

Unit 7

Right Forms of Verbs

Objectives

After the completion of this unit, you would be able to---

- learn the right forms of verbs.
- explain the rules of the right forms of verbs.
- use the right forms of verbs.

Overview:

Lesson 1: *The Right Forms of Verbs*

Lesson 2: *Subject-Verb Agreement*

Answer Key

Lesson 01: The Right Forms of Verbs



Right Forms of Verbs

The verb is the most important component of a sentence. It is found that the verb may take different forms, such as present simple, past simple, present participle, past participle, bare infinitive, to infinitive, gerund, etc. From among these various forms of verbs, it is very important to choose the right one in the appropriate place to make the sentence meaningful. In order to choose the right forms of verbs, certain rules should be remembered. Following are some of the important rules for using the right forms of verbs:

1. If a sentence contains *always, regularly, sometimes, often, generally, daily, everyday, occasionally, usually, normally*, etc. without any mention of time, then the verbs will be in the present indefinite tense. For example,
He always speaks in the class.
She takes fast food daily.
My father reads the Daily Star every morning.
I take exercise regularly.
2. If a sentence expresses *universal truth, habitual fact*, the verb will be in the present indefinite tense. For example,
The sun sets in the west.
Light removes darkness.
Everybody fears death.
Ill news spreads fast.
3. If any work is continuing at present, then the verb becomes present continuous. The words *now, at present, at this moment*, etc. may be present in the sentence. For example,
She is singing now.
They are watching television at this moment.
I am driving at this moment.
4. If an active sentence contains *has, have, had*, then the verb will be in the past participle form. For example,
He has finished his M.A. in English.
The teacher has punished the students.
I have visited the national museum.

5. If a sentence contains *just, just now, already, yet, ever, lately, recently, etc.*, then the verb will be in the present perfect tense. For example,
 I have visited my village home recently.
 He has just left the office.
 I have not taken my breakfast yet.
 His father has died recently.
6. If a sentence contains the words indicating past time, such as *yesterday, ago, long since, last night, etc.*, then the verb will be in the past form. For example,
 I went to my village home last week.
 They lived here long since.
 The man came here yesterday.
 The police arrested the criminal last night.
7. If any action was continuing in the past, the verb will be in the past continuous tense.
 He was then eating.
 I was reading at that time.
8. If a sentence contains *No sooner had than, scarcely had when, hardly had before, etc.*, then the first verb will be in the past participle form and the second verb will be in the past form. For example,
 No sooner had he seen the police than he ran away.
 No sooner had we reached the station than the train ran away.
9. A sentence containing 'since': If the first part of 'since' is present indefinite or present perfect tense, then the next part will be past indefinite. For example,
 It is many years since I came to Dhaka.
 Many years have passed since his father died.
10. If the first part of 'since' is past indefinite tense, then the next part becomes past perfect. For example,
 It was many years since they had first met.
 It was long since I had seen her last.
11. A sentence containing 'before': If the first part of 'before' is past perfect, then the next part becomes past indefinite. For example,
 The teacher had started the class before I came.
 The patient had died before the doctor came.
 I had finished my home work before father came home.

- 12.** A sentence containing 'after': If the first part of 'after' is past indefinite tense, then the next part will be past perfect. For example,
The teacher started the class after I had come.
The patient died after the doctor had come.
- 13.** If verb comes just after 'while', then the verb will take 'ing' with it. But if verb comes after 'while + subject', then the verb will be in the past continuous tense. For example,
While going to school, I saw a snake.
Don't gossip while reading.
While he was walking along the road, a snake bit him.
- 14.** The main verb after 'to be' and 'having' takes past participle form. For example,
He ran away having taken the money.
The chairman ordered the notice to be hung.
- 15.** If a sentence contains *by this time, by morning, by Sunday, etc.*, then the verb of the sentence will be in the future perfect tense. For example,
They will have reached by this time.
He will have returned by Monday next.
I will have finished the book by June 2017.
- 16.** If a sentence contains *tomorrow, next month, coming year, etc.*, then the verb of the sentence will be in the future indefinite tense. For example,
I shall leave for Dhaka tomorrow.
We shall visit the zoo next week.
Our final examination will begin tomorrow.
- 17.** If a simple sentence contains two verbs, then the 2nd verb will take 'ing' or 'to' before it or will take the past participle form. For example,
I saw him running.
I want to go now.
He got the work done.
- 18.** *Had better, had rather, would better, would rather, let, must, need, dare, etc.* are followed by the present forms of verb and if there is 'to' before that verb, then the 'to' is omitted. For example,
You had better leave the class.
I won't let you go now.
You need not help me.
We would rather follow the direction of our teacher.

