

# Communicative English

## Semester- II

### Negative Sentences

A negative sentence (or statement) states that something is not true or incorrect. A negative adverb has to be added in order to negate or “cancel” the validity of the sentence. This “negation” element is created according to the following general rule.

The Negation Rule: In English, in order to claim that something is not true, you form a negative sentence by adding the word not after the first auxiliary verb in the positive sentence. If there is no auxiliary verb in the positive sentence, as in the Present Simple and Past Simple tenses, then you add one (in both these cases, the auxiliary verb do).

Pay attention:

- When an auxiliary verb (including modals) is used, the main verb is not inflected (no s or ed ending), meaning that either the base form or past participle is used.
- The verb to be uses a different negation pattern.

Review the following table for examples of negation in English. Some examples use the contracted forms more used in informal writing and speech, and some others use the full forms.

Tense	Negative Element + Contracted Forms	Examples
Present Simple	do+not = don't	I do not play.
	does+not = doesn't	She doesn't play.
Past Simple	did+not = didn't	I didn't play.
	am + not (*no amn't)	
Present Progressive	is+not = isn't	I am not playing.
	are+not = aren't	

- He is not playing.
- We aren't playing.

Past Progressive

was+not = wasn't

were+not = weren't I wasn't playing.

They were not playing.

Present Perfect have+not = haven't

has+not = hasn't You haven't played.

She has not played.

Present Perfect

Progressive have+not+been= haven't been

has+not+been = hasn't been I have not been playing.  
She hasn't been playing.  
Past Perfect had+not = hadn't You hadn't played.  
Past Perfect  
Progressive had+not+been = hadn't been She hadn't been playing.  
Future Simple will+not = won't I won't play.  
Future Perfect will+not+have = won't have He will not have played.  
Conditional would+not She wouldn't play.  
Conditional perfect would+not+have She wouldn't have played.  
Modals can + not = can't or cannot (formal)  
should+not = shouldn't I can't play.  
I cannot play.  
We shouldn't play.

## Question tags

We can add question tags like *isn't it?*, *can you?* or *didn't they?* to a statement to make it into a question. Question tags are more common in speaking than writing.

We often use question tags when we expect the listener to agree with our statement. In this case, when the statement is positive, we use a negative question tag.

*She's a doctor, **isn't** she?*  
*Yesterday **was** so much fun, **wasn't** it?*

If the statement is negative, we use a positive question tag.

*He **isn't** here, **is** he?*  
*The trains **are never** on time, **are** they?*  
***Nobody has** called for me, **have** they?*

If we are sure or almost sure that the listener will confirm that our statement is correct, we say the question tag with a falling intonation. If we are a bit less sure, we say the question tag with a rising intonation.

### Formation

If there is an auxiliary verb in the statement, we use it to form the question tag.

*I **don't** need to finish this today, **do** I?*  
*James **is** working on that, **isn't** he?*  
*Your parents **have** retired, **haven't** they?*  
*The phone **didn't** ring, **did** it?*  
*It **was** raining that day, **wasn't** it?*  
*Your mum **hadn't** met him before, **had** she?*

Sometimes there is no auxiliary verb already in the statement. For example, when:

... the verb in the statement is present simple or past simple and is positive. Here we use *don't*, *doesn't* or *didn't*:

*Jenni eats cheese, **doesn't** she?*  
*I said that already, **didn't** I?*

... the verb in the statement is *to be* in the present simple or past simple. In this case we use *to be* to make the question tag:

*The bus stop's over there, **isn't** it?*  
*None of those customers **were** happy, **were** they?*

... the verb in the statement is a modal verb. Here we use the modal verb to make the question tag:

*They **could** hear me, **couldn't** they?*  
*You **won't** tell anyone, **will** you?*

If the main verb or auxiliary verb in the statement is *am*, the positive question tag is *am I?* but the negative question tag is usually *aren't I?*:

*I'm **never** on time, **am** I?*  
*I'm going to get an email with the details, **aren't** I?*

## Concord: Subject-Verb Agreement

### What is Concord?

Another word for Concord is agreement. We need to know how the various elements of the English clause or sentence go together if we are to be competent users of the English language. Some items go along more readily with some other items while some cannot go together in usage. When items go with each i.e. when they agree, such items are in agreement or that there is concord between them.

The subject and verb of a sentence are in agreement when they have the same number and person. If the subject is singular, the verb will be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb will be plural. The **Verb** must be in agreement with the subject; a singular subject takes a singular verb while a plural subject takes a plural verb.

### Rules of Concord

The rules of concord follow various patterns which we list below...

