bend	bent	bent	make	made	made
bite	bit	bitten	mean	meant	meant
blow	blew	blown	meet	met	met
break	broke	broken	pay	paid	paid
bring	brought	brought	put	put	put
build	built	built	read	read	read
burn	burnt	burnt	ride	rode	ridden
buy	bought	bought	ring	rang	rung
can	could	could	run	ran	ran
catch	caught	caught	say	said	said
choose	chose	chosen	see	saw	seen
come	came	came	send	sent	sent
cost	cost	cost	shake	shook	shaken
cut	cut	cut	shine	shone	shone
dig	dug	dug	shoot	shot	shot
do/does	did	done	shut	shut	shut
draw	drew	drawn	sing	sang	sung
drink	drank	drunk	sit	sat	sat
drive	drove	driven	sleep	slept	slept
eat	ate	eaten	speak	spoke	spoken
fall	fell	fallen	stand	stood	stood
feed	fed	fed	steal	stole	stolen
feel	felt	felt	sweep	swept	swept
fight	fought	fought	swim	swam	swum
find	found	found	swing	swung	swung
fly	flew	flown	take	took	taken
forget	forgot	forgotten	teach	taught	taught
get	got	gotten	tear	tore	torn
give	gave	given	tell	told	told
go	went	gone	think	thought	thought
grow	grew	grown	throw	threw	thrown
hang	hung	hung	understand	understood	understood
have /has	had	had	wake	woke	woken
hear	heard	heard	wear	wore	wore
hide	hid	hidden	win	won	won
hit	hit	hit	write	wrote	written
hold	held	held			

Useful Grammar Terms

Below are some very simple definitions of terms you and your student may find useful, if only in explaining errors.

Grammar term	Meaning	Example
noun	name: of persons or things	girl, uncle, book, window
verb	action: something we do	look, speak, like, have
adjective	describes person or thing	pretty girl, open window
adverb	describes (qualifies) a verb	speak slowly , listen carefully
pronoun	used in place of a noun	I, you, he, she, it, we, they
possessive adjective	shows who owns or has something	his face, my car, your baby, our new house, their children
preposition	word used to show relationship between nouns in a sentence	The <i>book</i> is on the <i>table</i> . The <i>traffic lights</i> at the <i>corner</i> .
article	definite (the) or indefinite (a +an) used before nouns	the book, an apple a day.... the doctors
subject	the person or thing responsible for the action	She speaks three languages. Their old car broke down. The dog barked.
singular	just one	a book, the house, a fence
plural	more than one	books, the houses, fences
phrase	A group of words without a verb	in the house; sitting on the grass.
sentence	A complete idea. Begin with a capital letter and end with a full-stop.	The family ate dinner together. The dog stayed inside the house.
object	noun which answers what/who after the verb	The family ate (what?) dinner
tense	refers to the time in a sentence	He ate breakfast. (past time) She's eating breakfast. (present)

Simple Facts about Sentence Structure

The order of words in a simple English sentence is subject (S), verb (V), object (O).

Subject (S)	Verb (V)	Object (O)
He	drank	a glass of water.
The old man	wore	a hat.
My sister	speaks	three languages.

Some verbs always need an object to make sense:

Have: I have a new car.

Like: Mary likes chocolate ice-cream.

Want: The baby wants an apple.

Other verbs don't need an object:

Leave: The train left.

Dance: Bob and Sue are dancing.

Come: They didn't come.

We usually put information about times or places at the end of the sentence:

We had a picnic at the river.

We had a picnic on Saturday.

Note: We had a picnic at the river on Saturday.

We had a picnic on Saturday at the river.

On Saturday we had a picnic at the river.

Which of the above is correct?