- 19.** The verb after *it is high time*, *it is time*, *wish*, *fancy*, etc. will be in the past form. For example,
It is high time we did the work.
I wish I went there.
I fancy I got a car.
It is time you studied hard.
- 20.** After *as though*, *as if*, *wish*, etc. the 'to be verb' transforms into 'were'. For example,
I wish I were a king.
She talks as if she were a mad.
He speaks as though he were president.
- 21.** If the first part of 'as though/as if' is present indefinite, then the next part will be past indefinite. But if the first part is past indefinite, the next part will be past perfect. For example,
He speaks as though he knew everything.
She behaved as though she had not learned any manner.
- 22.** The principal verbs take present forms after modal auxiliaries. For example,
One should not waste one's time.
He could run fast.
I would help the poor.
- 23.** If *have*, *has*, *had*, *got*, etc. work as causative verb in sentence, then the verb after them will be past participle. For example,
I got the work done.
I had my house painted.
I have my clothes washed by the boy.
- 24.** The verb after *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were* takes 'ing' in active form, but it will be in the past participle in passive form. For example,
He is doing the work.
The work is done by him.
The boys were playing football.
The letter was written by his friend.
- 25.** If a sentence contains 'lest', then the subject takes *should/might* after it.
He ran fast lest he should miss the train.
She studied hard lest she might fail in the examination.

26. A given verb takes 'ing' form after the following words: *mind, worth, without, past, cannot help, could not help, with a view to, look forward to, would you mind, get used to*, etc. For example,

I went to Dhaka with a view to meeting one of my friends.

The idea is worth considering.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

I believe you would not mind visiting your home.

Lesson 2 : Subject-Verb Agreement

The verb of every sentence must agree with its subject. Grammatical agreement means that the form of the verb matches the person and the number of the subject of the sentence. The following rules have to be remembered at the time of using appropriate verbs in terms of the subject.

27. In the present tense, a third person singular subject (*he, she, it or any noun that these words replace*) needs *-s* or *-es* ending of its verb.

The president likes to jog.

He tries to exercise every day.

The sun rises in the east.

a. In the present tense the verbs **be**, **do**, and **have** change their spelling to indicate different types of subjects.

Be	Do	Have
I am	I do	I have
You are	you do	you have
He/she/it is	he/she/it does	he/she/it has

b. In the past tense the verb **be** changes its spelling to indicate different types of subjects.

Past Tense of **Be**

I was, You were, he/she/it was, we were, you were, they were,

28. A compound subject usually needs a plural form of the verb. A compound subject is made up of two or more nouns or pronouns that are joined by **and**.

The headmaster and the secretary of our school were present on the occasion.

Dhaka and Chittagong are two important cities of Bangladesh.

29. If there are two nouns/pronouns combined by such words as **along with, together with, as well as, with, accompanied by, followed by**, etc., then the verb agrees with first noun/pronoun.

The chairperson along with the members was present in the party.
 She as well as her brothers is coming tonight.
 The teacher together with some students is conducting the research.

- 30.** When two or more nouns or pronouns are joined by *or, nor, either...or, neither... nor*, the verb form usually agrees with the noun that is closest to the verb.
 Neither the President nor the two houses govern alone.
 Neither the two houses nor the President governs alone.
 Neither she nor her sisters have done this.
- 31.** Words that come between a subject and its verb do not affect the number of the subject. For example,
 The quality of the mangoes is good.
 His choice of words is excellent.
 The colour of her eyes was blue.
- 32.** When the subject is a singular, indefinite pronoun, it requires a singular verb for agreement. Here are some indefinite pronouns that are always singular:
Another, everybody, nothing, anybody, everyone, one, anyone, everything, somebody, anything, neither, someone, each, no one, something, either, nobody.
 Everybody attends the meeting.
 Each works hard for the company.
 No one of them is going to attend the class.
 Neither of the girls was pleased.
- 33.** When the subject is a *collective noun*, it may take either a singular or plural verb depending on its meaning in a particular sentence. If you are writing about the group as a single unit, use a singular verb. If you are writing about the individual members of a group, use a plural verb. Some examples of collective nouns are **team, committee, family class, audience, jury, group**, etc.
 The Senate committee has been studying air pollution.
 The Senate committee have been studying air pollution in their own states.
 The jury is giving its verdict today.
 The jury were divided into two groups.
- 34.** Subjects that state a quantity or amount (*of time, money, height, length, width, space, or weight*) usually function like singular subjects and need singular verbs. However, they can function like plural subjects when they refer to individual items.
 Twenty miles is a long distance.
 Two-thirds of the committee members were opposing the decision.
 Twelve years was Jerry's age.