#### Pattern 1

A singular subject requires a singular verb. Let us look at these examples:

- *The novel is interesting.*

- *The driver has arrived.*
- *The news is hard to believe.*
- *Mathematics is a difficult subject for many students.*
- *Life was pleasant in the days of the oil boom.*
- *He does this regularly.*
- *The girl loves to sing.*

### Pattern 2

A plural subject requires a plural verb. Consider these examples:

- *The books are interesting.*
- *The teachers have arrived.*
- *His clothes were dirty.*
- *Some people love traditional music.*
- *The women are under arrest.*

### Pattern 3

A compound singular subject takes plural verb as exemplified in the following sentences:

- *The bride and the groom are here.*
- *The provost and his deputy have arrived.*
- *The man and his wife come here often.*
- *The book and the ruler were removed by unknown persons.*
- *James and Joe do their homework in the evening.*

### Pattern 4

Compound **plural** subjects take plural verb as demonstrated in the sentences below:

- *Doctors and nurses are needed at the health centre.*
- *The robbers and their leaders were arrested.*
- *Boys and girls have to work hard.*
- *Parents and teachers need to meet regularly.*
- *Many religious leaders and their followers were present at the rally.*

However, there are exceptional cases to some of these patterns when it comes to the subject-verb agreement. Let us consider some of these exceptions:

### Exceptions 1

When any of these words: with, along with, together with, as well as, in addition to, including, no less than, etc. joins a compound subject, the form of the verb is singular. That

is, when we replace ‘and’ in Pattern 4 with any of the words listed above, the appropriate verb form is singular. See the following examples:

- *The man with his wife is here.*
- *The boy together with his sister is attending the party.*
- *The husband, as well as his wife, was arrested.*
- *The goat in addition to the cow has disappeared.*
- *The goalkeeper no less than the defenders is to blame for the goal.*

#### Exception 2

When a compound subject joined by ‘and’ gives the impression of a unit or when the two singular subjects refer to the same person or thing, we use the singular verb as we have in the following:

- *Bread and butter is his favourite meal.*
- *His wife and greatest admirer gives him sound counsel.*
- *John’s friend and boss is very pleasant.*
- *The President and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces has arrived.*
- *Rice and beans is good for lunch.*

#### Exception 3

When we connect a compound subject (two or more singular subjects) with any of these words, or, either...or, neither...nor, not, but, not only, but also, we use the singular verb. Look at the following examples:

- *John or Joe is going to the farm.*
- *Either John or Joe is to blame.*
- *Neither the boy nor the girl has a good report.*
- *Not the husband but the wife was given the award.*
- *Not only the teacher but also the student likes the beautiful building.*

But when one of the subjects joined by any of the above items ([the correlatives](#)) differ in number; in other words, if one is singular and the other one is plural, the verb agrees in number with the nearer noun or subject. This is the principle of proximity. See the following examples:

- *Neither the thieves nor their leader was arrested.*
- *Neither the leader nor the thieves were arrested.*
- *Not only the boy but his friends were present at the game.*

#### Exception 4

A singular subject followed by a plural modifier requires a singular verb. Examples

- *The reaction of the students was unexpected.*
- *The leader of the armed bandits is to be convicted today.*
- *A list of the successful applicants is out already.*

## Indefinite Pronouns

**Indefinite pronouns** such as each, every, everybody, anyone, nobody, no one, none, etc. take a singular verb. Examples:

- *Everybody is going to come.*
- *No one was exempted from the punishment.*
- *Nobody has seen the missing boat.*

## Auxiliary Verbs

Some verbs are modified by auxiliaries like *do*, *be*, and *have* as in the following: *do/does*, *cook*, *write*, *dance*, *jump*, etc. when such auxiliary verbs come before the main verbs, it is the **auxiliary** which takes the singular form of the verb. E. g.

- *She does cook.*
- *The man does visit often.*
- *The boy has arrived.*

## Numerals or Plural Numbers

Plural numbers take a singular verb when we use them in a phrase to indicate a sum or a unit. Examples include:

- *Four years is the tenure of the president.*
- *Two million naira is a great deal of money to carry around.*
- *Ten percent is good interest.*
- *Forty hours is the normal work week in Nigeria.*
- *Fifteen minutes is enough for a coffee break.*

## Conventional Plural Words

Some nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning take a singular verb. Examples of such words include: Economics, electronics, Mathematics, Linguistics, Physics, news, statistics, whereabouts, ethics, dynamics, semantics, trousers, scissors, etc.

