

Unit 2: AUXILIARY VERBS

TYPES OF VERBS

There are three main kinds of verbs:

- auxiliary verbs
- modal verbs (can, could, must, shall, should, ought to, may, might, will, would)
- full verbs (normal verbs with meaning, non-continuous verb or mixed verbs)

Auxiliary verbs have no meaning, but are necessary to form tenses.

Modal verbs have some meaning, but can also be used as auxiliary verbs (to form negatives and questions).

Full verbs can be either normal verbs, state verbs (that cannot be used in continuous tenses) or mixed verbs (verbs with more than one meaning, i.e. have).

Auxiliary verbs are used together with a main verb to show the verb's tense or to form a negative or question. To make negatives, add not (-n't) to the auxiliary. To make questions, invert the subject and the auxiliary verb.

- *Does* Sam write all his own reports?
- The secretaries *haven't* written all the letters.
- Terry *is* writing an e-mail to a client at the moment.

Auxiliary verbs also used in short answers. To make a short answer, repeat the auxiliary verb or use *do / does / did* in *Simple* tenses.

- *Are* you coming with us? Yes, I *am*.
- *Have* you had breakfast? No, I *haven't*.
- *Does* she like walking? No, she *doesn't*.

AUXILIARY VERB "BE"

The verb *be* can be used as an auxiliary and a full verb. As an auxiliary we use this verb for compound tenses and the passive voice.

Note that *be* is an irregular verb:

Present Simple: I am, he/she/it is, we/you/they are

Past Simple: I/he/she/it was, we/you/they were

Past Participle: been

You can tell that in the following sentences *be* is an auxiliary because it is followed by another verb (the full verb). For continuous forms, use the „-ing“ form of the full verb; for passive voice, use the past participle of the full verb.

Continuous forms

- He is playing football.
- He was playing football.
- He has been playing football.
- He had been playing football.

Passive

- The house is/was built.
- The house has/had been built.
- The house will be built.

The verb *be* can also be a full verb. In this case, it's not followed by another verb. If *be* is used as a full verb, we do not need an auxiliary in negative sentences or questions.

- They *are* fifteen years old.
- They *aren't* fifteen years old.
- *Are* they fifteen years old?

AUXILIARY VERB “HAVE”

The verb *have*, too, can be used both as an auxiliary and as a full verb. As an auxiliary we use this verb to form compound tenses in active and passive voice. (Use the past participle of the full verb.)

- He has played football. (Present Perfect)
- He had played football. (Past Perfect)
- He has been playing football. (Present Perfect C.)
- He had been playing football. (Past Perfect C.)

Note that *have* is an irregular verb, too:

Simple Present: I/we/you/they have, he/she/it has

Simple Past: I/he/she/it/we/you/they had

Past Participle: had

As a full verb *have* indicates possession. In British English, however, we usually use *have got* (*have* being the auxiliary, *got* the full verb).

full verb: I have a car.

auxiliary verb: I have got a car.

When we use *have* as a full verb, we must use the auxiliary *do* in negative sentences and questions. If we use *have got*, however, we do not need another auxiliary.

have as a full verb:

I do not have a car.

Do I have a car?

have as an auxiliary verb:

I have not got a car.

Have I got a car?

AUXILIARY VERB “DO”

The verb *do* can be both an auxiliary and a full verb. As an auxiliary we use *do* in **negative** sentences and **questions** for most verbs (except not for *be*, *will*, *have got* and modal verbs) in *Present Simple* and *Past Simple*. (Use the infinitive of the full verb.)

Do as a full verb vs. auxiliary verb:

Because he spills things so often, Jerry *does* more laundry than most people. (full verb)

Jerry *didn't* put his coffee in a cup with a lid. (auxiliary verb)

Jerry *doesn't* always spill things, but it happens a lot. (auxiliary verb)

EXERCISES

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