35. Subjects that are plural in form but singular in meaning require singular verb for agreement. Some examples are *politics, news, information, scenery, advice, furniture, wages, poetry, issue, brick, hair, luggage, physics, economics, mathematics, ethics, civics, statistics, etc.*
The news is very sensitive.
Politics is the art of compromise to reach agreement.
Economics is a partner of politics.
The New York Times is a good source of news about politics and economics.
36. If the infinitive/gerund/participle is used as the subject of any sentence then the verb takes singular form. For example,
Walking is a good exercise.
To speak the truth is a great virtue.
That you have finished the work is known to me.
37. A verb agrees with its subject, whether the verb comes after the subject or before it.
At the end of the city is the President's Office.
At the end of the city are several commercial banks.
38. If article 'the' is used before 'adjectives' then the adjective indicates plural noun. Then the verb after the adjective becomes plural. For example,
The virtuous are always happy.
The poor are born to suffer.
39. The word **none** needs special attention. When **none** means **no one or not one**, use the singular form of the verb.
None of them is able to do that job.
When **none** means or suggests **more than one thing or person**, use the plural form of the verb.
None are helpless because they can always try.
40. When the word **number** is preceded with the word **a**, use a plural verb. When the word **number** is preceded with the word **the**, use a singular verb.
A number of people are waiting to see you.
The number of stars in the sky seems countless.



Exercise: A

Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs given in the brackets:

1. The boys(play) in the field now.
2. He (go) to school regularly.

3. I (buy) a new car recently.
4. Flowers(look) beautiful.
5. A basket is (make) of bamboo.
6. I have not (forget) them.
7. She (bring) an umbrella every day.
8. He (live) here for the last five years.
9. Neither his sister nor his brothers (approve) his decision.
10. Fifty miles(be) a long distance.

Exercise: B**Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs given in the brackets:**

Mamun was born in a little farm village in the East. He was happy even though he (live) a harsh life cultivating his field. One day he (wake up) by a heavy storm. When the storm (let up) he (saw) that his plantation (destroy). He(feel) despondent and (decide) that he could no longer live on the far. He (have) to move somewhere else. He(leave) the farm and(come) to a city. The hustle and bustle of the city(frighten) him a lot, but he(not want) to go back to his farm.

Exercise: C**Rewrite the following sentences using the right forms of verbs.**

1. Health should be (take) care of.
2. I am looking forward to (hear) from you.
3. The number of boys (be) smaller than usual.
4. The mother and daughter (be) walking.
5. None of the question (be) easy.
6. Each boy and each girl (be) meritorious.
7. Ill news (run) fast.
8. Would you mind (sing) a song.
9. I went to market with a view to (buy) a book.
10. He (pay) a visit to our school every now and then.

Exercise: D**Choose the correct forms of verbs:**

1. I bought a car because I (need/needs/needed) it badly.
2. The boy told me that he already (read/reads/had read) the book.
3. He said to me that he (went/go/would go/will go) to Dhaka.
4. It is long since I (see/saw/had seen) her last.
5. He heard the news and (brusted/bursts/burst) into tears.
6. In the evening many families spend time (watch/is watching/watching) television.
7. Ring me as soon as you (gets/get/got) home.

- Population growth must be (keep/kept/keeping) under control
- When the old man saw his daughter, he (become/becomes/became) delighted.
- I mentioned that my doctor (forbids/was forbidden/had forbidden) me to smoke.

Exercise: F

Fill in the blanks with right forms of verb:

- It was warm, so I _____ off my coat. (take)
- The film wasn't very good. I _____ it very much. (enjoy)
- I knew Sarah was very busy, so I _____ her. (disturb)
- I was very tired, so I _____ to bed early. (go)
- The bed was very uncomfortable. I _____ very well. (sleep)
- Sue wasn't hungry, so she _____ anything. (eat)
- We went to Kate's house but she _____ at home. (be)
- It was a funny situation but nobody _____. (laugh)
- The window was open and a bird _____ into the room. (fly)
- The hotel wasn't very expensive. It _____ very much. (cost)
- I was in a hurry, so I _____ time to phone you. (have)
- It was hard work carrying the bags. They _____ very heavy. (be)



Answer Keys:

Exercise A:

- are playing
- goes
- have bought
- look
- made
- forgot
- brings
- has been living
- approves
- is

Exercise B:

- lived
- woke up
- let up
- saw
- was destroyed
- felt
- decided
- had
- left
- came
- frightened
- didn't want

Exercise C:

- taken
- hearing
- is
- were/are
- is
- is
- runs
- singing
- buying
- pays

Exercise D:

- needed
- had read
- went
- saw
- burst
- watching
- get
- kept
- became
- Had forbidden

Exercise E:

- sold
- drew
- listening
- posting
- have been waiting
- has been raining
- is
- does
- spends
- lays

Exercise F:

- too
- didn't enjoy
- didn't disturb
- went
- didn't sleep
- didn't eat
- wasn't
- laughed
- flew
- didn't cost
- didn't have
- were