Consider the following sentences in which we have such manifestations:

- *No news is good news.*
- *Phonetics is an interesting subject.*
- *His whereabouts is a secret.*
- *Statistics is almost similar to Mathematics.*
- *Mathematics is a technical subject.*

# The Existing Verb Tenses and Their Usage

In English, there are twelve verb tense forms. They are:

1. Simple Present
2. Simple Past
3. Simple Future
4. Present Continuous
5. Past Continuous
6. Future Continuous
7. Present Perfect
8. Past Perfect
9. Future Perfect
10. Present Perfect Continuous
11. Past Perfect Continuous
12. Future Perfect Continuous

## The Present Tenses

Verbs in present tense are: **Simple Present, Present Perfect, and Present Continuous.**

**Simple Present** verb tenses serve two main purposes – describing when an event is presently occurring, or when an event happens regularly (also referred to as present indefinite).

Depending on the speaker, simple present verb tenses might be formed by using the root form or by adding -es or -s to the ending.

Examples of Simple Present verb tense:

- I go ...
- She goes ...
- Kelly is ...
- My mom likes ...

**Present Perfect** verb tenses describe an action or event that either happened at an indefinite time in the past, or started in the past and continued to the present. Present Perfect verb tenses are formed by **have / has + the past participle.**

Examples of Present Perfect verb tenses:

- I have gone ...
- She has gone ...

**Present Continuous** verb tenses indicate when an action or event is currently happening and will continue to happen in the future. Present Continuous verb tenses are formed by **to be [am, is, are] + verb [present participle]**

Examples of Present Continuous verb tenses:

- I have been going ...

- She has been going ...
- My mom has been practicing ...

## The Past Tenses

Verbs in past tense are: Simple Past, Past Perfect, Past Continuous, and Past Perfect Continuous.

**Simple Past** verb tenses are those that are used to describe events that happened before present time. Simple Past tense demonstrates that a speaker is discussing something that has already occurred and are finished. This is different from Past Continuous verb tense that focuses on events that happened over a specific timeframe.

Simple Past verbs are formed by adding – ed to the root form (or – d if the root form ends in e.)

Examples of Simple Past verb tenses:

- I went ...
- I wanted ...
- I had ...
- He wanted ...
- She waited ...
- Julie ate ...

**Past Perfect** verb tense is sometimes referred to as *pluperfect*. This verb tense is used to reference events that were finished or completed at some point in the past. Past Perfect verb tenses are formed by **had** + [**past participle**] for both singular and plural subjects.

Examples of Past Perfect verb tense:

- I had gone ...
- She had drank ...
- He had driven ...
- Jim had ran ...

**Past Continuous** verb tenses are also known as *past progressive* tenses. They are used to describe continuing actions, or events that were happening at some point in the past. Past Continuous verb tenses are formed by combining the past tense of *to be* with the present participle of the verb – *ing*.

Examples of Past Continuous verb tense:

- I was going ...
- Sally was reading ...
- He was eating ...
- She was running ...

**Past Perfect Continuous** verb tenses, also referred to as *past perfect progressive tense*, describes a specific action or event that started in the past but continued to another time



also in the past. Past Perfect Continuous verb tenses are formed using **had been + the present participle of the verb (root + -ing)**

Different from present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous verbs are events or actions that started in the past, continued in the past and also ended in the past.

Examples of Past Perfect Continuous verb tense:

- I had been going ...
- She had been driving ...
- He had been drinking ...
- Jim had been driving ...

## The Future Tenses

Verbs in future tense are: **Simple Future, Future Perfect, Future Continuous, and Future Perfect Continuous**. They all reference events that will occur in the future.

**Simple Future** verb tenses speak about events or actions that have not yet occurred. Simple Future verb tenses are formed by **will + [root form of the verb]** the formula will be the same for both singular and plural subjects. However, there is a second way to demonstrate that something will occur at a later point in time, **[am / is /are] + going to + [root form of the verb]**

Examples of Simple Future verb tense:

- I will go ...
- My dad will drive us to ...
- We are going to ...

**Future Perfect** verb tenses are used to demonstrate actions or events that will end in the future. Future Perfect verb tenses are formed by **will have + [past participle]** and it does not change if the subject of the sentence is singular or plural.

Examples of Future Perfect verb tense:

- I will have gone ...
- My sister will have driven ...
- Mike will have learned ...

**Future Continuous** verb tense has also been referred to as *future progressive tense*. This verb tense is used to discuss an action or event that will occur in the future and will continue to occur for a specific amount of time. Future Continuous verb tenses are formed by **will + be + the present participle (root verb + -ing)**

Examples of Future Continuous verb tenses:

- I will be going ...
- Sally and Fred will be going to the prom together.
- My dad will be going camping with my little brother.

**Future Perfect Continuous** verb tenses have also been called *future perfect progressive* verb tenses. They are used to reference events or actions that are expected to continue until a specific point in the future. Future Perfect Continuous verbs are formed by **will + have + been + the verb's present participle (verb root + – ing)**

Examples of Future Perfect Continuous verb tenses:

- I will have been going ...
- My mom will have been going to choir practice for eight months now ...
- My English teacher will have been handing out tests all year.